



When money is not enough – reggae, dancehall and policy in Jamaica

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6 **Title: When money is not enough – reggae, dancehall and**
7 **policy in Jamaica**
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12 **Introduction**
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14 Since the emergence of the creative industries discourse in the late 1990s, it
15 has become internationally relevant, with many governments adopting its
16 economic focus on their creative sectors. However, there have been
17 adjustments and disjunctures in its adoption, particularly in the non-West
18 (Cunningham 2009). This study highlights another disjuncture in the
19 international transfer of the creative industries policy discourse, a postcolonial
20 disjuncture. Reggae represents one of the few internationally prominent
21 creative industries from the Non-West and it has emerged from the Afro-
22 Jamaican lower class. Despite reggae's global popularity and the Jamaican
23 government's adoption of creative industries discourse, policies supporting the
24 music industry remain lacking. The most common explanation is policy
25 capacity (Burke 2007). This paper argues that economic value alone is not
26 always enough to make a creative sector worthy of policy support, even after
27 adoption of creative industries discourse. Dignity – the socio-cultural history
28 and position – of the creative sector is equally important. This argument is
29 made in reference to the failure to amend laws that negatively affect Jamaica's
30 reggae industry; and the continuing prejudices cited by respondents
31 interviewed within Jamaica's music industry and government connected to
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Jamaica's postcolonial identity. This case adds to a growing body of literature questioning and exploring the creative industries, particularly in the non-West. This paper, by highlighting the social embeddedness of creative sectors, questions the social inclusion benefit assumed of creative industries development (UNESCO & UNDP 2013).

Creative Industries and Cultural Value

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Creative industries development is such a popular public policy discourse that it has been called a 'Rorschach blot' (Cunningham 2009). Despite international popularity, the concept of creative industries development has developed largely within a Western orthodoxy that assigns prestige to arts and culture. Garnham (2005) argued that the British government use of the term 'creative industries' instead of 'cultural industries' was partly to imbue the technology industries with arts' prestige. Moreover, the cultural field is recognised as one where the upper classes dominate, demonstrative of the symbolic cachet of these industries in the Global North (Morgan and Nelligan 2018, Oakley et al. 2017). However, the dignity of creative forms differs from society to society. The term 'dignity' refers to the socio-cultural position, history and association of the creative group within a society (McCloskey 2010). Marginalised groups are inadequately addressed within creative industries development discourse. The *2010 Creative Economy Report* notes social inclusion of marginalised groups as one of the benefits of creative

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6 industries development, noting that ‘it can also facilitate greater absorption
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8 into the formal national economies of some categories of generally
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10 marginalised talented workers involved in creative activities’ (UNCTAD and
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12 UNDP 2010, 24). The *Creative Economy Report* therefore implies that the
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14 economic value of the creative product might erase the previous social
15
16 marginalisation of producers.
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20 ***McCloskeyian Model and Policymaking***

21 Creative industries development strategy has not adequately accounted for the
22
23 differential socio-historical position of creative producers themselves across
24
25 different societies. The historical position of creative producers can affect
26
27 policy support for an economically beneficial creative product, even when the
28
29 government is supportive of creative industries development. Deidre
30
31 McCloskey in her treatise *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain*
32
33 *the Modern World* (2010) sought to discover why the Industrial Revolution
34
35 happened in the UK and not in more technologically advanced China or the
36
37 Islamic Middle East. The Chinese and Middle Eastern bourgeoisie were more
38
39 advanced than the British bourgeoisie but lacked support from the wider
40
41 society. She concluded that the explanation lay in the ‘dignity enjoyed by the
42
43 British bourgeoisie, relative to their counterparts. This ‘dignity’ made
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45 commercial sectors attractive to talent and granted the bourgeoisie the
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47 ‘liberty’ to innovate thereby making their sectors profitable. Her theory
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49 therefore included the socio-cultural position of the innovators/ innovator
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6 community ('dignity') as a factor in determining whether growth would occur.
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8 Dignity interacted with other (economic and social) factors to precipitate
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10 growth. The implication for this Jamaican case is that the low dignity of the
11
12 reggae/dancehall community, separate from their economic value, can make
13
14 this global cultural product less attractive to policymakers.
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18 This paper presents a case where the actions of the Jamaican government, ,
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20 with regard to reggae and dancehall, presents a public policy puzzle as
21
22 adoption of the creative industries development policy discourse and
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24 identification of the economic potential of reggae has not resulted in a
25
26 supportive policy environment. I argue that McCloskeyian dignity interacts
27
28 with policymaking. Given the often postcolonial histories and concomitant
29
30 identity issues of many non-West countries, this adds an important complexity
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32 to policy translation of the creative industries discourse in the non-West
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34 (Mulcahy 2017, Cunningham 2009).
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41 ***Music Policy***

42 In the last few years, both *International Journal for Cultural Policy* and
43
44 *Popular Music* have had issues on music policy but only one of these articles
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46 addressed music policy in the non-West, demonstrating a geographic
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48 limitation in creative industries research. This paper analyses a non-West
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50 music sector and the impact its dignity had on its policy suitability to the
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6 Jamaican government, as part of a wider discussion on postcolonial contexts,
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8 and translation(s) of creative industries policy discourse in the non-West.
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12 While music policy is sometimes a subset of creative industries policy, it
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14 usually predates or is unrelated to creative industries policy. Music policy
15
16 traditionally addresses the issue of music content or noise pollution (Homan
17
18 2013, Johnson 2013). However, music policy, as a subset of cultural policy,
19
20 also interacts with the dignity of music community(ies) within a society.
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22 Simply put, music communities are cultural and existed prior to creative
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24 industries discourse.
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31 ***Methodology***

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33 This article is based largely from textual and discourse analysis of interview
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35 and archival data collected as part of a wider research project on cultural
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37 policy responses to creative economies in the non-West. Approximately 25
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39 interviews were conducted between January and March 2016, with
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41 respondents from Jamaica's music industry and government, including former
42
43 ministers, producers, and artists. Additionally, archival materials include
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45 Jamaican policy documents and previous case studies, such as the comparative
46
47 study of the Swedish and Jamaican music industries by Power & Hallencreutz
48
49 (2002) among others. Given the pop(ular) culture nature of reggae and
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51 dancehall music, newspaper and magazine articles have also been included.
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Jamaica: Reggae and Dancehall

This paper focuses on Jamaican musical forms, reggae and dancehall. Both are internationally popular and therefore potentially useful for Jamaica's economic benefit. Reggae's global prominence is decades-old, with global reggae icon, Bob Marley emerging in the 1970s, spawning a worldwide reggae movement. Dancehall, a faster, staccato branch of reggae, became popular in Jamaica in the early 1980s. While reggae songs tend toward universal themes of social justice etc., dancehall is oriented toward localised themes of sexual prowess, violence and braggadocio. While reggae is internationally well-known, dancehall has been rising in popularity among the Caribbean and African diaspora, particularly in the UK, US and Canada. Despite some negative international attention regarding lyrical content (homophobic), dancehall's sound has gone mainstream, and has been utilised by artists such as Rihanna, Drake and Justin Bieber.

Reggae is estimated to be worth USD 2-4 billion globally, but Jamaica's music industry is estimated at USD 130 million (Tom Fleming Consultancy 2016). This gap demonstrates the vulnerability of poorer countries within the global cultural economy and difficulty for Jamaica of translating 'global sales of Jamaican or Jamaican-influenced/ appropriated music into revenue that contributes to the Jamaican economy' (Tom Fleming Consultancy 2016, 23).

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6 Reggae and dancehall is currently internationally popular [again], but
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8 without a commensurate rise in the profile of Jamaican artists. Sean Paul, one
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10 of Jamaica's most successful artists (2017 Grammy nominee), noted: 'It is a
11
12 sore point when people like Drake or Bieber ... come and do dancehall-
13
14 orientated music but don't credit where dancehall came from' (Ellis-Petersen
15
16 2016). Similarly, Parris Goebel, choreographer of international pop star, Justin
17
18 Bieber's *Sorry* video, was accused of cultural appropriation. She utilised
19
20 dancehall moves, but initially cited American artists, like Michael Jackson, as
21
22 inspirations (Licata 2015). In response to the resulting online criticism by
23
24 Jamaican dancers, Goebel admitted to dancehall as inspiration (Parris Goebel
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26 defends dancehall moves 2015). Creating a cultural product does not
27
28 automatically guarantee a country the benefit of it.
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34 35 ***Reggae and Rastafari***

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37 Reggae in Jamaica is often more than just music, by promoting Rastafarian
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39 philosophy. Reggae emerged in the 1960s, at a time of socio-economic
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41 upheaval in Jamaica. Jamaica's independence in 1962 generated national
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43 discussions on race and social divisions, coinciding with the rise of Black
44
45 Power movements in the US (Hope 2006, Stolzoff 2000). Jamaica is over
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47 ninety percent black, economic power concentrated in ethnic minorities (Hope
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49 2006, Thomas 2004). Rastafari quickly bonded with Reggae when a number
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51 of artists, including Bob Marley, converted during that period.
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6 Rastafari is an Afrocentric religion which emerged in 1930s Jamaica.
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8 'Ras Tafari' is the princely name of Ethiopia's last reigning monarch, Haile
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10 Selassie. His 1930s crowning made him a 'Black Messiah' to some of the
11
12 disenfranchised masses of Jamaica, giving birth to Rastafari. Rastafari adheres
13
14 to an Afrocentric philosophy of peace, unity, repatriation, and reparations and
15
16 represents cultural resistance by the Afro-Jamaican lower class to being
17
18 dispossessed materially and psychologically in Jamaica (Chevannes 1995).
19
20 Rastafarians also have a distinct dreadlocked appearance. Rastafarians
21
22 therefore stand apart from the largely Protestant (Ethic), more Eurocentric
23
24 hegemony of mainstream Jamaica. Jamaican columnist, Annie Paul recently
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26 wrote 'in [the 1960s], Rastafarians were seen as disreputable, dangerous
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28 thieves and murderers, by...the middle and upper classes generally, mainly
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30 because they challenged faux gentility with their dreadlocks, vernacular
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32 speech and smoking of ganja (marijuana)' (Paul 2017).
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38 Rastafarians are the group most associated with reggae, as
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40 demonstrated by the distinctive Ethiopian red, green and gold at any reggae
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42 event. While it is true that not all reggae is Rasta-influenced and not all reggae
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44 artists are Rastafarian, Rastafari has influenced reggae immensely. "Reggae
45
46 has shown a tendency over the years to reflect the emphasis of the
47
48 Rastafarians, and to offer criticisms of Jamaican society from the point of
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50 view of the Rastafarian sub-culture" (Winders 1983, 69). Despite significant
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52 change in this perception with the embrace of Bob Marley, Reggae artist Tony
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6 Rebel noted that discrimination still lingered, 'Rasta and reggae was always
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8 synonymous... You should not discriminate and think I am less because I
9
10 wear locks.' (Interview with Rebel 2016). With reggae's Rastafarian
11
12 connection has come the prejudice experienced by Rastafarians. The
13
14 continued utilisation of reggae by various artists to convey a Rastafari
15
16 (influenced) Afrocentric, critical postcolonial philosophy has led to a lower
17
18 dignity attributed to the reggae/music industry by policymakers as an affront
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20 to the hegemonic Jamaican discourse of 'creole multiracial nationalism'
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22 (Thomas 2004, 59).
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26 27 ***Dancehall***

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30 Dancehall music is also of lower class origin, emerging largely from
31
32 Kingston's urban ghettos and encapsulating the values and lifestyles thereof.
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34 Dancehall's themes of sex and violence are also threatening to Jamaica's
35
36 social order as they run counter to the Christian respectability hegemonic
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38 discourse of mainstream Jamaica (Thomas 2004, Cooper 1995). Reggae blog,
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40 *LargeUp* 2017 top 10 list is topped by reggae song on the industry
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42 exploitation and a song about aphrodisiacs (LargeUp crew 2017).
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48 Nevertheless, both reggae and dancehall continue to demonstrate their
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50 international value. Continuing from the success of Bob Marley, a number of
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52 Jamaican reggae and dancehall acts have been signed including Grammy-
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6 winning Shabba Ranks with ‘dancehall [being] the toast of major labels in the
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8 1990s’ (When the ‘majors’ came 2014). Dancehall beats influence the work of
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10 international artists, such as Justin Bieber’s *Sorry*, Rihanna’s *Work* among
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12 others. Young Jamaican reggae artist, Chronixx was named the face of an
13
14 Adidas collection (Frank 2017).
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18 While reggae and dancehall are loved by many Jamaicans and demonstrating
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20 significant economic gains, the music industry faces disinterest and resistance
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22 from mainstream Jamaica, including the government due to its low dignity.
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26 27 28 **Jamaican creative industries policies** 29

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31 The Jamaican government incorporated the creative industries policy
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33 discourse since its 1996 National Industrial Policy (NIP) but there are few
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35 discernible creative industries policies. The entertainment industry is
36
37 identified as a sector for strategic intervention in the NIP, with the music
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39 industry identified as having the most potential. ‘Reggae music is a solidly
40
41 mainstream product among its niche market of urban contemporary music’
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43 (National Industrial Policy 1996, 127-8). Such recognition aligns with
44
45 UNESCO’s promotion of cultural industries since the 1980s predating even
46
47 the UK’s Department of Culture, Media & Sports’ (DCMS) use of the term
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49 ‘creative industries’ in the late 1990s.
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6 The recognition of music's economic potential has not resulted in
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8 policy change. The 1996 NIP recognised the need for greater public support,
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10 including 'replication of the creative style of Jamaican performers by foreign
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12 artists... and the lack of an incentive programme that covers the entire sector'
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14 (127) in order for Jamaica (and Jamaicans) to reap the benefits of its creation,
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16 but few of the recommendations were enacted. The raft of policies proposed
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18 included a national policy on entertainment; incentives for investment;
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20 measures to protect artists' and producers' rights; the establishment of an
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22 Entertainment Advisory Council; the establishment of a Jamaica Music, Film
23
24 and Entertainment Commission at Jamaica Trade & Invest; the provision of
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26 similar benefits as provided to those under the Motion Picture Encouragement
27
28 Act; access to national investment resources. Only the Entertainment
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30 Advisory Board and the Film & Creative Industries Commission have been
31
32 established. In 2005, a draft Entertainment Industry Encouragement Act was
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34 written, but never ratified.
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40 Cultural policy is usually where strategies regarding cultural and
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42 creative industries reside, but postcolonial identity issues have dominated
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44 (Bakhshi and Cunningham 2016, O'Connor 2010). Independent Jamaica's
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46 first cultural policy was in 1963. It limited the cultural concerns of the black
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48 majority to heritage, such as performing arts competitions, and did not address
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50 issues of political blackness, such as the sentiments which gave rise to
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52 Rastafari and Black Nationalism (Thomas 2004, Chevannes 1995, Nettleford
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6 1979). Anthropologist Deborah Thomas (2004) terms this ‘folk blackness’.
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8 Thomas (2004) notes these ‘reassertion of black nationalism presented a
9
10 major political and ideological dilemma for the state, [as]... it block[ed] the
11
12 traditional paternalistic alliance between middle-and lower-class Jamaicans’
13
14 (74). Cultural policy theorist, Kevin Mulcahy (2017), noted the centrality of
15
16 the politics of identity formation in postcolonial countries where there is need
17
18 to ‘transition from an asymmetrical cultural condition characterised by
19
20 hegemonic dominance’ (237). I, like Thomas (2004) and Nettleford (1979)
21
22 argue that the hegemonic dominance is still embedded within Jamaican
23
24 cultural policy practice. Jamaica’s National Cultural Policy (hereafter ‘NCP’),
25
26 while drafted in 2003, has not yet been ratified. The NCY acknowledges the
27
28 African identity of the majority of Jamaicans, stating that ‘our formal
29
30 processes have emphasised our European past more than our African,
31
32 Indian...’ (MOEYC 2008, 30). It also highlights the utilisation of culture for
33
34 Jamaica’s economic development characteristic of the creative industries
35
36 policy discourse. The need for artist and sector support is again recognised
37
38 and includes additional intergovernmental initiatives, such as negotiations
39
40 over copyright funds owed to Jamaican artists (MOEYC 2008). However, this
41
42 cultural policy remains unratified with consultations ongoing in 2017.
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49 Policy discussions around the Jamaica’s creative industries continue,
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51 but under industrial policy. The 2016 Business Plan for the Jamaican Cultural
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53 and Creative Industries (hereafter ‘Business Plan’) for the Ministry of Industry
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6 is the latest strategy document (Tom Fleming Consultancy 2016). It
7
8 acknowledges that ‘Jamaica is no longer the primary source point for reggae
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10 and, to a lesser extent, dancehall, [but] it still has enormous influence in terms
11
12 of the development of these genres and ...appropriated by both consumers and
13
14 artists from other countries’ (28). The Business Plan focused on local linkages
15
16 with film and fashion, an approach unlikely to address Jamaica’s international
17
18 reggae earning issues. Another priority highlighted in the Business Plan was
19
20 the need for more Jamaican events and festivals. The two existing major
21
22 Jamaican reggae events - Rebel Salute and Sumfest – can only access tourism-
23
24 centric support (listed as a threat in the Business Plan). There is no public
25
26 funding supporting a medium-term view of the Jamaican music business (Tom
27
28 Fleming Consultancy 2016).
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35 ***Jamaica Policy: Copyright and Heritage Listing***

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37 Jamaica’s music industry policy initiatives have focused on copyright and
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39 amendments to the Copyright Act. The focus on the copyright act aligns with
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41 conventional arguments on the importance of copyright for incentivising
42
43 investment in the creative industries (Towse 2011, Schulz & Van Gelder
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45 2008). Jamaica’s Copyright Act was promulgated in 1993, over a decade after
46
47 Bob Marley’s death. One reason for the belated follow-up is implied in the
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49 debates around the Copyright Act when Mike Henry, a former Minister of
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51 Culture, related (a story) that Bob Marley was rejected for registration by a tax
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6 officer as ‘this kind of occupation [singer] could [not] earn that kind of
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8 money’ (Hansard, 26 January 1993, as in Taylor 2013, 11). Henry’s story is
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10 supported by my 2016 interview data suggesting that government officials did
11
12 not value reggae. Jamaican DJ, Walshy Fire, from renowned EDM group,
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14 Major Lazer, expressed similar sentiments,
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17 Can you imagine the first time a man approached government and
18
19 said that this [reggae] is going to be popular internationally....
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21 They must have told him to get the hell out of here. Because they
22
23 are so disconnected (2016)
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26 Copyright legislation is not a panacea. As economist Ruth Towse
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28 (2011) notes,
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31 Copyright law only stipulates the copyright standard and the rights
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33 that protect authors, but authors almost always have to contract with an
34
35 intermediary or distributor in order to market their work and it is the
36
37 terms of the contract between them that determine the eventual
38
39 financial reward to the author.
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42 It does not address music industry power imbalances. In the Jamaican context,
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44 the pronounced power imbalance between producer/international agent and
45
46 artist, makes it difficult for the often-impooverished artist to assert his/her
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48 copyright (Howard 2009). In a recent *Fader* interview, veteran reggae singer
49
50 Sister Nancy spoke of not knowing her *song Bam Bam* was a hit until she
51
52 migrated to the US, as the producer, knowing the song was a hit, registered it
53
54 in his name (Kochhar 2017). The opportunity to record and to record on a
55
56 ‘hot’ rhythm is such that contractual considerations might be secondary
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6 (Power & Hallencreutz 2004, Stolzoff 2000). Copyright legislation alone is
7
8 not enough to protect the poor.
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12 Even though the Jamaican government has chosen to focus on
13
14 successive Copyright Act amendments (e.g. 1999, 2013 2018), significant
15
16 gaps remain. One key example is that Jamaicans do not have direct access to
17
18 online music retail affecting the sale of Jamaican singles, etc. Only two online
19
20 stores can operate in Jamaica: Deezer, a Paris-based internet streaming
21
22 service, and REGGAEInc. Sweden, by comparison, has 17 services listed
23
24 including Apple Music, iTunes, and Google Play. Even in comparison to other
25
26 Caribbean islands, Jamaica is lagging behind. Trinidad & Tobago and
27
28 Barbados have only two - Apple Music and iTunes, the largest online music
29
30 platforms (IFPI 2016, 2017). Jamaica has no access to these services as it is
31
32 on the US Trade Representative's (USTR) Watch List, due to copyright non-
33
34 compliance by radio and cable stations (Campbell 2016B). This situation is
35
36 also demonstrative of the political and economic vulnerability of small states
37
38 even within the global cultural economy.
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45 Another copyright gap is the economic rights of performers.
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47 Recognition of these rights was omitted in the 2015 Copyright Act
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49 amendments, due to ignorance, putting Jamaica in breach of its obligations as
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51 per WIPO's Performances and Phonograms Treaty.
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6 Performers' rights were agreed...And so we were shocked when it
7 [2015 Copyright Amendment] came out without it. Our
8 ...investigation revealed that at the legislative committee it [the
9 clause regarding performers' rights] came out there... To them, it
10 did not fit, and they did not understand it. No one...spoke up
11 (Anonymous C 2016).
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16 This is another important oversight in a country practising creative industries
17 development. It also demonstrates the subordinate position of reggae in
18 relation to other bases of power in Jamaica.
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25 The conventional explanation for the lack of supportive policies is the
26 [lack of] state capacity (Burke 2007). However, the Jamaican government
27 successfully completed a 2015 World Heritage List inscription of the Blue and
28 John Crow Mountains and the UNESCO Creative City application. A senior
29 Jamaican official noted that to the Jamaican delegation's surprise, UNESCO
30 officials expected reggae to be Jamaica's first case (Anonymous B, 2016). The
31 Jamaican government is only now planning to inscribe reggae on the
32 UNESCO Intangible Heritage List ' to identify to the world where the origin
33 of reggae is' (Gov't wants reggae inscribed 2016). However, the issue is the
34 lack of international recognition to and access by individual Jamaican artists.
35 Inscription does not address this. For example, in the case of Indian
36 kuttiyattam (Sanskrit dance theatre), inscription on the Intangible Heritage
37 List has not stopped performance by foreigners to greater reward than locals
38 (Spence 2004). Initiatives such as the establishment of a parallel to Export
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6 Music Sweden, whereby the industry partners with government to
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8 [successfully] promote the export of and international exposure of Swedish
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10 music, would be more effective (Taylor 2013). Despite successive policy
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12 documents and initiatives on the creative industries, but little policy or
13
14 solutions have emerged.
15

16 17 18 ***Transnational Approaches***

19 International organisations, such as UNESCO, have also supported a localised
20
21 policy approach. The latest iteration of the *Creative Economy Report 2013*
22
23 emphasises local government support in the development of the creative
24
25 economy (UNESCO & UNDP 2013). However, the global value chain of the
26
27 creative economy receives little attention. In many creative sectors, the
28
29 existing value chain limits success beyond the local, as the international and
30
31 more profitable sections of the industry are concentrated in the Global North
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33 (Burke 2007, Kratke & Taylor 2004).
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39 Despite significant diasporic audiences, Caribbean cultural policies
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41 usually ignore the transnational (Burke 2007, Scott 2004). Recently the
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43 Entertainment and Culture Ministry (they became joined in 2016) has started
44
45 some transnational initiatives. One such is the Artist Ambassador Program
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47 which gives artists a tour support grant. The last grant raised much opposition
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49 with commentators questioning the reason for a grant (Johnson 2018). In the
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51 UK, Canada and other Global North countries, the support for the creative
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5 industries comes from the public sector. Only in the US is investment in the
6 creative industries mostly private. Northern creative industries rely on
7 government support, rather than the conventional policies recommended by
8 international organisations for Non-West of local government support,
9 copyright and investment (Campbell 2016B, Taylor 2013). Recently a
10 *Ptichfork* survey of music policies declared, “many rich countries use public
11 funds to nurture home-grown musical talent” (Hogan 2017). Cultural
12 participation is there seen as desirable and a right (Hogan 2017, Crossick &
13 Kaszynska 2016). The cultural policy situation in Jamaica is quite different.
14 One government official noted, “there is minimal understanding of the [music]
15 industry [within government and Jamaica] due to class and race issues...The
16 policies are piecemeal as we do not yet understand our prejudices...against the
17 ‘noise’ of ghetto people” (Anonymous A 2016).
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37 ***Jamaica: National Security***

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39 Both reggae and dancehall have been associated with criminality by
40 government personnel. Reggae artists were once stereotyped for marijuana
41 use, Rastafarian beliefs and hype. A similar phenomenon is now occurring
42 with dancehall with the Jamaican police connecting dancehall to gang
43 criminality (Saunders 2016). The criminality claims are not completely
44 baseless. A number of industry interviewees pointed to criminal elements
45 being involved in sound systems in the 1990s and early 2000s, due to the lack
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6 of alternative financing options and expensive equipment (Stolzoff 2000). But
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8 as Walshy Fire (2016) noted ‘almost all the sounds now are hardworking
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10 [peoples’] sounds...the cost of equipment has gone down considerably and
11
12 now you can buy a lot less speakers and get the same sound. Recently there
13
14 have been high-profile criminal cases, most notably popular dancehall artist
15
16 Vybz Kartel and associates for murder in 2014. There is however little
17
18 evidence to characterise the entirety of the music industry as a criminal
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20 enterprise.
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25 The most successful Jamaican music policy has been the policing of
26
27 the spaces reggae and dancehall occupy. The most cited creative industries
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29 policy of the Jamaican government by interviewees was a
30
31 security/environment policy – the Noise Abatement Act (NAA). It was
32
33 designated by almost all respondents as a powerful and negative influence on
34
35 entertainment as it was focused on the noise concerns of upper/middle
36
37 class/mainstream Jamaica. The 1990s and 2000s were periods when reggae
38
39 and dancehall enjoyed significant international success. The 1990s saw the
40
41 institution of the Copyright Act (1993) and the Noise Abatement Act (1997).
42
43 One official said ‘the noise abatement clearly had the most national impact,
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45 but it is a negative impact. I have not seen the one [a policy] to have the most
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47 positive impact’ (Anonymous A 2016).
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6 Stolzoff (2000) noted that Jamaicans could be somewhat classified
7
8 based on their view of dancehall; with upper/middle class Jamaicans seeing
9
10 reggae and dancehall as obnoxious noise. The politico-cultural power to
11
12 define noise is a longstanding issue within Jamaican society and is an
13
14 expression of the cultural hegemonic legacy of coloniality (Mulcahy 2017,
15
16 Thomas 2004, Chevannes 1995). The Noise Amendment Act was drafted
17
18 from the perspective of entertainment events as noise, not a means of earning
19
20 and enjoyment for the majority of the population. It is a blanket piece of
21
22 legislation regulating that all events end by midnight on weeknights and by
23
24 2am on weekends with permits from the police and local government. It is not
25
26 unusual for dances to start after midnight in Jamaica. The NAA makes no
27
28 differentiation between residential, commercial, rural or urban areas. And it
29
30 remains un-amended, despite protestations from the Entertainment and
31
32 Culture ministry and the industry. Given the event-centric nature of reggae
33
34 and dancehall, the effect of the Act was negative especially in Kingston – now
35
36 a UNESCO Creative City of Music. ‘You just see a dance lock off [shut
37
38 down], but you don’t really know why....there was a certain point you felt
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40 things were getting shut down all the time’ (Walshy Fire 2016).
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47 Industry respondents also spoke of increased difficulty in finding
48
49 funding for reggae/dancehall music, as the haphazard ‘lock-off’ made
50
51 entertainment business riskier. With entertainment events being both
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53 enjoyment and economic strategy for poorer Jamaicans, this had economic
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5 effects. A popular song, *Unfair Officer* described the effect of the NAA on
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7 livelihoods,
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11 They say I am not qualified for the 9 to 5,
12 So I am hosting a dance
13 Take some liquor on consignment,
14 and block the street,
15 Lots of people came,
16 But after a while, all I saw were (police) jeep.
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20 (Translation from Jamaican dialect)

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22 *Unfair Officer* by Wasp, 2009 (The Musicologist 2017)
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25 The NAA remains because described succinctly by one interviewee, ‘power
26 is concentrated in those that don’t depend on entertainment for a living. They
27 use entertainment for recreation’ (Anonymous A 2016). One event promoter
28 interviewee wondered ‘how many events have been stopped by criminality
29 versus by the police?’ (Anonymous D 2016). Interestingly, the
30 Entertainment/Culture Ministry has no say in the NAA’s amendment (Grizzle
31 2017),
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43 **Class and Status in Jamaican Society**

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45 One of the conventional explanations advanced by policymakers in interviews
46 for not investing in reggae/dancehall is the anti-government nature and
47
48 frivolity of its content, capturing the difference between creative industries
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50 and other industries. As noted before, reggae and dancehall have a message of
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5 liberation, hedonism and opposition to the oppressive and 'respectable' nature
6 of Jamaican socio-economic system for lower class black Jamaicans. Creative
7 industries need to push boundaries to be attractive, raising a broader question
8 about the suitability of creative industries for government policy (Caves
9 2006). The creative industries produce symbolic value in a way that other
10 industries such as manufacturing do not. The best-known model of the
11 creative industries, 'the concentric circles model is based on the proposition
12 that cultural goods and services give rise to two distinguishable types of value:
13 economic and cultural...and it is the cultural value or cultural content of the
14 goods and services that gives the cultural industries their most distinguishing
15 characteristic' (Throsby 2008,148). My hypothesis is that low cultural dignity
16 of the reggae and dancehall innovators prevents policymakers from supporting
17 these sectors.
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33 One senior official noted:

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37 Their [artists] job is to curse you. Some government people say
38 they are anti-government. But the JMA (Jamaica Manufacturers'
39 Association) criticises government. But then we go to school
40 together. They have my phone number. For entertainers you say
41 who are these people talk to me? Ghetto boy how can you talk to
42 me like that? The JMA man is a rich man. He funds my campaign
43 (Anonymous A 2016).
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49 A number of themes emerge from this quote. The first is that some
50 policymakers see the traditional critical role of artists as anti-government.
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6 However, the issue is not criticism, but the source of the criticism.
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8 Businesspersons are considered worthy critics, but not 'ghetto boys'. Jamaican
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10 businessmen and policymakers belong to similar social networks, a situation
11
12 exacerbated by the smallness of the country (2.7 million people). The
13
14 economic value of reggae and dancehall is not high enough to realign the
15
16 cultural dignity of the music industry.
17

18
19 The average Jamaicans' relationship with reggae is complicated and
20
21 reflective of Jamaica's postcolonial condition. Reggae and dancehall are loved
22
23 as demonstrated by the numerous reggae events in Jamaica and even used in
24
25 election campaigns, but it is considered entertainment, not business. The
26
27 Entertainment Ministry is not seen as a serious ministry by non-industry
28
29 respondents (Anonymous A 2016). In 2016 the government's Economic
30
31 Growth Council released its strategy for Jamaican economic growth. The
32
33 creative industries or music was not mentioned once. Nevertheless in 2016, a
34
35 number of reggae artists from the nineties were given national awards
36
37 including Grammy winner Shabba Ranks. As with many forms of popular
38
39 creativity, the older it is, the more respectable it gets. But that respect does not
40
41 accord to the business of the music industry.
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47 Soca and Carnival provide a useful foil to reggae/dancehall in
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49 treatment from Jamaican authorities. Soca is Trinidadian carnival music and
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51 previously, only well-off Jamaicans could travel to Trinidad for Carnival.
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6 Now Jamaica has its own Carnival that has been embraced by the
7
8 upper/middle classes, corporate sponsors and policymakers. On April 23rd,
9
10 2017, four Carnival organisations marched on the road and Kingston's city
11
12 centre blocked off. That same night, a regular weekly reggae dub session, Dub
13
14 Club, hosted by Gabre Selassie (a Rastafarian sound system selector) in the
15
16 Kingston hills and listed as one of the top 3 things to do in Kingston (Nightlife
17
18 in Kingston 2017) was shut down prior to the expiry of his permit due to a
19
20 noise complaint by the police. Upon inability to produce the physical permit
21
22 (one had been granted), Selassie was arrested under the NAA (Johnson 2017).
23
24 The contrast in treatment led the Culture Minister to remark about class
25
26 division and 'two Jamaicas'. However, the comments to the newspaper
27
28 reflected an attitude that music industry people should respect the law
29
30 irrespective (Two Jamaicas 2017). This incident and reaction demonstrate the
31
32 divide within Jamaican society towards music personnel.
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38 The McCloskeyian model is applicable to the Jamaican case. Here is a
39
40 multi-million-dollar industry, one that the government has repeatedly
41
42 designated as having great potential and noted its international earnings; but
43
44 there is little support policy-wise. Incentives have been implemented for other
45
46 sectors like film, while policies deleterious to music have been implemented
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48 with little hope of repeal. The recently-concluded Jamaica trade policy review
49
50 noted that 'within the creative industries, emphasis has been put on film'
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52 (UNCTAD 2015, 56). Moreover, the policies and strategies enacted –
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6 Copyright Act, UNESCO Inscription and Noise Abatement Act - have
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8 substantial gaps. This has occurred in a policy environment that has adopted
9
10 the language of creative industries and recognises the music industry's
11
12 economic impact but has confronted an entrenched postcolonial cultural
13
14 dignity orthodoxy which privileges a differing vision of Jamaica from that of
15
16 artists. 'Once the public does not perceive entertainment as an industry, it is
17
18 difficult for government to spend. Government spending is directed by public
19
20 acceptance....You put a waiver for entertainment, it is resisted by the public'
21
22 (Anonymous A 2016).
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29 With few investment incentives, it is easy for foreigners who
30
31 recognise the music's potential to pilfer. It is not just a copyright thing. "I am
32
33 touring the world and EDM DJs are using our culture with sound systems and
34
35 are making millions from it while we disrespect it....Persons overseas are
36
37 always asking me why doesn't the government support our culture" (DJ
38
39 Delano in Campbell 2016A). The McCloskeyian model helps us understand
40
41 why. Creative sectors have history and symbolism within their societies and
42
43 are differentially situated within different societies. The Jamaican case
44
45 exhibits an economically viable creative sector that is marginalised due to the
46
47 historical status of its creators and Jamaica's postcolonial identity issues.
48
49 Dancehall and reggae can be seen as forms of cultural resistance to the
50
51 prevailing Jamaican cultural hegemony (Hope 2006, Thomas 2004,
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6 Chevannes 1995, Cooper 1995). Such resistance is not uncommon in the
7
8 Caribbean, such as Trinidad's Carnival (Burke 2014, Green 2007).

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10 Recognition of economic value has been enough to enact economic policy
11
12 initiatives for the music industry, rather than policy documents (Economic
13
14 Growth Plan), or to revamp the status on artists beyond the entertainment
15
16 sphere, but the security policy remains unamended.
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21 **Conclusion**

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24 The creative economy development discourse implies that economically
25
26 successful creative sectors can be easily utilised by policymakers for
27
28 developmental gain. However, reggae's and dancehall's origins within
29
30 marginalised groups have contributed to an adverse postcolonial policy
31
32 response from the Jamaican government, despite government's stated
33
34 commitment to developing the creative industries. While convincing
35
36 arguments are made about copyright and state capacity, these issues do not
37
38 account for the entire story (Burke 2007, Power & Hallencreutz 2002).
39
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41 Important copyright concerns regarding the economic rights of performers and
42
43 local copyright enforcement to access major online retailers of music remain
44
45 unaddressed. The strongest policy response has come in the area of security
46
47 and noise, hampering the growth of the Jamaican reggae industry, but
48
49 conforming to a historical discourse about noise, criminality and music in
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51 Jamaica, not uncommon in the Caribbean (Burke 2014, Green 2007, Stolzoff
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6 2000, Copper 1995).

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9 The policy conundrum of supporting a policy discourse, while enacting an
10 adverse policy stance can be explained with reference to cultural dignity. The
11 creative economy policy discourse focuses on economic value, with an
12 assumption that favourable economic prospects will overcome the
13 marginalised status of a creative group. The Jamaican example is significant,
14 demonstrating how creative industries differ from other industries in the
15 importance of cultural dignity and in determining whether the cultural and
16 creative sector will be supported by local policies. There is therefore need for
17 greater discussion of the cultural dignity and the historical 'baggage' of
18 creative sectors, particularly in postcolonial societies, and its interaction with
19 the creative industries policymaking from the perspective of public policy.
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