

Capitals of Punk: Paris, DC, and the Circulation of Urban Counternarratives

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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May 2017

Acknowledgements

I've never been known as a man of few words. Here we go:

First, I must extend my deepest appreciation to my doctoral committee for all their help in my time at the University of Tennessee. Thank you to my adviser Derek Alderman, whose exceptional standards as mentor, researcher, writer, and navigator of academia will always be what I'll aspire to in my own career. Thank you to Micheline Van Riemsdijk, whose sharp editing skills and qualitative wisdom have made me a better researcher and writer. Thanks as well to Tom Bell, whose enthusiasm for my research equaled mine for his. I doubt this dissertation would exist as it is had it not been for his work in musical geography. And last but not least, thank you to Les Gay for admitting me into your full ethnomusicology seminar my first week at UTK and for serving as my external committee member. I'm grateful for you and all of my colleagues over in musicology.

Speaking of which, respect and gratitude are due to many colleagues I came up with through the UT Geography program. Too many names belong here to list, but you know who you are. I cannot wait to see everything great that you accomplish (and in many cases, already have). Outside of academics, I seriously appreciate how well the city of Knoxville has treated me since I moved here in 2013. Thank you to Sarah for her deep and unconditional support through everything these past few years, as well as the cast of other brilliant characters I have gotten to know throughout the region. I genuinely feel bad for those who have not been fortunate to experience what the Southeast has been accomplishing in comedy, music, and other arts.

I must acknowledge the disparate contributions that various characters have made to this dissertation, no matter how far back or tangential their impact. Though name everyone would be impossible, I'll mention a few key players in the interest of mapping it out. Though his name

appears throughout this dissertation, I must say thank you to Philippe Roizès for being a great informant and fact-checker throughout my research process. Thank you as well to Philippe Beer-Gabel for being a good point person and friend in Paris over the years. Thank you to Mathieu, Natasha, and the rest of Kimmo for welcoming me on my first visit to Paris, as well as to Ryan in DC for connecting me with them. Going back even further, I am grateful that my high school friend Jon lent me cash to buy a beaten-up copy of Minor Threat's *Complete Discography* CD, as well as the anonymous record trader at the Madison Arts Barn who sold it to me with the endorsement that “it's fuckin' awesome.” Going back even further, thank you to long-gone Music for a Song in Westbrook, CT for selling me my first Ramones CD, and thank you to Merle's Record Rack in Guilford, CT for selling me my first Rancid CD (as well as to the kind soul who sold it back to them so teenage me could afford it).

Of course, I would be nothing if not for the support of my family. To Brittany, thank you for being a great sister and best friend. I can only hope to make you half as proud as you've made me. To Mom and Dad, thank you both for decades of love and support. I decided to leave DC and follow this path because you both supported my decision, and I'm grateful for that every day.

Finally, this is dedicated to everyone who has worked hard to give Washington, DC such a unique and amazing local culture, and with the deepest respect to those fighting to maintain it. It needs to be said.

Abstract

In the history of underground music in the punk era, few cities' scenes have garnered as much respect and influence as Washington, DC. Bad Brains, Minor Threat, Scream, Rites of Spring, Fugazi, and a deep catalog of other regional groups have accrued legendary status among fans of hardcore and have become subjects of popular books and documentaries. However, few accounts have investigated DC's underground influence on other urban landscapes outside of the United States. This dissertation focuses on that relationship between DC and another iconic Western capital with a largely unheralded hardcore punk history, Paris.

Using qualitative, ethnographic methods, this dissertation unpacks the dynamics and underlying geographic currents of this exchange. Based on primary sources like personal interviews and secondary sources like fanzines, correspondence, and recordings, the details of this unique slice of Franco-American cultural circulation are uncovered. Informants discuss their role within the circulation of music and ideas through alternative networks, and Parisians express impressions of Washington, DC as affected by that city's subcultural diffusion. In the process, prevailing urban counter-narratives are unveiled and lessons discerned on the life cycle of profoundly changing urban landscapes.

This dissertation ultimately proposes a circulation model through which to understand the movement of music as well as that music's omnipresent role in collective sense of place. By understanding how and why punk circulated between Washington DC and Paris, geographers and other social scientists can understand the greater circulation of culture, public memory of urban landscapes, and these cities' respective roles in global change.

“Banned in DC with a thousand more places to go;
Gonna swim across the Atlantic ‘cause that’s the only place I can go!”

Bad Brains, 1982

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Prologue:
A Tale of Two (DIY) Shows in Two Cities

On January 20, 1969, a little-known band led by Yardbirds guitarist Jimmy Page played a pop-up show at the Wheaton Youth Center, mere miles from Washington, DC. Or, they didn't. Accounts of this apocryphal early Led Zeppelin performance are still hotly contested. Filmmaker Jeff Krulik (known for his 1986 guerilla-style documentary *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*) investigated the question in his 2012 documentary *Led Zeppelin Played Here*. While he suggests that the show did, indeed, happen, multiple DC-area baby-boomers cast reasonable doubt. After all, nobody has found any surviving flyers for the show. Nobody has any ticket stubs. Nobody, even the biggest Zeppelin fans Krulik could find, had any autographed items from that night.

All of these curious vacancies had explanations. Led Zeppelin's first album had been released stateside merely one week prior to the show with relatively little promotion. Nobody in the audience would have known any of the songs Page's new band played. One or two people featured in Krulik's documentary claimed that the band was promoted as “the new Yardbirds” and not officially Led Zeppelin yet. While rock ‘n’ roll had been a global phenomenon for well over a decade, the concert industry of established clubs, promoters (flyers), and distributors (tickets) was embryonic at best (Kruklik, email correspondence 25 Oct 2013). The well-documented excesses of the musicians, coupled with the rigorous touring and recording schedule they had at the time, did not lend any credence to their accounts. When Krulik asked Page about it at the Kennedy Center Honors, the guitarist said it was possible, but he had not thought about this apocryphal show in decades.

Led Zeppelin Played Here may not conclusively answer the question, but it does explain to the contemporary viewer *why* one of the first shows by one of rock's most popular and iconic

bands has faded from memory. While Krulik's justifications are valid, I would argue that they are more matters of time and even more significantly, place. Look at the date. As the caravan bringing the British rock stars wound its way down to DC through blinding snow from the Midwest, Richard Milhous Nixon was sworn in as President. The local press and populace were understandably distracted from the goings-on at a suburban youth center. Americans were fighting a highly contentious war both abroad in Vietnam and at home against one another. The assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy had sparked a cycles of rioting and national mourning.

Across the pond, the French, whose colonial occupation of Southeast Asia had trickled down into a multinational war effort, watched Parisian student protests flare out into a national shutdown the previous May, the events of which theorists still analyze, celebrate, and condemn in the same breaths. In 1969, the US Capitol found itself in a precarious position, a button-down city at the height of hippie counterculture. Though DC had produced a handful of noteworthy (if not commercially successful) bands over the prior decade, the city carried a reputation as the antithesis of a "rock 'n' roll town." To most of the world's population, even many from the District, it still does.

*

On May 6, 2010, Rush n' Attack, a quartet from Northern Holland, played a tour stop at Le Pix, a basement venue in an ornate yet unremarkable bar on Rue Pixerecourt in Paris' Belleville neighborhood. The Parisian band Kimmo, whose members booked and promoted the show, opened for them (see Figure 1). A friend of mine from DC (where I lived at the time) put me in touch via email with Mathieu Gélézeau, one of Kimmo's two singer-guitarists. I was scheduled



Figure 1. Kimmo sound check at Le Pix bar, Paris May 2010. Mathieu Gélézeau (L) checking with Natasha Herzock (R). Photo by the author.

to land at Beauvais airport (far outside of Paris) on the evening of their gig, I had never been to Paris before, and I would not have an active mobile phone while I was in France. This endeavor required some strategy. On April 21, I emailed the band:

I'm a punk fan from Washington DC who wants to come check out your show at Le Pix on May 6. My buddy Ryan (who's lived in France for a little while) told me about your show, and it's happening a weekend when I'm visiting Paris, so, awesome.

I'm landing at Beauvais airport at 1840h so I'll hopefully be getting to Paris around 2000h? If I get right on the metro and come out to Telegraphe should I be able to make it in time to see enough of the show?

Let me know.

Ty

A few days before the show, I got a reply from Mathieu:

*Hi Ty,
Mathieu from Kimmo here. Happy to know we have a fan in DC !
So, for the show at Le Pix, i think we will play at 21:30h.
If you are in Beauvais at 18:40h, maybe you can be at Le Pix at 21:30 but you
have to be speed ! If you are in Paris at 20:00 or 20:30, it will be OK.
We play 45 minutes i think.
Hope to see you at this show.
Bye,*

Mathieu / Kimmo

I did not reply and admit that I'd never actually heard his band's music, but his friendliness and eagerness for me to see them perform made me ready to be a fan. After catching a well-timed shuttle from Beauvais into the Eastern core of Paris, I hopped on the Metro and navigated my way to Télégraphe station, the closest one to Rue Pixérécourt and the venue. At the time, I knew nobody in Paris and spoke no French. My bulging backpack gave me away as a stranger, especially on that quiet Thursday night in what appeared to be a gentrifying neighborhood (a suspicion that eventual research and better acquaintance with Paris would later verify). At the time, I was not a geographer, at least, as Denis Cosgrove (1989) would have phrased it, “not consciously.” I was working full-time at a public relations firm in Washington, DC, in Europe enjoying one of my two luxurious weeks of paid vacation that my Parisian counterparts would likely have either laughed at or pitied. I was disenchanted with, to lift a famous line from The Clash, “working for the clampdown.” I had been thinking about going to graduate school for geography, but I still did not have a comprehensive grasp on the constellation of abstract concepts that constituted the subject, much less how prominently geography would play into what I was about to experience, tucked away on this Paris side street.

I arrived as the first of the three bands were finishing their set. I asked for Mathieu, and we chatted for a couple minutes before Kimmo went over to the small stage in the Le Pix basement space to set up. He was grateful I came to the show, and I was excited to see them

perform. For the few minutes leading up to their first song, I wandered over and thumbed through the items on the merchandise table, got a beer at the bar upstairs and brought it down, and stood against the back wall of the tiny performance space trying to blend in. Listening to a cacophony of French for the first time in my life was thrilling to the tourist in me.

Kimmo opened their set with a song off their album *Bolt and Biscuit*. It was my first time hearing them, and even before their first song ended, I felt surprisingly at home. It confused me why it felt so familiar, but the thought formed in my head pretty quickly: *they sound like they're from DC*.

*

You may be wondering (understandably so) why a dissertation about punk culture would begin with an anecdote about Led Zeppelin. Two key yet heavily contrasting reasons come to mind. First, the fact that any show could happen this apocryphally in DC predates the strong sense of community and the archive that would eventually characterize the DC punk scene from the 1980s onward. Second, this exemplifies the dearth of "rock 'n' roll culture" in the US Capital that gave rise to such a vibrant punk underground (as this section will explain), as much as DC hardcore (or, "harDCore") did not develop in a vacuum. Bands like Zeppelin which formed what would later be known as "classic rock" may not have actively participated in punk culture, but they formed the adolescent soundtrack to many who would build punk scenes. A pack of teenage skateboarders at Wilson High School in Northwest DC listened to artists like Ted Nugent and Foghat because, until the arrival of the Sex Pistols and Ramones, this arena-rock was the hardest and loudest sound available at the time (see Andersen and Jenkins 2001).

Punk rock, for such a cultural sea-change that it brought, introduced little to the canon fundamentally. The bluntest evaluations of punk cite how the movement hit the “reset” button on rock music, dialing it back to its raw roots. Many characteristics of punk that become standardized after the late-1970s explosion were not exactly revelatory. In certain respects, the mores of DIY (“do-it-yourself”) and underground/alternative music venue promotion have always existed. Punk just mollified the concept and brought it more to the forefront of the discourse on cultural production:

The DIY process has two main meanings. Firstly, it refuses any hierarchy in terms of legitimacy to create. One does not have to learn to play guitar for years to start a rock band. One does not need to care about what the establishment will think about one’s works. Secondly, it also means that cultural production should search for autonomy. It must escape the cultural industry by creating its own labels, magazines, venues, and more” (Raboud 2015, 31).

Before rock clubs became a common presence, rock ‘n’ roll bands played wherever performances could be set up. Early rock ‘n’ rollers, even Elvis Presley, played performances in high school auditoriums, VFW halls, and ballrooms. The pre-fame Beatles honed their chops playing at seedy bars in Hamburg's Reeperbahn district (see Inglis 2012, Fremaux and Fremaux 2013). As Led Zeppelin and their ilk ushered in a more crystallized club industry in the 1970s, punk and the associated underground emerged in a quintessential case of cultural equal-and-opposite reaction. Ian MacKaye, one of those Wilson High School skaters who eventually helped grow the city’s punk scene into global recognition, would later tell the fanzine *Comet*:

"Punk has no single definition... but to me it has always meant the underground, the place where conventional approaches to life can be taken to task. I don't think of it as so much of a ‘movement,’ rather a constant parallel world that has been around for as long as there has been an ‘overground.’ There has to be a place where profit and popular tastes don't dictate creation, otherwise we would never go forward" (*Comet* 2.1, 2001).

MacKaye's sentiments, which he has echoed consistently for over three decades in his roles as punk musician and head of Dischord Records, reflect central theses on the 'culture industry' which thinkers like Antoni Gramsci, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer set forth generations ago. All three demonstrated in their heavily-cited works that "the idea of alternative culture demands an understanding of the hegemony of the mainstream...constructed to keep the working classes and other marginalized groups in a state of perpetual disempowerment" (Spracklen 2014, 254). As Charles Fairchild posited:

"The creation of an alternative implies both the existence and the inferiority of a mainstream. At the core of an alternative music are fundamental questions of autonomy, self-definition, and resistance in the music industry; these are not musical questions but institutional ones. The creation of an alternative requires the negotiated maintenance of a specific set of social and cultural strategies while carefully avoiding the stubbornly persistent calcifying aspects of tradition" (Fairchild 1995, 26).

This dynamic tension, at least for the harDCore scene and its diasporic elements, has persisted for nearly four decades, despite brief flashes where the underground and mainstream have converged. In the early 1990s, where the commercial success of the Seattle-area rock band Nirvana transformed underground, independent labels into a veritable "farm system" for corporate major labels. A handful of DC-area punk musicians eventually saw the financial spoils of this. Shudder to Think, Jawbox, and The Dismemberment Plan all released critically acclaimed yet commercially unsuccessful records on major labels. Jawbox publicly regretted their decision to leave Dischord, or at least to sign with Atlantic, despite being given ample creative freedom and self-sufficiency (O'Connor 2008, 24). The Dismemberment Plan was signed and then quickly dropped from Interscope Records in 1998, so they decided to release their last two albums (1999's *Emergency & I* and 2001's *Change*) on their native DeSoto (a label run by members of Jawbox). However, only Dave Grohl (who would leave the Northern

Virginia band Scream to join Nirvana in 1990) and Henry Rollins (another one of the Wilson High School skater kids who left for LA in 1981 to front the seminal hardcore punk group Black Flag) have maintained successful mainstream celebrity status, for which both of whom had to leave DC. Other, more cult figures like Shudder to Think vocalist Craig Wedren, have achieved success within the mainstream entertainment industry, scoring television shows and movies while adhering or paying respect to their DIY roots. Though some members of the harDCore family have left DC and entered the mainstream, the DC scene offers the closest to an ideal of resistance against an oppressive culture industry.

These interstices between the mainstream and underground will formulate a valuable component of this dissertation moving forward, keeping the conversation alive about how indispensable punk culture has become (and always has been) to understanding urbanism. This dissertation recognizes the impossibility of drawing clear-cut lines between what qualifies as "underground" and "mainstream" two decades into the realm of internet-mediated culture and society. While the internet was not the reason the second show in this introduction took place, it played a vital role in the promotion, and it led me to it, and after some years of reflection, this dissertation.

Introduction: Welcome to the Show

“Punk presents itself as one of the best investigative objects for addressing the urban space from a musical point of view. Born in the United States and England, around the cities of New York and London, and in the midst of deep political, economic and social crises of the 1970s, it is connected to a political, economical and social system in deep and disorienting transformation. By keeping distance of an utopian revolutionary positioning, punk sought in the reality of urban chaos, the basis for its constitution” (Santos 2015, 136).

This dissertation intends to make strides in the conversation between music, geography, and contemporary urbanism through one of underground music’s most storied legacies. The focus is the circulation of DC punk and hardcore music between Washington and Paris, with the lessons to be learned advancing larger discussions of sense of place, revanchist urbanism, the nature of music and technoculture, and the indispensability of popular culture for academic inquiry. While the Washington DC punk and hardcore scene has been archived and mythologized (see Connolly, Clague, and Cheslow 1988, Andersen and Jenkins 2001, Azerrad 2001) very little, if any such documentation exists of its international subcultural impact nor of its valuable counterpart in Paris. Drawing histories and meanings from ethnographic interviews and textual, archival research, this dissertation will illustrate how and why punk circulated (and still circulated) between the two cities. In doing so, this story will provide a greater framework through which to understand urban music and the nature of circulation.

The dissertation is divided into four main parts, each section subdivided into chapters that focus on individual subjects or groups of closely related topics. The first part presents the background to this project (which began with the anecdote in the introduction) and its ontological bases. I provide a theoretical framework through which these places and topics intersect: Washington DC, Paris, Punk Culture, and Circulation. Each is couched with its contribution to geography, and vice versa. This section also includes an introduction to the

methodologies through which I gleaned my qualitative data and subsequent observations on sense of place, cultural meanings, and trans-Atlantic exchange.

The second part focuses on the methodological bases through which this project came to fruition. Like many dissertations or authoritative books on any subject, the process has been iterative and extends well beyond the period of my life as an academician. The raw, directed research for this dissertation took place over the past three years, highlighted by a month of in-person interviews in France with many valued informants in July 2015. I also incorporated two brief trips to DC into the project, though the project did not necessarily focus on DC's impressions of Paris, but rather the other way around. The methods section will account for that juxtaposition, laying out my primary and secondary sources, acknowledging the obstacles to charting the history of this cultural circulation as well as decisions I had to make in the process. This will also include an explanation of the mechanisms of circulation (music, writing, and adapted technologies) as they both created conduits for culture to flow between the cities and have provided me with data at this stage in their life span.

The third part tells the story of the history of this cultural exchange. This includes a contextual history of Franco-American cultural circulation, which of course pre-dates the proper existence of modern France and the United States of America. The late 20th century is the main focus, however, as the pre-internet era in punk has become increasingly mythologized in international circles. As various testimonies I gathered through qualitative research reemphasized, discrepancies exist between collective sense of place among punk fans and the realities of these places. These discrepancies reveal the nature of cultural perspective on place and collective memory, and is important to ask why the sounds and images of the pre-internet era (roughly 1995 and before, in the industrial West) has dominated the discourse. The history will

be told, much like the overall dissertation, as a story of circulation. The first portion of Part Three focuses on the pre-punk exchange between the two countries, the second portion overviews the growth and expansion of DC punk out of its cocoon and overseas, and the third portion examines the process through which DC punk's influence (or DC's "urban ethos") comes home on the backs of French fans who pay Washington a visit.

The fourth part focuses on these Parisian and otherwise French perspectives on this cultural exchange, as manifested through the "tourist gaze" (see Urry 1990), reflections upon severe revanchist urbanism (see Smith 1996) in both cities, and impressions of "American-ness" versus "French-ness" in DC's alternative iconography. Though these symbols of DC's punk and hardcore landscape are mentioned and explained throughout the text, this is where the key 'outsider' perspectives come into play and reflect upon this circulation of punk culture.

The fifth and final part offers concluding thoughts, revisiting the methodology and informants, and answering central research questions. What *is* it about Washington, DC? What can the Franco-American circulation of punk culture teach about how we study alternative landscapes and understand alternative, post-Fordist (see Torres 2012) tourism? How can these lessons be applied to the greater study of circulation and the greater study of popular music?

"Music appears as a powerful catalyst for reuniting the different dimensions of geographical observation. For example, numerous musical forms that blossomed during the twentieth century contributed to the development of images, values, myths and practices of mobility, through 'tours', musical hybrids and long-term musical wanderings and nomadism" (Canova 2013, 864)

While looking at these phenomena through a geographic filter, this dissertation demonstrates the importance of fields adjacent to geography in critical evaluation of music and place. Geography is a notoriously amorphous field, and so in the course of geographic inquiry on

the relationship between underground music and urban ethos, a variety of adjacent fields is to be incorporated.

Despite being an overwhelmingly geographic discipline, ethnomusicology's direct engagement with geography has been relatively minimal. Reasons for this may include how few geographers have directly approached ethnomusicology or published seminal works that musicologists often cite or use in seminar studies. Two examples, *How Musical is Man?* (Blacking 1974) and *Sound and sentiment: Birds, weeping, poetics, and song in Kaluli expression* (Feld 2012) both came from social and linguistic anthropologists, respectively. Of course, both John Blacking and Steven Feld published well before musical geography was an established subfield. However, more recent updates to ethnomusicology overviews by authorities like Bruno Nettl still overlook many comparably integral musical geography studies. Many of Nettl's theories, though, are based upon an understanding of geographic dynamics such as mobility. He writes that "songs, 'the most indefatigable tourists,' move around the world, but mostly they move on the backs (or in the heads) of people who change their residence" (Nettl 2005, 334). Though cultural geography and cultural anthropology have shared a prodigious overlap for much of the past century, the latter has shared a longer and more inextricable relationship with musicology. Hopefully, geography gains greater footing within ethnomusicology (as well as the other way around), and one of this dissertation's underlying directives is to enhance that conversation.

Many of the overarching themes that govern scholarship on music and culture are equally applied to both geography and musicology. Perhaps the most relevant theme in the discussion about how punk facilitated a subcultural relationship between Washington and Paris is circulation. Circulation has been the prevailing concept guiding the history of music as well as

the contemporary proliferation and redevelopment of music in the internet age. The circulation of music between the Middle East and the West modified the very instruments through which the music was performed, as “almost all instruments used in the West have their prototypes in the Middle East, and modifications made to them over the centuries generally reflect the desire for increased volume potential, wider range, and more varied tone color” (Wetzel 2012, 2).

It would be impossible, however, not to acknowledge the networks already firmly in place between the two capital cities and their respective countries. Paul Adams refers to this veritable feedback loop as ‘reverberation,’ which “constituted through the paired acts of writing and reading across languages, continents, and political cultures is a fundamental component of democracy” (Adams 2007, 1).

Much of Adams’ discussion focuses around the stage set by the 2004 election, when anti-French sentiment was at a fever pitch in the United States, at least given the rhetoric of the George W. Bush administration’s expansionary geopolitical agenda (Adams 2007, 33). French president Jacques Chirac, a pivotal figure in French politics for the entirety of that country’s punk era, was a vocal opponent of the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and had an antagonistic relationship with Israel. In 1996, Chirac had angrily snapped at Israeli security forces when they applied excessive pressure to keep Palestinian journalists away from him. He yelled “This is not a method, this is a provocation... do you want me to go back to my plane and go back to France? Is that what you want?” (Cockburn 1996). A decade later a hardcore quartet from Brest, Thrashington DC, would lift this notorious quote and paste it (free from context) over a grainy image of the White House on a t-shirt for their only American tour (See Figure 2). Unfortunately, all they could fit on their buttons was their name, also confusing (free from context) to one American visiting Paris in 2010.



Figure 2. Fab Le Roux at home in Rouen, posing with an old Thrashington, DC shirt featuring the White House and the 1996 Jacques Chirac quote "Go back to my plane and go back to France; is that what you want?" Photo by the author.

To present a detailed, comprehensive history of the DC and Paris punk scenes that led up to my moment of epiphany would be impossible as well as detract from my central ontological theses. Following Kevin Dunn's treatise on *Global Punk* (2016), this dissertation, out of necessity, eschews any claims to comprehensiveness. This project is by no means a definitive history of the DC punk scene or its counterpart in Paris, as those are both already available in multiple popular formats. Several histories of this scene have been published over the past three decades. Mark Andersen and Mark Jenkins collaborated on perhaps the cornerstone reading on the 20th century history of punk in the Nation's Capital, *Dance of Days* (2001). Photographer and longtime Dischord Records employee Cynthia Connolly released the quintessential photo-document of American hardcore: *Banned in DC* (Connolly, Clague and Cheslow 1988), now in its 7th printing. More mainstream journalists have profiled Minor Threat in popular-press books, including Michael Azerrad in his landmark volume *Our Band Could Be Your Life* (2001) and Andrew Earles in his collection *Gimme Indie Rock* (2014), the latter of which featured a photo from a Minor Threat show on the cover.

Anyone with no prior familiarity with American hardcore music (and the French circulation thereof) would be wise to look to these documents for anecdotal and visual accounts of the culture. However, it would be wiser yet to sample the music of these cities and this era, and hear the soundtrack of the underground for themselves. Unlike the progenitors of these stories, curious listeners today are in an incredibly fortunate position to be able to find almost any punk song of renown on YouTube, Spotify, or another service. No longer does one need to "know somebody," no longer does one need to wait months for an unreliable distributor or label to mail an import 7" (though this delay is still possible with some labels), no longer do we need to rely on the mix tapes of the 1980s or mix CDs of the 1990s to discover new (old) music. For

anyone interested, I have compiled a soundtrack of twenty songs that encapsulate decades of this underground cultural circulation between Washington, DC and Paris, available in Appendix A. I will also make this available as a playlist on YouTube and Spotify, available on SonicGeography.com. Turn it up, and don't be afraid to listen along while you read.

PART I:
GEOGRAPHY, CIRCULATION, AND
PUNK LANDSCAPES

Chapter 1:

Underground Landscapes as Counternarratives

One of the core theses that this dissertation presents hinges upon an understanding of *counternarratives*, specifically urban case studies. A geographic counternarrative is, quite literally, a refutation of commonly held public imaginaries of place. These imaginaries are often enforced through hegemony, a term that Antonio Gramsci (2012) standardized in sociology, indicating a dominant ideology reinforced by the subordinates as well as those with the power to write the history. The dominant narrative of Paris, for example, dances around romantic images of the Eiffel Tower, accordion music, haute cuisine and fashion. This narrative, perpetuated by the tourism industry and generations of popular culture, of course belies the marginalized classes and races on the fringes, unable to afford even a tiny apartment. It compromises the role of urban citizenry, it makes uneven the Henri Lefebvre-coined (and David Harvey recontextualized) ‘right to the city.’ DC’s iconic Government office buildings, Smithsonian Museums, and stuffy 9-to-6 atmosphere also betray the city’s heartbeat.

Music has formulated one of the most powerful strikes against these problematic hegemonies, as “there is ample evidence to support the proposition that music has the ability to conjure up powerful images of place, feelings of deep attachment to place” (Hudson 2006, 626). As public access to these cultural undergrounds expands, it is only becoming a stronger force. Popular music has been accomplishing this for ages; the Beatles’ ostensible redefinition of Liverpool from a depressed Northern Industrial city into a veritable hearth of British rock music (see Gillet 1970) is merely one example. The grunge explosion in the early 1990s (which I will revisit when discussing DC’s preemptive role within it) transformed Seattle from a secluded Northwestern city to a nexus of fashion and young-professional innovation (see Bell 1998). The

role that the ‘culture industry,’ to borrow the term from Theodor Adorno, played in the ascension of those two cities notwithstanding (Chapter 4 will discuss how DC’s redefinition has been unique), everything from individual references in lyrics, to entire songs about specific houses, to entire records about specific cities, have seismically influenced public sense of place.

Sense of place has been among the fastest-growing conceptual frameworks within cultural geography in recent years, as the subject requires expansive unpacking and cannot easily be contained within epistemological boundaries. Perhaps the concept of sense of place has grown so much in recent scholarship because it inherently values the collaborative perspective of both the insider and the outsider. As Yi-Fu Tuan wrote in his ground-breaking treatise on *Space and Place*, “long residence enables us to know a place intimately, yet its image may lack sharpness unless we can also see it from the outside - through the eyes as tourists, and from reading about it in a guidebook” (Tuan 1977, 18).

I had moved to DC in 2005, largely influenced by that city’s legendary and mythologized punk legacy. To be blunt, I could have cared less that the government was there, despite the admitted novelty of strolling by the White House or seeing a Secret Service caravan on occasion. Although many bands I was listening to at the time were no longer active, I made an effort to attend as many shows with bands from the Dischord, Desoto, and Lovitt Records families as possible. Not having many friends upon relocating there opened up many of my nights, and the notoriously low prices of admission (emblematic of DC hardcore) kept it affordable for me while I was interviewing for jobs. I saw Dischord bands like French Toast and Antelope play alternative arts spaces in as-of-then gentrifying patches of Chinatown. I went to see The Evens play as part of “Operation: Ceasefire,” an all-day outdoor concert on the National Mall protesting

the continued American military occupation of Iraq, emceed by founding Dead Kennedys vocalist Jello Biafra¹.

I never thought of relocating to a city to soak up its underground ambiance as unique; many people I knew moved to places influenced somehow by the musical legacy of their destination. I still occasionally hear anecdotes of people whose love of The Replacements led them to the Twin Cities, or chose their college town based upon how cool they understood the music scene to be. This phenomenon has long been recognized within the academy on music:

Being such an integral part of American life it is not illogical to assume that popular music is in fact as valid an information input to our perception forming processes as friends, textbooks, or other more formal sources. As such it is believed these "music based" images play an important role in decision-making with regard to location and migration (Henderson 1974, 269).

Five years later in a French city across the Atlantic unfamiliar to me, a band I had never met nor heard before was transporting me back to a specific place and time in my life in America's capital. While my personal experience of simply being a fan of the "DC sound" (the connotations of that will be fleshed out throughout this dissertation) was commonplace, I became, even more unexpectedly, a celebrated curiosity in that bar basement. As punks in attendance found out I was from DC, they seemed to brighten up and asked me questions about the city and various bands they loved. Mathieu, later in Kimmo's set, started what sounded like a dedication. I recognized him saying "Washington D.C." and realized that he was talking about me². I saw a couple of attendees, including the one collecting the cover charge at the door,

¹ Biafra, when introducing The Evens, mentioned that "they haven't put anything out yet, but you'll be hearing plenty from them." MacKaye, sitting on his stool across the stage, turned and gave Biafra a highly perplexed look; The Evens had released their debut LP to great critical acclaim six months prior. It created one of that day's more awkward moments.

² Groups of locals responded positively, a couple of whom joked with each other "Washington... d'ici?" Gélézeau would later explain to me that "d'ici" means "from here" in French, creating a

wearing pins that said *Thrashington, D.C.* The monumental question entered my mind: what *IS* it about Washington, DC?

Though I realized none of this at the time, my curiosities posed incisive questions about not just ‘Paris versus Washington’ or ‘France versus the United States,’ but about the nature of culture and how it circulates geographically. It did not matter that few of these bands, if any, ever became household names; they had still changed the world. Nobody would argue against the influence and acumen of hardcore bands like Bad Brains, Minor Threat, Void, Scream, and a long list of others. Solely because I was from a city with a venerated subcultural history, I found myself bombarded with questions about Fugazi on a sidewalk in Belleville in the middle of the night. Punk had affected what DC meant to these Parisian music fans, and based on what I had experienced that night inside Le Pix and outside on the street, were still inspiring them to create:

“Punk offers resources for agency and empowerment that individuals and communities around the world employ in their articulation of domestic needs and struggles. Local punks and punk scenes construct global networks in ways that create openings for political interventions. These alternative circuits disrupt the ‘naturalness’ of the dominant circuits and practices of global capitalism, showing that alternatives to the status quo can be both imagined and realized” (Dunn 2016, 21)

This dissertation will investigate the phenomenon of how underground music becomes an agent of urban landscape and public memory. It will look to Paris specifically to understand how DC punk and hardcore music (alternately, “harDCore”) has circulated and impacted impressions of the District area on a global scale. This is not to say that the current DC punk scene lacks innovation or influence. In fact, the hardcore punk scene that brought DC into the national and international conversations in the punk underground over three decades ago has ebbed and flowed as much as any scene, but has never gone away or lost relevance. However, the mollified

linguistic paradox.

imaginary of harDCore in the public memory privileges certain images and proscribed landscapes. Over the past two decades, music critics, bloggers, and historians have brought this to the attention of a wider audience. All of these contested, counterhegemonic public memories coalesce into what Adam Krims (2007) terms the “urban ethos,” an idea that applies throughout this study:

“It is the scope of that range of urban representations and their possible modalities, in any given time span, that I call the *urban ethos*. The urban ethos is thus not a particular representation but rather a distribution of possibilities, always having discernible limits as well as common practices. It is not a picture of how life is in any particular city. Instead, it distills publicly disseminated notions of how cities are generally, even though it may be disproportionately shaped by the fate of particular cities” (Krims 2007, 7).

Underground Scenes and ‘the Mainstream’

Before this section unpacks the discursive meanings and geographic manifestations of punk within the two cities in question, I must discuss my use of, and the discursive significance within the term “scene.” One of the challenges in writing about punk scenes is that both of those terms (‘punk’ and ‘scene’) have consistently changing definitions that are difficult to understand outside of sets of cultural circumstances. In other words, neither the ‘scene’ nor ‘punk’ have discernible boundaries and tend to be highly subjective. Cities, DC and Paris both being quintessential examples, are one of the few binding factors between the two.

The elusive definition of scenes, at least within the standpoint of art, has been the subject of much academic introspection. Over 25 years ago, Will Straw wrote this overview:

“A musical scene...is that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization. The sense of purpose articulated within a musical community normally depends on an affective link between two terms: contemporary musical practices, on the one hand, and the musical heritage, which is seen to render this

contemporary activity appropriate to a given context, on the other. Within a musical scene, that same sense of purpose is articulated within those forms of communication through which the building of musical alliances and the drawing of musical boundaries take place. The manner in which musical practices within a scene tie themselves to processes of historical change occurring within a larger international musical culture will also be a significant basis of the way in which such forms are positioned within that scene at the local level” (Straw 1991, 373).

More than two decades later, Straw streamlined and generalized his definition, citing the changing creative economy of the city that relegated music to the background. He referred to a scene as “that cultural phenomenon which arises when any purposeful activity acquires a supplement of sociability and when that supplement of sociability becomes part of the observable effervescence of the city” (Straw 2015, 412). Musical geographers like Lily Kong have connected this confluence of activity more directly to music, citing “the construction and reinforcement of identities ... made possible through the musical texts (the rhythm, lyrics and distinctive styles), the intertexts (such as posters, video clips, T-shirts and other paraphernalia; style of dressing), as well as from the local activities” (Kong 1995, 193).

Cultural spaces, like all spaces, cannot stay confined within rigid boundaries. As Tuan (1977) wrote, “space is transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning; Intimate experiences lie buried in our innermost being so that not only do we lack the words to give them form but often we are not even aware of them” (136). In Dunn’s estimation, even attempting to extract meaning from retroactively ossified ideas of scenes is profoundly problematic:

“Scenes are fluid, constantly changing, constantly driven by internal tensions and divisions. To try to talk about a specific scene often means to freeze it in time and simplify all those tensions and divisions, creating a snapshot of a complex moving picture. A lot of scholarship on local scenes often read like autopsies on a living body or, worse still, involve attempts to kill a living, moving body in order to perform that autopsy” (Dunn 2016, 72).

Though this dissertation focuses primarily on underground scenes in Washington, DC and Paris, the amorphous concept of the ‘mainstream’ must be understood in order to conceptualize the “underground.” As MacKaye’s quote (see page 6) attests, one cannot really exist without the other. The ostensible omnipresence of popular culture, especially in urban settings, creates a forum for resistance. The underground cannot exist without whatever figures, icons, and forces dominate above the surface, just as the ‘mainstream’ inherently necessitates an opposite (if not quantifiably equal) reaction.

For those who actively identify as part of an underground scene, much of what defines their place therein and accrues subcultural capital is an active refutation of sweeping assumptions about the mainstream. Sarah Thornton wrote about this dichotomy within the British Club scene of the late 1980s and 1990s, stating, “the social logic of subcultural capital reveals itself most clearly by what it dislikes and by what it emphatically isn’t” (Thornton 1996, 105). For those who aligned themselves socially and politically with harDCore both at the time of its prominence or retrospectively, these dichotomies are obvious. The mainstream was corporately controlled and globally oriented; harDCore was independent and locally oriented. The mainstream was mediocre, passive, and uncritical; harDCore was innovative, aggressive, and highly politicized.

Thornton goes on: “for many youthful imaginations, the mainstream is a powerful way to put themselves in the big picture, imagine their social world, assert their cultural worth, [and] claim their subcultural capital” (1996, 115). It does bear mentioning here that, while this dissertation asserts that harDCore has ‘changed the world’ (albeit at a glacial pace), the grandiosity of the sentiment still belies the reality that none of these bands are household names and still operate on the fringes of cultural life. Although Bad Brains have been nominated to the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and Minor Threat t-shirts are available at many Urban Outfitters

stores, most Westerners (and even more non-Westerners) would likely not know who these bands are. Most denizens of these scenes do not harbor delusions of grandeur. Ian MacKaye routinely asserts (unproveably) that many cities on earth do not contain a single citizen who knows who he is.

As Dunn (2016b) and many other theorists on punk have posited before him, punk and other subcultures address commonly perceived deficiencies in corporate media culture. In doing so, underground movements operate in defiance of a capitalist superstructure even if they have profit motives or openly embrace capitalist practices in other manners. Punk scenes, as a predominantly urban phenomenon, contradict the economic conception of the city as a hub of capitalist accumulation.

“The movement of people in and through the city - via the rapid transit of the daily commute, the rhythms of tourism, the push and pull of a diasporic community, or the more gradual shift in population as processes of decay, gentrification, and cultural renewal transform some urbanites into nomadic subjects - means that cities often function as nodes on a global circulatory system through which capital, signifiers, commodities, and human bodies move in a seeming unending stream. This is not to suggest, however, that cities are the stable endpoints of global mobility” (Boutros and Straw 2010, 9).

Relatedly, punk scenes generate mobile networks of accumulation that seemingly defy this conceptualization of the city’s overwhelming mainstream confluence of actors and capital. Where cities increasingly demand their citizens overexert themselves and mortgage their time and labor-power in order to subsist in the environment, underground art scenes flourish with no clear profit motive. In other words, punk musicians and scene members create for the sake of creating, not capitalist reproduction. Over the next few chapters, the intersection between punk and musical geography in light of Washington, DC will prove many cases in point.

Circulation and the Urban Punk Landscape

In his research on the Japanese Noise (or “Japanoise”) culture, David Novak writes that “noise ... can only exist in circulation” (2013, 6). Punk, a similarly abstract and amorphous concept, can only exist in circulation as well. He goes on:

“Circulation typically describes the distribution of material goods and currency, but its models of economic production and exchange are embedded in a discursive framework that extends to the dissemination of social knowledge, news, ideas, and other productions of cultural content. Increasingly, circulation is used to characterize intercultural relationships, paths of migration, aesthetic and expressive forms, and ideologies and imaginaries of cultural globalization... but circulation can sometimes appear as a transparent background for exchange, rather than a cultural production in itself” (Novak 2013, 17)

This dissertation seeks to embrace this ample conception of circulation for its ability to include an array of cultural exchange processes, but the variegated discursive meanings through which circulation could be applied to understanding musical geography must be understood in less broad terms. The cultural circulation(s) between DC and Paris, at least within the realm of punk, are to be exposed and analyzed over the course of this dissertation. However, by focusing on the networks through which this music, aesthetic, and ethics circulated, this research can elicit a greater understanding of how and why these landscapes affected one another. As Holly Kruse wrote, “alternative music scenes across the country and even across the Atlantic are connected rather abstractly through shared tastes... and quite concretely through social and media networks (Kruse 1993, 34).” Furthermore, as scenes are never static, despite the best intentions of some insiders and outsiders who cling to one proscribed imaginary, the changing positions and identities of those involved have a dramatic impact:

“An ethnographic, or micro-sociological, analysis of music scenes allows us to get a sense of the plurality of practices that help constitute the identities of those involved... While social identities are not fixed once and for all, we must keep in mind that at any historical moment within a particular cultural or subcultural context there are not an infinite number of options for experiencing identity” (Kruse 1993, 40).

However, in proposing a circulation model for musical geography, one cannot overlook the musical, geographic and sociological realities in place. For example, it would be irresponsible to deny that most circulations are uneven. Though these things cannot easily be quantified, hardCore has had a categorically stronger impact and influence on Paris than the other way around. Additionally, circulations are not constant or even regulated; they can operate at a virtually glacial pace (e.g. the ‘slow burn’ of Minor Threat’s increasing global popularity thirty-four years after their final show) or almost immediately (e.g. musicians collaborating over FTP or in real-time over Skype). Circulations also stop and start according to the whims of the people acting within them, rarely according to any set schedule.

Another factor that contributes to the inherent spatial and social unevenness of circulation can be those factors that segregate them along demographic lines. Though these are not the core focus of this dissertation research, race, gender, sexuality, and class must be considerations when conceptualizing any circulatory model that centers on people. As Simon Frith writes, this is particularly pertinent when studying music:

“We can point to the cultural capital embedded in technique and technology: people produce and consume the music they are capable of producing and consuming; different social groups possess different sorts of knowledge and skill, share different cultural histories, and so make music differently. Musical tastes do correlate with class cultures and subcultures; musical styles are linked to specific age groups; we can take for granted the connections of ethnicity and sound” (Frith 1996, 120).

Though the DC punk scene has made great strides in the advancement of inclusive dialogues and discourses (see Chapter 4), one cannot overlook how punk culture is overwhelmingly white, young, middle-class, and heterosexual male. The stereotypical image of the punk as someone who fits into all of these categories is undeniably the product of simplified mainstream depictions, a consequence of major labels’ systematic marginalization of artists of

color for generations. One of the ironies here is that the spaces of punk culture have operated within and adjacent to predominantly black landscapes. Geographers have addressed this phenomenon in light of other musical styles, such as Gibson and Connells' citation of blues as a geographical function of racial segregation in Memphis (2007, 178). This dissertation will address that dynamic within the circulation of punk between DC and Paris as a historical marker for revanchist urbanism (see Chapter 12). This hegemony contradicts punk's central ethos of rebellion:

“The mainstream is the trope, which, once prised upon, reveals the complex and cryptic relations between age, and social structure... the problem for underground subcultures is a popularization by a gushing up to the mainstream. These metaphors are not arbitrary; they betray a sense of social place. Subcultural ideology implicitly gives alternative interpretations and values to a young people's, particularly young men's, subordinate status; it re-interprets the social world” (Thornton 1996, 5).

For both those who operate social and cultural spaces within the mainstream and underground alike, cultural meanings and exchanges have different meanings for different people. Any lopsidedness or uneven pacing of this circulation between DC and Paris, however, does not detract from the fact that this cultural interaction is still very much an active circulation. Therefore, “ethnography is a qualitative method that is best suited to emphasizing the diverse and the particular” (Thornton 1996, 107), and as I will detail in the following chapter, I employed ethnographic methods in my research as a way to investigate these diversities within an admittedly homogenous community.

Chapter 2: Primary Sources, Ethnography and Reflexivity

As one of this project's qualitative cornerstones, I conducted unstructured in-person interviews with a total of seventeen individuals in Paris, Rouen, Lyon, and Marseille throughout July of 2015. The interviews were conducted in locations that included public places (primarily cafes) as well as private spaces, as three individual subjects invited me to their homes. The recorder used in Paris was a TASCAM DR-40, which included adjustable onboard condenser microphones, ideal for close-quarters interviewing. The microphones were crucial for recording in public places like cafes and bars not only because they increased the sound quality for transcription purposes, but also due to one of one Paris' intangible yet omnipresent characteristics: the city is *loud*.

“Musicologists speak of "musical space." Spatial illusions are created in music quite apart from the phenomenon of volume and the fact that movement logically involves space. Music is often said to have form. Musical form may generate a reassuring sense of orientation” (Tuan 1977, 15).

Geographers have explored the phenomenology of urban sounds as building blocks of landscape, including more recently Torsten Wissmann, who claims that “we do not listen actively to [urban sound, because] it is part of the urban environment and, therefore, taken for granted” (2014, 22). This obliviousness does not encompass people who require low-noise places in which to work within the city soundscapes. Paris oversaw many of the infrastructural transformations that made cities bigger, louder, and noisier. Railroads in the 19th century and automobiles in the 20th added harsh layers of mechanical noise to an already crowded urban landscape. Walter Benjamin wrote in *The Arcades Project*, “Paris is built over a system of caverns from which the din of Metro and railroad mounts to the surface, and in which every passing omnibus or truck sets up a prolonged echo” (1999, 85). Matthew Gandy once said in a

lecture on city atmospheres that the “urban soundscape becomes the acoustic realm of late capital” (2016). This further echoes older sentiments from the prominent Marxist geographer David Harvey:

“Capitalism perpetually strives, therefore, to create a social and physical landscape in its own image and requisite to its own needs at a particular point in time, only just as certainly to undermine, disrupt and even destroy that landscape at a latter point in time. The inner contradictions of capitalism are expressed through the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes. This is the tune to which the historical geography of capitalism must dance without cease” (Harvey 1985, 150 quoted in Berland 1992, 38).

All of the interviews, taking place in French cities, reflected and worked around these capitalistic tensions. In two cases, my informants and I needed to relocate because our initial spot was too loud. When we found suitable sound environments in which to record, we were happy to purchase food or drinks in order to retain our tables and good graces of the proprietors. Little research has been done on the consumption habits of researchers in the course of conducting fieldwork. Jamie Gillen (2012) has written on gift-giving practices in interview settings, but the incidental expenses and gastronomic experiences of eating and drinking while interviewing could be enticing.

Most of the individual interviews lasted between one and three hours, as they were unstructured and revolved around the focus topics of French perceptions and impressions of Washington, DC, personal relationships with DC punk and hardcore, and any sociopolitical perspectives on Parisian and greater French culture. The interviews often included unrelated yet interesting anecdotes which remained applicable to the greater discussion on public sense of place and cultural circulation. While these were not included within the theoretical context of the dissertation, they provided valuable ethnographic backgrounds on the speakers. My interview with Roizès, for example, began with a story about how he once flew to Minnesota twenty years

ago to meet and interview Prince for a French magazine. Natasha Herzock, formerly of Kimmo, told me while we were walking up to her apartment that she was born in Spain and had a multi-national family history. We subsequently conducted portions of our interview in Spanish.

Two of these interviews were conducted in group settings, unintentionally falling into a focus-group format. The first of two took place in Marseille with Olivier Firminhac, Claire Samant, and Charlotte Lobert. I had contacted Olivier because his label, Crapoulet Records, featured a banner photo of a Minor Threat show prominently on its website. Though Olivier has lived in Marseille for the past eight years, he grew up in Paris' punk scene in the 1990s and continues to book shows for touring artists. He met and married Claire, a Marseille native, a few years ago. She owns and operates a tattoo parlor, Sailin' On, named after the opening track on Bad Brains' eponymous album (see Figure 3). Charlotte is a friend of the couple who was visiting them the week I was there, and though she felt less explicitly connected with DC punk and hardcore, was happy to join the interview and share her thoughts. She plays bass for the Parisian punk band Stalled Minds, who traveled to the US for the first time to perform at Damaged City Fest in Washington, DC last year. I recorded this interview over dinner and wine at the Crapoulet headquarters apartment, which added to the comfort level and mutual trust.

The second of these focus trios took place the following day at a café in Lyon. I arranged a meeting with Nabil Ortega, whom the members of the band Baton Rouge had connected to me via email. I initially reached out to Baton Rouge because I found them in an online search of their members' defunct band 12XU (named after a 1977 Wire song that Minor Threat covered for Dischord's 1981 *Flex Your Head* compilation). Nabil plays guitar in the Toulouse-based hardcore/metal band Woodwork, but his calling card has been a popular English-language



Figure 3. Claire Samant poses in front of her Tattoo Parlor, Sailin' On (named for a Bad Brains song). Marseille, France. July 2015. Photo by the author.

zine called *Just Say Yo!*³. He is a Nice native with an extensive network of Paris connections. I had been corresponding separately with one of those connections, his friend Gabrielle. The owner of an international zine distribution (I Lost My Idealism), Gabrielle lives west of Paris in Chatou, one town over from Colombes. She was visiting in Lyon on holiday when I came through, and she joined us for the interview, enthusiastically showing me a tattoo of Cynthia Connolly's "black sheep" Minor Threat logo on her right calf. The third person, Florian, plays guitar and sings for the indie-punk group Sport and, incidentally, teaches secondary school geography. Like another informant back in Paris, Anthropology Ph.D. student Benjamin Pothier,

³ From what I could ascertain, Ortega named the zine after an album title by the Bugout Society, a New York Hardcore/hip hop group in the vein of Beastie Boys. He admits that he somewhat regrets the title but has remained loyal to it, so as not to change it and confuse readers.

Flo's observations came from a genuine place but were couched with a slightly deeper understanding of the theoretical context of our interview.

Nabil arranged for Flo to meet us in the afternoon, where we recorded the group interview at a back table in a café on the popular Cours Gambetta. Flo, Nab, and Gab surprised me, later in the interview, when they posed several of my interview questions about DC back at me. They were not attempting to 'turn the tables,' but as a trio of longtime fans of DC punk with varying degrees of North American travel experience, they became curious if their impressions of Washington were valid. I did my best to address their curiosities about DC based upon my own experiences there, but reminded them that they may get a different answer depending on who they asked.

While these interviews, if staged as focus groups, were small (three individuals apiece), they still achieved many of the synergistic effects of focus groups, which have the potential to generate more information and insight than individual interviews (Cameron 2010). Both of the group interviews featured men and women, as well as corrections and moments of dissent among participants. The reinforcements were also helpful for those with less English proficiency, as they were able to bounce French words and terms off one another before delivering a potentially incorrect one to my recorder:

Gabrielle: [Going to punk shows] is difficult because for me [where I live], it's maybe an hour to go to a show, and for a Parisian it's like twenty minutes. It costs 8 Euros (to Nabil, aside) comment dire le retour?

Nabil: Both ways.

Gabrielle: (back to me) to go both ways, so you paid 8 Euros and then you pay for the cost of the show...

Though language barriers did not render any of the in-person interviews unusable, having subjects use their second (or in some cases, third or fourth) language presented a double-edged

qualitative sword (see Burton 2010). On one side, the respondents may have unknowingly censured themselves had there been an anecdote or phrase which they were unsure of how to translate into English properly, as in the prior example with Roizès. Various interviews also presented this cross-cultural dynamic when subjects like race were mentioned (cf. Bad Brains, Khmer-French musicians, etc.). The relative sensitivity of topics affected both how subjects designed to come across in their interviews and how they approached these topics (see Blee 2010).

All of these factors had an undeniable influence on the qualitative data I acquired through these interviews. Though I was there in an ostensibly supportive role, my positionality required me to keep this dynamic in mind. Most obviously, my informants knew I was American, spoke French very poorly, and did not purport to have a deep cultural understanding of Paris nor France at large. My informants also knew that I lived in DC for most of my twenties as well as that I was a regular at DC punk shows and events. What I did not consider at the time was that this likely influenced my informants to hold back any negative opinions about DC artists, lest they worry their words actually get back to the bands they reference. All of my informants knew these interviews were being recorded for my dissertation, however, so that probably kept negative opinions inside for my informants more than my perceived social role in DC's current punk scene. Regardless, who I was, and more importantly who my informants may have perceived me to be, conditioned many of their responses. This may have hurt me, as much as my DC history and fandom helped me.

On Reflexivity in Interviews

Interview respondents understood that I was there to understand, celebrate and promote their individual and collective accomplishments. This again brings reflexivity to light. Social

science research rooted in any type of fandom – whether for music, sport, film, or anything tied into popular culture – cannot have emotion completely sundered from the encounter. Fandom has been gaining traction as a subject of reflexive inquiry, especially in ethnomusicology and media studies (see Hills 2012). Geographers like Dydia DeLyser have approached the dynamic of qualitative research by ‘insiders,’ who “find topics close to home, or close to our hearts – topics so compelling we can't leave them alone – and we try to find ways to use our ‘insider’ status to help, not hinder, insights” (DeLyser 2001, 442). This is an inherent contraction through which any academic research on punk culture must come to terms with, as echoed by noted ‘punkademics’ like Kevin Dunn (2016b). Only in rare cases are members of the punk scene ‘untouchable’ as celebrities, so the cultural network of the researcher and the informants often overlaps.

Punk has an intense degree of stewardship and protection, and the vast majority of those who study it from within the academy occupy a unique position within the scene as well. Some factual errors may be minor to dilettantes but serious transgressions to those who have worked hard within a certain insider community. Mislabeling or misconstruing subgenre is one common mistake like this. These incongruities also work cross-culturally. While a vast majority of DC hardcore falls within the umbrella of punk music (as it originated with the name ‘hardcore punk’), only a specific, often self-identified subset of punk musicians label themselves as “hardcore.” In fact, few bands in the Dischord Records family carried the ‘hardcore’ label beyond the early 1980s. Many of those I interviewed in France differentiated between ‘punk’ and ‘hardcore’ in their responses to questions. By the time early American hardcore styles had permeated France, hardcore had already mutated into something more metallic across the Atlantic. In fact, by the time that DC hardcore first visited Paris in the form of the band Scream,

most of that band's contemporaries had moved onto slower and more intricate strains of underground music. Some, like Shudder to Think, even drew heavily from pop music and ultimately aimed for the charts.

None of this, however, eliminates the need for reflexivity in qualitative research like this, as “reflexivity is a strength for evaluating qualitative work, allowing a conscious deliberation of what we do, how we interpret and how we relate to subjects” (Baxter and Eyles 1997, 505). Furthermore, to deny that any research, even with the investigator completely minimalized, would even exist without their opinions and nuances would be unfair to both the researcher and the reader. One obviously does not want research to be all about the investigator, as that would be highly unethical (or at least self-indulgent and boring). But this exists on a multi-tiered spectrum. Gillian Rose wrote how “the relationship between researcher and researched can only be mapped... as either a relationship of difference or as a relationship of sameness... the contradiction is that the latter is impossible while the former is unacceptable” (Rose 1997, 313).

While I am not an accomplished musician, nor was I ever a key player in the DC punk community, it is important to lay clear my biases and affinities to the District. I listened to DC bands for years prior to moving there, and the music molded my imaginary of DC and motivated both my decision to move there as well as, ultimately, my decision to investigate this subject. Regardless of how a subculture's participants may become insular in their narratives, having a good (though hardly encyclopedic) knowledge of punk was immensely helpful. Additionally, it helped established a greater rapport and related trust with those I interviewed (Longhurst 2010). That rapport enabled me to dig deeper discursively with my subjects because for lack of a better descriptor, I shared a culture with them. As Valerie Yow (2010) puts it,

“the interview [is] a collaborative effort, not between authority and subject but between two searchers of the past and present...I am not advocating that the

researcher's personal reactions become the emphasis of the research. What I am suggesting is that when we pretend there is nothing going on inside of us that is influencing the research and interpretation, we prevent ourselves from using an essential research tool. And in some cases, the reader needs to know what influenced the research and interpretation” (Yow 2010, 63).

I have curated my primary sources in order to mitigate and minimize that ‘subjective I.’ Books about punk in the popular press have rarely faced similar restrictions to a dissertation. The Institutional Review Board at the university level often places additional levels of mitigation on the process of gathering qualitative data, and those who had a central role within these scenes likely have greater access to top informants (albeit with a heightened conflict of interest). For this reason, I avoided interviews with musicians or scene members with whom I shared a close friendship when I lived in DC. I did meet some of the individuals I interviewed for this project while I lived and attended shows in DC, but I had not had any personal conversations with them nor maintained contact through email or social media. This unfortunately excluded depth of insight from several DC bands that toured in Europe, including the Dismemberment Plan and the Max Levine Ensemble, both of whom included members I would consider friends and creative acquaintances. However, as in all ethnographic research, not all potentially valuable resources could have been included as informants. The decisions to not approach potential subjects, and in some cases turning down interview offers from those outside the research question (e.g. a British woman who has lived in Marseille for the past five years but grew up and became a fan of DC punk in England), were not made lightly or easily:

“The simultaneous impulses to achieve empirical depth and analytic breadth, to pursue immersion and reflection, do stretch the researcher. They require a constant tacking' back and forth between one pole and the other. Yet this challenge can be met with great effectiveness, and yield insightful analyses” (Herbert 2010, 72).

As Herbert (2010) suggests, my ethnographic processes over the past few years have both enhanced my understanding and appreciation for qualitative methods, but have also guided my approach to this project's central research questions. While the English woman's insights would likely have been fascinating, they might have diluted the focus on French impressions on DC. It was for this reason (along with time and space constraints) that my interviews (in all formats) with veterans of the DC scene about that circulation per se were limited as well. The dissertation ultimately relies on the testimony of French informants' "thick description" (see Geertz 1973) of DC psychogeography and the geographic conclusions that can be drawn based on the history of the two urban cultures. As DeLyser (2001) warns, "personally and professionally, it is tricky to recast relationships with friends and coworkers, shifting from being one of the gang to being a researcher" (444). While I have maintained communication with many quoted individuals through social media, I have not continued relationships with them outside the general frame of this project, particularly as many of their words have helped inform the gradual development of my circulation framework.

Geertz' (1973) credo of "thick description" lends itself well to this study for several reasons. First, engaging personally with interview subjects allows them to expand further upon their pivotal ideas and impressions than they would via email, phone, or Skype. Second, it accounts for the subjectivities and semiotics within the musical practices themselves, since certain bands or songs hold greater significance for different people. Ultimately, thick description accounts for the discrepancies and irregularities within the circulation model for musical geography, both acknowledging how cultural processes privilege some over others and the difficulty inherent in revisiting time-sensitive frameworks. As Dittmer (2010) writes, "society is seen as eternally in process, with any perceived regularities being the result of

moments of discursive fixation that attempt to create the illusion of their own timelessness” (278). Thick description also privileges qualitative methods in that its devotion to semiotics can glean deeper meaning through the discourses on the surface. Importantly, these discourses “are not universal but contextual...[as] knowledges, texts, truths, practices, and realities are all products of particular times and spaces” (Cresswell 2013, 211).

Social Media and Qualitative Geography

These prominent, albeit antiquated, ideals of “emotion-less evaluative intelligence” (Thien 2011, 313) perhaps made more sense when many prominent social scientists (Sauer 1925, McLuhan 1964) published in the era before email, Facebook, and Twitter. While these technologies can easily blur the lines between professional and personal relationships, these mechanisms have made almost all of the conversations in this project possible. This is appropriate, since social media has redefined the mechanisms through which music has been made, distributed, and appreciated:

The creative and expressive potentiality of the artistic productions and the ways of musical use have undergone significant changes with the introduction of digital technologies and social media. For example, for many consumers search for music, inquire, possibly by probing the opinions of other lovers, taste it (with the “pre-listen to”) and to buy it, have become interconnected operations within a continuous, constant and collaborative process...In general, music has always played a leading role in the diffusion of communication technologies and locates in social media its *raison d’être* as it was born to be consumed, exchanged and shared (Prattichizzo 2015, 318).

Though Facebook launched in 2004, it took until this decade to draw adequate attention from social scientists, most of whom can no longer deny its societal role and value to researchers (Wilson, Gosling, and Graham 2012). Within this project, Facebook took on a valuable role in the ‘snowballing’ process (see Longhurst 2010) that led me to many of my interviews in France as well as follow-up communiqués after returning from fieldwork.

Ostensibly, Facebook has provided an open-access phone book (or email directory) for the 21st century. Several informants recommended a friend of theirs whom they had not spoken to in years, and in the process lost their phone number or email address. Facebook provided the only direct means to contact certain sources both in France and in the United States. Asking through an extensive network on the chance that one person may have a way to contact a desired subject via email or phone, though necessary in the past, may be a tremendous waste of time today.

Many French punks who participated in this project also kept Facebook pages under pseudonyms. Several times in the course of my snowballing interviews did people write down their friends' names with "on Facebook as" their friends' aliases. Reasons for this within the French punk community were varied and reflect reasons why people use aliases on a universal level. Two of my informants work for the SNCF (Societe nationale des chemins de fer francais), the national train company, and wished to keep their online punk persona separate from their professional personae. Several of the women interviewed use aliases on Facebook in equal measure to avoid professional interference and avoid online harassment. The most frequent reason stated across my recorded interviews was simply "so people can't find me unless I know them." Firminhac attaches his Facebook name (Olivier Crapoulet) to his record label to help bands and other labels find him for networking purposes. Prior to our interview in Marseille, he posted an update asking if anyone in his local network was interested in meeting with an American to talk about DC hardcore. One of his friends replied (half-joking) "is Ian MacKaye coming?"

Facebook and other social media platforms have become so inextricable from daily life that they must be understood as inextricable from qualitative inquiry as well. As Thien (2011)

wrote in her critique of unrealistic objectivity, “the very designation ‘social scientist’ insists upon a distanced and distancing investigation of the social” (313). Similar to YouTube, Facebook has been compiling and archiving (however unintentionally) a living history of musical geography through groups like “DC Scene – 80’s and 90’s.” For example, one user in that group uploaded a photograph of a flyer from a Dead Kennedys Show at the Lansburgh Cultural Center on Sunday June 5th, 1982 with local openers Scream, No Trend, and Void. A comment string ensued with various members of the group volunteering their memories of that show, including details on how the DC Fire Marshall shut the show down and Dead Kennedys singer Jello Biafra led the crowd in a campfire-style sing-along (see Figure 4). The Dead Kennedys were a living testament to San Francisco’s status as “arguably the most political punk scene in the United States” (Foley 2015, 62), and written testimonies found on social media corroborate this. This also corroborates accounts of how urban punk scenes cross-pollinated at the time and thrived through this kind of circulation.

One can only speculate on how a similar story about underground circulation might be written in another three decades, but the internet will undoubtedly play a pivotal role. The role of interacting urban ethos and local signatures, however, will hardly disappear from ontological or epistemological view. Although the web has given touring bands much cheaper and immensely quicker access to promoters, record swappers, and other cultural circulators, the physical movement of songs and ideas are still firmly ensconced in people as agents.

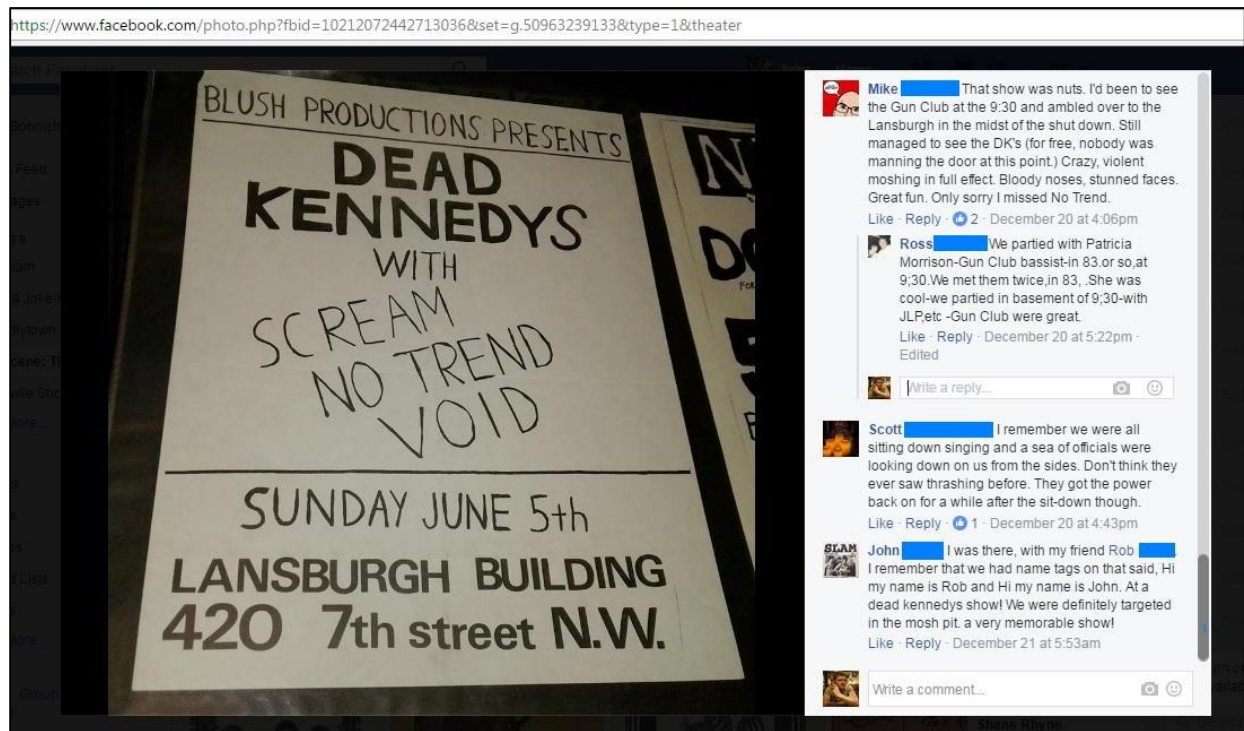


Figure 4. Screen capture of a post on the “DC Scene – 80s and 90s” public Facebook group, with comments from members sharing their accounts of that show and similar events from around that time.

Flyering

Another successful recruitment method included flyers that I left at record shops, book shops, and when possible, merchandise tables at punk shows in the Paris area. Flyering, or the activity of posting show flyers in the area of an upcoming performance, is another activity institutionalized within punk's DIY culture, but goes back almost as far as the written language. Circulation of the music relied on this communication network which has, in turn, been applied here. Though some doubt the usefulness of flyers in light of near-universal access to the internet in Western cities, flyers still resonate with those connected to these scenes. Particularly in places like DC where underground venues (as well as those accessible to underground artists) have traditionally been at a premium, flyering has been paramount to successful promotion. "A good, visually interesting flyer that conveys the basic info clearly (where, when, who, what, how much) is not difficult to make," wrote Positive Force head Mark Andersen in issue 3 of *Crack DC* (1991), "but remember that personal contact (i.e. handing out fliers at other concerts) is probably the best and least expensive method."

The flyers created to recruit informants for this project were bilingual and straightforward, asking the question "Aimez-vous DC Punk and Hardcore?" (see Figure 10). They included a short introduction, explaining who I was and what I was interested in learning while visiting Paris. I encouraged participation from anyone interested in sharing their experiences with punk and hardcore music from DC, leaving my French mobile number and email address. Though the French punk underground has always been tight-knit and snowballing was a reliable way to connect to further informants, I did not want to miss the opportunity to include any potentially enthusiastic yet marginalized voices. A small pile of flyers I left on a table at a new record and clothing shop near la Bibliothèque François Mitterand yielded an email



Figure 5. Half-page flyer used to help recruit participants in Paris during July 2015 fieldwork. I recognize the flub in that I should have written “et” instead of “and,” but it did not affect anyone’s understanding or attention.

and an interview with Benjamin Pothier, an Anthropology student whose love of hardcore bred his fascination with Native American culture. He had also done artwork for the Orleáns-based Burning Heads, one of France’s best-selling homegrown punk bands. Another flyer left on the record dealers’ table at an Oi! gig at a dive bar in Montreuil yielded a text message (at the gig) from Nicolas Gresser, who was initially reticent to give an interview, fearing he wasn’t “legitimate” enough for the project (he connected me, via email, to Philippe Cadiot, the drummer for 80s hardcore group Sherwood Pogo). However, I explained the project further, and we met later that week and had one of the most fascinating conversations of my month there. A straight-edger with a large Minor Threat tattoo on his back, Nicolas provided wonderful insights about

the power of imagery and “American-ness” of bands, as well as his place within the DC-bred globalized Straight-Edge culture.

Otherwise, the flyers provided valuable conversation pieces, especially in scenarios where I had little time to introduce myself to someone or a language barrier existed. At the same show where I met Nicolas, Gaël Dauvillier (an informant whom I had recently interviewed) alerted me that the singer for the headlining band, Syndrome 81, used to sing for Thrashington, DC! After the show, I introduced myself to Fab Le Roux. Because he was busy packing up equipment, I handed him a flyer with my information on it, and we kept in touch. Later that month, he and his wife invited me up to their home in Rouen for lunch and an interview, where Fab showed me his personal collection of DC punk (and DC punk-referencing) vinyl and ephemera.

One other flyer, left on the table at a gig at Le Mécanique Ondulatoire, a small venue in central Paris, initiated an email exchange with a 21-year old punk fan who lived too far outside the city to meet with in person. We exchanged a couple of emails, but he stopped replying before I got any qualitative information from him. For whatever reason he disappeared, this calls to attention perhaps the most obvious limitation of what Kevin Dunn calls “computer-mediated communication” (2010), namely the difficulty of carrying out and sustaining the full conversations needed for research inquiry.

Email Interviews

“The weaknesses or limitations of CMC interviews, relative to face-to-face interviewing, stem mostly from the spatial and temporal displacements between the informants and the researcher. These issues include concerns about the authenticity of the informant, the loss of visual cues that assist rapport-building, and the ‘clunkiness’ of the interview relationship. There are also issues of uneven internet access and comfort with the medium, as well as ethical issues having to do with privacy and anonymity” (Dunn 2010, 130).

Overlaid with the cultural and physical dimensions of the fieldwork and ethnographic data collection on this dissertation, some of Dunn's caveats about email interviewing were more evident than others. I began many of my email exchanges with informants mentioning whomever had referred me to them and provided my contact details. Dropping names of friends and confidants, along with particular cultural references, likely mitigated concerns the informants may have had about my sincerity and authenticity. The topic of music itself, though inherently political in the everyday sense, demands little information about their private lives or questionable affiliations with radical or illegal activities. Granted, even my in-person interview with Roizès called attention to the conflicting narratives that one may encounter either digitally or in person. While statutes of limitation may protect individuals from legal consequences for minor crimes committed thirty years ago, the publication of such activities may still prove damning on a professional or personal level. The widespread use of pseudonyms among French punks is an extension of this idea. Fortunately, these indiscretions (at least by the informants themselves) were minimal, and in questionable cases, this study will anonymize the informants.

The 'clunkiness' of the email interview relationship is inevitable. The visual and verbal cues which help to establish rapport were not there; nor were there opportunities for immediate follow-up questions for clarification. Where I conducted the in-person interviews using open-ended, loose questionnaires that tended to veer wherever the informant wanted, email interviews were constricted. As would be expected, some of my emails went unreturned, and other informants, while enthusiastic at first, began to ignore my replies for unknown reasons. Several informants were habitually slow at replying to emails, especially those which required a lot of information and ample time with which to reply. In most cases, these informants were honest and apologetic about their tardiness. Some individuals even "went dark," from modern technology

for stretches, including one whose side of accounts for an early visit he made to DC would have been helpful. Outside of an initial reply with some rudimentary information about his visit, he and I had little direct exchange. Regardless, his initial reply was infinitely more constructive than no reply, as not only does he know that this dissertation exists and his story plays a role. His skeletal information is enough to verify that this DC visit did happen.

All of this primary collection exists on a spectrum between purely formalized and completely informal. Though much of the qualitative data acquired and expressed here came through targeted research objectives and interviews conducted specifically for this dissertation, much indispensable background knowledge imparted cannot be sourced. Every geographic analysis of harDCore's diffusion through France includes informational elements gathered from years of informal conversations and the author's own incremental acculturation.

A similar confluence of years of informal conversations about the nature and importance of punk in Washington, Paris, and several other cities inspired the questions that bred this dissertation. This subjectivity and respect for the independent, counter-hegemonic spirit of DIY punk scenes has permeated most extant literature and popular press on the history of this music as well. This could be important in expanding methodological understanding of art communities in general. Traditional ideas of data collection have consistently ignored the critical role of participation in a community that is necessary for ethnographic understanding.

Chapter 3: DC and Paris, Capitals of Punk

Because this project celebrates and details the exchanges of underground culture between DC and Paris, a wide array of bands from both cities appear within the narrative. Of course, considering how heavily the research relies upon extant documentation, the best-known bands from each city may dominate the spotlight. Particularly when discussing the mainstreaming (culturally and politically) of indigenous punk scenes in the respective towns in the late 1980s and early 1990s, bands like Fugazi and Bérurier Noir usually occupy the foreground. Especially in the case of Fugazi, the band does represent the figurehead of the amorphous “DC punk scene” and as rocker Ted Leo once referred to them as “the paradigm of the successful indie rock band.” Therefore, they will figure predictably and prominently in subjective tracings of the Franco-American circulation of DIY punk culture. But, as the bootlegged t-shirt⁴ often says “This is not a Fugazi t-shirt,” and this is not a Fugazi dissertation.

That being said, no other band in DC’s underground history was as popular or as heavily documented, so the collective contributions and actions of Fugazi figure quite prominently in this study. This should not minimize the artistic and political contributions of many other bands from DC’s punk era, certainly not limited to the Fugazi members’ previous bands like Minor Threat,

⁴ Fugazi notoriously eschewed traditional merchandise. This included T-Shirts. One could imagine the band’s surprise when they spotted fans at a show in Boston wearing shirts that said FUGAZI on them. Ian MacKaye discovered that the source of the unlicensed shirts was a boutique printer called Just Say Rock! He called them and said, in his words, “you’ve gotta fuckin’ cut that out.” So, before long, the same printer, undeterred, starting to make t-shirts that said ‘THIS IS NOT A FUGAZI T-SHIRT.’ MacKaye called them back and said “that’s creative, so now let’s be creative with your accounting, and give that money [you’re making off that shirt] to a women’s shelter in Boston.” The printer apparently obliged, shortly thereafter stopping printing them. Like clockwork, however, “people started making those [‘THIS IS NOT A FUGAZI T-SHIRT’] shirts; they were bootlegging the bootleg.”

Rites of Spring, Embrace, One Last Wish, or even the farcical Happy Go Licky. Too many other seminal bands within the scope of new wave (The Slickee Boys, Urban Verbs, etc.), hardcore (Bad Brains, Scream, Void, SOA, etc.), post-hardcore (Jawbox, Shudder to Think, DC3, Fire Party, etc.), and later, indie pop (Q and Not U, The Dismemberment Plan, etc.), pop-punk (Fairweather, The Max Levine Ensemble, etc.) and ska (The Pietasters, Kill Lincoln, etc.) operated within and outside the Dischord orbit to attempt anything close to a comprehensive scene history in these pages.

In fact, Bad Brains, often considered the trailblazers of the fast and loud DC hardcore sonic aesthetic, did so in the years preceding Dischord's founding and never released anything on the label. Bad Brains moved to New York early on, but are permanently considered a DC band. Bad Brains' legacy is a cogent reminder that though "the Dischord family" and scene enveloped most of the music that influenced international impressions of DC, the label's catalog is hardly a comprehensive telling of the story. Several other labels, including the Slickee Boys' Dacoit, Jawbox's DeSoto, Unrest's Teenbeat, and turn-of-the-century Arlington mainstay Lovitt all served the regional music scene in their respective ways over the past forty years.

The Paris punk scene, however, does not have such a global legacy. Many American bands, particularly the DC ones, have been immortalized in coffee table books and numerous "rockumentaries" including the Fugazi film *Instrument* (Cohen 1998) and more recent entries like *Salad Days* (Crawford 2015) and James Schneider's forthcoming *Punk the Capital*. This level of documentation has not been the case for most of mainland Europe. Little academic attention has been afforded Paris as a punk rock city, and next to none has been devoted to the city's hardcore punk underground. This is one of the great inequities that French punks have, unfortunately, grown to accept over the years:

“In Paris, the scene occupied a physical territory marked by certain clubs such as the Gibus and shops such as Harry Cover and the Open Market, the latter both in the new commercial district of Les Halles, which quickly came to be seen as the epicentre of the French punk movement. This ensured high visibility for punk styles, fashion and behaviour, but such visibility did not translate into significant commercial success for any of the French punk groups. Perhaps for that reason, French punk has not been afforded much attention by analysts of popular culture. It is largely absent from accounts of the international development of punk in the 1970s, which are mostly concerned with events in America and the UK. Neither has it been seriously studied on its own terms” (Warne 2013, 220).

Outside of the much-maligned compendium *Nos Année Punk* (2002), we have seen few formal texts anthologizing the French punk movement. Some books on the history of French rock (see Médioni 2007) include significant 1970s and 1980s bands affiliated with the punk movement, but only a handful of commercially successful ones like The Dogs or Bérurier Noir. The actual underground is easily lost in the balance.

Why DC?

“What's wrong with DC? Why is it so easy to ignore? The town you love to hate? The obsession that died: Too many timid bureaucrats? Transient government employees? All political power and no pretty power? Not enough clubs? No money-sucking labels? No Ego? No college radio uniting the area? CIA plot to clean sweep the streets of Mainstreet USA of subversive influence? Lack of diverse financial base? Bad Fed reputation? Too many idiots comparing it to bigger media meccas?” (*Mole Zine*, Issue 6, 1993)

“Remember! The scene you crave should be the one you create!!!!!!” (*Capitol Crisis* Issue #1, 1980)

While it is simple to disregard DC as an aberrant urban system in the shadow of American megacities like New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, this chapter takes the opposite stance. Washington, DC, while its federally-oriented origin may set it apart from more traditionally developed urban centers, has undergone generations of growth, development, inequality, and loss that reflect the greater anxieties of American culture. As Hyra and Prince (2016) wrote recently, “while the federal government remains important, today's DC economy is

more diverse and dynamic and represents an advanced service sector economy, which might be very telling of future urban growth throughout the country" (xlvi). Overpopulated as it may be, the District and its surrounding Maryland and Virginia suburbs (or, colloquially, the DMV) encapsulates the warring social dynamics of any American city in what I argue here is a globally comprehensive context. Helen Taylor (2001) wrote that cultural diffusion must be understood trans-Atlantically, and I argue that the urban landscapes that provide the spaces and places (collaboratively, the stage) for these cultural "documents" to grow into "monuments" (see Foucault 1972) must also be understood in a global context.

Landscapes like that of DC and Paris, often "constructed with specific ideals in mind... by ideologically driven governing elites" (Hoelscher 2009, 137), have come into greater focus in cultural geography over the past decade. Usually, these analyses offer a critical deconstruction of such hegemonic narratives of cityscapes and ways to democratize place and space. As Hoelscher (2009) continues, "even the most ordinary, everyday, and taken-for-granted landscapes carry symbolic meanings that can be interpreted for their iconographic intent and effect" (139).

When I presented an early iteration of this dissertation at the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology Southeastern and Caribbean division (SEMSEC) last year, my greatest epiphany came from watching the presentation that followed mine. Victor Hernandez-Sang (2016) from the University of Maryland spoke about the international diversity of Latin-American bands in the Washington, DC area. It struck a chord with me not only because it was a well-researched and thoughtful project, but because I remembered how important these salsa, merengue, and Cumbia groups were to the urban musical landscape of DC. While punk was what made me interested in DC, I soon found a vibrant Latin-American community that was

embedded in that city's nightlife. Even as a white twenty-something out in the Adams-Morgan neighborhood, I vividly remember hearing three or four different bands of Latin-American musicians churning dance rhythms and call-and-response melodies out the doors of the intimate nightclubs like Bossa or Chief Ike's Mambo Room (RIP) and into the ears of passersby. These Latino bars and clubs sat mere blocks from the house where Minor Threat played their first show in 1980. The DC that Victor presented through the lens of mostly immigrant Salsa musicians was just as strong of a counter-narrative to “mainstream DC,” every bit as intriguing, and every bit as valid. DC's Latin-American music scene, while not exactly full of tourism signposts (not yet, at least), actually exemplifies the “e pluribus unum” (“out of many, one”) melting-pot spirit of America, while overcrowded monuments downtown merely regurgitate the phrase on nationalist symbols. DC's Latin underground, similar to the punk underground, has accumulated little mainstream fanfare, though its quotidian role in the urban landscape confronts the hegemonic narrative that draws millions to the National Mall each year. As geographer Owen Dwyer might term it, one cultural landscape pales in ‘symbolic accretion’ to the other, more established one, though both certainly possess it:

“Symbolic accretion is not limited to the appending of commemorative elements that are sympathetically reciprocal. In some instances, the accretion can be antagonistic and insurgent, rubbing against the grain of the common or dominant interpretation of the memorial. While symbolic accretion is most commonly employed to reciprocally augment commemorative themes, there are instances in which symbolic accretion is used to contradict or otherwise disrupt a memorial via the addition of a counter-narrative” (Dwyer 2004, 421)

On the mainstream level, DC's most prominent icons owe an obvious aesthetic debt to European architecture, with an emphasis on French ideals. The White House is categorically the most famous building in DC, serving as geographic shorthand for both the federal city and for the United States in film, television, and elsewhere within the pale of popular culture.

Why Paris?

“Few things in the history of humanity are as well known to us as the history of Paris. Tens of thousands of volumes are dedicated solely to the investigation of this tiny spot on the earth's surface.” – Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 1940 (1999, 83).

The role of Paris in any discussion about global culture and Western society needs little justification. Benjamin famously named it “the capital of the 19th century,” where high and low culture converged and modernism and capitalism both became refined as art forms unto themselves. Few countries in the Western world are as emblematic of “culture” in the intellectual sense as France, given the country’s unparalleled roster of 19th and 20th century philosophers. Any attempt to distill French or even Parisian culture into a set of pages would be impossible but would also belie the point about punk’s role within that greater scheme. Music scholars have accordingly situated Paris as the rare urban paradigm of these ideas:

“The French capital has held a very special place in the global political imaginary, from the French Revolution of 1789-1799 through the July Revolution of 1830 and the Paris Commune of 1871, as the personification of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Parliamentary democracy, universal male suffrage, freedom of the press, and free secular education were examples of the values offered by Paris, especially from around the 1830s onward” (Hall 2016, 155).

As early as 1855, the poet Charles Baudelaire was noted for using the term “Americanized” in a negative light “as part of his more general critique of the modern idea of progress at the world's fair that year” (Green 2014, 3). Credited with coining the term *modernité* (modernity), Baudelaire fetishized Paris’s sordid landscape, arguably laying the groundwork for art which celebrated and canonized the city and urban ethos 120 years before Metal Urbain recorded “Panik.” His archetypal character of the flâneur, an artist and passive observer of the over-stimulating city, influenced generations of thinkers. Walter Benjamin, though not native to France, centered most of his most influential work around Paris, which he dubbed “the capital of

the 19th century” retrospectively. These included *Das Passagen-Werk* (The Arcades Project), a collection of writings about the prior century of creeping urban phenomena that was unfinished at the time of his death in 1940. The recently-deceased Polish sociologist Zigmunt Bauman contrasted their approach, hinting at several tropes which would inform the late-‘70s punk explosion (e.g. “the modern world” for The Jam and the Buzzcocks’ “boredom”):

"It is the modern world which is the original flâneur, the Baudelaire/Benjamin human flâneur is but its mirror image, its imitation, the product of stock-taking, of forced adjustment and mimicry. Like the world which is his home, the flâneur wanders without aim, his stroll punctuated every once in a while by looking around. Without aim? That aimless stroll is the aim; there could not be, there should be other aims" (Bauman 1994, 139)

In the early 1950’s, French philosopher Guy Debord became a proponent of the *dérive*, where one operated at the whims of the landscape he or she encountered on his or her stroll. In another case study of Franco-American refraction, American city planner Kevin Lynch, almost simultaneously, was promoting the same idea of treating the city as an active agent in its own creation and modification (Long 2014, 50). Both Debord and Lynch were integral in the establishment of *psychogeography*, a governing concept in the relationship of mental perception and impressions of an urban landscape, either nearby or distant. As Long (2014) goes on to contextualize psychogeography, he indicates the critical role of music and art:

“Psychogeography as theory and practice is therefore a way of framing, mapping and traversing complex city environments including soundscapes and also suggests ways in which visitors may be directed to those ‘obscure places’ featured in song lyrics or implied in sound that may otherwise be overlooked in ‘official’ city marketing and maps, routes and trails” (Long, 2014, 51).

Though punk did not originate as a rock subgenre in France, some argue that it could not have grown or proliferated without the influence of radical French thinkers. Citing Paul Yonnet, Jonathyne Briggs recently wrote that “punk provided a method for directly critiquing French society and engaging young people politically ... [thus continuing] a tradition of critical culture

that had deep roots within French history” (2015, 148). Though he was too old to catch the wave of punk in the late 1970s, prominent 20th century philosopher and semiotician Roland Barthes is frequently cited in literature on punk culture. In *Subculture*, Dick Hebdige implied that punk was a natural extension of Barthes’ ideals:

“Barthes was not concerned with distinguishing the good from the bad in modern mass culture, but rather with showing how all the apparently spontaneous forms and rituals of contemporary bourgeois societies are subject to a systematic distortion, liable at any moment to be dehistoricized, ‘naturalized’, converted into myth:

The whole of France is steeped in this anonymous ideology: our press, our films, our theatre, our pulp literature, our rituals, our Justice, our diplomacy, our conversations, our remarks about the weather, a murder trial, a touching wedding, the cooking we dream of, the garments we wear, everything in everyday life is dependent on the representation which the bourgeoisie has and makes us have of the relations between men and the world (Barthes, 1972)’

... [Barthes] found in phenomena as disparate as a wrestling match, a writer on holiday, a tourist-guide book, the same artificial nature, the same ideological core. Each had been exposed to the same prevailing rhetoric (the rhetoric of common sense) and turned into myth, into a mere element in a second-order semiological system” (Hebdige 1979, 9).

As the urban microcosm of French popular culture, Paris occupies a rare position in myriad media-based worlds. I would argue that *les soixante-huitards* (those in “the spirit of ’68 unrest”) presaged the advent of punk in France through their systematic rejection of the old ways and full-scale rebellion. They also broke down walls between the government and the people. Much like the urban riots of 1968 in the US, the student and worker protests throughout France brought much more serious attention to issues of urban unrest and poor living conditions (Flanagan 1993, 73). Much more so than the prevalent hippie culture in the United States at the time, the Paris student demonstrators formed an unwitting coalition with a proto-punk art movement (see Kugelberg and Vermès 2011) and the far-left thinkers of that era (see Servan-Schreiber 1969; Baudrillard 2006). Henri Lefebvre, the Marxist philosopher whose work has been widely

expounded by geographer David Harvey, first published on “the right to the city” in 1968, which is no coincidence in light of events and movements in France.

The legacy of May 1968 found a thinkable counterpart in the punk movement in Paris, and those tropes have reappeared throughout popular culture since then. The French crime novel (Serie/Roman noir) is a key example. Because France’s punk scene is less developed than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts in England and America, “the roman noir, in other words, is on numerous levels punk rock for France...commonalities between punk and crime fiction are important because they break down the conceptual divisions between the social roles of music and literature” (Lee 2005,186).

Paris’ emerging and strengthening diversity during the punk era played a valuable role in the interplay between underground music and qualitative observation on urban landscape. Especially early on, before punk culture became easily mass-marketed and refracted through simplified representations on television and film, “punk in France acted as a powerful nexus not only for fluid and creative cultural contact, but also for political reflection” (Warne 2013, 220). The diverse characters came from all around the city and *les banlieues* (suburbs) mixed in at clubs like Les Bain Douches and Le Palace, changing dialogues about French identity in the process.

Though often finding itself perpetually ‘behind the curve’ (as several of my informants attested here), Paris has made great strides and contributions to the discourse on punk circulation. Over the years, Parisian bands like Prohibition have drawn from the jazz and art-rock inflections that motored DC post-hardcore and created these political reflections of their city. In 1996, on the heels of a period when they shared stages with Fugazi all over Europe, Prohibition released the LP *Towncrier*, which they called a “concept album about urban life and Paris in particular ...

carried out as an experiment by the band” (prohibitedrecords.bandcamp.com). Clearly, that DC-style predilection for pushing boundaries and hometown reflexivity had found a new laboratory on the Seine.

Why DC and Paris?

“For these crucible capitals, it is hardly *plus ça change*; but maybe, if we admit some transatlantic transpositions, we continue to recognize some of *les mêmes choses*. And while it is untenable to flatly suggest that ‘as the capital goes, so goes the nation-state,’ a comparative examination of their ‘exceptional’ urban histories reveals key junctures when each country’s rulers had to vigilantly attend to how power is rooted in those most special of cities” (Klemek 2014, 13).

Washington, DC and Paris, France are politically, historically, and culturally inextricable from one another. Both cities are prominent national capitals, rife with nationalist symbols that all occupy permanent space in the global imaginary. Every simplified skyline of DC includes the White House, the Washington Monument, the Capitol Dome, and a steady selection of others in some form (The Smithsonian Museums and memorials to Jefferson, Lincoln, MLK are all popular symbols). Every simplified skyline of Paris includes the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, Notre Dame Cathedral, and a steady selection of other, more esoteric choices (Le Louvre Pyramid and Montmartre are also common). Both cities are microcosmic of the very democratic process under which so much of the world is governed. Both cities, though navigable by motor beltways, are very difficult or plain idiotic at times to take by automobile. Both cities have expansive and often-troubled public transit systems (both called Metro). Both cities, though in differing orientations and across differing timelines, have been extensively racially segregated. One of the most remarkable historical similarities between the two is that they were both prominently designed, from an urban standpoint, by Frenchmen.

If DC doesn't need to rely on its musical heritage for tourism, then certainly neither does Paris. If there's one thing that Paris does not lack, it is tourists. The city received 22.4 million visitors in 2014 *just to its hotels* (Paris Office du Tourisme et des Congrès). This does not include AirBNB stays or other travel networks like Couchsurfing and personal visits to family and friends. Visitors to Paris, like those to DC, come from all over the world and engage in almost every type of known tourism as well, most of which overlap and are combined. Notre Dame Cathedral, for example, satisfies both religious pilgrimage ambitions as well as world heritage tourism. Certain general attractions, especially food, are much more heavily sought after in Paris than in DC. Regardless, both cities are stark examples of major cities in the world's most developed countries that have attracted an increasing amount of attention from social scientists, engaging with manner in which tourism "has become of increasing importance for developed, industrialized countries" (Kruger and Trandafoiu 2014, 4).

An obvious historic contrast between the two cities is that DC was devised specifically to be the home of the American federal government, and Paris has a history going back almost two millennia (Gallois 1923). However, the plan for the District of Columbia was laid out by a Paris native named Pierre L'Enfant, today immortalized with a statue in his likeness and major civic plaza (and Metro Station) in his name in the city's southwest quarter. L'Enfant came to the United States to assist the Continental Army under the command of the Marquis de Lafayette (also immortalized with a statue and large park directly north of The White House). George Washington entrusted L'Enfant with the duty of laying out a general plan for this city on the Potomac River, and the planner's recognition of French nobility and monarchic symbolism did not defeat the Enlightenment ideals under which his adopted country had been founded. However, the two symbolic systems did battle:

"[Pierre] L'Enfant composed the plan... of two simple geometrical designs: the orthogonal radiating pattern traditionally favoured by European monarchs exercising an absolute power which radiated from their persons and their courts, and the infinitely repeatable grid pattern which had become the basis for every colonial town, a democratic and egalitarian form that gives no single location a privileged status" (Cosgrove 1989, 129).

The star/grid pattern obviously did not anticipate the advent of the automobile, of which DC had the greatest per capita usage of in the nation during the 1920s (Goode 2003, 25). Nor did the original ideal plan anticipate how extensively the city's population would expand beyond the lawmakers, their families, and those who worked for them. This cartographic signature, which followed the classic European model that no structure could be "closer to God" than the central Cathedral, dictated that no building (save for the Washington Monument) would rise higher than what would soon be the Capital dome spire. While the Rosslyn business district across the Potomac River could circumvent these statutes by being in Arlington, the District itself has stayed uniquely flat or horizontal for a major city. While certain buildings on the Virginia and Maryland fringes are taller than the Capitol, few are skyscrapers like that of New York or Chicago, none of which existed during L'Enfant's time. In fact, by the end of the nineteenth century, the city had grown so haphazardly that it no longer seemed like a planned city. The Federal Government had done little to control it, and it was not until they constituted the McMillan Plan in 1901 and the Park Commission plan in 1902 that they "modified, enlarged, and reestablished L'Enfant's plan of Washington (Jacobsen et al 1955, 13).

Unlike DC, Paris is an ostensible nuclear or primate city. Though France's smaller cities like Lyon, Marseille, and Nantes are all significant, Paris remains the dominant core of the country's cultural industries. Paris is the epicenter of the French motion picture industry, the standard-setting French fashion industry, and the corporate presence of the French music industry. Though Washington, DC has all of those things in smaller doses, these doses cannot

compete with the suppliers of New York, Los Angeles, and even, in cases of urban landscapes linking popular music with tourism, New Orleans (see Gotham 2005) or Austin (see Porcello 2005). However, even for musicians, these more musical cities offered “few economic benefits: [they lacked] a strong local recording industry, and local musicians had to go to bigger cities such as New York, Los Angeles or London to prosper directly from music production” (Taylor 2001, 117). As mentioned earlier, Washington’s two most commercially successful punk musicians, Henry Rollins and Dave Grohl, both had to leave the DC area in order to achieve mainstream success, the former (eventually) as a major label recording artist and film actor and the latter as drummer for the meteoric Seattle band Nirvana and eventual front man for Foo Fighters. Rollins and Grohl, however, are two prominent figures in a long list, including Ellington, Al Jolson, and Marvin Gaye, whose early lives were spent in DC but entire professional careers were spent in, or based in, major cultural centers.

Chapter 4:

Punk and Musical Geography

“It is perhaps appropriate that the punks, who have made such large claims for illiteracy, who have pushed profanity to such startling extremes, should be used to test some of the methods for ‘reading’ signs evolved in the centuries-old debate on the sanctity of culture” (Hebdige 1979, 19).

Dick Hebdige, among the first social scientists to fully embrace the punk counter-culture, also testifies here for how integral punk is in understanding the power of urban counternarratives. One cannot discuss circulation, nor musical formations, without discussing culture. None of which could be addressed without the frame of geography, because “as Johansson and Bell (2009, 9) succinctly put it, ‘place is omnipresent in music and, reciprocally, music is clearly evident in place’” (quoted in Long 2014, 49).

The ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl once wrote that “music... grew out of materials already present: animal cries, speech, rhythmic activity” (2005, 261). Similarly, within the greater structure of popular music, punk rock grew out of materials already present: power chords, defiant or didactic songwriting, feedback, and distortion. In fact, very few of the musical conventions associated with “punk culture” anywhere in the world simply appeared or just occurred spontaneously. Punk synthesized a vast constellation of existent ideas into a palpable movement. Like all genres of popular music, punk “existed before it had a name” (Weinstein 2011, 36).

Before it had the punchy four-letter label, it had spread well beyond the confining, non-representational structure of music. Denizens of the confounded yet intrigued news media notably associated punk with rebellious fashion, anti-establishment attitude, and delinquency. Music only made sense as a launching point for punk because not only did 'punk rock' roll off the

tongue, but as musicologists have argued since well before the 1970s, music was inextricable from the quotidian life of its adherents:

"The importance of music, as judged by the sheer ubiquity of its presence, is enormous, and when it is considered that music is used both as a summatory mark of many activities and as an integral part of many others which could not be properly executed, or executed at all, without music, its importance is substantially magnified. There is probably no other human cultural activity which is so all-pervasive and which reach into, shapes, and often controls so much of human behavior" (Merriam 1964, 218).

Alan Merriam wrote *The Anthropology of Music* long before music was widely accepted as a theoretical launching point in the academy, but his work has remained influential throughout the humanities over five decades later. More recent work about the role of music in social development and the greater pale of human activity reinforces and builds upon these ethnomusicological theses:

"Music was a powerful force in shaping tribal and community life, religious ritual, and modes of human behavior for thousands – possibly millions – of years. Some believe its influence in the development of civilizations has been equal to that of spoken language, and should be treated with greater seriousness" (Wetzel 2012, 1).

As punk music grew into commodities and marketability, it wrote a new chapter in the history of popular music. By all accounts, rock 'n' roll had largely stagnated by the mid-1970s and many popular rock writers lamented that the original narrative of rock 'n' roll had been lost. Critics, theorists, and fans all over the world all have their own opinions why: substance abuse had taken too much of a toll (e.g. Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Brian Jones, et al), the garage rock underground which the British Invasion had spawned had burned out, the U.S. retreated from Vietnam with its tail between its legs and the hippies had lost their idealism, among other reasons.

After punk blew onto the charts concurrent with the disco craze in 1977, writers retroactively sought alternative sources outside of the dueling ground-zeros of New York and London. Detroit bands like the MC5 and The Stooges are commonly considered godfathers of fast and loud music, but much like all musical genealogy, the borders are not so easily cut and dried. Though independent labels sprang up to release the less mass-marketable sectors of punk music at the end of the seventies, the parallels between this era and the dawn of rock ‘n’ roll were certainly not taken for granted:

“Independent, do-it-yourself record labels pre-date the origins of punk, and there is a long and respected tradition of small record labels within the history of the music industry. Sam Phillip's Memphis-based Sun Records, after all, is generally credited with helping invent rock ‘n’ roll. Before that, there was a plethora of small record labels in the US that recorded and released jazz, country, and soul music to small, dedicated audiences” (Dunn 2016, 129).

Unsurprisingly, however, in order to thrive in the mainstream, the most culturally relevant bands needed to go through established channels in major cities. Even though Paris was a ‘major’ city in most respects, punk had difficulty gaining a foothold there. At this point, Washington, DC was barely making a blip on the radar. Young punks in both cities, however, would change that in a profound way over the following decade.

In the mid-1970s, perhaps the biggest difference in the two core punk landscapes was how in New York, punk was more of a lark on the then-prominent excesses in arena rock culture. New York's 'Proto-punk' bands who appeared ahead of the curve, like the New York Dolls and the Dictators, injected ‘50s-style urban(e) rock ‘n’ roll with an affect that fell on a spectrum between sheer glam/androgyny or (particularly for the Dictators) self-effacing humor with a home-style Jewish and Italian cultural subtexts (Beeber 2014). While the Dolls, like the Velvet Underground the prior decade, enjoyed some insular influence among New York's tastemakers like Andy Warhol, the joke didn't exactly play outside the five boroughs (or necessarily even

throughout all five boroughs). The Dictator's 1975 debut album *Go Girl Crazy!* remains one of rock's funniest inside jokes, referring to singer Richard Blum (aka Handsome Dick Manitoba) as “the handsomest man in rock ‘n’ roll,” covering Sonny & Cher, and singing “we're all members of the master race / we've got no style and we've got no grace” (Shernoff 1975). Sire Records released the Ramones' debut album the following year. While many elements that made The Dictators appealing were still present, The Ramones were even more stripped-down and appealing to curious music fans in both the Americas and across the Pond who had never heard anything like Johnny Ramone's buzz-saw guitar before. Other New York bands that circulated the Bowery/CBGB's scene like Blondie, Television, and The Dead Boys (though they originated in Ohio) did not necessarily mimic The Ramones' style but were clumped together nonetheless by an increasingly eager music press. In this span of less than 18 months, punk bands popped up all over North America, tied together through an informal network of underground press, tape trading, and word of mouth. To give the hundreds of noteworthy bands a mention here would be impossible.

Meanwhile, in London, a generation of British entrepreneurs packaged punk as a stylistic statement, and a generation of British youth who felt they had "no future" bought it hook, line, and sinker:

“One of the defining characteristics of the early British punk subculture (1976-1978) was an identifiable "look" that reflected the urban squalor and decay typical of postwar British cities and that embraced tokens of "bad taste" as a way to challenge and resist the values of middle- and upper-class Britons who tended to shield themselves from, and therefore to claim ignorance of, the plight of the country's urban working class” (Fournier 2016, 91).

Where punk was still regarded as significant (though some derided it as a fad) back in the United States, punk in the UK was more aggressively threatening the tenuous social order of England. Malcolm McLaren's project The Sex Pistols embraced all the clichés of punk

(voluntarily or not), toured regionally, and purposefully confronted the establishment for a couple of red-hot years before imploding in early 1978. UK contemporaries like The Clash, The Jam, The Damned, Buzzcocks, Siouxsie and the Banshees, and an impossibly long list of others both contributed to and capitalized upon that zeitgeist.

Meanwhile in Paris, a homegrown scene sprouted that drew heavily from nearby London, even to a point where French punks revered British identity and the use of English as indicators of “authentic punk” (Briggs 2015, 147). This reverence, at least early on, stripped nascent Parisian punk bands of their outward French-ness. Stinky Toys, allegedly the first self-labeled punk band in Paris in 1976, suffered from lukewarm reviews and a lack of label support. They did perform in London early in that city’s punk explosion, but faded from prominence as the scene grew in both cities.

The free movement of individual agents among Paris, London, and New York throughout the 1970s makes tracing the movement of proto-punk and punk music, style, and beliefs nearly impossible. Jonathyne Briggs recently attempted, perhaps as accurately as anyone has, to trace the lines of circulation in *Sounds French* (2015). He cites the Parisian Elodie Lauten as an ostensible ‘fan zero’ for French proto-punk culture; she spent much of the early 1970s living among New York’s tastemakers, bringing some artifacts of that scene back to Paris with her in 1974. As he put it, Lauten’s “ease in moving between the punk worlds of New York and Paris reveals the cosmopolitan character of punk and certainly influenced its development in France” (Briggs 2015, 156). Similarly, Mark Zermati opening the Open Market shop in Paris in 1972 also seems, in retrospect, like a cornerstone in the “first stirrings of French punk culture” (Briggs 2015, 151). Zermati, setting the tone for other culture shops like New Rose that would emerge when punk fully landed later that decade, imported underground American and British music,

making much of it accessible for the first time on French soil. A founding member of ‘Les Punks’ (Lou Reed’s Paris Fan club), Zermati would also found Europe’s first proper punk festival, bringing the Damned to the Mont de Marsane bull ring on August 21, 1976.

Clearly, that aforementioned “cosmopolitan character of punk” contributed to the cultural development of these scenes and added a valuable chapter into their respective histories. A more detailed history of the cultural circulation between Paris and these cities will be contextualized within a history of Franco-American circulation in Chapter 9.

Punk and Social Theory

While most of the academy (geography being no exception) was slow to embrace the double helix of punk music and culture, many theoreticians in the 1970s recognized the multiplicity of intellectual movements that informed punk rock. Many rhetoricians had written extensively about protest music and associated movements (Cathcart 1972; Knupp 1981). The landmark post-war countercultures of the 1950s and 1960s had also widely inspired those in the academy to pursue both objective and reflexive inquiry, including the beat generation (Freud 1959, Masserman 1967), hippie counterculture (Becker 1967, Hall 1968) and Caribbean-influenced rudeboys (Simpson 1955, Nettleford 1970), all of whom were bound to particular musical scenes and styles.

The first social scientist to address punk formally and enthusiastically was Dick Hebdige, an English sociologist who incorporated UK youth movements in his 1979 volume *Subculture*. In his twenties at the time, Hebdige made a critical argument that punk was a confluence of multiple counterculture mores, which were “subject to historical change, each [instance representing] a ‘solution’ to a specific set of circumstances, to particular problems and

contradictions” (1979, 81). This fluid dynamic of punk which has appropriately aligned it with the palimpsest landscapes of its host cities will be addressed in greater detail in the following chapters.

While Hebdige’s “claims of illiteracy” in punk were essentialist and stereotypical assessments, one can understand where he was coming from. Thirty years after publishing *Subcultures*, he published a retrospective paper that explained the time-place context for his writings. He does not necessarily backpedal on his initial points about punk, reggae, or mod culture, but he does take time to explain his intent and the contextual realities of the project. He signed his contract in 1976 and submitted the draft for publication in 1978, which was before the “post-punk” era (encapsulated by funkier bands like Gang of Four and The Slits, both of whom formed in 1976 but released their first albums in 1979) cohered and blew initially dismissive music critics and academics out of the water. Similar to many punks’ early records and on-the-record statements (lyrics, liner notes, zine interviews, etc.), he also felt that his early points had gotten away from him and recontextualized, for better or worse:

“Two British exports – spectacle punk and Birmingham School cultural studies – got sort of welded together in *Subcultures* and the package went viral. This was good news for me of course: I’ve been travelling on the back of foreign language translations of that little book ever since – though some would no doubt say I did cultural studies proper a disservice by placing a gaudy, cartoonish wrapper on a serious activist and scholarly field of endeavour” (Hebdige 2012, 401).

Hebdige’s early statements, given their inevitable flaws, came from a supportive and constructive place. Cases of punk crossing into the academy demonstrate one of the culture’s many inherent contradictions. Though not necessarily “claiming illiteracy” (in fact often claiming the opposite, particularly in the case of many post-punk and hardcore bands), punk has often eschewed higher-level structuralist theses about its nature or existence. Most academics (or “punkademics”) write about punk from within its fences, most often heavily embracing

reflexivity while avoiding objectivity. Noted punkademic Kevin Dunn told me, for example, how academic accounts of punk written by outsiders “are all deeply flawed because they have no understanding of the scene, leading them to make ridiculous claims or, more often, conflating “indie rock” with punk” (Dunn 2016a). In his 2016 book *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life*, Dunn cites the often-confrontational feminist movement ‘Riot Grrrl’ as a case that avoided media interaction to avoid misrepresentation after innumerable setbacks of that nature in the late 1980s (see also Marcus 2010).

Unsurprisingly, punk's propensity to question has found an appropriate bedfellow in academia. Multiple notable musicians, activists, and otherwise self-identifying punks have earned PhDs, while others have earned law degrees and become involved in public service. Greg Graffin, the lead singer of second-wave LA punks Bad Religion, earned his M.S. from UCLA and his PhD from Cornell, and serves as a lecturer in Biology at UCLA (Feinberg 2007). Stephen Mallinder, lead singer of the confrontational post-punk band Cabaret Voltaire, earned his PhD in Australia in 2011 and recently published a chapter on critical analysis of noise (Mallinder 2013). Joe Escalante, founding member and bassist of Bad Religion's Orange County contemporaries The Vandals, earned his J.D. from Loyola Law School and worked for years in anti-trust litigation, and in 2012, ran for judge in the Los Angeles Superior Court election.

Several DC scene veterans have gone into advanced degrees as well. Minor Threat guitarist Lyle Preslar earned his J.D. in 2007 and still practices law in New York City. More recently, Q and Not U drummer John Davis earned his Master's in Library Science from the University of Maryland and helped found that institution's DC Punk and Hardcore Zine Archive. Without Davis' assistance (which shall be detailed in the following chapter), much of my archival research for this dissertation would have been impossible. In conversation over archival

research, he mentioned DC music scene's natural archival propensity, perhaps an outgrowth of Dischord's primordial function of documenting the city's nascent hardcore scene.

In words often attributed to Minutemen bassist Mike Watt, punk is whatever one makes it to be. Though punk has, at times, developed tacit rulebooks for sonic or aesthetic acceptance, enforcing such ideology on individuals just for performing music for fun can also be considered limiting as well as fascistic. This kind of orthodoxy developed within various punk scenes by the end of the 1970s and alienated many founding members. Straight Edge, a DC-bred subculture of abstinence from drugs, alcohol, and promiscuous sex, is a quintessential example (see Haenfler 2004). However, punk's nature rejected (at least in corners of scenes and around the world) this orthodoxy and reemphasized individuality, originality, and iconoclasm, especially in the scene which would emerge in DC. Noted “metalologist” Deena Weinstein wrote about the obstacles to musical geography of underground music, which could be equally applied to punk and to its cousin, heavy metal:

“Mapping metal, especially its active “underground,” is a messy task at best. No laws or sharpshooting border guards keep bands playing within one style, nor are there any official music guardians or academic gatekeepers enforcing the standardized usage of terminology by critics, publicists, or fans. Moreover, styles are not watertight containers: they leak, bleed into others. Musicians borrow and steal, and styles constantly evolve and transform into new styles... not even fans or critics know where to draw the lines” (Weinstein 2011, 41).

Punk music extends this problematization even further. One of the first indigenously Parisian punk records was Métal Urbain's 7-inch single ‘Panic.’ When juxtaposed with the Ramones' *Rocket to Russia* or The Sex Pistols' *Never Mind the Bollocks*, ‘Panik’ sounds positively alien. Synthesizers and a drum machine generate noise, both effective tools for creating music yet widely taboo in many punk scenes. However, “in stark contrast to critics' claims concerning French culture and punk, [Métal Urbain] claimed to create a blueprint for an

authentic French punk through their recordings” (Briggs 2015, 164). After all, Métal Urbain retained the confrontational aesthetic that defined punk in the mainstream through their recordings, even pointedly singing in French to counteract this new format of British cultural imperialism. Since then, despite factions of the Parisian punk scene adopting the raw guitar-bass-drums-screaming setup typical of early American hardcore, the most successful groups domestically retained their native tongue and electro elements.

Bérurier Noir, whose campy carnival-inspired stage costumes and prominent drum machine, became one of France's most successful and politically-active punk bands in the 1980s and 1990s. They also refused to sing in English, and like their DC counterpart Fugazi (in attitude if not sound), they transcended punk and became what *Maximumrocknroll* referred to in 1992 as the first proper French indie rock band. They remain highly influential and respected among French punks, including many of those interviewed for this dissertation. In DC, many bands that later took their cue from electronic punk, like Girls Against Boys, began in earnest as side projects. Scott McCloud, who first played in Paris with Soul Side in 1989 and would eventually move there in the early 2000s, found himself in this position. McCloud wanted to incorporate more synthesizers into his music, but among the DC post-punk scene in the mid-1980s, it was frowned upon. “The truth is I always wanted to play in a band with keyboards, but this was not a very “cool” option back in the punk days. No keyboards!” (McCloud, Email Correspondence, 4 Aug 2016). The bands in the DC underground who did incorporate more of an electronic sound, like the curiously named The French are from Hell, struggled to fit in.

None of this, of course, discredits Paris or any other peripheral (to early punk) city as a viable hearth. Stylistic boundaries were not fair nor applicable anywhere. Ironically, the first alleged use of the word “punk music” was on an early ‘70s flyer for a performance by Suicide, a

New York electronic duo whose shows were as confrontational as they were entertaining. By the time that The Ramones released their first record in 1976, keyboards had simply fallen out of fashion in the US and UK punk scenes, which quickly coalesced with major label support and sensationalist TV coverage.

Global Punk, like most treatises on the subculture, carefully avoids umbrella claims or comprehensive posturing. This dissertation, as pertaining to the wildly diverse and long-term scenes in Washington, DC and Paris, Ile-de-France, is no different. In the 37 years between *Subcultures* and *Global Punk*, however, a vast array of academic and commercial literature on punk and musical geography has emerged and grown. Though North America and Western Europe still control much of the discourse on popular music, the academic emphases on music, much like the musical styles themselves, have globalized. However, as Will Straw argued, “the new globalization of the cultural industries is unlikely to alter regional or hemispheric patterns of economic subordination” (1991, 370). Though many items in this library have been the subject of debate (particularly those on the commercial side, as I will detail in the next chapter), they have all provided valuable data for any conversation about the culture that, as AllMusic critic Peter D'Angelo once wrote in a review of The Explosion's 2000 record *Flash Flash Flash*, “has already lasted a few more decades than expected” (D’Angelo 2000).

Punk and Musical Geography

“What makes music special - what makes it special for identity - is that it defines a space without boundaries (a game without frontiers). Music is thus the cultural form best able both to cross borders - sounds carry across fences and walls and oceans, across classes, races and nations - and to define places; in clubs, scenes, and raves, listening on headphones, radio and in the concert hall, we are only where the music takes us” (Frith 1996, 125)

As Simon Frith argues, music is the least confinable art form. Because punk, in a way, shattered the practical uses of rock music while reverting to its embryonic form, punk is deserving of its exalted status within the study of popular culture. This dissertation further argues and seeks to demonstrate that punk also deserves its place within the study of musical geography, and examples from both the Washington DC and Paris scenes reinforce this. One must admit that music, as an art form, is famously amorphous and therefore ostensibly resistant to geographic analysis:

The history of popular music is a constant flow of appropriations in which origins, and notions of originality, are often difficult, if not impossible, to trace. While the ownership of individual songs by composers is protected by copyright against musical theft, the ownership of, for example, guitar riffs, phrases, or idiosyncratic sound styles is virtually impossible to protect (Mitchell 1996, 8).

Despite the inherent challenges of tracing the origins of musical movements and the near impossibility of neatly caging off sonic styles, geography has embraced them as legitimate bases of inquiry over the past thirty years. Though musical geography did not firmly establish itself within the academic literature until the late 1980s, it had existed in a variety of forms for decades. Considering ethnomusicology, the academically sanctioned interaction between music and place has existed for centuries.

Like punk itself, music studies had innumerable facets and tenets that informed artists, scholars, and journalists, even though the umbrella term “musical geography” did not yet exist. Much foundational literature for musical geography was not conducted by geographers. Similar to how bands like the Stooges and Velvet Underground were retroactively labeled “proto-punk,” scholars like musical anthropologist Alan Merriam (1964), folklorist Floyd Henderson (1974), rhetorician Ralph Knupp (1981), and of course sociologists like Hebdige (1979) could appropriately be labeled as proto-musical geographers. None of these scholars specifically used

place nor space as a fulcrum upon which their subjects balanced, but place was always present in their observations. Seminal ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl is one example:

“Many variables determine the musical and social outcome: relative size and selection of the diasporic population, the motivation for immigration, the amount of contact later maintained with the original traditional home, the degree of physical, cultural, and linguistic isolation and cohesion of immigrants in the host country; the cultural and musical difference and compatibilities of an immigrant culture in its relationship to the host culture; the attitudes of such a group toward diversity and change; the role and value of music in immigrant and host culture; and, most important, matters of hegemony, oppression, and power relations” (Nettl 2005, 336).

By the mid-1990s, however, geographers refused to let music and other strains of popular culture remain marginalized. While geographers of film (Lukinbeal 1998) and popular literature (Shortridge 1991) began offering cogent analyses about the role that these respective mediums played in affecting the public memory of landscape, music geographers staked their claim too. Though music, by its nature, is a less representative (i.e. non-visual) category of art than illustration or film, it is “a medium through which people convey their environmental experiences - both the everyday and the extraordinary... [and] can thus be said to possess a duality of structure: as both the medium and the outcome of experience, it serves to produce and reproduce social systems” (Kong 1995, 184).

Genres like punk and hip-hop, both of which notoriously emphasize and prize the “local,” function as unwitting geographic mile markers in the timeline of their urban landscape. Dunn tackled this extensively in *Global Punk*, citing scholars such as Martin Stokes (1994) and Mark Olsen (1998) who both expounded this idea about the geographic value of music, the latter characterizing scenes as “‘territorializing machines’ that produce particular kind of relationships to geographic space” (Olsen 1998, quoted in Dunn 2016b, 65).

Dunn immediately quotes Ian MacKaye, who uses the term “regional accent” to describe the collectively-read essence of a city and connected scene. A cursory run through a set of noteworthy releases by DC bands have lyrics and artwork that directly represent their city and region. In 1991, Nation of Ulysses sang songs like “You’re My Miss Washington, D.C.” and “Hot Chocolate City” in bizarre tributes to their hometown. Two years later, Fugazi’s third full-length *In on the Kill Taker* (1993) featured a hazy photo of the Washington Monument on the cover. Q and Not U titled an early single “And the Washington Monument Blinks Goodnight” (2000). The Dismemberment Plan’s song “Spider in the Snow” features singer Travis Morrison memorializing his young-professional experience of “[walking] down K Street to some temping job” (Morrison 1999). Gray Matter’s song “Oscar’s Eye” and the title of the album it was on, *Food for Thought* (1985) were both named after multi-purpose venues within DC that had been vital to the scene’s development. Their contemporaries Rites of Spring titled a song “Hain’s Point” (1985) in honor of the scenic southern outpost on Roosevelt Island. The Capital City Dusters named their second album *Rock Creek*, after the vast green space that slices through the center of the District.

Suburban bands made similar marks, expanding the geographic signature of DC punk to well outside the District lines. Early pressings of Scream’s 1982 *Still Screaming* LP (the first full-length album that Dischord released) have a prominent ‘bXr’ on the labels, a nod to Bailey’s Crossroads, the Northern Virginia community where the band lived. Hoover’s 1993 album *The Lurid Traversal of Route 7* refers to the busy state road that led into and out of DC from Winchester, VA. Even the noisy experimental quintet Black Eyes had a song called “King’s Dominion,” paying tribute to a popular amusement park down Route 95 in Virginia that has been a longtime day trip destination for DC teens and young adults. The list could go on.

In her paper calling for greater acceptance of music within the discipline of Geography, Kong enumerated five prevailing themes that bundled together much of the extant geographic literature on music. These themes were (1) the spatial distribution of musical forms, activities, performers and personalities, with the bulk of work originating in the USA; (2) exploration of musical hearths and diffusion, using concepts such as contagion, relocation and hierarchical diffusion; and examining the agents of and barriers to diffusion; (3) delimitating areas that share certain musical traits, with the exercise of delimitation occurring at different scales; (4) the regional tradition in which the character and identity of places are gleaned from lyrics, melody, instrumentation and the general 'feel' or sensory impact of the music; and (5) thematic analysis of lyrics to explore environmental concerns expressed in music (1995, 184-5). Kong then goes on to enumerate four specific shortcomings of geography related to musical study:

“One is the failure to engage with the social and political contexts in which music is produced. **Secondly**, there is no recognition of the socially constructed nature of space and place experience, nor acknowledgement of the role of music in that construction. Instead, space, as in the tradition of spatial organization studies, is accepted as a given. **Thirdly**, there is little sense of music as a cultural form that is consumed, and that in the process of consumption it undergoes further transformation. **Fourthly**, the importance of music in contributing to the social construction of identities (national, race, gender, class ...) and of space and place has not been explored by geographers” (Kong 1995, 186, emphases added).

In the two decades since Kong's published her piece, geographers have heeded the call and addressed extensively all four of these perceived shortcomings. Many began to approach the intersection of music and place with a keen sense of historical context. For example, Tom Bell's investigation (1998) of the alleged 'Seattle sound' in light of the early-90's grunge explosion (which will figure deeply in theses on the 'DC sound' here) took Seattle's unique site and situation seriously. The confluence of academic inquiry on music has also begun to address an issue that Kong overlooked. Much early musical geography failed to conceptualize circulation

adequately, instead emphasizing limited diffusionary theses. This dissertation identifies this collective shortcoming and addresses it.

One of the benefits of investigating the musical geography of Franco-American circulation is that it calls attention to generations of French geographers. Some of the most innovative work done in that area by French geographers has not been translated for non-French speaking academics. Even Singaporean geographers like Kong, who base their research and publication most in English and Chinese, can easily overlook that side of the discipline. It took until the early 2010s for an adequate compendium of French musical geography that was easily accessible to the English-speaking academy. Nicolas Canova (2013) provides a great overview of the false-starts of the French musical geography movement over the past few decades, which seemed to reflect advances made in the English-speaking world (including the UK, the US, Australia, and Singapore). He cites a couple ancestors of French musical geographers, but admits there was no cohesive movement “until the 1990s, with initial studies being stimulated by research into the links between sound and the environment, most notably the pioneering work of [Jean-Pascal] Vauchey” (Canova 2013, 862). Furthermore, Canova proposes a new theory through which to study the production of space and place through music, termed *territoire*:

“[the *territoire* concept] allows geographers to approach music from numerous directions, such as music as a vector of territorial identity, music as a factor of territorial attractiveness, music as a territorial resource, music as a tool for analyzing emerging territorialities and music as a factor in the dematerialization of territories” (Canova 2013, 865).

Similar to “urban ethos” (see Krims 2007), Canova’s concept of *territoire* (or territory, in the abstract sense) provides a vital building block in my conception of cultural circulation as a phenomenon that transcends direct representation. In consideration of a circulation model of musical geography, one must equally consider

sense of place as well as socially constructed space experience.

Music and Socially Constructed Space and Place Experience

The past decade has seen a spate of scholarship on music's role in the socially constructed nature of space and place experience, or "social practices involving the consumption and production of music [drawing] people together and symboliz[ing] their sense of collectivity and place" (Cohen 1995, 436). Entire volumes have emerged on the general concept, prizing "the urban dystopias of industrial music and the post-punk portrayals of urban decay, the nostalgic urban landscapes of Britpop and the inner-city 'hoods of rap, [illustrating] how popular music has been associated with cities and with people's fears, hopes, desires and dreams about them" (Cohen, Schofeld, and Lashua 2010, 106).

Punk and post-punk music in particular have inspired both music journalists and academics to weave geographic narratives into the aesthetic narratives of the music. Many of these are done posthumously and indirectly, imposing psychogeographic meaning and structure on words and music. Manchester post-punk group Joy Division, despite having a relatively small recorded output (two full-length LPs and a few singles), has been among the most prototypical examples of this in Europe. Even prior to the 1980 suicide of the band's enigmatic singer Ian Curtis, British journalists like Paul Morley had been ardently associating the band's musical aesthetic with Manchester's urban ethos (see Morley 2005). In the past two decades since the geographic calls for greater consideration of popular music, scholars in closely related fields have been drawing on Joy Division and Manchester for inspiration. In the pale of the public imaginary, Manchester cannot exist outside of a centuries-long development both in fiction and history books of working class and industrial connotations" (Bottà 2007, 351). Particularly in

England, where Manchester was ground zero for the industrial revolution, bands like Joy Division and their contemporaries The Fall, Buzzcocks, and (by the early 1980s) The Smiths and Happy Mondays have been unable to avert dirty, grim, working-class associations. Sociologist Leonard Nevarez⁵ approaches Joy Division's geographic legacy from this critical perspective:

“[The band's reluctance to speak to Manchester's impact in interviews] complicates the meaningfulness of Joy Division's connections to Manchester, since audiences “hear” creative works differently based, to a significant degree, on their locations in social structure and social context...If this contention seems to reject the views of Mancunians who recognize firsthand the alienation and desolation conveyed by Joy Division's music, in actuality it only highlights the mediation of history, geography, social relations, and technology involved in the act of listening. It further raises the question, what are the contemporary contexts in which people might perceive Joy Division to sound like the Manchester of old?” (Nevarez 2013, 58).

The influence of Joy Division, Cabaret Voltaire, and other gritty UK urban-decay post-punk was immense on what quickly became the French Cold Wave sound of the early 1980s, “a musical symbiosis of the UK post-punk guitars and German industrial electronics that rhetorically mimicked - through dark melancholic sonorities - the acoustic contours of Europe's angst-ridden cultural landscape” (Hall 2016, 152). Today, Paris' most prominent punk bands like Frustration openly bridge this tradition with more modern interpretations. Though DC and Paris have hegemonic representations and perceptions of their urban landscape that differ from Manchester or similarly (historically) industrial cities in their respective countries, artists from both have had to cater to curiosities about psychogeographic life during their eras of origin. Where the city is the canvas for creative expression in rock music, the city's changing meaning

⁵ Leonard Nevarez, in addition to having an impressive body of work that contributes to much of the literature here, happens to be a DC scene veteran. Though he is a sociologist by trade, his scholarship of music geography and high school experience in the hardCore orbit are not a coincidence. He attended the notorious 1983 show at the Lansburgh Community Center where Void and No Trend opened for Dead Kennedys. His full account is available on his site at <http://pages.vassar.edu/musicalurbanism/2013/06/04/view-from-suburbia-dks/>.

in the public memory is also the site of introspection and academic inquiry. Ultimately, the changing meaning informs the growing *counternarrative* of that city, a cogent reminder of music's role in that development.

Music as Consumed Cultural Form

Though it was not until this century that Geographers deeply examined how music is consumed as a cultural form, tourism studies staged how “music tourism constructs nostalgic attachments to musical heritage sites, scenes, sounds or individuals, while relying on musical events and incidents from the past that can be packaged, visualized, photographed, and 'taken back' home” (Kruger 2014, 135). Geographers, over the past two decades, have heeded this call and approached a wide array of sites where these phenomena have become standardized. Graceland, perhaps the pinnacle icon of American rock 'n' roll's commercial influence, has influenced Southern specialists like Derek Alderman (2002) to examine the pilgrimage landscapes inspired by Elvis Presley. On a wider scale, Hannah Gunderman (2013) wrote about how businesses throughout North America have memorialized the Grateful Dead through place-naming and place making. This dissertation will explore how fans of French fans of DC punk have memorialized bands like Minor Threat and Bad Brains similarly. Although no band from the DC scene has sold as many records as the Dead, nor did they attract festival-size crowds to any of their performances during their heydays, this dissertation argues that similar lessons can be learned that are no less significant than those focusing on the Grateful Dead (Culli 2004; Gunderman and Harty 2016), The Beatles (Cohen 2005; Kruse 2005; Fremaux and Fremaux 2013), Elvis (Alderman 2002; Brennan-Horley, Connell and Gibson 2007) or other superstars. In fact, focusing on underground music may generate qualitative data less mitigated by mainstream

media, which could in turn present a less filtered perspective on humans' preoccupation with place in the consumption of popular music. This dimension is especially pertinent when theorizing urban landscapes. As Will Straw notes:

“As visible expressions of taste and political identity, undergrounds contribute to the theatricality of cities. They occupy space, invite judgments, and participate in the spectacle of visual diversity which has long been one of the key features of cities. At the same time, as obscure worlds whose logics and practices often escape easy identification, musical undergrounds enhance the sense that key features of contemporary urban life are invisible, indecipherable, mysterious” (Straw 2015, 407).

The “indecipherable, mysterious” dynamic has been a core point of intrigue for consumers to seek out the “underground DC” in whatever form they can find it. Often times, this emotional longing for a music scene one never knew has been understood as major engine in the vinyl record industry's exploitation of sense of place to sell records (Vaher 2008, Gibson and Connell 2008, Sonnichsen 2013). Economic geographers in particular have begun paying specific attention to the “new economics” of the music industry, which are heavily predicated upon mutating conduits of consumption that affect the ways artists produce music (see Hracs, Virani, and Seman 2016).

In both of these manifestations, the relationship between music and place has been demonstrated to transcend the actual music. This public ownership which music unwittingly encourages, though not always neatly consumed through mass-produced figurines or posters, can directly incorporate sense of place and elude the artist's original intention. Punk scenes, especially in cases like DC, become inextricable from urban counternarratives, and over time, these become commodified and sold. Though harDCore has not yet developed mass-marketing for tourists, locals in the Petworth neighborhood can order burgers named after Ian MacKaye, Dave Grohl, Henry Rollins, and Chuck Brown at the Satellite Room (Rettig 2014). On occasion,

curious locals and visitors can bid on DC Punk walking tours led by Mark Andersen as charity benefits, though these are hardly a common occurrence. The consumption of punk music in DC remains predominantly through the traditional format of records, but where it transcends recordings as a cultural form, it remains highly localized and reverent to place.

Music and Place-Based Identities

“Different places seem to produce different types of music that reflect regional identities and attachments, and which can be used to describe and analyze representations of territories and their music genealogies. At the same time, it is music that tends to define the place” (Canova 2013, 863).

Geographers have been tackling the effect of music on place-based identities with increasing efficacy over the past twenty years. For example, Blake Gumprecht issued an investigation on how popular music affected identities of West Texas and vice versa (1998). Chris Gibson and Tim Connell’s work on the intersection of music with tourism has vastly elevated the stature of Memphis (see 2007) in academic discourse, and others have tackled how music is manipulated to suit the needs of both regional pride and nationalism. Indie rock has played a vital role in the (re)definition of place in cities like Omaha (Seman 2010). There is little question of whether geography and music have intersected in the interest of civic pride and city growth, but historical context is crucial here. Many of the musical and cultural transgressions that this dissertation incorporates occurred “in a period... where the concept of the 'creative city' and 'symbolic economy' were far from the centre of the political agenda, and popular music was simply ignored at a municipal level” (Bottà 2007, 350). Washington, DC offered little support or even acknowledgment of hardcore during its early years of development, and while France has historically been supportive of “the arts” at a federal level (especially after the Socialist

government was elected in 1981), Parisian punk bands were hardly taken seriously by civic leaders.

As a contribution to the study of musical geography, this dissertation applies all five of the prevailing themes in musical geography literature as well as advance the conversation addressing these four pockets of weakness in the literature. Regarding spatial distribution, this dissertation addresses how punk in both Paris and D.C. incorporated the geographic influence of its places of origin. It explores these musical hearths and diffusion by placing Washington, DC at the focus of subcultural exploration of hardcore punk, and places Paris within that trajectory of diffusion. This research simultaneously delimits areas that share certain musical traits while gleaned character and identity of places from music. Chapter Four examines the concept of “the DC Sound” and investigates how certain specific musical styles and clichés come to constitute a city’s urban ethos (see Krims 2007).

Regarding the thematic analysis of lyrics, this dissertation presents a variety of lyrics inspired by, and about, the artists’ host cities. Though most lyrics did not refer to specific locations on a map, they reflected local attitudes at the time they were written, and DC groups like Fugazi included references to local places, spaces, and geographic processes like gentrification in their lyrics. Their 2002 song “Cashout” dealt with the city’s forceful development head-on, while others like “Suggestion” attacked the gendered spaces of their city in a more nuanced way. Similarly, the electro-punk quartet Frustration obliquely expressed their own frustration with Paris in songs like “Dying City.”

As for Kong’s four areas of weakness, I will draw context and inspiration from those who have answered Kong’s call and further address these points. In asking “what was it about DC at the end of the 70s as well as Paris in the early 1980s?” this section directly engages with “the

social and political contexts in which music is produced” (Kong 1995). The urban condition in time and space of both cities, as well as the cultural circulations that affected these cities at specific points in their history, will be omnipresent throughout historical readings.

One of the core theses of this research is that underground music generates a spirited counternarrative to hegemonic public memories of place. These “places” of DC and Paris are domineering urban landscapes of nationalist symbolism which generally command and manicure the “tourist gaze” (see Urry 1990). DC’s underground punk history has chipped away at this narrative and refracted many tourists’ lenses, even on a niche scale. As there would be no music industry without consumption or commerce, so would punk culture dissolve without a global diffusion of materialities. The commodification of “punk,” as silly as it may be on the surface, has played an indispensable role in the circulation of the culture between DC and Paris. Furthermore, the diffusion of punk beyond the borders of London and New York, and outside the pale of hegemonic cultural boundaries (i.e. the English language, major media markets), has created a deep catalogue of literature and scholarship that has yet to be discovered by social scientists:

“Telling stories about punk that begin in times and places far removed from conventional punk narratives, and considering the social and political circumstances that conditioned the emergence of these other punk cultures, such contributions productively decenter punk studies. Indeed, they unsettle its basic assumptions about the directionality of punk’s lines of influence, and about the primacy (or derivativeness) of non-English-speaking punk culture operating on an unstudied periphery, outside the Anglo-American center. Documenting the adaptive and appropriative practices by which punk practitioners in a variety of different places made punk’s performative force their own, such accounts rewrite punk history in a very important way. They replace longstanding scholarly indifference to punk’s globalization with a nuanced, differentiated account of cultural innovation that emphasizes the polyvalence of punk signifiers, the imbrication of local and global ways of making culture, and the active participation of non-Anglophone punks in the reception, and reproduction, of punk culture” (Hall, Howes and Shahan 2015, 7).

Considering the obvious contributions that French have made in spreading punk beyond its English-language dominance, it is surprising how self-effacing many French punks in this study were about their culture's role in the circulation of the music. Unpacking those contributions profoundly contradicts Kong's thesis that "the importance of music in contributing to the social construction of identities (national, race, gender, class ...) and of space and place has not been explored by geographers" (1995, 187). Following the previous point about cultural circulation, the people at the heart of this phenomenon were dedicated to the ethics, imagery, and fashion espoused by punk. The various pockets of punk culture that grew in Paris, though smaller in scale than London or New York, all made a geographic impression on the city, and still do.

Though this chapter has focused on Lily Kong's treatise, I do not mean to single out her work on musical geography as a comprehensive overview of the issues nor of the potentials of musical geography moving forward. It was merely, especially two decades ago, a concise presentation of where English-language musical geography had been and where it was heading. As this dissertation approaches qualitative concepts like the "sound of DC" and Parisian reflections thereof, it intends to advance the conversation about the value of circulation, as well as the inherent conduits and complexities. This circulation model which I approach accounts for the movement of recordings and music between scenes "[as an] index of the ways in which a particularly stable set of musical languages and relationships between them has been reproduced within a variety of local circumstances" (Straw 1991, 379). One of the weak links in much of musical geography and ethnomusicology, which Kong (1995) overlooked, is how often both disciplines rely on an archaic, monolithic diffusion model which has tended to ignore the most important agent of circulation: people. Rather than simply observing where the cultural icons of

hardCore wound up as of the time and settee of my qualitative research, this dissertation approaches the movement and transformation of the meanings, much like one would approach their city of origin itself. The perpetual, seismic motion of DC icons to and from Paris can create a contradiction in that arts and innovation rarely, if ever, sit still long enough to be observed as concrete representations. However, to understand circulation as a self-perpetuating process could draw greater parallels with sense of place and urban theory. Cities cannot exist without their own internal circulations, and cities cannot accrue meaning (urban ethos) without the external circulation of their people and culture.

PART II:
CONDUITS FOR CIRCULATION AND
MEANINGS

Chapter 5:

The “DC Sound” and the Birth of hardDCore

Though a large constellation of revered bands proudly carries the “DC” label, to comprehensively describe “the DC Sound” is impossible, as “the ‘local’ D.C. sound is well known and influential, with a genealogy that reveals its influences from just about every corner of underground music from 1969 to the present” (Fairchild 1995, 22). The closest approximation, as many of those interviewed for this dissertation echoed, is an attitude that is inextricably linked to the music’s production context. The social elements which are culturally bound with bands from DC are similar, ontologically, to “the Seattle sound.” In 1998, a few years after Seattle’s time in the international spotlight and atop the Billboard charts had cooled, Tom Bell offered a cogent analysis of both geographers’ and journalists’ collective naïveté:

“Cultural geographers have tended to cling to the notion that there is such a thing as the personality of a region. This has been the case at least since the time of the French regional school that first popularized the notion; cultural geographers are not the only ones. Journalists would like to believe this as well and their frantic search for the meaning and even the existence of a Seattle “sound” is proof positive of that belief. If a Seattle “sound” did not really exist, they simply set about to manufacture one. To anyone who has listened to the music of the Seattle-based bands, the notion that they sound alike is almost ludicrous. They range from the folk-inspired Walkabouts to the quasi-heavy metal sound of Soundgarden, the heir apparent to the suburban Seattle based “real” heavy metal bands Queensryche and Metal Church of an earlier musical decade. Journalists have been falling over themselves, however, trying to weave together disparate threads to create a sense of commonality about Seattle’s music scene. The elements they have selected are the noise level of the music, its honesty, and the degree to which many of the groups were treated better elsewhere before being accorded their due in their hometown” (Bell 1998, 37).

Seattle, while being the prototypical case study of the conflict between urban musical geography, the popular discourse, and marketing, was hardly the only application. Following Colin McLeay, Tony Mitchell had a similar assessment of Dunedin and the public’s fascination with its music generated “through a cultural geography of isolation, which produced a

'mythology of a group of musicians working in cold isolation, playing music purely for the pleasure of it' ... [and] made Dunedin a metonym for Aotearoa/New Zealand music as a whole" (Mitchell 1996, 224). DC, over the past few decades, has accrued a comparable mythology, presenting an ideal of self-sufficient DIY network to which other scenes around the world could and seemingly should aspire. As previously mentioned, several artists born in the DC underground went onto major-label record deals, so this is an obvious simplification and romanticization. That being said, DC's collective contribution to the canon of punk is one of few scenes so universally revered.

This was especially true by the time that Seattle's sound hit it big in 1991 and cities like DC and Dunedin were suddenly viewed as stables for future pop stars, most of whom failed to reach their commercial potential. To tag one band prototypical of the DC scene would be both unfair and irresponsible. Arguments could be made for the "most iconic" DC band, though. Fugazi were the most traveled and enduringly popular punk band from DC, but Minor Threat (still Dischord's best-selling artist) were perhaps the most emblematic byproduct of the "big bang" of hardcore⁶.

This fast-and-loud style was not completely unique to DC, though DC put its unique spin on it, standardizing the subgenre's name as a declaration of dedication. The constellation of teenaged punks forming speedy bands in the wake of Bad Brains called themselves 'hardcore' punks as a reaction to the docile punk fashions and the poseurs who wore them around DC in the wake of punk's spark of popularity in the late-1970s (Andersen and Jenkins 2001). Kids like Ian

⁶ I credit Shudder to Think vocalist Craig Wedren with this term. He used it once in conversation with me and it stuck, similar to various other colloquialisms and turns of phrase in light of DC's punk and DIY culture. Though he is not a household name like other DC scene alumni Henry Rollins and Dave Grohl, Wedren has enjoyed extensive success in the TV and Film industry as a score and soundtrack composer.

MacKaye and Nathan Strejcek were serious about what the music meant rather than simply playing the part to seem edgy.

Though played by a relatively small number of bands within a tiny network, this fast-and-loud style of punk fell into virtual standardization by 1981, when most of the people performing it were still in their teens. The trope of DC hardcore revolved around shouted anthemic lyrics, triple-time drumming (sometimes hovering as high as 200 b.p.m.), and slashed power chords, wherein “a guitarist is able to maintain the same basic shape in the fretting hand while sliding up and down the fret board and moving from string to string” (Easley 2013). Charles Fairchild contextualized the harDCore aesthetic in these terms:

“The essence of the sound was a trio of instruments literally thrashing as fast as possible, with shouted or screamed vocals, and lyrics of some definite political weight. It was as if the three-minute pop song form had imploded and exploded simultaneously, while twisting into an entirely new message, that of refusal, self-exclusion, and simultaneous self-definition, articulating a social activism which was a far cry from the nihilism of the earlier [punk] era” (Fairchild 1995, 22).

It was not difficult to play, though it was a challenge to play it well, which bands like Bad Brains and Minor Threat absolutely did. Even to the untrained ear and uninitiated punk listener, Minor Threat’s sonic assault was usually sharply calculated and deliberately accentuated for maximum impact. Music theorist David Easley was able to unpack Minor Threat’s intricate musical values:

In their song “Straight Edge” from 1981, for example, Minor Threat places a series of individual repetitions within a longer, hierarchically organized motion in order to amplify and sonically enact the lyrics. Whereas many hardcore bands’ lyrics are directed at some type of external entity, such as the police, “Straight Edge” is more of a personal statement from singer Ian MacKaye. On the surface, the lyrics seem to depict the way MacKaye wishes to live his life: free from drugs, alcohol, and any other elements that might lead him to lose self-control ... They reflect a preoccupation with living freely and without the need for vices such as alcohol and drugs, but also free from the interference and influence of others. The energy and intensity inherent in the riff construction serves as an aural analogue

to the lyrics, as they complement the directness of the message and assist in the process of intensification and resolution in the song (Easley 2013).

While Minor Threat's music did slow down and morph into something that invited inevitable musical and personal differences that dissolved the band in 1981 and again (for good) in 1983, their catalog of lightning-strikes of songs like "Straight Edge," "Out of Step," and "In My Eyes" has withstood the test of time, and band's legacy continues to swell globally 33 years after they played their final gig. The global impact of "Straight Edge," a 41-second song that Mackaye wrote about his sober philosophy, is incalculable. According to some sources, the first traceable reference to "straight edge" in South America came on the cover of a 1982 Grito Suburbano album in Brazil. Sao Paulo remains, perhaps even more so than DC or Paris, a center of Straight Edge culture today (Reia 2015, 126). According to Robert Voogt of Commitment Records (a Dutch label known for its Straight Edge bands), the movement took root in Europe throughout the late 1980s, rising within punk scenes in the Netherlands, the UK, Germany, Belgium and Italy, with Scandinavia not far behind.

Craig Wedren: "So many American boys were fetishizing and romanticizing and beating their chests over their impression of the DC hardcore scene of 1981 that it turned into something a little bit religious in that way. It becomes dogmatic. When romanticizing or fetishizing turns into dogma, then you're starting to shut down the creative freedoms. And one could argue that there are some near-fascistic movements like Futurism or metal that have produced some pretty awesome material" (Wedren 2016).

Unsurprisingly, Straight Edge has landed well in cultures that already eschew alcohol consumption such as Muslims in Indonesia, as well as Latter-day Saints throughout the world (Dunn 2016, 29).

According to Straight Edger Nicolas Gresser, however, Paris (and France at large) are relatively lacking in a cohesive community. He has often had to leave France in order to find hovels of that community in England or in the United States. His last few US trips have been

motivated by seeing Straight Edge hardcore bands like In My Eyes (named for the Minor Threat song) in Baltimore.

A Minor Threat t-shirt is likely to elicit compliments at a punk gig or record shop anywhere in the world, and an underground music scene which Minor Threat's members and their friends grew has reached iconic status that completely transcends the music itself. As Guy Picciotto said in an interview with the German fanzine *Trust* in 1988,

“The sound now with all of the bands is totally different, you wouldn't believe it, there's no 'sound.' No DC sound at all now. It's really varied. The artistic levels are totally diverse. The things that hold the scene together are more like connections between friends, links like that, rather than some code of ethics or a sound, things like that. I think that is really healthy” (*Trust* 1988).

By the time that Shudder to Think left Dischord to sign with a major label, the band was based in New York City, where Craig Wedren had been based since he left DC to attend New York University in 1987. Their guitarist Chris Matthews, bassist Stuart Hill, and drummer Mike Russell remained in the DC area, though, and Wedren would take the train down almost weekly to practice and play shows with the band. It was actually on the train between New York and DC where he wrote the majority of the band's lyrics (Wedren 2016). Shudder to Think remained solvent as a touring unit, and they were happy to carry the “DC band” tag on the road. The city's urban ethos freed many bands from a musical orthodoxy. As the band told *Sidekick* zine in 1990:

Craig [Wedren]: It helps [being from DC when we're on the road].

Chris [Matthews]: It certainly gives us license to not be (plays generic 1-2-1-2 drum line on his knees) 'cause we're not into that that much. We'd much rather do what we do.

Craig [Wedren]: And I think it makes people want to hear us. There are so many good bands that have come out of DC. They expect quality (*Sidekick* 1990).

Live videos from that year of Shudder to Think playing early iterations of songs like “Red House” (which got MTV airplay in 1997 when the group re-recorded it for their final album *50,000 B.C.* on Epic Records) strikingly presaged the imminent grunge explosion. Though

they were a DC band, their aesthetic matched that which would soon characterize on a grand scale so many of their contemporaries in Seattle: long, shaggy hair (Matthews had a full head of dreadlocks; Wedren cut his hair the next year and eventually shaved his head bald by the time of their MTV appearances), flannel, baggy pants, murky yet melodic guitar tones, and a stomping declarative rhythm section. Though they sounded similar to some Seattle bands at the time, perhaps it was the “musical honesty” (Bell 1998, 38) that tied them both together. Shudder to Think, typical of bands on the Dischord roster or within the label’s orbit, were content to let their live show bleed through on the recordings, avoiding fancy studio effects or ‘clean’ recording production.

This prompted Nick Crossley, drawing on network theory in his paper on the Sheffield post-punk scene in the late 1970s to suggest that because many bands recorded in Cabaret Voltaire’s studio, the whole scene was more vulnerable to the band’s unifying influence.

“Network properties reflect the processes whereby networks are formed. They are consequences (mostly unintended) of the inter-activities of the actors involved in a network and of the constraints upon such interaction, albeit consequences which then act back upon those actors, in the form of new, emergent opportunities and constraints” (Crossley 2015, 57).

This bares a clear parallel with the DC scene over a much greater time span. Don Zientara’s Inner Ear Studios has been the recording spot for dozens of classic DC records by groups of all genres. Through the 1980s, however, many of the Dischord bands recorded there and Ian MacKaye would often helm production. In addition to being the label founder and scene figurehead, he also nudged the sound and production decisions of many bands that helped shape DC’s sound over the following decades. Multiple punk and indie musicians, including Smart Went Crazy’s Chad Clark and Aloha’s TJ Lippie, also moonlighted as recording engineers. J. Robbins (Jawbox) also frequently produced local bands as the 1990s wore on, opening his own studio in Baltimore, the Magpie Cage.

This dynamic was common among smaller, self-contained scenes in both the US and France. In several cases, artists, engineers and producers traded places between DC and Paris. After their initial trip to DC in 1987, Philippe Roizès and Arnaud Gabelli brought back stories about Inner Ear to their crew in Paris. The following spring, Roizès mailed MacKaye a letter indicating that the French hardcore band Flitox were planning to record at Inner Ear that August, and that Gabelli's band Cosmic Wurst were also interested in speaking with Zientara. A few years later, Ted Niceley, who produced early albums by the Slickee Boys and Fugazi, found himself in high demand in France via his resume. In the early 1990s, he went over to produce a record by Fugazi fans Noir Désir, returning throughout the 90s to work with other bands, culminating in one of his favorite projects by the DC-influenced Bordeaux two-piece Gâtechien⁷ (Niceley 2016).

Of course, this raw-studio-sound ethos which had been pertinent in DC became coveted, standardized, and ultimately placeless by the early 1990s. Prior to the major-label abetted 'explosion' of Nirvana and the mainstreaming of 'alternative' music by proxy, neither Shudder to Think nor Mudhoney, Mother Love Bone, nor even Nirvana were composing their songs with the pop charts in mind. In fact, Dave Grohl admits that, upon leaving Screem to move to Seattle and join Nirvana, he considered Fugazi to be the paragon of a successful independent rock band; he hoped his new band could sell half as well as his hometown heroes. What happened by the end of the year was something few could have foreseen. Despite the meteoric rise of Nirvana and the scene they carried on their collective backs, most insiders posit that none of it could have

⁷ Ted Niceley: "A two piece group consisting of Laurent Paradot on Bass and vocals and Flourian Beloud on Drums and vocals. A ferocious yet melodic record, it was as if Fugazi and Birthday Party had a jam session on this studio called Le Nef in Angoulême as this eerie fog rolled in and all of a sudden a lightning bolt struck and Gâtechien was the bastard child."

happened from an artistic standpoint without the prior six years of fallout from Revolution Summer in DC. The DC scene receives due credit for raising Grohl, who played a prominent role in making Seattle's packaged "sound" palatable (Crawford (2015). This current did not go unnoticed on an international scale, either:

Roman Jaskowski⁸: "When grunge got big and the music arrived in Europe, it did nothing for me, because I felt I had heard all that already, from DC punk. That scene was preparing what was next; it was the youngest and freshest version of it" (Jaskowski 2015).

Bad Brains and Hardcore Iconography

This dissertation will shine a light on significant contributions to cultural circulation between DC and Paris from as many sources as possible. However, as the superstructure of popular music creates greater demand and the "urban ethos" of DC as a 'punk city' often becomes simplified to a small set of artists. In this case, through years of empirical evidence as well as those bands most readily referenced by my informants, those three bands are Bad Brains, Minor Threat, and Fugazi. As the latter two were bands which Ian MacKaye started, and were both tightly documented through their role in Dischord Records, they remain immensely popular and influential. However, Bad Brains, are considered the righteous inventors of the hardcore punk style, and for many they are considered the best band to ever play in that style. They did have some marginal mainstream success in the late '80s as they shifted to playing metal, and in 2016 they finally landed the most mainstream of musical recognition: they were nominated for

⁸ Jaskowski's career arc since the beginning of the 1990s would be confounding to many. In 1996, he started the emo-influenced pop group Somerset, who played for four years and played with touring DC bands of that era like Bluetip and The Dismemberment Plan. After the end of the 1990s, Roman continued playing bass with the band Melatonin (who were signed to Universal Records for a time) in the early 2000s, Parisian reggae band Les Pigments Libres from 2008-2013, and more recently, in the tongue-in-cheek ska band Plus Naïf Que Tu ("More Naïve than You").

induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland. The local press reflected on the band's undeniable influence:

“Even within its own genre, Bad Brains was an act unlike any other, pushing the idea of what punk rock and hardcore music could be, while breaking down racial barriers. The band fused elements of reggae, metal, R&B and funk. In that sense, Bad Brains became a bridge for from artists like The Clash and Sex Pistols to the likes of Jane's Addiction, Living Colour, Rage Against the Machine, Sublime and Soundgarden” (Smith 2016).

MacKaye, when asked about the band for WTOP-FM, put it more succinctly: “In 1979-80, not only did we have this great local band, we actually had the greatest band in the world playing in Washington” (Augenstein 2016). It would be safe to assume that harDCore would never have happened without Bad Brains deciding to try playing punk. The band's debut single “Pay to Cum” (1979) became a lightning bolt (more on that symbolism in a second) that changed the course of music in DC, for musicians both American and French:

Craig Wedren (Shudder to Think): “I remember hearing ‘Pay to Cum’ and just being attacked with it. It was the rapid-fire singing. The rapid-fire playing. It wasn't metal, it wasn't punk, it was melodic, it had so many totally revolutionary - in my ears, then... [Bad Brains] made all of our chops so much better (Personal Conversation, 10 May 2016).

To understand the adversity which gave rise to hardcore punk in the United States may have been difficult for French punks at the time. Lyon scene veteran Maïe Perraud enthusiastically cites the culture cafes she encountered during her late teenage years as pivotal in the proliferation of punk culture in France. The Francois Mitterand government, between founding the Fête de la Musique and sanctioning culture cafes nationwide, heavily contrasted with the Anglo-Saxon governments led by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Myriad rock critics cited waves of sociopolitical conservatism under Reagan and Thatcher as the source of undeniable fomentation for a highly volatile, exciting musical underground. Shayna Maskell, in her treatise on Bad Brains, makes the case that:

“The meaning-making occurring at [the Bad Brains well-documented 1982 performance at] CBGBs is a refutation of the staunch conservatism and strict moral turpitude professed and accepted as the social mores of the 1980s. While this dominant political view itself included violence—that of the State against other countries, and the State against minorities, both figuratively and literally—the violence of Bad Brains and their audience was a sort of reclamation of violence as representation” (2009, 414).

Bad Brains finally released their debut album on cassette for ROIR in 1982. As the band was too fast and loud for mainstream radio play or MTV at the time, promotional efforts were stunted and the cassette became a “holy grail” purchase for international fans. Over the years, the album’s cover art (See Figure 6), which featured a cartoon of lightning striking the US Capital dome, bedecked with a color scheme befitting the band’s newfound Rastafarianism, has become among punk’s most parodied images⁹. The Rouen band Tekken released a split-7-inch in 2006 entitled *Banned in Rouen* (a nod to Bad Brains’ “Banned in DC”), lifting the ROIR artwork almost directly, though replacing the Capital Dome with a similarly distorted image of Rouen’s top landmark, the Jean d’Arc Cathedral (see Figure 4). Brest hardcore quintet Thrashington, DC released a special edition of their 2007 LP *To Live and Die in B.M.O.*¹⁰ that included a poster that featured a cartoon lightning bolt striking Brest city hall (See Figure 5). Incidentally, that album included an original song called “Banned in B.M.O.” and a cover of Minor Threat’s “Bottled Violence.”

⁹ I only included examples here relevant to Franco-American circulation. The Bad Brains self-titled album cover has inspired parodies in the hundreds, possibly even thousands. A month or two before this writing, I saw Asbestos Records, a label based in Connecticut, issued a T-Shirt that aped the Bad Brains artwork for “Banned in New Haven,” replacing the Capitol dome with a pizza, New Haven’s great cultural/gastronomic export.

¹⁰ B.M.O. stands for “Brest Metropole Océane,” the region of Brittany that included Brest. According to Thrashington, DC singer Fab Le Roux, the phrase had not been administratively official at the time, but the band thought it was hilarious and a good localism and rallying cry in their early songs.



Figure 6. Bad Brains self-titled (1982 ROIR), original cover art. From Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 7. The cover of Rouen punk band Tekken's 7" 'Banned in Rouen,' which directly parodies the cover of the first Bad Brains LP, replacing the US Capitol dome with the Jean d'Arc Cathedral.



Figure 8. Collectible Thrashington, DC poster issued by the band with their first LP. The poster parodies the cover of the first Bad Brains LP, replacing the US Capital Dome with the Brest City Hall building.

Bad Brain's musical eclecticism also served to diversify DC's early punk ethos beyond merely color lines. The 1980s hardcore kids in DC, following in the footsteps of a black band, did not ignore their kinship with the city's go-go funk. Though segregation drove wedges between the two scenes, they attempted to build bridges and occasionally booked shows together. One time, Government Issue and Trouble Funk performed together in a historically genre-melding event. The results were mixed; many of Trouble Funk's older fans were less interested in harDCore, and despite the (relatively) large number of black faces at punk shows, the two scenes' fans did not mesh on a large scale (see Crawford 2016). Also, though they both encouraged crowd participation, Go-Go's long-form jamming and call-and-response mechanics (see Hopkinson 2012) did not cohere with Government Issue's short, punchy songs. Despite the

ostensible failure of the experiment, one predominantly white scene and one almost-exclusively black did more to bridge the widening cultural gap of the height of DC's crack era than anybody at City Hall:

“Go-go can feel a lot like a Pentecostal church service. Both run for extended hours, and you never know when they will end. Neither erects a huge barrier between who is performing and who is watching. Both are heavy in call and response. In the beginning there was [Chuck] Brown, then generations of Washingtonians came after him that continued to make go-go a place, subject, and verb” (Hopkinson 2012, 51).

Similarly, in the beginning there was Bad Brains, and then generations of Washingtonians came after them that continued to make hardcore a state of mind, a style of music, and an adjective. The Georgetown punks, who would cross paths with Bad Brains at the Hard Art Gallery and Madam's Organ in 1979, actually gave it that title, seeking to differentiate themselves from poseurs who wore punk fashions but didn't take the music seriously (Anderson and Jenkins 2001). Hardcore, too, can feel like a religious ceremony. Shows would sometimes run for several hours, sometimes stretching well into the night.

The racially-motivated "death of disco" in 1979 coincided with deflated major-label interest in punk music. According to black ushers at Comiskey Park, few black fans attended 'Disco Demolition Night,' and the white fans destroying 'disco records' were bringing in LPs by black artists who had never recorded a disco song (John 2016). The music industry followed suit and echoed the public's tacit rejection of black music, simultaneously disinvesting in punk and disco. Coincidentally (and perhaps ironically) the most commercially successful bands who signed with majors during punk's first wave had either mutated toward black music (Blondie toward disco, The Clash toward reggae and ska), dissolved (The Sex Pistols, The Dead Boys), or

were The Ramones¹¹. As it happened, punk slid underground and gave birth to hardcore while disco slid underground and gave birth to techno and house. The consequential mainstream ambivalence furthered an underground kinship between punk with disco, go-go, and reggae, a hybridization that ran as a strong urban-centric counter-narrative to corporately controlled music media¹². As Adam Krims wrote,

"Indeed, the urban ethos soon after disco's demise contained no space for a social equivalent to the music and its attendant social practices. Punk and its crossover cousin, New Wave (even when, as in the music of Blondie, it incorporated components of disco), not only spelled the oft-recounted reaction to disco and arena rock, they also announced different perceptions of city life, in which squalor and class-based rage could no longer be denied or contained" (2007, 80).

Despite both an understandable stereotype of the District as a button-down, vanilla atmosphere as well as its proud status and history as the quintessential African-American-dominated "Chocolate City," DC has long been a constantly shifting *mélange* of flavors that enhance the sweetness of one another. Though 'punk' and 'hardcore' are often subject to aggressive genre-fication, DC has problematized the dynamic that "the vast majority of musical production at any one time involves musicians working within relatively stable 'genre worlds' (see Frith 1996), "within which ongoing creative practice is not so much about sudden bursts of innovation but the continual production of familiarity" (Negus 1996, 25). This played into the hands of the major labels, which historically prized and marketed formulaic music over

¹¹ It bears a mention that 1979 was the year the Ramones recorded their glossy *End of the Century* with infamous producer Phil Spector. *End of the Century* has many acolytes, but it is hardly a representative piece of Ramones music.

¹² Even Deep Dish, suburban Marylanders of Persian descent who would find success as House and Club producers and deejays, cited Minor Threat and Bad Brains as early influences. Many early hardcore musicians in both DC and Paris transitioned to electronic music. Manu Casana, whose early visit to Dischord is chronicled in Chapter 11, began a successful career in House and Rave promotion by the early 1990s. The cultural impact and meaning of dance music circulation between DC and Paris would make an interesting counterpoint for this dissertation.

innovative niche-market subgenres. Similarly, Will Straw wrote how “the drawing and enforcing of boundaries between musical forms, the marking of racial, class-based and gender differences, and the maintenance of lines of communication between dispersed cultural communities are all central to the elaboration of musical meaning and value” (1991, 372). DC's punk scene, has, more than most, run counterintuitive to these ideas, establishing the city as a more representative snapshot of punk’s cross-cultural impact that is largely ignored by the genre’s mainstream depictions:

“Different people are drawn to punk for different reasons. In my formal interviews and informal conversations with hundreds, if not thousands, of people who identify themselves as punk, no clear personality profile emerges. They are not exclusively male, white, suburban, American youths, as one often hears from Western media and people unconnected to punk” (Dunn 2016, 25).

Like many bands operating on the fringes of the music industry, Bad Brains, universally regarded as trailblazers of hardcore music (see Maskell 2009) had little reverence for genre. The quartet routinely performed dub reggae numbers in between the fast and loud songs. Guitarist Dr. Know (Gary Miller) incorporated heavy metal guitar riffs early on as well, which moved the band into a more pop-metal style by the later 1980s. While no constellation of bands can disprove Frith's idea of nebulous 'genre worlds,' DC did more than most punk scenes of note in that era to disrupt their stability. After Bad Brains set this precedent, many early harDCore bands like Scream and Red C (both of which had black members) followed suit. Through this and other types of transgressions against hegemonic suppositions about a commonly misunderstood musical family, DC’s entire history as a subversive “capital of punk” has consistently defined itself against the mainstream and repeatedly reinvented itself.

Gender and Urban Ethos of DC

Like many (though unfortunately not all) of their contemporaries in the DC punk scene, bands like Fugazi made strides for political responsibility in music, consistently defending marginalized and endangered groups. Though they were all in the hegemonic position of being white, middle-class men, their lyrics always took care to punch up and fight social injustices that became more prevalent over the course of the 1980s, especially in hardcore. One of these was the aggressive and objectifying treatment of women in the predominantly male scene. As the feminist geographer Mona Domosh wrote “when we move out of the house and on to the streets, our identities are constantly being monitored, judged, constituted, negotiated and represented” (1998, 280). Fugazi brought this to the forefront on their 1988 debut EP with the song “Suggestion”:

“Why can’t I walk down a street free of suggestion?
Is my body the only trait in the eyes of men?” (Fugazi 1989)

Fugazi were not the first male punk musicians to include feminist sentiments and experiences into their lyrics and turn the camera on their gender, but to the international community, they fomented an association of their hometown scene with gender parity. Though few punk scenes were shining examples of egalitarian demographics, DC concerned itself especially with providing a platform for marginalized voices that historically struggled to succeed on their own terms within the sphere of rock music (see Davies 2001).

While punk rock has never been an explicitly raced subgenre of popular music, relatively few progenitors have been people of color. Though on a worldwide scale, DC has produced many of the most notable musicians of color. In addition to the most prominent example in Bad Brains, Void guitarist Bubba Dupree, Beefeater guitarist Fred Smith, and Scream bassist Skeeter

Thompson have all remained highly respected and influential throughout the hardcore underground for over three decades. Several black women also made profound impacts as the scene came of age. Red C bassist Toni Young and Fire Party drummer Nicky Thomas are two prominent examples, the former also producing singles by local acts like Double O and helping manage bands before passing away in 1987 (Connolly, Clague, and Cheslow 2015, 46).

Thomas' band, The Fire Party, was an all-female quartet active at a time when sexism in punk finally birthed a homegrown American movement in reaction: Riot Grrrl. The most prominent Riot Grrrl bands were associated with the Pacific Northwest (Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, and Sleater-Kinney all originated in Olympia, Washington), but the figureheads, including Kathleen Hanna, spent the summer of 1991 in DC to create a zine and help spread their radical feminist movement (Andersen and Jenkins 2001, Crawford 2015). Though the Fire Party had broken up by 1990, their members stayed involved in the community. DC had already been well-established to international fans as a crucible of social justice in punk; it just happened that Fugazi were the most visible at the time, and "Suggestion" was the most audible. Six years later, Jawbox used a powerful platform afforded them by Atlantic Records to get their anti-objectification song "Savory" played on MTV. Four years prior, Jawbox bassist Kim Coletta had reflected on her place in the punk scene in an interview with *Maximumrocknroll*:

"One of the reasons, the driving force I'm in a band, is to try [to] show other women, 'Look, it can be done. You can do it. You can pick up an instrument and be in a band.' For me it was kind of frightening at first because one of the reasons I didn't join a band for so long was I was quite frankly scared. Being female I thought 'if I don't play this bass fairly well people will just dismiss me as a female musician,' and I hate that ... I'm a complete nut onstage now. It's really empowering because often, after I play, women come up to me, even if there aren't many women in the audience, the few there will come up and say, 'That was really great. It's inspired me. I've been trying to play guitar and I'm really going to try extra hard now.' That makes me so excited, almost more than anything else at a show" (MRR #91, 1990).

Like the extensive list of women who built that era of indie rock, Coletta was a musician first, but was forced to operate within rock's masculine superstructure. From a qualitative research standpoint, you could ask the question "what is it like to be a woman in punk?" to 100 different people and receive 100 different answers.

Maïe Perrauld: "When I started to be in the punk scene, I never asked anybody to have my place to do this or that. I came here to do something. I never had any problems with men, maybe because I never mentioned that I was a woman, or wanted to do something "as a woman." I think that all the girls with me did the same. When we were in the pit, we didn't care.... I guess that if there are more punk rockers male than women it's because of history. It's because of our culture, because we're in a very masculine culture, and it doesn't mean that women have not their place in it. But you just have to *take* your place in it. I don't have to fight to have something, I just take it. We were not all involved in the Riot Grrrl movement, [but] we were curious about them (Perrauld 2015).

Gabrielle: "I learned how to play guitar when I was 9 until 16, the age when you're supposed to play in a band, then I stopped. Then I started to learn drums when I was 20 until 23 or 24...It's really different when you're a girl in the scene, because you're too shy to play with boys, or... there is so much gossip, and when you're a girl it's horrible, the worst.... For some boys, girls are just here because they're the girlfriends, so they don't ask he girls "which bands do you like?"... in France you have few zines run by girls, too."

Nabil: I don't know of any city in France that is known for having lots of girls at shows or whatever. It's the same pretty much everywhere (Group Interview 26 July 2015).

Regardless of how an individual may feel within their community and scene at large, punk increased this dialogue worldwide, and DC has led the charge. Due to time constraints, I was only able to post the question about experiences being a woman in punk to five female members of French punk scenes. Because gender in punk was not my research focus, I rarely led with questions pertaining to the matter. This also demonstrated a shortcoming of my email interview methods, as only the superficial questions focused on the main research questions typically get addressed by respondents. That is not to say that gender can ever be removed from questions of human geography and social landscapes of music. As many feminist geographers

have established, gender is an inescapable element of existing in and across both public and private space (Domosh and Seager 2001). Additionally, critical research and reflexivity both necessitate a feminist epistemological approach to research, which transcends historically masculinist, authoritative viewpoints (Rose 1993, Thien 2009).

DC, Paris, and Franco-American Political Legacy

Fugazi's name is a tongue-in-cheek reference to one of DC and Paris' greatest collaborative atrocities, the Vietnam War. MacKaye, Guy Picciotto, Joe Lally and Brendan Canty, all born between 1960 and 1965, came up in an America growing exhausted with its overreaching military and the veritable lost generation it was creating out of the Baby Boomers. The members lived and went to school mere miles from where Presidents Johnson and Nixon signed off on fateful decisions that resulted in the death and traumatization of millions. Even to the kids who would later become punks in a city unknown for its musical counter-culture, political resistance was closely tied to music:

Ian MacKaye: "The Vietnam War was central in my consciousness as a child. My parents were anti-war, we had a lot of anti-war protestors who would stay at our house. And the rock 'n' roll world was tied in with that. So I did a lot of studying of '60s culture... I read Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin and Emmett Grogan... I think people forget with all the underground stuff that was going on then, just how crazy and horrific and savage and pointless that war was" (Personal interview, 13 Aug 2016).

MacKaye landed on the name for his new band in the summer of 1987, the byproduct of a lengthy obsession with Vietnam War stories and documentaries (Andersen and Jenkins 2001; Connolly 2016). One book that he was reading at the time, Nam by Mark Baker (1981), had the

word *fugazi* in the glossary defined as “a fucked-up situation¹³.” Surprisingly, he and the band would actually need to go to Southeast Asia to discover their name’s deeper entomology.

Ian MacKaye: “[On November 8th] 1996, we were in Singapore, and we had done a show at a club called Fire, and there was a teenage girl named Venita and her younger brother whose name I don't recall. Her brother asked what Fugazi stands for, and Venita says 'fucked up, got ambushed, zipped in.' It was the first time I'd ever heard it, and [Fugazi had] been together for almost a decade at that point” (Personal interview, 13 Aug 2016).

Fugazi possessed a multitude of quintessentially French characteristics in what Shudder to Think singer Craig Wedren calls the band’s “aesthetic libertinage” (Personal Interview, 10 May 2016). They are one of few independent rock groups whose influence not only transcended their music internationally, but grew to encapsulate their city's urban ethos during their lifetime. In Paris as well as most world cities where they played their thousand-plus concerts, they represented DC in no uncertain terms. MacKaye traditionally began every Fugazi set the same way: "Hi, we are Fugazi from Washington, D.C." Though Fugazi would speak for disaffected members of Generation X, performing several now-legendary free anti-war concerts in their hometown, they were slightly older than that age group. By the time Ian MacKaye and his friend Henry Rollins entered Woodrow Wilson High School in the mid-1970s, the United States had limped away from Vietnam and entered an uncertain malaise.

The members of Fugazi were unquestionably a product of their hometown, and because they all remained there for most of their existence as a band, their hometown kept shaping them. Their January 12, 1991 concert in Lafayette Park adjacent to the White House was a landmark in a media-minimized protest movement against the Iraq War (see Mojo Magazine, July 2016). While Fugazi had played their final show before the next Bush declared the next Iraq War in

¹³ Similar were the terms ‘snafu’ (situation normal, all fucked up) and ‘fubar’ (fucked up beyond all recognition/repair), popularized among World War II soldiers.

2003, the band's members continued publicly criticizing the military-industrial complex and the US invasion, both MacKaye as one half of The Evens and Joe Lally as a solo artist.

While Fugazi had earned worldwide retroactive renown for Dischord Records and the greater urban ethos of DC, the band's local impact and importance could not be overstated.

MacKaye prefaced one outdoor concert at the Sylvan Theater in 1995 (see Figure 6) discussing how many non-profit groups in the DC area had contacted them, desperate for help.¹⁴

“Every couple days or every couple of weeks, we get calls from people who are looking for us to do a concert to raise money for their particular organization, or shelter or group or something. Washington is full of social or service-oriented groups or organizations, and we’re a band that has played many, many benefit concerts for groups that we think are important and fortunate for the community that we live in, which is right here in Washington, DC. ... The last year or so, we’ve been getting inundated with calls saying ‘we desperately need money,’ and they need money because the funding has been cut off by the city. Because as you may or may not know, the financial situation here is really fucked. ... There’s far too many groups who need money, so we decided instead to just to this one for now which is to encourage everybody here and anybody else who happens to come across to volunteer your time, your money, and your services to these groups. They all definitely need money and the city is not in a position to take care of them, so it’s up to the people. Good luck, everybody, good luck.”

The city had stricken so much funding from shelters that the only financial (or at least the most attainable) hope came from a band. Congress and the DC Council had been at war over civic laws and regulations since the city had first been granted self-governance two decades prior. In 1995, around the time of that Fugazi concert, Congress had stripped the city’s budgetary sentience completely. Concurrently, The District’s isolation from its suburbs became increasingly defined as “administratively conservative (i.e., unregulated) regional development enmeshed economic and racial segregation on a metropolitan scale” (Klemek 2014, 14). This moment captured a grim reality that the city was facing, and this is worth remembering when questioning whether ‘punk matters.’

¹⁴ A full video of this Sylvan Theater show is available at <https://youtu.be/gZornvqsPxw>.



Figure 9. Flyer for Fugazi's 9/16/95 benefit show at the Washington Monument, held in protest of citywide budget cuts. The fine print in the circle reads: "Washington, DC is a highly combustible mix of wealth and power amidst despair and deprivation. Our city has been left prostrate by an on-going tragedy of poverty and violence as well as by growing cutbacks in services to the poor generated by chaos in the city government and by callous disregard in the Republican Congress. We all must act, both to protest and to share our talents, time and resources so that the needy are not sacrificed on the budget cutting table. The rich and powerful must understand that there is a limit beyond which people cannot be pushed without risking an explosion. Our love and our action can help provide the fuel for justice, hope and a renewed community." From the Dischord Archive.

The Overlapping Geographies of DC Music Scenes

Interviewer: “Do you think the way people fetishize DC of a certain era, do you think that's unfair?”

Craig Wedren: “I'm guilty of it; the older I get the more I romanticize '81, because I wasn't there [in DC yet]. I have no bad memories to ruin things... You can't appreciate it when you're in your early twenties, because it's your first time behind the wheel. But you can't think of ‘this is our right, this is a meritocracy (laughs) everything's happening.’ Then you look back and realize, holy shit, that was a real creative laboratory happening there” (Wedren 2016).

As a byproduct of the confluence of cultural spaces in and around the District of Columbia, harDCore did not develop in a vacuum. Nor did its creators intend for this to be the case. In fact, although many would not realize it at the time, DC's punk scene could never have happened were it not for an elaborate social, cultural, and internationally influenced history of their city. Though the nascent Paris punk scene was not exactly instrumental in the birth and early development of harDCore, DC's intermittent touches of Parisian influence appeared throughout the story of its birth and worldwide growth.

The more one reflects on DC's musical legacy, the harder it is to believe that DC is still predominantly characterized as a relatively amusical city by most of the outside world. Duke Ellington and Francis Scott Key both have their name on one bridge and one school each in the District. The two are the most historically prominent musical figures in DC history, but in manners that serve two conflicting narratives. Key was not even a musician per se. While Ellington wrote hundreds of songs that became jazz standards and almost single-handedly legitimized the form within American popular music, his name merely scratches the level of Nationalist clout as that of an amateur, slave-owning poet lawyer who wrote what became the national anthem. Of course, Key (1779-1843) and Ellington (1899-1974) lived during two dramatically different eras, and Ellington left his native DC behind at a young age to join the

zeitgeist of the Harlem Renaissance. Key spent most of his life in Washington, practicing law and interacting with the federal government¹⁵. Despite the preponderance of his name in nationalist discourse, Key's residence at 3518 M St NW (1802-1948) became a casualty of Georgetown's post-War development. Though early tourism efforts converted the house into a museum in 1907, it eventually came down when the city completed the Whitehurst Freeway and connected it to the Key Bridge, completed two decades prior (Goode 2003, 11).

Though both names attract a good handful of interest from tourists, Ellington and Key still demonstrate why Washington, DC does not *need* musical tourism. If there is one thing DC does not lack, it is tourists. In 2014 alone, about 20 million tourists spent almost \$7 billion in the city (O'Connell 2015). Visitors to the District area routinely engage in almost every type of known tourism (see Ohashi 2012), including political tourism (e.g. a presidential inauguration), heritage tourism (e.g. The White House, monuments), thanotourism (e.g. Civil War sites, Arlington National Cemetery, Vietnam Memorial), sports tourism (e.g. college or professional basketball games), food tourism (e.g. Ben's Chili Bowl, Old Ebbitt Grill) and educational tourism (e.g. The Smithsonian Museums), most of which could easily fall into more than one category and happen within the course of one well-planned trip. Daily life for many District residents has become inextricable from the tourist landscapes of their city, as "the distinction between tourism and other spheres of capitalist accumulation is fuzzy and imploding" (Corkery and Bailey 1994, 493). DC's small size and its position outside the radar of the mainstream culture industry have both been strengths in developing the city's musical acumen, particularly from the standpoint of network theory:

¹⁵ See <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/francis-scott-key-the-reluctant-patriot-180937178/> for more information.

“conflict, competition and marginalization may have positive as well as negative effects: e.g. conflict may spur musicians on both to rehearse hard and innovate, producing better music, and relative isolation may remove musicians from strong social influences and demands for conformity, facilitating innovation” (Crossley, McAndrew and Widdop 2015, 3).

No artists develop their style in a vacuum, and it follows that DC's size, density, and intersection of races and ethnicities across performance venues would mix that pot. Perhaps DC's most prominent and politicized indigenous musical form, Go-Go funk music, is the greatest encapsulation of the city's ethnic site and situation. Though the DC punk scene was hardly monochromatic, it would be both inaccurate and irresponsible not to discuss Go-Go, a percussion-centered subgenre of funk indigenous to the district. Something as simple as music blaring from a car radio can alter the atmosphere of an entire city block (see Wissmann 2014), and recently local radio stations have ramped up efforts to keep go-go relevant in a changing city¹⁶. As Natalie Hopkinson chronicled in her 2012 book *Go-Go Live: Musical Life and Death of a Chocolate City*, the District has been, for the past forty years and throughout the punk era, been a “laboratory for social innovation” (2012, 148):

"There is no better place to see [Habermas'] theory [of public spheres] in action than in Washington, D.C.: on the House and Senate floors, at the memorials for the Vietnam and the Second World Wars on the National Mall, in the Smithsonian Museums - and in the go-go clubs. These physical spaces are repositories of our national collective memory and the nexus of debate for the pressing issues of the day, whether they concern national governance, education, policy, slavery, poverty, or civil rights. The country's racially fraught history is the reason why the Chocolate City arose at this same intersection. Washington and D.C., go-go and "mainstream" music public sphere appear separate and diametrically opposed. In reality, however, they overlap. Federal Washington and black D.C. are two sides of the proverbial coin” (Hopkinson 2012, 148).

¹⁶ On my most recent trip to DC, one of the most memorable and quintessentially ‘DC’ moments occurred while I was walking down H Street NE, crossing 9th St. The Atlas District was full of activity that Friday night, but this block I was on was eerily quiet. Suddenly, a black sedan rolled by, blaring the familiar percussion-heavy sounds of Go-Go out of its windows. Within moments, the desolate block had transformed into a signpost of DC's great contribution to the funk music canon.

As go-go has grown in direct opposition to the mainstream purview of DC, so has punk. Though the progenitors of punk came from more privileged or suburban backgrounds than the members of Trouble Funk or Experience Unlimited, they were all people, agents of circulation (mostly internal) acting as geographic mile-markers in a city fraught with contradictions.

Chapter 6: Violent Memories and Obstacles to Oral History

“There exists no simple or direct recovery of how things ‘really were,’ only of how things come to be remembered and translated, not what happened, but what is happening... memory is also the art of forgetting, of occluding a loss, negating a lack... in which the poignancy and pain of the past is overwritten in the psychic release of the present” (Chambers 1997, 235).

This project embraces a multitude of characteristics that Kitchen and Tate (2013) attribute to qualitative study: humanistic, subjective, interpretative, idealistic, small sample sizes, participants, and a spate of data composed of words, pictures, and of course, sounds (40). Furthermore, “anthropologists, folklorists, and, perhaps even more, ethnomusicologists, are typically distinguished by their belief that a (musical) culture can best be understood through intensive work with a relatively small number of representatives” (Nettl 2005, 144). A growing number of scholars in human geography may agree. For this dissertation, I interviewed a total of seventeen individuals in a loose conversational format, recording a total of over thirty hours of interview audio. These conversations, large portions of which I transcribe throughout this dissertation, touched upon a variety of topics pertaining to the subcultural circulation of harDCore between DC and Paris. The primary questions focused on the informants’ *impression* of DC, based upon what they know of the city’s mythologized punk and hardcore history. I also asked about any connections they considered between DC and Paris culture (and on a larger scale, the Franco-American relationship). These interviews also included many travel anecdotes and frank opinions about their experiences of place both as insiders and outsiders. Additionally, because this project’s ultimate ontological focus is on people as agents of circulation, I eagerly asked for their stories of how they got into punk and ultimately what led them to become a fan of DC’s underground output.

The majority of this ethnographic research was conducted in person in Paris throughout the month of July 2015, with various communications for the purpose of following up and reconnecting with informants. Additionally, I took two brief research trips to Washington, DC to visit the punk archives at the DC Public Library and the University of Maryland as well as meet with a few scene denizens. Due to time constraints, extended interviews were recorded with two informants via Skype over the summer of 2016.

Using multiple print sources explained throughout this section, I was able to triangulate various anecdotes that illustrate the geographic interactions of punk with the urban landscape of DC. This analysis also drew parallels between the violent urban realities of DC and Paris at the time the two subcultures began to circulate and integrate. DC and Paris, as two different cities, obviously transformed and gentrified differently, but this discussion helps illuminate how particular blighted landscapes made the early growth and circulation of this music possible. Chapter 13 will revisit gentrification in light of DC and Paris. In both cities, shuttered buildings and abandoned (after dark, at least) city blocks redefined the towns as veritable playgrounds or unsupervised laboratories for live performance and exchange of ideas.

Violent Memories of Paris

The first skinhead in Paris was an Algerian teenager named Farid. He spent most of his childhood hearing from his father that they were returning to Algeria as soon as they had the means. They never did. Instead, they established roots in Colombes, a community a few kilometers to the Northwest of Paris, with no end in sight to their new citizenry in post-Colonial France. When Farid came of age in the mid-1970s, punk boiled over across the Channel in London. Punk crossed into France early with bands like Rouen's Olivensteins (named after a

doctor known for helping addicts kick heroin), but it wasn't the first wave the captivated Farid and his friends Ammour, Pierrot, and Fan. After punk created a major-label feeding frenzy in England by 1977, the cockney-influenced Oi! subgenre grew. Oi! was a working-class style of call-and-response street punk streamlined by groups like the Cockney Rejects, the Business, and perhaps most important to these alienated French and Algerian teens, Sham 69.

Oi! arrived at the perfect moment in Paris. Gérard Miltzine wrote to the LA-based zine *Flipside* in 1983 reflecting that at the end of the 1970s, the punk movement in France became “a musical desert.” French national television imported New Wave culture from England on the show ‘Chorus,’ which showcased videos by bands like The Clash, Magazine, and Siouxsie and the Banshees. Los Angeles punk bands with international distribution like The Germs and the Avengers also began to eke their way through (Miltzine 1983). However, to the diverse first wave of French skinheads, Oi! brought a new aesthetic that suited them. In Farid's words, “the uniform was clean, square, and scared people off” (Vecchione 2008). The first four French skins were not hell-bent on destruction, only on a pronounced identity. Oi! music and the interwoven skinhead culture were largely apolitical until the early 1980s. The title Oi! was a reference to a cockney fighting incantation; if someone yelled it at you, you were probably about to wind up bloody. It was the battle cry of a generation unskilled in peaceful, measured diplomacy. Violence was all they understood.

Across the Channel in England, the National Front rose to power and captivated the imagination of angry, disenfranchised youth; the nationalist and White-Power lyrics that Oi! bands like Skrewdriver adopted exacerbated the intolerance. In Paris, the National Front party grew under the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen, coalescing far-right sentiments that had emerged in France against immigration and the so-called mongrelization of Western Civilization,

of which they viewed France as the apex. Several right-wing Nationalist skinhead bands soon popped up in Paris, including the Tolbiac Toads, Evil Skin, Brutal Combat, Bunker 84, and Legion 88¹⁷ (Vecchione 2008). The Toads (named after their home neighborhood in the 13th Arrondissement) rose out of the third generation of skinheads in Paris, and the first to have overt nationalist and racist views.

The first two Oi! bands in Paris, L'Infanterie Sauvage and R.A.S. both broke up in 1984, though for strikingly converse reasons. R.A.S. decided to call it quits after too many of their shows ended in violence between Nationalist skinheads and Anti-fascist punks (see Figure 10). L'Infanterie Sauvage, however, disbanded because their singer Géno (born Jean-Christophe Mam) moved too far right politically, engaging with the RAC (Rock Against Communism) movement and aligning with neo-Nazi groups. Ironically, Géno (see Figure 11) was half-Cambodian, as were many young Parisian suburbanites in the wake of the diaspora caused by the Vietnam War and subsequent rise of the Khmer Rouge. Though these bands and many of their followers had fallen into nationalism as the byproduct of “confusion” and “teenage politics” and would eventually turn against racism (Roizès 2015), their crews had a profound impact on Paris' violent 1980s street culture.

The first wave of skinheads within the periphery of Paris appeared in 1978 around the Fontaine des Innocents, in Les Halles neighborhood, in the 1st Arrondissement (Vecchione 2008, Beauchez 2014). The second wave emerged in 1980, centralized on the landmark fountain at Place de la République, less than two kilometers east of Les Halles. Still relatively unfazed by politics, this crew rallied around the bands like Swingo Porkies (Roizès 2015). By the end of

¹⁷ “88” is commonly acknowledged shorthand for “Heil Hitler,” as H is the 8th letter of the Roman alphabet. This became common shorthand for the Neo-Nazi far-right because Nazi regalia like the Swastika were illegal in post-War Germany.



Figure 10. The final R.A.S. show ends as neo-Nazi skinheads invade the floor, Paris 1984. Photo courtesy of Philippe Roizès.

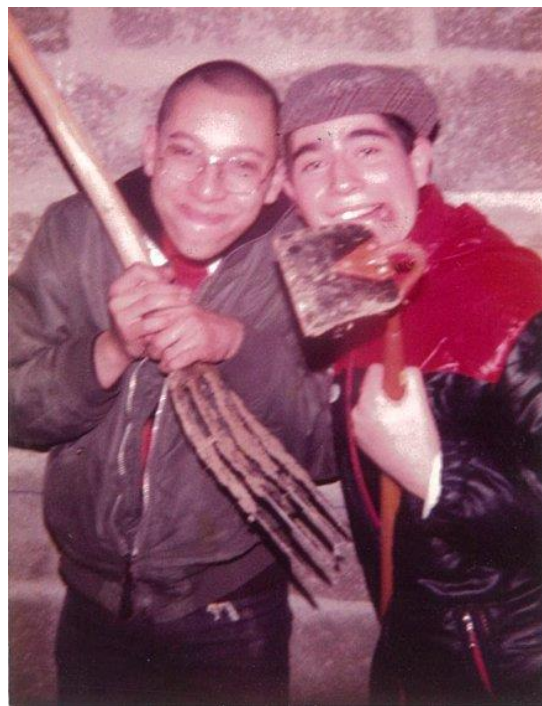


Figure 11. Géno (Jean-Cristophe Mam) and Phil Roizès brandish gardening tools, Colombes, 1983. Photo courtesy of Roizès.

1980, Skinheads and divergent sectors of punks were making their geographic impact felt in downtown areas across Western Europe. In Paris, such rendez-vous sites included Les Halles or in front of Beaubourg (Miltzine 1983). This interplay between skinhead movements, street violence, and urban landscape demonstrates the spatiality of the underground punk culture at the time. What had once been quotidian Metro stops in the punks' childhood had suddenly become danger zones. An anti-Fascist gang member named Julien remarked in the 2008 documentary *ANTIFA* that "to hang out in Paris, you had to plan your subway trips. Certain stations just couldn't be crossed, [including] Les Halles, Luxembourg, and the Clignancourt flea market" (Vecchione 2008).

French skinheads were a diverse group in their earliest iteration, even including several Jews among their ranks. When some skins did become predisposed to racially-motivated violence, black gangs like the Del Vikings, Black Panthers, and Black Dragons emerged from the Parisian suburbs to fight back. All of them had associations with the punk scene (Konan 2016). Extreme-right, Nationalist, and racist elements would enter skinhead culture from various sectors of Paris and France at large (see Beauchez 2014). Even Farid, a North African who endured harassment and discrimination in an intensely diversifying Paris in the 1960's and 1970s, developed his own take on first-generation French Nationalism in an act of rebellion against his father.

Today, Farid spends his days wandering around Menilmontant, meeting up with friends and answering questions about the old days from curious locals. Many are surprised that he, a former heroin addict and AIDS survivor, are still alive and active, considering how badly opiates crippled that generation:

"Les plus radicaux ont alors constitué la perte d'illusions et le manque en étendard d'une résistance nihiliste qui, pour certains, s'est épuisée dans une forme

d'hyper-consommation mortifère. Au cannabis, à la bière et au vin bon marché se sont alors adjoints des additifs variés : amphétamines, hallucinogènes ou opiacés, tous destinés à fabriquer le plaisir et les sensations fortes que l'étroitesse de la banalité et du mauvais sort étouffaient au quotidien.

“The most radical become the most disillusioned upon the loss of standard nihilistic resistance which, certainly, results in a form of deadly hyper-consumption. Cannabis, beer, and wine are well-sold together with varied additives: amphetamines, hallucinogens or opiates, all ultimately intended to fabricate the pleasure and the strong sensations that the embrace of the banal and of the bad stifling fate of the everyday” (Beauchez 2014, 194, translation my own).

Farid is one of few remaining signposts of the neighborhood's sordid past. One hundred years ago, Menilmontant and Belleville still fostered elements of the city's pre-modern era, these “little rustic cottages in the midst of gardens” (Gallois 1923, 360). By the 1980s, the aesthetic had shifted to something immeasurably less bucolic. The vacant, blighted storefronts that once filled the street have given way to a quintessentially French hybrid of gentrification and “embourgeoisement” over the past two decades. The term “gentrification” became prominent in French urban reportage in the late 1980s, though the process had been active since the 1960s. Belleville, which lies directly north of Menilmontant and runs over to Rue Pixerecourt on its eastern edge, remained relatively gentrification-proof until this past decade. Where the Belleville neighborhood was, as of a decade ago, “made of social housing and rundown buildings, where working class immigrants from Northern Africa and China lived” (Clerval 2006, 4), the dominoes of development have fallen on this area recently. Granted, the city has had designs on it for years:

Even in Belleville, a solidly working-class neighborhood in the northeastern outskirts of Paris, now a major center of Arab, African, Chinese and East European immigration and a traditional stronghold of proletarian opposition, Parisian city authorities have initiated a series of “amelioration schemes” aimed at gentrification (Smith 1996, 180).

Places like the Belleville Brûlerie (co-founded by DC expat David Flynn) on Rue Pradier and Café Charbon on Rue Oberkampf have been de facto flagships of the neighborhood's transformation into an upper-middle-class hovel. Philippe Roizès told me as much as we walked down Rue Oberkampf, toward the Menilmontant Metro station in the 11th Arrondissement. Thirty years ago, suburban punks like Roizès (who also grew up in Colombes and knew Farid) were unable to get from the Metro station two blocks away to hardcore matinees at Le Cithéa¹⁸, on the corner of Villa Gaudelet without being confronted by roving skinheads. Roizès recalls confrontations of his own as well as altercations he witnessed or heard of second-hand that turned violent or fatal:

So the skinheads hanging out over there, probably '85 I would say. Kind of Nazi skinheads. I know them now, and they are completely out of this stuff now. They are not racist at all [anymore]. [One time,] the singer of Heimat-Los [Norbert Mension] was going to a show and... he never made it to the Cithéa. He got punched by 3 or 4 skinheads on his way to the Cithéa; there was blood everywhere. He came back to his place, to his parents'.

And the same skinheads, at least one of them, two of them- another night, maybe three or four months after, or maybe one year after, something like that, they were as usual hanging out over here, and they punched a punk guy. And probably this guy had been punched by skinheads before. And he came back to his place, maybe he was living in tiny, tiny place under [a nearby mansard roof] where it's really hot, paying low rent in this area, and he came back with a gun. And he shot the two skinheads. One died; he was 16 years old. And the other guy, he's in a wheelchair from this time.

... [The shooter was sent to] jail. French jails are known to be the worst in Europe. Amnesty International writes it every year, [that they are overcrowded] and dirty. And when that guy went to jail because he was in disastrous way of life in the jail he tried to [set fire to] his cell, so he had some more years in jail, he punched a guardian, so more years. He tried to escape, so more years... [and while in jail] he got AIDS from [shooting] heroin.

By the way, the first wave of skinheads I told you about? Most of them are dead by heroin. Farid got AIDS from heroin, but somehow he is still alive. Maybe 3 are

¹⁸ Le Cithéa had become the more upscale Le 114 theatre at the time of our July 2015 interview, and had closed down as of this writing.

still alive, all the others are dead from shooting heroin. One is dead from a knife from buying heroin and not paying, another is dead from AIDS... the lost generation.

And so the guy who was in jail [for the shootings] was sent to jail for 7 years, and he did something like 22 years. He's out now; I met him one time. He is into [living in] a squat and extreme left-wing activities.

It's funny, when I met some guys from [the] New York hardcore scene, Agnostic Front, Madball, and such, were saying 'New York is really tough!' Yeah, okay (laughing) we have our stories also.

At this point in our conversation, Philippe stopped to point out a video shop on a nearby side street. “The owner of that shop was very active in the Communist party in the 1970s and 1980s. He was very pro-China, pro-Mao. Still is.” The walk signal changed and we continued walking. “But don't bother going in there and trying to ask about it, he'll pretend he doesn't know what you're talking about.”

Punk Culture and the Obstacles of Oral History

My conversations with Roizès call attention to myriad challenges in qualitative research, most of which stem from the inevitable inconsistencies with oral history. Philippe's fascinating account, transcribed here for examination, demonstrates challenges around both human recall and linguistic inconsistencies. Though fluent in English (as all of those interviewed for this research were, at varying levels), he chose specific words and terms to communicate particular actions that did not translate neatly between French and English. For example, while I edited the phrase to make it read properly in American English, he originally said that the punk in jail tried to “put fire in” his cell, rather than “set fire to” his cell. Also, he admits not knowing exactly how much time passed between the skinhead assault on Mension and the assault that resulted in the shooting (“another night, maybe three or four months after, or maybe one year after, something

like that”). He also admitted to me that, depending on my sources, I may get a radically different personal account from others once connected with the scene. Even if he had been an eyewitness, the nature of memories connected with traumatic incidents, like most memories, shift to accommodate the present as the distance between the present and the past grows. Recall of violent incidents can also morph to accommodate and serve shifting political ideologies (see Allison 2006). This all reinforces the opinion of “critics [who] highlight the difficulties of recovering what the researcher saw and experienced undermining the ability of fellow scholars to form an independent judgment of the quality of the analysis” (Garrett 2011, 531)

While verifying early accounts in any marginally-documented scene can be difficult, oral histories around early punk scenes are particularly challenging and often confrontational. Yi-Fu Tuan wrote of how “intimate occasions are often those on which we become passive and allow ourselves to be vulnerable, exposed to the caress and sting of new experience” (1977, 137). Conversations about Rue Oberkampf’s unceremonious history of street violence also led me down what the anthropologist Michael Herzfield termed a “productive discomfort” (1996). As Baxter and Eyles wrote, each respondent has his or her unique version of the truth:

“Whilst respondents do not have privileged access to the truth, they do have privileged access to their own opinions and meanings... if we do not check our interpretations with participants, we are in danger of merely fitting data into the preconceived theories/frameworks with which we are comfortable” (1997, 515).

Most scene denizens are incredibly passionate or defensive about their opinion and version of the truth. This obstacle is common in music writing, because “music, an aesthetic practice, articulates in itself an understanding of both group relations and individuality, on the basis of which ethical codes and social ideologies are understood” (Frith 1996, 111).

Appropriately, geographic discourse of punk’s legacy is predominantly subjective and overwhelmingly qualitative. This is appropriate for an ethnography, because “ethnographers

explore topics that are difficult to research and represent using quantitative techniques, and may not be readily accessed through language” (Watson and Till 2010, 122).

Any reading of underground cultural history requires an intersectional, intertextual approach that acknowledges how “meanings are co-created with an active audience” (Waitt 2010, 222). In a music scene and diasporic culture, texts and testimonials about the music would be virtually meaningless without the music. Consequently, the music cannot exist on its own, devoid of the social factors and experiences that inspired and produced it. Music exists as a testament to the experiences of musicians, and often times the other way around too, when the music spreads and takes on new significance to place in the minds of listeners (Kong 1995). Approaching the pragmatic core of qualitative research, Clifford Geertz wrote that “if you want to understand what a science is, you should look in the first instance not at its theories or its findings, and certainly not at what its apologists say about it; you should look at what the practitioners of it do” (1973, 5).

Punk in particular has been less concerned with adherence to musical convention than most genres, a dynamic which many musicologists embrace. Mantle Hood, for one, insisted that “the person with no previous musical training...has an advantage over the music student who misses the printed page” (Hood 1960, 56). Third, conducting research contextually, focusing on the sites and situations of one’s subjects “renders them accessible: setting them in the frame of their own banalities, it dissolves their opacity” (Geertz 1973, 14). Laurence Estanove, in her excellent investigation of how underground and indie music constructs impressions of urban landscape, offered a similar take:

‘By looking at *representation(s)*, I mean looking at the way a certain image of the city has been constructed by the media, but also, initially and perhaps of even greater interest to me, taking the standpoint of the listeners, the fans, collecting

personal accounts and stories of their own engagements with the city via its bands and labels' (Estanove 2015).

One strength of DC labels like Dischord has been this commitment to the archive, which renders these banalities accessible. "Data in oral history archives lacks the random quality required for formal statistical study" (Lummis 2010, 255), so it would be naturally difficult to cross-reference individual accounts that are based squarely on the memory of the person being interviewed. Like most qualitative research, this dissertation uses both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included in-person interviews, email interviews (which include Facebook messenger conversations), empirical observations from both DC and Paris, as well as contextual background information gathered from years of informal conversations about punk music and culture. Because I lived in DC for six years, my position within this culture is discussed both in a concentrated passage as well as through supplemental mentions in the text where appropriate.

Chapter 7:

Punk and the Archive

Writing concurrently with the international punk explosion (though likely not directly inspired by it), Yi-Fu Tuan declared that “to strengthen our sense of self the past needs to be rescued and made accessible” (1977, 187). As punk came of age, the collective dedication to documentation and archiving became institutional, especially when much of it went underground at the dawn of the 1980s. Archiving has long been a social and musical practice, and has become increasingly integral to research methodology. From an epistemological standpoint, archival research is a valuable form of discourse analysis:

“The fusion of material texts with other forms of communication, such as body language, interactions, symbolic acts, technologies, and the like constitutes a Discourse, or a culturally-specific mode of existence. It is through the recognition and interaction of the various discourses in which we are embedded that meaning is created, power is conveyed, and the world is rendered recognizable” (Dittmer 2010, 275).

When the members of the band Teen Idles self-released an EP and started Dischord Records in 1980, they began a quest to document their music scene around the District. That quest has not changed in almost four decades; the label has only officially released records, CDs, and tapes by DC artists (and some Baltimore artists with direct ties to DC). Though most of their work would go unheralded for generations, journalists, authors, and other fans would publish testimonials to “the way things were” in DC and other punk scenes during the underground era. This dissertation seeks to further that literary institutionalization and understanding of why the trans-Atlantic circulation of DC punk was important. Additionally, it argues against the “data hierarchy (audio media forever trapped within written words) [that] risks reinforcing phonography as inherently secondary to written language” (Gallagher and Prior 2014, 280).

The secondary sources used in this project consisted of, but were not limited to: audio and video recordings, newspapers, fanzines (hereafter referred to as their vernacular name *zines*), and texts (both popular press and academic). Many coffee-table books or historical texts that include references to DC and Paris' punk scenes focus, as this dissertation tends to, on the early years of circulation in the 1980 and 1990s. Most of these books work as aggregate sources, triangulating personal and archival interviews with whatever documentation may exist, including zines and personal collections.

Audio and Video Recordings

“Recorded music has become integral to contemporary senses of place and identity. Recordings inspire local revivals and provide material for emerging archives of cultural memory even as their sonic contents are remixed into new forms and alternative interpretations of history. In this feedback, it is difficult to describe any popular music as distinctly local, original, or independent. Local musical cultures have not disappeared. But they are constantly reproduced and remediated in dialogue with other new projects of listening, performance, emplacement, and selfhood” (Novak 2013, 21).

Novak's quote reemphasizes a truism that cannot be denied in any music-related research; despite the mobility of musicians, the cultural pull of music would barely be in the conversation without recordings through which it can circulate. This was exponentially more true prior to each wave of technological reinvention for music. Before the internet (when much of the circulation in question in this dissertation took place), scenes circulated on dubbed cassettes and rare slabs of vinyl. Before cassettes and vinyl, musical culture circulated via the radio (see Taylor 2002), sheet music (see Gay 2003), and to those who could afford them, cylinders and shellac records.

Rock journalist Peter Guralnick remarked in his book *Searching for Robert Johnson* (1998) that other than audio recordings, little evidence exists that the legendary, mythologized bluesman and father of rock 'n' roll ever even lived. Few of Johnson's acquaintances were still alive or accessible to Guralnick when he was writing the book. Few predicted that the value of Johnson's 78-rpm shellac records would skyrocket in value after the 1950s folk revival, and few white people were plugged into Delta Blues when Johnson was performing (King 2006). For these reasons among others, individual collectors' prices of early pressings of "Milkcow's Calf Blues" and "Crossroad Blues" draw exorbitant prices among record collectors. Of course, his songs are readily available for listening all over the internet and for reasonable prices on vinyl and CD reissues. Though not at a level of demand of original Delta blues pressings, some early vinyl items from the American hardcore underground have had similarly meteoric climbs in value. Dischord's first release, the Teen Idles' *Minor Disturbance* EP, is a frequent talking point in discussions about rare and sought-after punk records. Early DC punk zinester Xyra wrote in Issue 3 of *Capitol Crisis* (February 1981), "Only hard core punks and their personal friends will treasure this record." She had a point at the time, though collectors after paying \$1000 for a copy in decent condition today would disagree. For record collectors who fetishize the artifacts which the artist and their contemporaries could have traded by hand shortly after the moment of creation (see Sonnichsen 2016), reissues and streaming digital versions hold limited appeal. Following Michael Thompson (1979), Will Straw wrote:

"the physical life cycle of objects takes them from the moment of their creation to the point of their material decay or destruction...The commercial life cycle of an object, on the other hand, may involve several changes in value and price...the occasion on which they undergo important reversals (by becoming rare and collectible, for example) are numerous" (2010, 197).

As particular recordings reflect a revered moment in their origin city's timeline, music collectors append sentimental value to these records, as "these objects contain layers of value not

offered by digital downloads and mass-produced CDs” (Hracs, Jacob, and Gauge 2013, 17). Few labels carry a greater attachment to the urban landscape of any city as Dischord does to Washington, DC. Michel Foucault wrote, “history is that which transforms documents into monuments” (Foucault 1972, 7); Ian MacKaye has repeatedly gone on record to say that Dischord’s purpose was to document that scene:

“I like the idea that when it's all over - and it will all be over - that someone will say, "Yeah, Dischord was from D.C." That's just so cool. Not only does it create an illusion, but it actually creates reality of a community. It actually creates a scene. It's no secret that Washington had a cool music scene or still has a fairly cool music scene, but part of what makes a scene is someone there to document it” (quoted in Brannon 2007).

To those doing research and using recordings to verify oral histories and supplement documented accounts of punk culture, the ability to hear the music these people in these places created is paramount. These recordings are the reason latter-day fans and academics are discussing the meaning of the music in the first place. Several highly regarded bands of the post-punk era, like Los Angeles’ *Screamers*, were never professionally recorded, so any representation of their existence as performers lives on through happenstance live recordings and related photographic, oral, and written testimony.

Bands that eked out a recording budget like the *Screamers*’ contemporaries *Black Flag* (who began SST Records in the process) had no expectation to sell significant quantities of records. Dischord especially, which began rising to prominence underground with the relative success of *Minor Threat*, similarly sought merely to document their sound, not turn a profit. This inherently anti-capitalist and arguably paradoxical business approach generated a counterpoint to a highly excessive music industry at the time, and quickly took hold within punk scenes around the world. This canonization of the common association of DIY ethics with DC did not occur immediately, but shifted over a span of the past few decades.

In 1984, the label ROIR released its *World Class Punk* compilation, among the first of its kind to unite bands from 25 countries on one easily traded piece of vinyl. The record “was an important reflection of, and introduction to, the increasingly global scope of punk at that time” (Dunn 2016, 134). Notably, it introduced the Parisian hardcore sound to the world with the song “Detourement” by Nevrose, a band that only existed for one 7" release at the time.

This is why punk culture provides a cogent reminder that subcultural impacts cannot be immediately charted, and in many cases cannot be completely understood until several other concurrent transformations have been understood in equal measure as products of specific time and place. However, certain sources one may not expect to provide respectable documentation of these underground scenes can still surprise the researcher.

Newspapers and DC Punk

One unpredictably rich archive of documentation on DC’s punk history was in the decidedly mainstream form of newspaper. The *Washington Post* and the *Washington Times* have paid attention (with modulated consistency) to the city’s indigenous music scene despite an expected preoccupation with DC’s government and civic life. Though punk would likely have grown in DC if the local press had never existed, the paper did immensely help the scene. A few years before the international punk explosion and the “big bang” of hardCore locally, the *Post* became an international sensation when reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein (as the party line goes) took down the administration and led Richard Nixon to resign the presidency. The paper’s iconoclastic bent and radical undercurrent as a pillar of “the fourth estate” has maintained since then, even if physical circulation of the paper has declined and many of its counterparts around the country (e.g. the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*) have closed up physical

shop. When harDCore was young, the *Post* took an interest in the nascent scene around Georgetown. The old-money neighborhood was DC's first to gain federally-observed historical status and was one of the first in the country to do so (Goode 2003, xvi), but it was a *Post* article that a teenage Cynthia Connolly read in 1981 which influenced her to convince her mother into moving them to the Georgetown area (Connolly, Clague, and Cheslow 2016).

While the paper has been cognizant of the local punk scene for a long time, the internet has removed space restrictions from the content they can produce. Though citations of the local scene back then were rare, today, stories and anecdotes on local punk history appear almost weekly on *The Washington Post's* website. The paper, coupled with these official, professional archives, has accepted that level of stewardship. Whenever one of the city's (unprotected) historic places falls prey to redevelopment, *The Post* has made a point to document it. When contractors broke through walls at 2318 18th St. NW, they revealed graffiti left behind from 1979 and 1980, when the building housed the Madam's Organ venue (Kelly 2016). Folk singer Ryan Adams posted a photo with Ian MacKaye on the Dischord house steps (a nod to Glen Friedman's iconic 1981 photo of Minor Threat) to his Instagram page, which the *Post Express* commuter paper reprinted (Greenberg 2016). When Government Issue singer John Stabb (nee Schroeder) died of stomach cancer at 54, the *Post's* music section wrote a touching tribute to him, detailing how he first got involved in the early Georgetown hardcore scene:

“The tony Washington neighborhood had become the center of a punk movement known as “harDCore,” in which songs were rarely longer than two minutes, were screamed rather than sung, and frequently targeted corporations and commercialism. Teenagers with leather jackets, chains and boots walked the neighborhood's M Street drag in packs and — too young to get into most clubs — made the Häagen-Dazs ice cream shop their home” (H. Smith 2016).

This counters a common sentiment often expounded by critical urban geographers who infer that newspapers “work to reinforce state-controlled templates that urban explorers are

working so hard to reconstitute and reinterpret” (Garrett 2010, 1450). Newspapers still have the responsibility to document their city, nation, or world. Despite the questionable impacts wrought by corporate ownership, they serve, on a macrocosmic scale, the same ostensible function as boutique record labels or, the true lifeblood of underground punk scenes, fanzines.

Zines and Small-Press

“Punk music was seen as an alternative to the mainstream music industry and provided something new and liberating through its independent and ‘do-it-yourself’ approach.... Punk fanzines attempted to recreate the same buzz visually” (Triggs 2006, 70).

The role of fanzines in punk circulation, both in its embryonic phase as well as during its underground submersion and reinvention over the years, cannot be overstated. Like most foundational elements of punk culture in both DC and Paris, zines were nothing new in the late 1970s. One can find a tradition of self-publishing well before the creation of a so-called mass media. In colonial Pennsylvania, “Benjamin Franklin [began] his own literary magazine for psychiatric patients that he distributed to patients and staff, thus embodying the key elements of zine making” (Dunn 2016, 163). Franklin was the United States minister to France and arguably more responsible than any early American statesman for forging diplomatic relations between the Continental Congress and the French crown. Another classic example was Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, a self-published pamphlet that many history books cite as the catalyst for what turned into the American Revolution. In fact, small-scale self-publication was one of many industrious traits that impressed the French diplomat Alexis de Tocqueville, who wrote in *Democracy in America* (1835):

“In America, parties do not write books to combat each other's opinions, but pamphlets, which are circulated for a day with incredible rapidity, and then expire. In the midst of all these obscure productions of the human brain appear the more remarkable works of a small number of authors, whose names are, or ought to be, known to Europeans” (de Tocqueville 1968, 173).

Almost 150 years later, politics and society had profoundly changed, but the spirit of independent publishing remained very relevant, especially for musicians. Where the local press' interest and network may have been limited, zinesters self-published reviews, interviews, and exposés on bands they felt deserved the attention. Given how national music press was often limited in access and interest in these scenes, "it was in reaction to the negative qualities of mainstream media that zine culture was created" (Duncombe 2009, 143). Bands often published their own zines and sold them at shows as companion pieces to their music. Some bands during the early harDCore era never made any official recordings (or whose recordings never saw official release), so their appearances in zines were for a while the only tangible evidence to the outside that the band even existed. Insurrection, the high school band of Guy Picciotto (who would later play in Rites of Spring, One Last Wish, and Fugazi), is one noteworthy example.

Zines have provided an honest, alternative perspective on an often-ignored set of contributions to music scenes. They call attention to the politics of knowledge production; because they were integral in the transmission of underground cultural ideals, they arguably made interventions in what had been deemed as "newsworthy" or politically relevant. According to NME interviews with Tony Parsons at the time, "there is evidence of early zine exchanges between the UK punk scenes and those across continental Europe. For example, two French zines, *I Wanna Be Your Dog* and *Malheureusement*, could easily be found within the early London punk scene" (Dunn 2016b, 169). Thirty years ago, zines helped circulate music scenes, and since then, they have richly contributed to the legitimization and archiving of underground scenes.

Over the past five years, the University of Maryland and the DC Public Library have both opened successful archives that were indispensable for this dissertation research. The University

of Maryland's Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library opened the first zine archive collection¹⁹ of its kind in 2014. The collection has been curated by John Davis, a Maryland alum who spent most of his teens, twenties, and thirties playing drums and touring with the Dischord bands Corm, Q and Not U, and Title Tracks. He also published zines as a teenager and college student, including *Held like Sound* and *Closed Captioned*. Through his expansive network, Davis has been able to secure contributions from private collections of punk fans all over the world. The UMD archive also, helpfully, includes an archive of zines from outside DC that reported on bands and activities from the scene. One example, *Alien*, based out of Grignon in southeastern France, included features on Jawbox and Nation of Ulysses in its first issue in 1994.

Recovering and reconstructing histories from the pages of zines presents many of the same qualitative challenges as gathering oral histories. Because zines were self-published and unregulated, most of the reviews and interview transcripts were subject to the whims of the publisher. Most zines were produced on exceedingly low budgets, so fact-checking, editing, and even spell-proofing were luxuries. Additionally, though some of the most groundbreaking music writing has been done by teenagers, the youth and ostensible immaturity of many people behind zines are inevitable. Some zines which provide excellent contextual data in researching the history of a scene can also include uncomfortable language or simply juvenile humor. In Insurrection's zine, the band posted a fake "win a date with Insurrection" contest alongside a cartoon illustration of the band performing to a crowd of screaming girls (including a prominent pair of French girls swooning over Picciotto). Obviously, the content was created by teenage boys and predisposed to being "just as moronic as most things boys do at that age" (Picciotto,

¹⁹ The official zine archive online catalog is available to the public online at <http://digital.lib.umd.edu/archivesum/actions.DisplayEADDoc.do?source=Mdu.ead.scpa.0195.xml>.)

email conversation 16 Aug 2016), but it provides a valid and honest window into the psyche of the young Washingtonians who aligned ‘Frenchness’ with sophistication they sought to reflect back on the band.

Long considered ephemeral, individualized statements on underground music (as records once were, generations ago), zines have grown in influence and importance to methodology in understanding cultural circulation as well as public memory. A more detailed history of zines, as well as specific cases in which zines functioned as conduits for circulation between the DC and Paris, will be discussed in Part Three.

YouTube and Virtual Ethnography in Punk

“Virtual ethnography – ethnography without physically going into the field – is a method of inquiry that can reveal the interplay of emotion and identity construction within places of traumatic memories. It is important to remember that methodologies consist of more than merely tools (i.e., more than methods). They are assemblages of information gathering and information analysis techniques informed by our conception of the world and our notion of how our conceived worlds can be made known” (Carter 2015, 48)

Though only one decade old, publicly accessible online streaming video interfaces like YouTube and Vimeo have both become indispensable conduits for the circulation of new music as well as global archives of previously documented music history. The online audio/video recording file sharing trade of the late 1990s gradually supplanted the underground tape trade of the prior twenty years, particularly once personal connection speeds and storage capacities increased. The proliferation of sites like Napster and LimeWire around the turn of the century compromised the role of place in the circulation of recordings, as physical tapes that had to be transmitted by hand or mail were now binary codes that could be transmitted online. DC bands active during that era like the Dismemberment Plan noticed the impact that file sharing had on

their music, noticing fans singing along with songs that had yet to be released on CD (Modell 2011).

While most people seeking specific live show recordings already have a basic knowledge about the bands, they no longer need to know people with whom to trade cassettes as they did in the 20th century. In this way, the web has turned the tables on gatekeepers within the punk community. This also further democratizes access to the music for those in places with less immediate access to cultural activities like concerts and record sales. This does not imply universal access; Robyn Longhurst wrote, “although 'YouTube' is supposedly about 'you,' this is far more likely if 'you' are from the United States, have access to a computer and are technologically proficient in crafting videos” (2009, 48). Regardless, a growing confluence of social science research has verified the role that the internet, and more recently streaming video, has played in the proliferation of punk and metal outside the Western world (Wallach, Berger and Greene 2011; Weinstein 2011; Dunn 2013; Dunn 2016).

More directly representative of the live experience than oral and written testimony, video and audio recordings of performances provide more detailed windows through which “ethnography [can explore] the tissue of everyday life to reveal the processes and meanings which undergird social action” (Herbert 2000, 551). It also aids historians and other writers by presenting supplemental details inherent in the qualitative data which defy simple transcription or description:

“Video footage [often] serves as an (often unintentional) record of a particular time and place, preserving visually, aurally and sensually what will inevitably change ... But what is captured need not necessarily be on such a large scale to be useful. Video can also capture small gestures, expressions and moments which remind us of something intangible, something that may have slipped from memory otherwise” (Garrett 2011, 526).

By incorporating and making visible and audible the socio-spatial contexts of historical punk performances, online video has greatly enhanced secondhand research on ‘doing the geographies of music’ through the embrace of non-representational means (see Wood, Duffy and Smith 2007). Video recordings of Minor Threat’s storied performances at DC Space (1980), Buff Hall in New Jersey (1982), and in their final performance at the 9:30 Club (1983) had been dubbed, traded, and transferred online before Dischord officially packaged them on VHS and DVD as Dischord 27. Most other Minor Threat live videos, long bootlegged and rarely officially released, gradually appeared on YouTube as the site expanded its reach and sold out to Google. Instant access to an increasing catalog of these active visual representations of the depicted places and times can relay the aesthetic experiences, thereby rendering the emotional geographies of these moments more accessible to those who could not be there to witness them. They can also unlock valuable memories and verify questionable ones to those who were. These videos demand geographic inquiry because “emotions... are sensations and impressions shaped and structured by social and cultural relations with bodies and ghost objects [which] act as powerful magnetic forces binding particular bodies to particular objects giving birth to place” (Carter 2015, 54).

While physical recordings of live and studio performances contain valuable lyrical and aural representations of place, the internet has expanded and somewhat democratized the interactivity of these representations. Where Facebook has expanded the virtual community around the memorialization of music scenes and other such emerging heritage, YouTube has expanded upon this discursive arena as well. Though often maligned as veritable dumpsters of contrarian, trolling, and otherwise fringe opinions, the comment sections on YouTube videos occasionally provide valuable data for qualitative inquiry. A live video of Shudder to Think on

March 12, 1989 at the BBQ Iguana (in what the video uploader calls a “pre-gentrification P Street hellhole”) elicited a range of reflections from passionate (albeit anonymous) comments. One user called “mwoodhouse666” lends credence to the idea that Dischord has influenced migration to Washington since well before the internet:

“I was there. BYOB, as I recall. Freshman year [George Washington University]. I chose GW ‘cause of Dischord Records and no other reason, never even visited the campus before moving there. 1989: One of the best years for D.C. bands since the Minor Threat days. Seemed like Fugazi played live every damn week that year” (brackets the user’s own).

Comments like these reinforce musical place-theories like Henderson's (1974), which insisted that music deserved attention because it influenced inter-city migratory patterns. This user also offers corroboration on the side of DC for a generation of French punks who were, at that time, synthesizing that city’s influence into their own local version of post-hardcore. The attraction of DC during this transitional era of the mid-to-late ‘80s was not lost on any of my French informants who were musically active at the time.

Chapter 8:

Conduits of Circulation

“It should be stipulated that [the urban ethos] is not an autonomous characteristic of popular music; instead it is a multimedia phenomenon developed among music, music video, films, television, newspapers and magazines, novels, theatre, and recently the Internet... In truth, this regime of representation always seems to ricochet back and forth among parameters of cultural production, in ways that are sometimes unpredictable but that as an aggregate can form some interesting and revealing patterns” (Krimms 2007, 8).

“The underground hardcore scene of the 1980s was created mainly through interpersonal communication and not through mass media exposure. ... communication research repeatedly shows that the main effect of mass media is to reinforce attitudes and beliefs that already exist. Social change and fundamental change at a personal level come through small-group interactions. Having someone make you a mixed tape, bring you to your first show and then interacting with people in the scene could change your life. Watching a band on television does not have this kind of effect” (O’Connor 2008, 51)

For the past two decades, the internet has fundamentally altered and rapidly expanded music distribution and cultural circulation, but it cannot tell the whole story. From the standpoint of circulation of punk culture between DC and Paris, this research chooses to focus on the transactions of the twentieth century. However, this should not minimize or ignore the ever-increasing circulation of punk between DC and Paris as proxy to the United States and France, as the two countries never ignored one another. Though Adam Krimms (2007) focused on music’s relationship with urban geography and Alan O’Connor (2009) focused on the relationship between punk record labels and autonomy, both couched their research in terms of media circulation. The entire media studies discipline accounts for this, to a degree, as the essence of media lies in its transmission and reception at varying scales (interpersonal, local, regional, national, and global). Geography’s inevitable ontological overlap with media studies has, in recent years, started to evaluate the relationship with media transmission and consequential public sense of place. The Franco-American exchange’s twenty-first century epoch has inspired

geographers like Paul Adams (2007) to unpack the relationship between media images and geopolitics:

“The Internet, as a global system, has been blamed for forcing communications into a globally homogeneous form, promoting a loss of place-specific experiences. It would be mistaken, however, to make this connection between the scale of the communication infrastructure and the scale of the identities people construct in and through that infrastructure” (Adams 2007, 170).

Taking cues from Krims, O’Connor, Adams, and others, this chapter focuses on what I believe were the pivotal conduits of punk circulation, including individual reflections and stories on their interaction with said media from my informants. As previously discussed, a comprehensive history of each would be impossible, but many primary-source accounts I received represent microcosms of the greater space of circulation over the eras in question.

Zines and Blogs as Cultural Circulators

The San Francisco-based journal *Maximumrocknroll*, (“MRR”) still in heavy circulation both in print and online, routinely interviews French bands and publishes content from French writers, decades after facilitating early circulation through France punk scene reports and reviews of Heimat-Los records. The LA-based *Flipside* would likely still be doing the same if the zine were still active. Tim Yohannon began MRR as an East Bay radio show in 1977, transforming into a zine in 1982 that quickly grew into international readership. Today, it remains the most circulated, and most critically analyzed, punk zine (Dunn 2016, 181). Teal Triggs (2006) describes the cultural and political importance of zines:

“Punk fanzines are sites for oppositional practice in that they provide a forum for cultural communication as well as for political action, which should be included in any broader political discourse... It is the self-empowerment component of a do-it-yourself culture where direct action begins” (Triggs 2006, 73).

Many of my chief resources in this research were either zines or the people who produced, published, or distributed them. The further outside the pale of popular culture one felt, the more likely they needed to make their own zine. Many of my informants, prior to starting bands, used zines as an entrée into the punk scene. Some of these zines, like Roman Jaskowski's *Kakofony*, circulated around Europe as far as possible through their networks, and quickly faded after making an initial impact. In the case of *Kakofony*, the zine provided a forum through which bands could circulate songs on a mix cassette that went out with the physical copy (see Figure 11).

Other zines in the mid-1980s were fortunate to include flexi-discs, which played a few times on a turntable and were cheaper to mail. This practice has long been standardized by mainstream music publications like *Mojo* and *NME*, both of which included sampler CDs of bands featured in the attached issue on newsstands all over the UK and Europe.

Zines, in addition to being an entrée into the punk scene for many enthusiasts, became resources for geographic reflection. Early punk zines in both London and Paris proudly flaunted journalistic convention, drawing attention to typos, crossed-out letters, cut-out texts, and images blatantly ripped from other magazines and books. Contemporary French zines, while largely more professionally designed, have maintained this tradition. Stéphane Delevacque, who has been producing *Rad Party* for well over a decade, shows his dedication to the craft by stripping most extraneous ads and scrap graphics from his zine, and in the style of *Cometbus* (a pivotal Bay Area zine by drummer Aaron Elliott), hand-writing the bulk of his essays. He released one special zine to catalog the history of his mid-2000s band *Customers* that was all written long-hand, and he has also translated several *Cometbus* issues into French by hand.



Figure 12. *Kakofony* cassette compilation (1986), issued with Roman Jaskowsky's zine of the same name. Image from <http://euthanasie.records.free.fr/>

Many Paris-based zines, particularly those which began in the shadow of *MRR* and *Flipside*, followed those publications' model of higher-quality output. Mathieu Gélézeau and Natasha Herzock co-produced *Positive Rage* for over a decade. Gélézeau explained to me that he founded his zine as *Rage*, but had to change the title when a glossier, nationally distributed magazine named itself the same thing. He added “Positive” for the dual purpose of reminding his readership of positivity and nodding to the DC punk scene he deeply revered (See Figure 13). Mark Andersen and a collective of volunteers began *Positive Force* in 1985 as a way to collectivize and encourage political action with the transforming DC punk community and was heavily instrumental in what came to be known (first regionally, later internationally and mythologically) as ‘Revolution Summer.’ Many Dischord bands, particularly when performing locally, would couple their performances with political causes. *Positive Force* had standardized this; three decades on, Andersen still routinely speaks to political causes between band performances at St. Stephens Church in Northwest DC. The far-reaching impact of *Positive*



Figure 13. Mathieu Gélézeau with the last three print issues (ca. 2000) of his zine Positive Rage. Paris, July 2015. Photo by the author.

Force, even to punks who never set foot in DC, cannot be measured, but the existence of *Positive Rage* is a testament as well as signpost of a multivariate cultural circulation. Even to outsiders, harDCore and its hometown are about more than music, but about the political manifestation and influence. These impressions permeate representations of DC like *Positive Rage*, *Alien*, and other reproductions of the scene for foreign audiences. Though Gélézeau and Herzock released their final print issue over fifteen years ago, they continue the music reviews, interviews, and political spiels at PositiveRage.com.

Though many geographers have used the internet as a basis for scholarship on qualitative research, the internet is too omnipresent to categorize as a medium. Also, many websites of the past two decades have been itinerant, which privileges more recent internet-based material placed into the permanent record through catch-all networking sites like MySpace (ca. 2005 – 2010) and Facebook (2010 – Today). Even MySpace fell out of use for many bands and fans at the end of the last decade; some sites remain untouched but have not been updated. Other accounts have disappeared. This creates a variety of challenges for social science research, as most websites require neither credentials nor fact-checking in order to publish. Critics could say the same for zines, but the author cannot redact what is in print once a zine is in circulation. Additionally, many punk history books like *Dance of Days* (Anderson and Jenkins 2001) rely upon the authors to use zines for relevant quotes and anecdotal accounts. As discussed in the previous chapters, these accounts are not impervious to the fallibility of human memory, but if properly maintained, they provide a valuable portal into a time and place that attracted little outside documentation at the time.

"The Internet is currently the place that ideally offers itself to such micro-narratives, allowing (though probably in a different form) for the persistence of a core mythology, and a continuous array of (individual) narratives gravitating around it but most unlikely to affect the centre" (Estanove 2015).

The term “mythology” and the root “myth” are key to understanding this circulation. For the pre-internet generation in France who discovered American underground music, their education was necessarily scattershot, depending on what access they had to zines or accounts from other fans.

Noémie Ventura Rimmer: “I think I discovered American punk music when I was about 16- 17. Like a lot of people, the first band from DC I first came across was Fugazi and Dischord records. Back then there was no internet so it was not easy to get the Dischord bands as import - we could find a few Fugazi [releases] in big shops, but the other bands were harder to get hold of. You could only get them by mail order from the UK. There were no interviews or anything about any of them... Just *fairytale*s that were retold and passed on from fan to fan. We would only get to see the bands live once in every blue moon, there was a lot of tall tales going around, these bands, in the French punk scene were like *mythical creatures*...” (Email correspondence 8 June 2016, emphases my own).

Considering the non-commercial and decidedly humble nature of the DC scene, especially prior to the grunge explosion that amplified major-label interest, the musicians behind it would have balked at the idea of being larger than life.

Some geographers have utilized resources like the Internet Wayback Machine (Bright and Butler 2015), which makes accessible archived ‘snapshots’ of older iterations of music websites like *Pitchfork Media*, a publication notorious for changing its format at the whims of their advertisers and removing reviews of unfashionable music (e.g. positive reviews tended to pop-punk bands in the late 1990s). The writers and editors have the right to change their minds about bands and albums, but pretending that they never published something or felt a certain way would be dishonest. Fittingly, *Pitchfork* started out as a Chicago-area zine that made its way to the Dischord House in the mid-1990s, according to Cynthia Connolly, who worked for the label at the time.

Connolly, along with Leslie Clague and Sharon Cheslow, compiled the *Banned in DC* book in the late 1980s to document the sights and accounts of the DC punk underground because

nobody else was going to do it. Outside of poorly-transferred photos in the few zines (save for *My Rules*, a higher-quality photo zine) that made it international, the photos in *Banned in DC* were the first official visual documentation of the aesthetic of DC hardcore outside of the States. The book was still difficult to obtain for French punks, though.

In 2001, Akashic Books published *Dance of Days*, which had wider international distribution, and sold a surprising amount of copies in France. Fugazi had made a seismic impact on French punk in the 1990s, and had played their final Paris show in 1999 at Café de la Danse. Other, newer Dischord bands like Q & Not U and the Capitol City Dusters were at their peak touring activity and routinely including French cities on their European tours. Mark Andersen and Mark Jenkins' book helped solidify DC's urban ethos to both the '80s generation of French punks and the newer generation, contextualizing the growth of the DC hardcore and post-hardcore underground with that city's inescapably political landscape and sense of place.

Gaël Dauvillier: "When I was a kid, [DC] seemed like one of the major US towns because the government was there... I didn't really think about the relation between the punk scene and the fact that the government was actually here and that it might affect the scene in many ways... I remember reading *Dance of Days* in the early 2000s and being like 'whoaaaa' there was this clear [political] intention, when I was reading about Revolution Summer, and the protests related to Apartheid, thinking 'this is so inspiring.' Yeah, but not really realizing the way the city was [actually] like" (Personal Interview, 6 July 2015).

Especially for punk fans who had never visited Washington, the book helped augment impressions of the city for them. The emerging celebrations of DC as an epicenter of American punk, like most consumable media, distorted these urban realities, shifting perspective of the town from symbols and lines on a map to a layered, mythologized cultural landscape that seemed larger than life. Some, whose impressions had been affected by books like *Dance of Days* and *Banned in DC*, among other materials like zines and record artwork, were often disappointed or underwhelmed when they actually visited the city.

Dauvillier: “When I went there [in 2003 for the first time], I was like ‘this is so small.’ This is such a small town. In some ways, it's kind of a legend, but... yeah, it's actually a small town [but] people are doing crazy shit. Like Dischord, for example. Thinking about it, like, you would never have something recognized as so valuable in France in a small [city like DC]” (Personal Interview, 6 July 2015).

Though the copies of the first Dischord EP (Teen Idles’ *Minor Disturbance*) were hardly plentiful and had no formal distributor, select copies made their way into good sets of hands. One copy landed in San Francisco, where *Maximumrocknroll* founder Tim Yohannon made “Get Up and Go” his song of the week on his influential radio show. A handful of copies made their way to London by 1981, where one landed in the hands of a curious 16-year old French punk on holiday. Hugo Maimone, intrigued by the artwork, bought the EP for at the Record and Tape Exchange for 1£. He reflects:

“I was heavily into American bands and finding import records was nearly impossible back then in Europe (especially France), so I gave that 7” a chance since it was cheap and the paper cover and artwork looked cool to me. I found the first Germs 7” in the same bin for 80 pences (no sleeve though)! When I played that Teen Idles 7”, I wasn’t so impressed musically at first, it was badly produced, not so great punk, but that 1-2 polka rhythm had something going on” (Maimone 2016, email correspondence).

Maimone never claimed, at least in our communication, to be the first punk in France (or even his hometown Lyon) to own the Teen Idles record, but it is possible. As oral histories present obstacles to verifying these histories as much as they lead us in the proper directions. Of course everyone questioned would like to think they were the first at anything; several of my informants in this study claimed that either Heimat-Los or Kromozom 4 were the first band in Paris to play hardcore punk directly “in the DC style,” but what qualified as “the DC style” adds another layer of subjectivity and complexity to the conversation.

Because Paris and DC were full of mobile young people at a time when foreign cities presented enticing landscapes to explore, the movement of punk styles with individual agents would be difficult to conclusively trace. Paris’ leading status as a cosmopolitan city makes

tracing the origin of any non-indigenous musical style there exceedingly difficult. Other European primate cities have simpler stories. For example, a fragile consensus exists that Rui Castro, a Portuguese immigrant living in London, regularly sent punk tapes and records to radio host António Sergio back in Lisbon as early as 1977 (Pinto 2015, 103). Demographically, Paris and London shared a heavier circulation of people and culture than Lisbon and London, but both exchange routes were significant. Due to democratic technologies like cassettes and trading, as well as the frequent movement of people between Paris, London, and at times New York and DC, it would be nearly impossible to conclusively trace the first time a harDCore song was played in France or heard by a French person. Around the same time, his friend in Grenoble, Gérard Miltzine (who would regularly contribute to *MRR* and *Flipside*) was starting the show “Western Front” on the quite unregulated Radio Bellevue and filling in many of the gaps for Maimone by playing hardcore bands from throughout the US.

These music formats, both physical and broadcasted, became the preeminent conduits of the circulation for punk culture between DC and Paris. Independently produced and distributed media like zines and cassettes were obviously both crucial, but similar to the early spread of punk throughout the US and the UK in the 1970s, French radio and television were both in a unique historical position in the 1980s to foment an underground movement. This chapter seeks to discuss how and why these formats made the impact that they did in the early circulation between the two scenes.

Cassettes (K7s)²⁰

“The cassette is the counterculture’s most dangerous and subversive weapon. It is a threat, an incendiary device, the perfect tool for the cultural anarchist... the mass media and big entertainment companies feel their monopoly on information and its dissemination slipping away – cassettes truly are the most democratic art form!” (Robin James 1992, quoted in Novak 2013)

As zines recreated punk’s buzz in visual terms (see Triggs 2006), cassettes became natural vehicles for the music and associated ethos. The interplay between consumer technologies, as well as the pre-regulation of media technology, and the urban landscape were pivotal to the era when hardcore punk first crossed the Atlantic (see Figure 14). The rise of punk culture and the rise of cassette culture occurred in tandem, and the two fed off of each other as punk, and then hardcore, circulated. In his history and analysis of Japanese Noise “music²¹,” David Novak provides a concise overview of how cassettes democratized music circulation early in the punk era:

“The mass introduction of cassette technology in the late 1970s and 1980s changed musical landscapes on a global level. Audiocassettes initiated a new social and economic relationship around sound recordings, allowing individual users to reproduce, remix, and distribute their own material... From the mid-1980s until the mid-1990s, the analog cassette tape represented many of the technological attributes now associated with digital files. Cassettes offered

²⁰ When I began writing this chapter, I had no idea I owned a cassette with 2 Krüll songs on it, "Coexist!" and "Non Sens." I purchased it in 2004 from the anarchist market in Madrid’s Tirso de Molina neighborhood. It was a dubbed cassette with a photocopied liner; the original name and address on it was in Finland. The contact name listed for Krüll was Vincent Bouchard, 74 Rue Dunois, 75013 Paris, FRANCE.

²¹ Quotation marks are included here around the word “music” not as conjecture about the quality of the Noise, but to remain faithful to Novak’s (2013) extremely nuanced message. Much of what his subjects and informants in Japan and around the world are considered to constitute music by its fans or creators. Popular ‘noicisians’ like Merzbow create media that are generally accepted, acclaimed, and considered to be music, but not all noicisians or noise-creators within that circulation consider their output to be “music” in the traditional sense. Thankfully, punk and hardcore both fall within the category of music, though like Noise (or noise, informally), they call attention to greater discourses on musicality and culture.

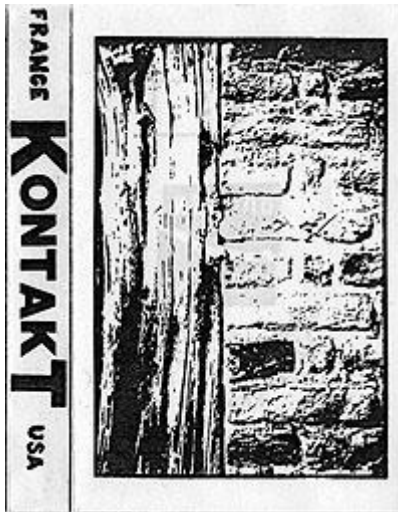


Figure 14. Cassette artwork for the "France Kontakt USA" compilation (1988) on Broken Tapes. Image from <http://euthanasie.records.free.fr/>.

transportability, mutability of content, and smaller size, but most significant, they created opportunities to produce and share music that enabled an alternative to industrial modes of distribution" (Novak 2013, 200).

Though the production and distribution of cassettes in mainstream music slowed down and essentially ceased by the end of the 20th century, many indie labels and DIY bands in the West kept using the format. Their reasons, while varied, harkened back to a balance between sustainability and political resistance. Cassettes, as a physical medium, are cheaper and easier to print than vinyl. They also maintain collectability for those who enjoy owning physical media for music. Compact Discs, while still vastly common among artists both mainstream and underground, have had their cultural cache superseded and their digital format compromised by the portability of iTunes and other Mp3 playing devices and interfaces.

Cassettes, while fulfilling the utilitarian purpose by being cheaper and possible to make at home, also fulfill punk's quest for political resistance by offering music in the format most accessible to punks across the world. Though the Compact disc and digital file trading online have become sizably standard throughout the developed world, cassettes have remained the

trading format for underground music in scenes which have flourished mostly in the past two decades. This has been demonstrated in research on punk and metal in Southeast Asia (Wallach 2002; Wallach 2008) as well as Japan's noise scene (Novak 2013). As Dunn (2016) put it, "global inequalities are directly manifested in punk through the formats being promoted and privileged" (151). Also, in the United States, particularly during the 80s hardcore circulation, there was a duty on importing cassettes, but not vinyl. The equation required calculating paying a fee "per square foot of cassette recording tape" (MacKaye 2016, Personal conversation), which demonstrated how little attention government officials were paying to music trade in the first place.

Cassettes played the most prominent role in the physical circulation of music between Paris and an expansive set of cities in the early hardcore era, especially Washington, DC. The young punks like Norbert Mension and Phil Roizès, who were fortunate to attend secondary school near New Rose, could rarely afford the 7" records imported from across the channel, much less the heavily-tariffed ones from the United States (often transferred through London).

Stéphane Delevacque: "[Tape trading] was a cheap way to get access to a lot of music, because records were already very expensive and [mostly] out of print, even if it was 1986 or 7. So we were checking out MRR for pen pals in other countries that we could send tapes" (Delevacque 2015).

MRR's readership even breached the Iron Curtain in the years leading up to the Berlin Wall coming down. Partially due to the spirit of *glasnost*, zine readers in Western Europe were able to communicate with curious writers from Russia, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere their parents would never have imagined. Natasha Herzock, for example, being a stellar student at school and studying Russian, was able to take a couple of school-aided trips east of the Curtain. While in Russia, she got her hands on tapes of Aquarium, a group regarded as the first Soviet punk band (Herzock 2015).

Bad Brains' music arrived in Paris in the early '80s, mostly on tape compilations and for a fortunate few who could pay the import prices, vinyl records. Particularly for the generation who discovered these bands on dubbed cassettes, they had little context and even fewer visual cues to pair with the music:

Norbert Mension (Heimat-Los): The first [hardcore] band I discovered was Bad Brains. And it blew my mind... the song[s], the sound, the quality. The first time I listened to them I didn't know they were from Washington DC and that they were black people (Email correspondence, 2015).

Philippe Cadiot: "I get instantly [got caught] by this sound 'fast & powerful' from DC. Bad Brains is number one for me, the best band ever in the style!" (Email correspondence, 2015).

Hugo Maimone: "[The] French label New Rose released the seminal compilation *Let Them eat Jellybeans*, where I first heard bands like DOA or Circle Jerks which I really wanted to check. I was attracted by a picture of 4 black dudes on the poster, thinking that Bad Brains would be a New Wave Reggae kind of band, but when I heard "Pay to Cum," boy, was I stunned by the velocity, energy and intensity! I had to get their records ASAP, but had to wait to go back to London to get a copy of their *Alternative Tentacles 12"* off their ROIR K7, which I got a few months after (as the Holy Grail) at Rough Trade" (Email correspondence, 2016).

Radio

"By leaving room to the imagination, [radio] has the potential to activate people - in contrast to the all-too-well-known pacifying influence of TV. Unfortunately, the radio's ability to transmit information has traditionally been used merely as a means of distribution, the flow of information going only one way, from the radio to its listeners. Realizing the potential of the radio requires reversing the flow of information. The monologue becomes a dialogue, and the radio as distribution system becomes radio as a communication system" (Ada Freelunsch in *Maximumrocknroll*, 1986).

Though the relationship between punks and the radio industry (if not the format) has long been a contentious one, radio has been crucial in the development and circulation of underground punk scenes in both DC and Paris. Radio's emergence in the 1920s, both in the US and France, dramatically shifted both the role of music in public life as well as popular conceptions of

intimacy (see Taylor 2002). One song, one news report, or one weather forecast could reach hundreds of thousands of Parisians in their homes in a matter of seconds, blanketing the city with sound, “[leaving] no one untouched... heard across all the institutional social, solitary and mobile corners of urban existence” (Berland 1990, 180).

Radio has always been a privileged vehicle for popular music, though in France, it became the site of an unequal struggle between the French musical genres and 'international' rock and pop. In the mold of veterans like Maurice Chevalier, Charles Trenet, and Edith Piaf, who still dominated in the 1950s, younger singers emerged like Charles Aznavour, Gilbert Bécaud, and Barbara. They continued the same melodic and romantic tradition, but added a flavor of transatlantic big-band singers in the style of Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra, who were popular visitors to France during the 1940s and 1950s (Kelly, Jones and Forbes 1995, 145).

Most states in Western Europe held monopolies on sanctioned radio stations due to a general lack of privatization, so this created a high demand for pirate stations. It wasn't until the 1960s that countries like the UK and France began breaking down these monopolies on radio content. Offshore pirate stations in the UK (as dramatized in the 2008 film *Pirate Radio*), forced the BBC to admit that its tastes were horribly antiquated. Soon thereafter, Radio One subsumed the now-illegal pirate stations into its own format. As the Canadian media studies icon Marshall McLuhan wrote around that time, the “airplane and radio permit the utmost discontinuity and diversity in spatial organization” (McLuhan 1964, 48). The French radical left had recognized radio's mobilizing potential for generations, particularly when the country erupted in demonstrations and violence in 1968.

Peripheral stations to France like Europe 1 and Radio Luxembourg were among the first to report any of the 1968 rioting, as French State radio played down these radically charged

events. By the mid-‘70s, Parisians began to realize the transformative and subversive power of radio, and due to the population density of their city²², they could hit a relatively large swath of population with relatively few transmission resources. The earliest pirate radio stations were run by environmental groups and called “Green Radios.” In 1977, Bruce LaLonde pulled out a radio on National Television and played one of these broadcasts from the 7th Arrondissement. Like the major brown-outs that happened in the Bronx that summer was a ‘big bang’ for hip-hop culture, so was this big break for underground radio in Paris. The Gaullist Jacques Chirac won the city’s first Mayoral election that year²³, which greatly suppressed free radios in the city, but that would not last long.

In DC at the time, however, the airwaves were not quite as free. Right after punk’s big commercial splash in 1977, the main conduit for new wave music, the Georgetown student station WGTB-FM was sold off by the Jesuits in charge of the University (Andersen and Jenkins 2001). The fact that this happened right at the dawn of hardcore likely forced the scene’s denizens further underground than they may have been if the station had remained on the air. Ironically, demonstrations to help save the station were some of the early unifying events that culminated with the harDCore scene. As the scene grew and diversified, peripheral college stations, like WUMC-FM at the University of Maryland in College Park, provided an adequate but low-watt platform. In the 1990s, a collective of activists in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood, led by several veterans of the Dischord scene, founded the District’s longest-running pirate

²² According to Matthew Gandy (2016), a discharging motorcycle in the center of Paris could conceivably wake up 200,000 residents early enough in the morning.

²³ “On March 25, 1977, 45-year-old Jacques Chirac won the first mayoral elections since the 1870 siege of Paris. Chirac was the leader of a new Gaullist conservative party, the RPR, which held the largest national assembly bloc during the 1970s” (Klemek 2014).

station, Radio CPR. Maureen Loughran (2008) wrote a full contextual history of the neighborhood and political resistance in her dissertation on the station.

Though proper radio access in the District was somewhat stunted as the 1980s began, across the Atlantic things were changing pretty rapidly. Presidential candidate François Mitterrand promised national legalization in the event of a Socialist victory, which happened in May 1981. The effects of the radio deregulation that followed were seismic for the underground music scene throughout France. In 1986, Ada Freelunsch wrote in *Maximumrockandroll*:

"French radio is changed forever. The sonorous voices of the official stations are still to be heard, but are now scattered among an array of voices and music as varied as the cultures of the western world - European, Arab, African. One turns the dial along the FM band [between 88 and 104 MHz] and muses on what radio can be" (Freelunsch 1986).

This deregulation afforded the country's nascent underground punk community great creative freedom. DJs like Gerard Miltzine (who also contributed to *MRR* and *Flipside*) and Hugo Maimone were among the first in France to broadcast the sounds of American hardcore music, sowing the seeds for the Southeast (Lyon and Grenoble) to be a leader in the circulation of the international underground. Back in Paris, "Radio Mouvence" became a popular program among the underground, complete with its anarchist leanings and early championship of homegrown bands like Bérurier Noir and foreign movements like Oi!. As Jody Berland wrote, the "construction of radio audiences is not simply an abstract (though quantifiable) assemblage of listeners with similar tastes, but also a ritualised transformation of people's relationships to (and in) space and time" (Berland 1990, 188).

The influence of pirate radio during its French golden age was profound on 14-year-old Paris native Roman Jaskowski, whose band Razzle Dazzle played their first show live on 'Radio Mouvence' with Krüll and the Rats. Through his exposure and dedication to free radio, Jaskowski's network began to flourish. He became friends with Heimat-Los (whom he refers to

as “gurus” to him at that point in his life), began publishing *Kakofony*, and started learning about international punk scenes, Washington D.C. in particular. He saw Scream at their first Paris performance in 1986 and interviewed the band²⁴, shortly thereafter getting his hands on a copy of Dag Nasty's debut LP *Can I Say*, which “blew his mind.” Within a year (around age 15), he would join Krüll, with whom he would open for Fugazi's first Paris show in 1988. He would join Apologize shortly thereafter and open for Fugazi's second Paris show in 1989, the only French musician to open for them with two different bands (Jaskowski 2015).

Television

Though underground punk music was not directly responsible for any of their proliferation, new approaches in media formats had a profound effect on the movement of styles, ideas, and ultimately people. In recent years, scholars have sought to greater understand the social impact of changing technology, particularly in the 1980s, when so many different formats underwent some type of major shift. This played out in a fundamental transformation of space in arenas both public and private:

“In the 1980s, more and more consumer electronics entered the private home: next to radios, televisions and hi-fis, consumers appropriated video recorders, CD players, personal computers, and video games; satellite television became widespread and MTV began broadcasting pop music video clips, first in the US (1981), and then in Europe (1987). ... The growing diversification of private entertainment equipment was complemented by an array of portable versions, which reacted to a rising urge for mobility, flexibility, and individuality... At the end of the decade, most teenagers owned a cassette recorder and even preschoolers regularly listened to cassettes. Media and other technology are not passively consumed, but actively appropriated by their users; the ‘domestication’ concept emphasizes that users ‘tame’ technologies according to their needs, their

²⁴ Regretfully, at the time of our interview, Roman was unable to locate these old issues of *Kakofony*. He told me he is hoping to organize, scan, and republish these interviews sometime soon. It would have been a boon to have access to that Scream interview in particular.

wishes, their rituals, and routines, while also shaping new meanings and cultures through their usage” (Weber 2014, 158).

Though television, radio, and recordable audio had been around for decades by the dawn of the 1980s, the onset of extreme portability made music fans approach the city differently. It also increased the rapidity with which new music and, on occasion, outsider or underground music, could circulate between North America, Europe, and the rest of the world. Obviously, cassettes, records, and zines formed the first line of circulation for harDCore into France, but television, like radio, played an important role due to a set of cultural circumstances. Historically, North American theorists like Marshall McLuhan have applauded the positive cultural ramifications of direct transmission of TV images. In fact, according to him, television became a necessity in order to keep Franco-American cultural circulation modern and relevant:

“The effect of the entry of the TV image will vary from culture to culture in accordance with the existing sense ratios of each culture. In audile-tactile Europe TV has intensified the visual sense, spurring them toward American styles of packaging and dressing. In America, the intensely visual culture, TV has opened the doors of audile-tactile perception to the non-visual world of spoken languages and food and the plastic arts” (McLuhan 1964, 54).

Radio was a more accessible format for those players in the mid-80s Paris hardcore scene, but Television also benefitted from Mitterand’s credo and did have a seismic impact on the punk scene both during and before his administration. Due to the deregulation of radio, the new stations had leeway to promote foreign music, much of which was American and British. In reaction to this, the French legislature passed the Pelchat Amendment in 1994, which enforced that certain percent of content had to be in French (Briggs 2015, 180). The Amendment may well have been “too little too late,” in the sense that a whole generation of fans had been absorbing outsider media from foreign sources for over a decade. It also could not undo the American ‘threat’ that critics had been weaving into French cultural policy since the end of World War II.

In a 1973 column in the magazine *Maxipop*, economist and musicologist Jacques Attali “remarked that the French were trying to be ‘anglo-saxons’ ... [but] by merely copying foreign models, the French were in essence creating poor facsimiles” (Briggs 2015, 159). Television in particular had been seen as “the means by which America attempt[ed] to impose its cultural will on France” (Kelly, Jones and Forbes 1995, 172). This form of cultural xenophobia, like all forms of xenophobia, was based off rhetoric rather than confirmed facts.

Programmers, by leaning heavily on ‘American-ness’ as a selling point, also aided in creating a complex set of Franco-American cultural circulations. One of the cornerstone music shows on French national TV was *Musique California*. Two of my informants, both around 50 and having grown up in suburban or rural towns, cited the show’s importance to their development as music fans. It aired between 1985 and 1986, showcasing bands not exclusively from California, but the state (or what it represented) had long been a marketable slice of America. “California” represented the garish, outsider, rebellious, and the label encapsulated a lot of bands the show played. The images that French teenagers saw translated directly into the cultural spaces of the scene:

Stéphane Delevacque: “*Musique California* was on every Friday. And that was a part of the education of the hardcore scene in France... we saw Black Flag on the TV, on the show I saw some videos of Hüsker Dü, the Minutemen, and I saw D.I., and it was really crazy. Some friends and I got our hands on the Minor Threat VHS [through Target Video, which advertised on the show]; we saw some stage diving and so we starting doing stage diving. People [at the shows in Paris] had never seen anything like this before” (Delevacque 2015).

Recently, a growing number of social scientists like Paul Adams (2007) have dug deeper into the role of television in the dissemination of “l’amerique profonde” (loosely translated “the real America”) to France. Others had already examined the role of television more

psychologically and semiotically, bringing Theodor Adorno's 'Culture Industry' into the discourse:

"It was Adorno who pointed to the station-switching behavior of the radio listener as a kind of aural flânerie. In our time, television provides it in an optical, non-ambulatory form. In the United States particularly the format of television news-programs approaches the distracted, impressionistic, physiognomic viewing of the flâneur, as the sights purveyed take one around the world. And in connection with world travel, the mass tourist industry now sells flânerie in two and four week packets" (Buck-Morss 1986, 105).

French understandings of American political nuances, for example, are much more advanced than the other way around (see Adams 2007, 152). Regarding popular culture, however, the importance of television as a conduit cannot be overstated, even to those whose tastes went way underground as they came of age.

Books

While many of these secondary sources, particularly audio recordings and streaming videos on YouTube, are available on the internet, many required deeper digging. Several popular-press books about punk, particularly *Dance of Days* (Andersen and Jenkins 2001) and *Our Band Could Be Your Life* (Azerrad 2001) were texts I read earlier in life and revisited for this dissertation. Both were easily obtainable for standard retail prices online or at many independent booksellers, especially in DC. Other visual and textual compendia of DC punk history from which I drew data, like *Banned in DC*, were long out of print. Fortunately, Cynthia Connolly was able to get me a copy of the 7th edition. The going price for many used copies of earlier editions was upwards of \$75 both online and in record shops nationwide. Like many of

the rare records that documented the scene her book depicted, it became a collector's item²⁵.

Like many artifacts of the DC underground, her book gained clout internationally and accrued value to collectors. Like that of the early Dischord record pressings, this was not intentional on her part. Many of my informants in France owned earlier editions of *Banned in DC*, and one even brought her copy of the first edition to our interview (see Figure 15).

First entering circulation several years before the internet made it possible for images to spread outside of fanzines and small private networks, *Banned in DC* accomplished something remarkable. In the December 14, 1988 edition of the *Washington Post*, Richard Harrington wrote a review of the newly released photo book:

“While the harDCore scene (which continues today with bands such as Scream, Fugazi, Swiz, and MFD) was always small, self-defined, and apparently happily self-contained, it was also a self-perpetuating, visceral and vibrant alternative community. Looking at the many performance shots among the 450 photographs in ‘Banned,’ one can't help but sense the focused aggression and exuberant tribalism that existed: There's a lot of muscle and blur, a spirited anarchy and youthful earnestness. You wish there had been such accidental but impassioned record keeping in Liverpool in the early '60s.”

The above quote, among the first times many of these bands had been mentioned in any mainstream media outlet, hit newsstands the same week that Fugazi first played Paris. Two years of hard work coalesced with the molasses-like spread of DC's reputation as, despite eight years of urban malaise under Reaganomics, a most unconventional rock ‘n’ roll town. Even if people did not have immediate access to the recordings, the images were out there, and so the visual components that would inform DC's place identity had earned their place in history. While Azerrad's stories are enticing and unquestionably add to the circulated mythology of place, Connolly and company's photographs, coupled with the icons of harDCore (the DC Flag with

²⁵ Connolly admitted to me that anyone interested could have just contacted her directly and gotten one for the original retail price rather than pay inflated market values for it.

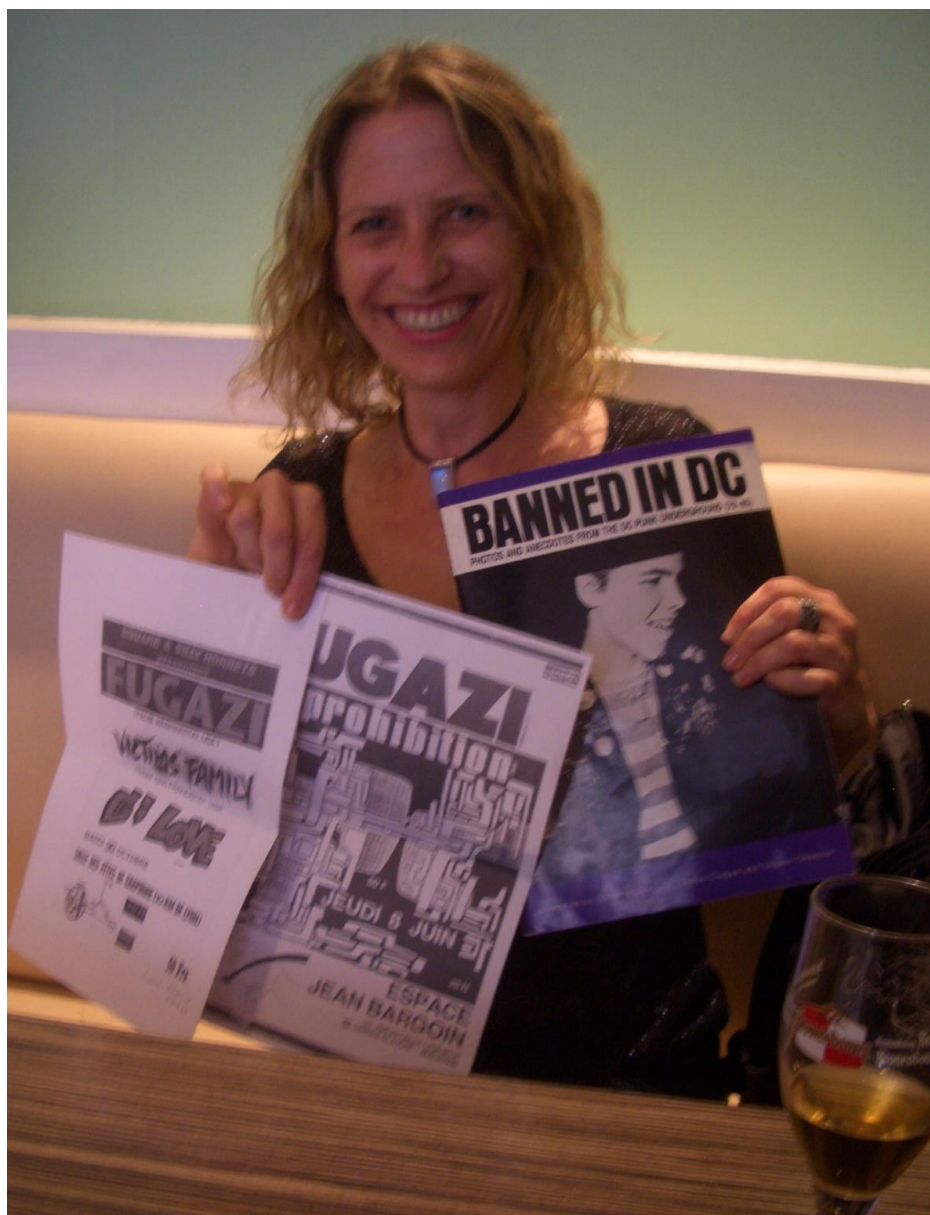


Figure 15. Maïe Perrauld with photocopies of flyers from Fugazi's two Lyon performances that she organized, as well as her first- edition copy of the 1988 photo book 'Banned in DC'. Lyon, July 2015. Photo by the author.

X's in place of the Stars, for one) that inform public interpretations. These pictures, often black and white, and how generations of consumers have romanticized the people and places behind them, are both discursively crucial in qualitative inquiry:

“Art historians of all sorts of interpretive hues continue to complain, often rightly, that social scientists don't look at images carefully enough. I argue here that it is necessary to look very carefully at visual images, and it is necessary to do so because they are not entirely reducible to their context. Visual representations have their own effects” (Rose 2012, 17).

Unfortunately, few titles exist that contain any type of sophisticated record-keeping from Paris' 1980s punk and hardcore scenes. The best-known history of France's early punk scene is Christian Eudeline's *Nos Années Punk* ('Our Punk Years,' 2002). Multiple sources in this project have assailed this book for its inaccuracies as well as Eudeline's alleged ignorance of underground trends which emerged by 1981. Clearly, Paris' hardcore scene never cohered as tightly as DC's, and it did not have an internationally recognized banner like DC did with the District flag adaptation or any Dischord imagery. Because of this, texts like Euthanasie Records' compendium *Discographie de Rock Français 1977-2000* (2002) have cited some bands like Komintern Sect as early denizens of hardcore in Paris. The most detailed record available of the bands who outlined French punk history is located on an antiquated blog site for Euthanasie Records (<http://euthanasie.records.free.fr/>).

Books about punk in the popular press reflect the aforementioned inherent contradictions and resultant difficulties with oral histories, especially considering how “all storytellers exaggerate [given]... the nature of their interaction with their audiences” (Angrosino 2008, 24). Roizès' story about Norbert Mension's altercation is likely an honest recollection, but considering how he was not an eyewitness and hearsay tends to conflate or minimize details, the violent events in Oberkampf represented here likely slight misrepresentations of what truly

occurred. This is not to minimize the importance of the accounts here, as "oral history is particularly apt... because it [allows one] to ask participants about general lived experiences as well as involvement in specific, past events and organizations" (Schroeder 2014, 171). Without oral histories and impassioned first-person accounts, none of these books about punk (or any scene histories for that matter) would exist. All oral histories are inherently biased, especially among scenes so heavily stewarded. As Turrini wrote, "most argue that oral history should not stand alone as a source, let alone as a definitive narrative; this is particularly true of historical methodology which suggests that information from oral sources should be corroborated with other sources" (2013, 66). While many events described (e.g. Fugazi's first two Paris shows) are available to watch on YouTube and helpful in verifying some anecdotes, most of the quotidian activities, (especially prior to the advent of smart phones) were not recorded. Human memory is highly fallible, especially among those who had a proclivity for alcohol and substance abuse.

The oral histories which this dissertation sources were obtained largely in the same manner in which I obtained my primary sources: informal one-on-one conversations. Participants were encouraged to share their honest and impartial (as possible) thoughts and recollections. Legs McNeil, co-author of *Please Kill Me: The Oral History of Punk* (1997), has a definitive advantage over most of his audience, as he was 'there' in New York in the 1970s. McNeil also carries cultural cache as he founded *Punk*, one of New York's most prominent early zines devoted to bands like The Ramones. However, this does not absolve McNeil, or anyone else at the helm of a similar project, of bias. In fact, McNeil's inherent biases may be stronger, given his personal history with many participants in the scene he strove to document.

Turrini went on, using McNeil as an example, estimating that he used less than 5% of the interviews he had recorded in his time, which "obviously required he and his coauthor to make

important decisions about what was most important and needed to be included, and what was not important and not included” (2013, 67). In a related discussion of ‘academic rigour’ in qualitative analysis, Baxter and Eyles wrote “although most qualitative reports display verbatim quotations, there is rarely a discussion of how particular quotations are selected for presentation from the range of available interview texts” (1997, 509). For this dissertation, I recorded about 30 hours of interviews in Paris and several more with individuals from DC. All of their stories were interesting and could have answered my research questions in some way, but given proportional structural and time constraints, it was impossible to transcribe and include every valid anecdote or opinion.

PART III: SEEING THINGS IN RETROSPECT²⁶: DC-PARIS CIRCULATION

²⁶ This title is taken from the opening line on Grey Matter's 1985 album *Food for Thought* (Dischord Records).

Chapter 9:

The Franco-American Circulation of Popular Culture in the 20th Century

“A city does not become historic merely because it has occupied the same site for a long time. Past events make no impact on the present unless they are memorialized in history books, monuments, pageants, and solemn and jovial festivities that are recognized to be part of an ongoing tradition. An old city has a rich store of facts on which successive generations of citizens can draw to sustain and re-create their image of place (Tuan 1977, 174).

Given what Yi-Fu Tuan wrote of cities and how much their power relies on memorialization and historical recognition. The same would be argued of any cultural circulation. It would be impossible to use the cultural circulation between France and the United States, or Paris and Washington DC by proxy, as a basis through which to understand the nature of how cities and their undergrounds change, without first staging the historical basis for that exchange.

Cultural circulations flow along established channels, and this discussion tells the history of those channels. No discussion of the spread of American underground culture into France would be possible without a contextual understanding of the relationship the two countries had grown through both mainstream and underground culture for generations. Paul Adams (2007) summed up the long important and lopsided appeal of America to the French in these terms:

“The French have been fascinated for more than two centuries with the savage and untamed character of the American landscape and society. The brutality and rough edges evident in everything American from teen music idols to the death penalty contrast with the French orderliness and sense of social obligation. From the vantage point of a social order rooted in a Catholic heritage, a political culture of centralized management, and centuries of relatively unchanged rural life, America presents a contrasting image of disorder made oddly more threatening by its paradoxical legacy of having restored order to a war-torn Europe” (58).

Though World War II recovery did present a sea change, laying the tracks upon which the American cultural tidal wave of rock music would roll in, it was still only the logical continuation of large-scale international cultural circulation. Popular culture had been circulating

vibrantly between the US and France for centuries. Under the thumb and behind the filter of class-focused English enforcement of “high” culture, the French sought relief in a “readily available and easily enjoyed [American culture, where]... experience was recorded simply, feelings were open, ambition was (it seemed) unlimited, success was (so we understood) real” (Gillett 1970, 295).

In cosmopolitan Paris, American music and film had been capturing the French imagination for as long as those industries existed and began circulating their productions. Though American film and music had travelled on the backs of individual agents before 1917, the mass-movement of Great War doughboys created the first tidal wave of American folk in Paris. By the onset of the ‘roaring twenties’ that followed WWI’s chaos, France was concerned with reestablishing order in the face of losing over a million young men in battle (Scriven et al 1995). Fortunately, the French had the “capital of the 19th century” (cf. Benjamin 1999) sitting in the heart of their nation, and Paris’ cache would soon emerge as a site of unprecedented peacetime international exchange.

Though wealthy Americans, in the mold of Ben Franklin, had lived in Paris since before American independence, a majority of American tourism in the 19th century was still the province of upper classes engaging in manicured ‘grand tours’ (see Nelson 2013). As Nancy L. Green (2014) chronicled, the Great War presented France with a new social class of Americans: the ‘popular’ or the ‘folk.’ Legions of American servicemen, many of whom came from rural communities and had never seen a big city, fell in love with the “City of Light.” Some met their future wives there, and some managed to stick around after the War’s end. Many who returned to their rural towns in the United States had trouble readjusting to the quiet agrarian lifestyle. Inspired by the newfound international love affair and social change in the US which resulted,

Walter Donaldson, Sam Lewis, and Joe Young penned one of the most enduring pop standards of the era: “How Ya Gonna Keep ‘Em Down on the Farm (After They’ve Seen Patee)?” Seeing Europe, especially France, during World War I gave black southerners a wild new window into the world they had not known existed, even within the United States. The servicemen who did return to the U.S. shortly began the ‘great migration,’ leaving their rural lifestyles in the South for the call of more tolerant cities up North. Of course, this included DC.

Many Americans, however, stuck around in Paris. The movement of American folk (especially black) culture and popular music into Paris came at the onset of the roaring twenties. Black doughboys who grew up under Jim Crow laws in the American South were surprised to discover how racism, though it existed, was not so institutionalized in France. The French had paternalistic colonial holdings all over West Africa and Indochina at the time, but in that country, African-Americans had found a respect for their culture which had been systematically suppressed back home. By the middle of the decade, a lively African-American community grew in counterpoint to the predominantly white “lost generation” of Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway. African-American entertainers like Josephine Baker enjoyed success and prestige in ways unimaginable in the United States:

“Paris provided jobs for jazzmen. The African-American community, from down-on-their-luck trumpeters to boldly dressed “chocolate dandies” strutting along the boulevards, was largely centered on the clubs, the cabarets, and the inexpensive residential hotels of Montmartre, painted by some black artists such as Palmer Hayden and Archibald Morley. The nightclubs of Bullard, Ada Smith (known as Bricktop), and Baker formed the heart of the neighborhood: Le Grand Duc, Bricktop's, and Chez Josephine, along with Florence Jones' Chez Florence. As the French became fascinated with jazz for its sound and its meaning - liking jazz was also a way of criticizing American racism - the new music became wildly popular. This drew jazz musicians of renown to Paris and led others to take up the trumpet in order to stay on” (Green 2014, 26)

Paris, and the greater scale of France, remained a destination for African-American musicians throughout the jazz era. Saxophonist Sidney Bechet and violinist (and DC native) Will

Marion Cook first performed in Paris in 1919 (Wetzel 2014, 69). By the 1930s, stars like Louis Armstrong and the Washington-native Duke Ellington “traveled to Europe to escape American racial prejudice [and] they found jazz treated seriously, the jazz musician celebrated as artist rather than entertainer; Dizzy Gillespie has noted sardonically that ‘jazz is too good for Americans.’” (Taylor 2001, 109).

Jazz has maintained its immense popularity in Paris in the legacy of Franco-American cultural circulation. In the mid-1970s, Parisian jazz collectors spearheaded reissues of American jazz and blues artists. Henri Renaud supervised the “aimez vous le Jazz / do you like jazz” series for Columbia records, drawn from the personal collection of Dr. L. Charles Clavié. All of the releases in the series achieved impressive sales figures in France (Billboard 1977). Jazz plays an indispensable role in this story of punk's circulation between DC and Paris because, like other cultural forms, it was always in the ether. Fugazi drummer Brendan Canty, who would generate a commonly accepted ‘rhythmic signature’ of DC punk in the 1990s, came largely from this genre world. He explained to the *OneWeek/OneBand* music blog in 2012:

"My favorite drummer of all time is Tony Williams, who played in Miles' [Davis] band in the sixties. He got in that band when he was 16 years old and he was just a monster. He really opened up for me what you could do with your small quiet exchanges between cymbals and hi-hats. Little things can mean a lot. He was why I started playing Gretsch drums. I was really trying to be Tony Williams ... DC's a good town for jazz. It's not the best, but there's a lot of that music here. I was always sneaking down to Blues Alley whenever I could when I was in high school to see any of my heroes. Like, Elvin Jones, or someone like that, because you knew they weren't going to be on this earth for very long" (Canty quoted in Gibbs 2012).

The French film industry, one of the world's leaders artistically since the inception of filmmaking, became another platform for thick cultural circulation between that country and the United States. Some of the cornerstone analysis of American film post-World War II came from

André Bazin and Étienne Chaumeton. In fact, one of France's most enduring artistic movements came from this reflection on American cinema:

“It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that the definitive analysis and codification of American cinema, and the critical terms in which it is still most frequently discussed, originated in France in the period 1945-1960... it was arguably the close study of American cinema which led to the renaissance in French cinema in the late 1950s which was known as the *nouvelle vague* (new wave). Long study of Hollywood films had led many post-war French critics to look for ways to understand and explain how works so clearly produced in a 'factory' could achieve such extraordinary individuality” (Kelly, Jones and Forbes 1995, 172-174).

The French New Wave exercised a global influence on art film and criticism which still exists to this day. Ironically, the term “nouvelle vague/new wave” became so hip that the entertainment industry eventually co-opted it and recontextualized it around music. The following decade, music producers and fans applied the term ‘new wave’ to the music that grew out of punk and onto the pop charts. In DC, the Slickee Boys, the Nurses, and Urban Verbs would approach this label as they separated themselves from a stagnant rock scene. Ironically, they accomplished this by turning back the clock and drawing from the original fire of 1950's rockabilly and rock ‘n’ roll, as was a directive aesthetic of punk.

America, Rock ‘n’ roll, and the Assault on High Culture in France

American rock ‘n’ rollers provided templates for the first major class of French rock stars like Johnny Hallyday (born Jean-Philippe Smet in 1943), whose stage name was a deliberate nod at extant templates for musicians like Johnnie Ray, Elvis Presley, and Gene Vincent. Though Hallyday would not break through to the English-speaking world as his Francophone contemporaries Serge Gainsbourg and Jacques Brel later managed, he remains a household name throughout the French speaking world and a valid starting point in the conversation about

Nationalism in French pop culture (Looseley 2005; Briggs 2015). Even detached from the issue of punk circulation, the United States and France (and, by proxy, Washington and Paris), had enjoyed an enriched history of cultural exchange. Hallyday's career, which has continued through at least one "retirement" and well into his seventies, has weathered the waves of public acceptance of rock 'n' roll within French culture. Charting Hallyday's career could be read as another example wherein French popular music fell a few years behind the curve, as Parisian hardcore did when it coalesced out of punk in the mid-1980s. Various interviewees for this dissertation noted that France has been perpetually behind the curve of rock trends:

Fab Le Roux: "France is not a very rock 'n' roll country... we don't have a rock tradition. I don't see France as [that]. In my opinion, France is always lagging behind ... If you want to book a show, it's very hard to book a show on Monday, Tuesday- even when bands from the US came to France to tour, they only come here to cross the country to get from Germany to Spain. In my opinion, Germany [has] more rock tradition" (Le Roux 2015).

When Hallyday emerged as France's preeminent rock star in the early 1960s, he represented a threat to the establishment similar to how Elvis Presley frightened Middle America five years prior. By the end of the 1950s, the conservative backlash to rock 'n' roll had died down somewhat; Elvis Presley had entered into military service and other standouts of the era like Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens died tragically. Others, like Johnnie Ray, faded from the limelight (though he remained successful outside the United States for decades). Johnny Hallyday's arrival "was feared by the cultural and political establishment everywhere as a dangerous influence on youth, and in Gaullist France particularly, as a vehicle of US cultural imperialism" (Looseley 2005, 200). Of course these attitudes would change over time. Hallyday remained successful for decades, and the establishment's acceptance and celebration of him reached a point by the early 2000's, that state officials and top French businesspeople reserved more than 800 seats at his 60th birthday party in Paris.

The American infiltration and French embrace of rock ‘n’ roll culture (which would shift into “rock” in its own context, as it had in both the UK and US previously) also pinpoints one of several notable moments where the gap between “high” and “popular” culture became compromised. For most of modern history, established “culture” (music, theater, literature) had largely been the province of the elites- those who controlled the publishing houses, sheet music, and pre-enlightenment, could actually read and write. The term “popular” actually had a negative connotation until the late eighteenth century, when meanings of the term shifted from “low” or “vulgar” to more “widespread” or “accepted,” gradually accruing more positive associations over the course of the nineteenth century (Kassabian 1999). As Anahid Kassabian puts it, “this history is important because of the meaning of the term shifts from embracing the perspective of an elite class that looked down its collective nose at the common people, to celebrating - and remaking - what those common people valued” (1999, 114).

Sociologist Howard Becker offers the classic model for understanding the ability of culture to create social formations through what he called “art worlds.” The interaction between artistic values and artistic production establishes a lexicon for a social group to speak to one another, to share ideas. Although Becker focused on the production of high art, Simon Frith (1996) illustrates how Beckers' ideas are just as applicable to popular music; much like high art, the value and meaning of popular music is based on a combination of musical expression, critical mediation, and an audience reception (Briggs 2015).

“Rebellion, defiance, ‘low’ culture and dissatisfaction replaced established norms of cultural capital within the hardcore punk community. Such an alteration was intentionally in contrast with the hegemonic cultural capital sought after and obtained by dominant society (Maskell 2009, 416).

The collective contribution of DC punk to the canon, then, comes to mind here. Not a hardcore band but unquestionably a product of hardcore, members of Fugazi were, perhaps more

than any of their contemporaries, responsible for pulling punk music into the domain of “high art.” Their output may not have the same esteem among music historians as that of Bach, Berlioz, or Beethoven, but within the realm of popular music, they have certainly established punk as intelligible to intellectual aesthetics while also helping shed some of the genre’s ‘teen-angst’ stigma among music critics.

In addition, this is commensurate with the gap between popular and “high” culture becoming compromised, for a variety of reasons. Primarily, the wealthy elite, while physically isolated, rarely avoid popular culture with contemporary media proliferation. Additionally, the population, at least in the West, who came of age before the rise of rock ‘n’ roll, is drastically thinning. The youngest person who remembers popular music before Elvis Presley is at least seventy years old. However, rather than separating rock music from the realm of “high culture,” this progression has redefined the idea, perhaps regimenting and segmenting grades within popular culture. Bourdieu wrote in his cornerstone *Distinction* that

“The embodied cultural capital of the previous generations functions as a sort of advance (both a head-start and a credit) which, by providing from the outset the example of culture incarnated in familiar models, enables the newcomer to start acquiring the basic elements of the legitimate culture” (Bourdieu 1984, 71).

In other words, ‘legitimate culture’ has a shelf life, and it cycles out. This has been proven true on both sides of the Atlantic. As Hallyday’s case indicates, “the standard Bourdieusian view – that classical, or ‘bourgeois’, culture is socially constructed as legitimate in order for its elite proponents to be demarcated from the mass – has been overtaken by events in the last quarter-century, because popular cultures themselves have undergone a legitimation process in their own right” (Looseley 2005, 201).

Punk Comes to DC with Some Help from France

Though DC punk is most often associated with Dischord Records and a handful of bands universally praised as seminal by underground music aficionados, the city's history of unfriendliness to bands aided its archival accessibility in a way. Throughout the early 1980s, and even until Dave Grohl and drummer Dante Ferrando opened The Black Cat in 1993, the epicenter of the DC's punk scene was the 9:30 Club. Other clubs like the Bijou hosted some left-of-center rock acts, but only 9:30 catered to the purposefully confrontational and experimental. An ad for 'Nightclub 9:30' placed in the March 1981 issue of the zine Dischords features prominently a black and white photo of a young woman in a mask, mixing chemicals and creating smoke amid a batch of lab equipment.

Through the 1980s, the nightclub operated in the old Atlantic Building at 930 F Street NW. The surrounding downtown was in notoriously bad shape at the time and featured little else that brought denizens to the area after dark. The Atlantic Building's neighbor had been, between 1918 and 1968, the Metropolitan theater, one of the first three movie palaces to open in downtown, along with the Rialto and the Palace: "Reflecting Georgian Revival, the delicately scaled and shallowly projecting ornament of the facade provided an elegant contrast to the theater's earlier and more robust F Street neighbors" (Goode 2003, 418). The Metropolitan stuck it out through the post-War slump in downtown until it shuttered around the city's MLK-assassination riots.

The 9:30 Club hosted Minor Threat's final performance in 1983, along with a host of other legendary performances by local and touring groups. While other performance spaces began to fade, particularly with the District's 1995 funding pull, 9:30 managed to weather the storm. In 1996, the club relocated to 915 V St., a much roomier space on the eastern end of the

gentrifying U Street corridor. The Atlantic Building, and the last ghosts of the original 9:30 club, came down in 2000 (Goode 2003, xiii).

Few D.C. artists, if any, had record deals in the mid-1970s. The glam-metal band Angel signed to Casablanca after being discovered by KISS, but their success was fleeting. The Urban Verbs, led by Roddy Frantz (brother of Talking Head Chris Frantz), managed a two-album deal with Warner Bros. Records in 1978 on the heels of several trips to play CBGB's in New York, but their style was hardly innovative next to what other New Wave bands were playing to bigger audiences at the time.

The Slickee Boys, regarded as DC's first new wave band, however, remained local. The biggest label they ever signed with was Twin/Tone, a Midwestern label best known as the incubator of The Replacements in the early 1980s. Though Twin/Tone was not exclusively a punk label, it became emblematic of the wave of "DIY punk labels [that] sprung up globally partly because global capitalism's attempt to profit off of passive consumers actually led to the development of a vibrant independent, anti-capitalist DIY punk culture" (Dunn 2016b, 136).

Founding guitarist Martin "Kim" Kane, who spent his childhood in Korea, named the band after a youth movement he encountered there. Along with guitarist Marshall Keith and original vocalist Martha Hull, the group recorded the covers-heavy *Hot and Cool* EP in 1976. In order to release it, given how barely any major-label focus rested on DC at the time, Kane and Keith created Dacoit Records. The following year, Half Japanese (aka ½ Japanese), an outsider group from remote Uniontown, MD led by brothers Jad and David Fair, would do the same with their label 50,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 Watts Records. Though they were geographically separated from the District area early on, DC was the closest accepting music scene and city at

the time and they came to be widely regarded as quirky pillars of that city's boundary-free urban ethos.

This ostensible lack of boundaries owed much to the city's relative invisibility, but it did not necessarily mean that DC cohered as a music scene for that generation of new wave bands. A 1979 issue of the zine *Descenes* included "a family tree of the D.C. Underground" at the time, which included the Slickee Boys, Mark Hoback Band, and six iterations of the group White Boy. The Slickee Boys produced their own zine at various times over the years, sometimes merely to document their recent activities and others as gifts for fan club members as the '80s rolled on. One 1985 issue of *Slickzine* gave Kane the chance to get his official history the band into print, as well as a platform to voice concerns over their international distribution at the hands of Twin/Tone Records.

Though they predated the local bands who would initiate the diffusion of the DC scene into London and Paris in the early 1980s, the Slickee Boys would eventually reap benefits and downfalls of the growing cultural circulation in equal measure. The group signed with Twin/Tone to release their 1983 full-length LP *Cybernetic Dreams of Pi*, and drummer Dan Palenski signed their deal for New Rose Records to release their lead single "When I Go to the Beach" in Europe. J.D. Martignon, the French owner of Midnight Records, a shop across the street from New York's infamous Chelsea Hotel, got Patrick Mathé of New Rose in touch with him. Shortly thereafter, Mathé licensed the full LP directly from Twin/Tone. Palenski remembers receiving royalties from Mathé for the "Beach" single in 1984, but is unsure if royalties came for any releases after that (Kane 2016).

Despite these hurdles, the Slickee Boys' career demonstrated how French and American artists shared a passionate respect and curiosity for one another regardless of city of origin. As Palenski wrote to Kim Kane recently,

"I don't know if you remember, but I hammered the Slickees to do 'Death Lane' by [early Rouen punk group] The Dogs. I give all of the credit for this to George Budnovitch who gave me a copy of their "too much class for the neighborhood" LP. I was blown away. George and Dominique [Laboubée] (of the Dogs) were pen pals. I later heard where the Dogs got a huge prestige boost in France by having the song covered by an American band [on the Slickee Boys' 1986 *Uh Oh No Breaks* LP]. I was always so damn proud of this."

By the mid-1980s, members from the Slickees' local circles (even those outside of punk) were also openly courting interest from French labels and reciprocating that fascination:

"Those wanky Wanktones – the Slickees favorite Maryland hillbillies, may just be signing (seriously) an LP deal with BIG BEAT RECORDS of France. Apparently though, it's Bo Link who's holding up the signing until the French company gets him an autographed picture of Johnny Hallyday (the French Elvis) and a date with Bridgit Bardot!!!! (*Slickzine* 1985)

The "DC Sound" Takes Shape with Dischord Records

Maz (Meantime Records): "The thing that was important in the 80's and 90's was that Dischord records proved that kids could promote a scene that they created, and give it an exposure worldwide without doing concessions. Keeping it genuine and out of the 'société du spectacle' (as said Debord) and still being able to have a large audience. And yes, 'putting DC on the map'! And giving an identity to what was going out of Washington in the prospect" (Moulard 2017, email).

Rather than musical style or aesthetic as a guiding principle on what constituted "the DC sound," the most viable component when drawing any theoretical lines around punk bands and scene is not even music per se, but geography. With the exception of Bad Brains and few others, all of the bands most closely aligned with ideas of DC, harDCore, and post-hardcore released music on Dischord Records. In an odd way, Dischord's directive of 'documenting' the musical goings-on of the DC underground mimics an imperative of folk festivals and other movements

which are "embedded in modernity... created in oppositional discourse against the commercial and the cosmopolitan, favoring the folk and the local" (Regis and Walton 2008, 409).

The story of DC hardcore, most often beginning stylistically with Bad Brains, quickly sparked with a group of Wilson High School students who worked and hung out in Georgetown. The Teen Idles (singer Nathan Strejcek, bassist Ian MacKaye, guitarist Georgie Grindle, and drummer Jeff Nelson) were unwittingly helping coalesce one major international movement while continuing in another. Musically unsophisticated, the band wrote a handful of originals about their outlook and hobbies, played at Bad Brains' blinding speed. They padded their set lists with hyperactive covers of 1960s pop songs, many of which were the same songs "which were so vital to the success of the *copains* [French teenybopper bands] as translations in the 1960s" (Briggs 2015, 158). According to Andersen and Jenkins in *Dance of Days* (2001), Teen Idles opened their first gig with a chaotic rendition of the Contours' 1962 hit "Do You Love Me?" Within a year, three more foundational harDCore bands, State of Alert (SOA), The Untouchables and Minor Threat, recorded covers of the Monkees' 1966 hit "(I'm Not Your) Steppin' Stone," which had been previously covered by the Sex Pistols. The song would also later be covered by the French punk group Les Thugs as well as over a dozen more bands around the world.

Barely out of Wilson High School when college and interpersonal conflicts spelled the end of their band, Teen Idles decided to spend the little money they had saved to make a record. The result was a 7-inch EP, *Minor Disturbance* (Dischord #1). Skip Groff of Yesterday and Today Records in Rockville, MD, agreed to record them on his relatively cheap equipment. The fuzzy, spastic EP contained 8 songs, the longest of which clocked in at a minute and a half. As the story continues, the band, not knowing any other way, folded, glued, and packaged the records themselves. The vocalist Nathan Strejcek accidentally melted dozens of copies on a

radiator, too, thereby ultimately making the records “even more of a collectors’ item” (Andersen and Jenkins 2001).

No major label, even punk-leaning concerns like Sire or Stiff, had a pack of teenagers from Washington, DC anywhere near their radar. As Alan O’Connor wrote, “the vast majority of punk bands in the late 1970s and early 1980s never even got that far... doing it yourself was not a choice but a necessity” (2008, 2). Minor Threat, the band that MacKaye and Nelson would form with Georgetown prep students Brian Baker (bass) and Lyle Preslar (guitar) upon Teen Idles’ breakup, toured North America before their 1983 breakup, building success and esteem for their still-nascent label. Meanwhile, Dischord released the first recordings by DC-area hardcore bands like SOA (featuring a young Henry Rollins), Void, Faith, Government Issue, Marginal Man, and the band that would eventually beat all others over to France, Scream.

By 1983, when Minor Threat broke up, many of the fastest and loudest bands had already split, and many of the local musicians got bored with breakneck rhythms and unintelligible verse. By 1985, many of the same musicians from the first generation of harDCore mixed with kids from the second generation. The “older” generation, who oversaw the gelling of the underground scene into hardcore, splintered into varying factions of slower, more emotive groups. At the time, there was no frame of reference for what constituted “generations” in the underground scene:

“Each punk generation seems to last for about four or five years. The experience of those who got involved with the first wave of punk in 1977 is different from that of younger participants who discovered punk about 1985 or got involved after 1990. People [in the 1970s] had to hear about punk through the mass media and through record stores. The underground hardcore scene didn’t exist in 1977. Punk was a confused mix of bands and ideas that was diffused at least in part by the media” (O’Connor 2008, 48).

DC’s ostensible detachment from the music media allowed the first generation of hardcore bands to diversify and release music however they saw fit. By 1985, several new bands were writing slower, more confessional songs that many zine writers reacted to by labeling it

“emotional hardcore” (which slowly became “emocore,” soon thereafter, “emo.”) Shortly after his high school band Insurrection broke up, Guy Picciotto co-founded Rites of Spring, named for Igor Stravinsky’s landmark work *Le Sacre du Printemps* whose 1913 Paris premiere combined “dissonant harmonies... with the primal subject matter of the ballet (ancient Russian fertility and sacrificial rites) [and] created a riot in the theater” (Wetzel 2012, 4). However intentionally, punks in the fertile, unheralded DC scene were writing an epilogue in a quintessentially Parisian tradition of musical rebellion. The “Revolution Summer” bands of 1985 like Embrace, Dag Nasty, and Gray Matter followed suit.

Though MacKaye and Nelson saw their friendship change post-Minor Threat, they maintained a business partnership with Dischord, MacKaye as more of a mouthpiece and Nelson as a silent partner. The duo flew to the United Kingdom in 1986 to secure a distribution deal with John Loder of Southern Recordings in London, recording two songs as Egg Hunt (“All Fall Down” b/w “Me and You”). This would be their final recording together.

Though MacKaye would not make it to France until touring with Fugazi two years later, he recalls “a guy named Pierre, that worked for Southern, a French guy [who] actually drove a Citroen” singing backups on the recording (MacKaye 2016). He was largely unaware of the impact that his music was having in punk scenes throughout France, but that would change profoundly over the following few years. First, MacKaye and Nelson struck a deal with Loder that moved the international manufacture of his label’s releases to a French factory that Southern had contracted out. For decades, a majority of Dischord releases would read “MADE IN FRANCE,” permanently connecting the two in the global imaginaries of punk fans worldwide:

“[Our deal with Southern] worked out so well then we did the [*Out of Step*] Minor Threat release, and then we did like 80 or 90 percent of our releases through Southern at that point. [Jon Loder] went out actively looking for pressing plants that he could get a good price and at some point, he made a deal with Mayking in

France. Actually it was a British company that had a pressing plant in France. That's why our records said 'Made in France.' Actually, they didn't say that at first, but then the customs people put their foot down about it. Everything made out of the country, you had to have it labeled. Back then, me and Jeff, when we would get a shipment from England, we would have to go out to the [Dulles] airport and actually process it. So we would have to go do all the documentation, do all the paperwork, work with the customs people, it was insaaaane. So we would go out there with thousands of 'Made in France' stickers and just be sticking them on. Which sucked. So we just started printing them on, which started causing problems. In record stores, you were charged more for the import records. Stores were charging more for the French pressings of the records, which was why we went so bold with the 'this record \$5 PPD from Dischord records' you know... I had never been to France and never met any of the people over in France [at that point], it was just the way these records were labeled, so suddenly it was like we had some French Connection" (MacKaye 2016).

A major difference between Dischord and many similar independent labels was that Dischord never stopped releasing music, and more importantly from a geographic standpoint, never released music by musicians outside of the DC region. In the past two decades, the label has expanded to include some Baltimore acts, most of whom include musicians with a DC pedigree like J. Robbins, formerly of Jawbox. MacKaye has repeatedly justified the label's decision to remain locally based, and therefore sustainable. He and Nelson never felt the need to expand into other scenes, as their city had more bands to record than they could afford. Ultimately, their sustainability gamble paid off. Dischord's four million records sold (Cuzin 2016) are nearly inconceivable for any independent label that has never scored a hit single or record. In fact, *Red Medicine*, Fugazi's 1995 album, peaked at 126 in the Billboard 200, thereby making it the highest-charting Dischord release²⁷. These sales, along with a disproportionate amount of media coverage of Dischord and many punk fans around the world holding Dischord up as an ideal, have made the label into a monolith. This under-serves a large grouping of DC

²⁷ Fugazi's final album, 2001's *The Argument*, reached #1 on the Independent Charts, but only #151 on the Billboard 200, where it spent one week, November 3, 2001. The #1 album that week was entitled *God Bless America*, a patriotic 9/11 tribute on Columbia Records that featured no artists from DC.

punk artists who never released anything on that label (such as Bad Brains) and operate outside of its orbit.

In 2016, when Dischord uploaded digital files of their whole back catalog to Bandcamp.com, that site's editors organized a roundtable of musicians and players in the label's history. They posed a question about the inextricable connection between Dischord and Washington DC geography, which got animated responses.

[Bandcamp Managing Editor / Former DC Punk Jes] Skolnik: I think that's the nature of all local punk scenes, really, but Dischord is so community-minded, and there are so many references to other local bands, political movements, monuments, and places throughout the entire catalog, both visually and musically. And I learned the ethics of being part of the community and the idea of giving back from Dischord and Positive Force. You didn't just have a show in a church basement, you did a benefit for the needle exchange that that church hosted on the weekends. I always think about something I've heard both Cynthia Connolly and Ian MacKaye talk about: that D.C. didn't have a larger punk scene, so they had to make their own. There's something fiercely provincial about it that I honestly like a lot. D.C. doesn't get enough credit, ever.

[Author and Northern VA native Joe] Gross: It was massively important to me. The idea that all of this stuff was near me—I felt a sense of ownership, of sorts. I adored its regional focus. Dischord was like a folk label in that way, and I really dug that. To this day, I have a bit of a knee-jerk, I-will-give-this-a-spin reaction to bands from anywhere from Richmond to Baltimore, and Dischord is a huge part of the reason why.

[Smart Went Crazy/Beauty Pill Frontman Chad] Clark: I think I remember talking to Ian about the label's focus on regionality, and I think he said that he always expected other labels to conduct themselves that way. Like, it was a natural characteristic of independent labels to reflect where they came from. That makes sense to me.

[Swiz / Bluetip / Red Hare Guitarist Jason] Farrell: There were many other local labels representing their scenes. Dischord followed that same idea, but did it quite well. None lasted as long (Bandcamp.com).

These public conflations of the label's down-to-earth practices with the city of DC itself had long since taken root for their international fans as well. A generation of French punk fans

who came of age in the 1990s, catching Fugazi on their European tours and getting into an increasingly mobile set of DC bands, understood the connection:

Noémie Ventura Rimmer: “I think we were all very inspired by the indie music scene in DC - and we were trying to do something similar in our own way... I think that Dischord records showed us that it was possible to just do your own thing and be self-reliant without compromising your work for the sake of marketing. They are/were very inspiring folks. They represent an ideal, the embodiment of punk values. They walk the talk, it's rare... They have been standing for a long time, even after the Nirvana phase back in the 90's - when all these US indie labels back then were being bought by big record companies” (Rimmer 2016).

Punk Labels and Urban Ethos

“The artisan readily understands these passions, for he himself partakes in them: in an aristocracy, he would seek to sell his workmanship at a high price to the few; he now conceives that the more expeditious way of getting rich is to sell them at a low price to all.” - Alexis de Tocqueville, 1840 (1978, 170)

Independent record labels like Dischord have grown inextricable from the urban ethos of their cities of origin and have become icons of circulation of local identities as much as music. Many labels have kept their releases exclusive to bands from their hometowns. This was often as much a question of sustainability as it was hometown pride and ethics. For example, Ian MacKaye has cited his genuine desire to keep bands on his label close to home and easily accessible as much as the handy excuse to politely reject overzealous artists from outside the Mid-Atlantic who send in demos (Brannon 2007, 78). Many boutique labels around the world, like Meantime Records in St. Etienne, have modeled themselves off of Dischord, which itself was modeled after Dangerhouse Records in Los Angeles. Thereby, as with music being an unwitting representation of place (see Kong 1995), record labels have also become unwitting conduits for circulation of punk culture and practice.

Many labels like these have lent themselves to academic, pointedly geographic, inquiry.

Laurence Estanove, a Paris-based singer and scholar of English literature, recently wrote:

"There is generally speaking in music fans a strong attachment to locating the artists or labels they like. It seems to me that this has a dual implication: on the one hand it may tend to individualize and demystify the artists, creating a form of fantasized proximity with them, granting them a concrete, geographically rooted existence. But it also definitely works at mythologizing both the label that gives the artists a collective (supposedly) coherent existence, and the city itself" (Estanove 2015).

Numerous labels throughout the United States and Europe demonstrate this phenomenon.

Almost every prominent indie label from the past three decades remains inextricable from its city of origin. Case studies abound throughout North America. Sub Pop, the label that most famously birthed Nirvana along with most bands integral to the grunge explosion of the early 1990s, remains active and firmly based in Seattle. Mostly home-grown groups at the time who shared a murky punk aesthetic, Sub Pop bands dominated the discourse on what would coalesce into "the Seattle sound" (see Bell 1998). The label expanded its focus during the nineties, signing Midwestern Bands like The Afghan Whigs and later, the successful New Mexico band The Shins. However, Sub Pop remains firmly intact as integral to the urban ethos of Seattle: rainy, bleak, and noisy.

The Chapel Hill-based Merge Records found underground success with its founding band Superchunk and North Carolina contemporaries like Neutral Milk Hotel and The Mountain Goats throughout the 1990s, and eventually earned surprising mainstream success by signing the emergent Montreal-based band The Arcade Fire in 2004. Merge is arguably one of the few indie labels that transcended its hometown, but its founders continue operations in North Carolina. Similarly, No Idea Records, which began as a fanzine in Gainesville, Florida in the mid-1980s, grew into an impressive documentation of activity in the swampy land-grant college town (see

Walker 2016). The label's earliest releases were predominantly bands from Florida, some of whom became commercially successful in the 1990s (Less Than Jake, Hot Water Music) and 2000's (Against Me!) and left the label. Though, like Merge and Sub Pop both, No Idea's roster expanded nationally very quickly, the label remains based in Gainesville and reinvests in that city's musical legacy through the annual Fest every Halloween weekend.

Other successful American indie labels benefitted from their locations in major entertainment centers. Epitaph Records was founded in 1980 by members of the Los Angeles punk band Bad Religion (who former Minor Threat/Dag Nasty bassist Brian Baker would actually join in 1994). The label struck mainstream success when The Offspring, an Orange County quartet on their roster, scored two smash hits in 1994: "Come Out and Play," and "Self-Esteem." Other American bands who capitalized on the well-marketed mainstream embrace of punk rock that year, including the Bay Area bands NOFX and Rancid, sold many records for Epitaph but left to start their own labels (Fat Wreck Chords and Hellcat, respectively).

Despite the cultural geographical contrasts between Northern and Southern California, labels like these successfully commodified and sold a proscribed 'California' aesthetic around the world. Perhaps most significant for the DC punks (and many Parisians as well) was SST Records, a Long Beach, California-based label started by Black Flag guitarist Greg Ginn in 1977. SST, maintaining operations in the Los Angeles area for decades, released music by many of the bands with whom Minor Threat would form a kinship in the early 80's, including Descendents, Minutemen, Meat Puppets, and Hüsker Dü. Ginn's poor financial leadership of SST would eventually drive many of the bands that outlasted Black Flag away from the label acrimoniously (see Azerrad 2001), but SST remains among the most venerated of independent labels from that decade.

Green Day, the band whose mainstream success has had perhaps the greatest impact on punk's globalization (see Wallach 2008), became both the guiding force and ultimately the downfall of Lookout Records. Larry Livermore technically began the label in the mountain communities between San Francisco and Sacramento in the mid-1980s to release albums by his trio The Lookouts, but the breakout success of their late-80's signings Green Day, The Mr. T Experience, and Operation Ivy moved the label's geography firmly to the East Bay. Ultimately, poor accounting practices, unsustainable distribution agreements, and Green Day needing to pull their back catalog resulted in the label going bankrupt and eventually shuttering in 2012 (O'Connor 2013). Despite the label's unsustainable success and consequential failure (which Livermore chronicled in his 2015 book *How to Ru(i)n a Record Label*), Lookout demonstrates how firmly a legacy of place and urban ethos cling to a record label well past its life cycle.

Another Bay Area label that did not enjoy as much mainstream success was Alternative Tentacles. Dead Kennedys vocalist Jello Biafra founded the label in 1979 out of the same necessity that sprouted labels like Dischord and SST, but his aim was more iconoclastic. His trademark far-left politics and confrontational attitude necessarily skirted the capitalism-driven pop charts, which still attached the label firmly to the volatile urban ethos of San Francisco. As Michael Stewart Foley (2016) describes at length, the Dead Kennedys' vicious attacks on conformity, Ronald Reagan's encroaching 'Morning in America,' and atrocities like "Chemical Warfare" captured the zeitgeist of a critically unstable city on the verge. That the band's first gigs happened within a month of Dan Brown murdering Harvey Milk and George Moscone was not a coincidence; the simultaneous "big bang" of hardcore punk in DC was a similar confluence of social and political factors that the musicians behind it could not help but live among. In fact, the Teen Idles' summer 1980 trip to San Francisco and Los Angeles exposed the kids to

California punk labels like Alternative Tentacles, SST, and Dangerhouse, all of which directly inspired them to begin Dischord back home (O'Connor 2008, 6).

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, local indie labels sprouted up in reaction to a London-dominated music industry that ignored the vibrant smaller scenes. Postcard Records, founded in Glasgow by the enigmatic Alan Horne in 1980, gave start to underdog post-punk groups like Orange Juice, Aztec Camera, and Josef K. Its similarity to Dischord would be paramount if Horne had not seized operations in 1981. Regardless, Postcard's kinship with Dischord merely begins at the locals-only approach and their 1980 origin. Horne and MacKaye were not interacting at the time, but both lived in cities they felt were cruelly overlooked and were reacting to that hegemony. Decades later, the Glasgow and DC addresses associated with their labels remain pilgrimage sites for obsessive fans.

Such was the case for the Bristol label Sarah, which focused on releasing 7" records by bands often described as "twee" pop, a delicate substrata of UK indie in the late 1980s. Most of the original Sarah releases were intentionally and necessarily limited in pressing, so many of these items are among the most prized pieces for collectors of British music from that era. Similar to Horne's treatment of Postcard, the label founders Clare Wadd and Matt Haynes purposefully killed their label and brand. They thereby enhanced the mythology which surrounds the label and their iconoclastic set of artists which included The Field Mice, The Orchids, and Another Sunny Day. Critics have cited the latter's 1988 single "I'm in Love with a Girl Who Doesn't Know I Exist" as an ostensible summation of both the twee-pop movement and what the then-nascent "emo" movement would become in the 1990s. Though not all of Sarah's artists were from Bristol, the label has illuminated that city in the mental map of the UK for indie pop fans worldwide (see White 2016).

One French label that deliberately parroted the locals-only ethics of Dischord was the St. Etienne-based Meantime. By the time that Meantime began in the early 1990's, Fugazi and other Dischord groups (Scream, Shudder to Think, the Fire Party) had played multiple gigs throughout France and their label was beginning to intrigue scene enthusiasts. Vocalist "Maz" (Jean-Francois Moulard) started Meantime Records in order to release the first record by his band Sixpack. Thereafter, Maz decided to maintain Meantime as a Dischord-like experiment, only releasing material by bands in St. Etienne:

Maz: "It was important from the start to release mainly material of local bands. The label Bonanza Recordings, run by my mate Frank, was already doing just this, but there [were] a lot of bands in St Etienne then, so if I could help... I did the same thing with the Meantime zine I was doing at the same time: interviewing local bands, etc... Just to try to 'put Saint-Etienne on the map,' to promote the local scene outside of its frontiers! Years after, I've participated to the release of records of bands from all-around the country but it seemed logical to help local bands have records in the first place. I've always been into doing things in my neighborhood first, it's almost a political thing, really" (Moulard 2017).

Various bands connected to Meantime had opportunities to play with DC groups like the Capital City Dusters, who made a great impression on Sixpack's drummer Maxime Charbonnier. After his band dissolved, Charbonnier decided to complete the circle and actually head to DC. His experiences there, taking a significant role in that era of cultural circulation, are told in Chapter Eleven.

Crapoulet Records, based in Marseille, is a more recent and more currently active label that began using Dischord and the greater urban ethos of DC as templates (see Figure 16).

Olivier: "For the label, I used to say that I'm running it like Dischord, because there is no contract, it is very simple. The maxim is in do-it-yourself. The only difference is I'm not only releasing records from my city, but all over the country, and other countries where nobody has funding to make records like Argentina or Chile. Or Croatia, Israel. It's not like Darbouka [Records], which [releases punk] records from Africa...but I want to make records for bands in Croatia who have no measures to make people know about them. ...[my] audience is somewhat less



Figure 16. Ian MacKaye poses with a Crapoulet Records shirt, featuring an adaptation of an old Minor Threat photo from the back of the 'Flex Your Head' compilation. MacKaye's head is replaced by a bunny's, and "we're just animal threat" is scrawled in the foreground.. Photo: Crapoulet Facebook.

big, but they are more big fans of the music. It is the spirit I am trying to give" (Personal interview, 2015).

His wife Claire, who opened her own tattoo parlor in 2013 on Boulevards Longchamps, named the shop after the Bad Brain's early song "Sailin' On." Though a punk fan since age 14, she admits coming to hardcore relatively late, and that it took refreshing takes from the DC scene to attract her to the style:

Claire: I did not get into hardcore until really late, because I thought it was stupid and [overly macho], you know, people dancing round and round [in a pit]. So when I started dating Olivier, he said he was into hardcore, and I was like "please no!" (Laughter). And then he made me listen to Black Flag and Minor Threat, and I thought 'oh, this is really cool.' So, I like the spirit, I guess. It is the more...sane? scene, I can figure, because what I know about New York hardcore, we call it 'hardcore de beouf.'

Olivier: Redneck hardcore.

Claire: Not redneck, but just (husky, goofy voice) 'huh huh, we are real mean,' moshpitting...What I think about [the DC] is more common sense; they are not into [the hardline], they are more 'think wisely and do what is cool.'

Olivier: And no [Hare] Krishna shit (Laughter) (Group Conversation, July 2015).

A few years ago, Crapoulet had the unique opportunity to release rare recordings by one of the seminal harDCore bands, and they decided to do so in a high-novelty manner. Olivier had been a big fan of Government Issue since first discovering harDCore, so he contacted John Stabb about a release he was planning to benefit a rabbit shelter in Marseille. Stabb actually did have some unreleased, scratchy demo recordings from 1982 and figured he may as well let them go to a good cause. The demo set included crudely-recorded versions of tracks like “G.I.,” “Rock ‘n’ Roll Bullshit,” and “Anarchy is Dead.” The average track length was well under one minute. Olivier realized that anyone who would want a physical copy of these demos would not care much about sound fidelity, but rather merely having the item. Given how expensive it would be to press a special 7-inch record, how common cassette tapes had become, and how fans of the label could download the audio for free anyway, he realized he could fit all of the tiny audio files across two 3.5-inch floppy disks. Crapoulet, the boutique label who owed its existence to Dischord's influence, now owed its most unique release to one of the seminal Dischord artists, a testament to the accessibility that has defined the DC scene for many international fans.

The animal-loving ethos of Crapoulet notwithstanding, this case study demonstrates the primary reason why indie labels circulate urban ethos and place identities so well: their owners want them to. Any record label based outside of a major entertainment market (even Paris) should not be expected to sustain itself by just selling products to kids in the neighborhood. In recounting the history of Dischord to the Library of Congress in 2013, Ian MacKaye rhetorically asked the audience what exactly they believed the larger music industry was selling. His answer

was ‘plastic.’ Labels like Dischord, No Idea, Sarah, Postcard, Meantime, and Crapoulet are selling an image and a mentality embedded in DC, Gainesville, Bristol, Glasgow, St. Etienne, and Marseille, respectively. In other words, local record labels serve as ostensible shorthand for urban landscapes and become conduits for the circulation of local identities.

Chapter 10:

THIS IS NOT A FUGAZI DISSERTATION (DC Punk Comes of Age)

For years, the words ‘SURRENDER DOROTHY’ in thick black spray-paint adorned a CSX Railroad Bridge that spanned the Washington Beltway at a point between Connecticut and Georgia Ave, where the District's northern tip blends into Montgomery County, Maryland. The graffiti was an inside joke about the Oz-like Mormon Temple protruding from the trees in the distance in Kensington. It provided a momentary break from the standard bumper-to-bumper drudgery for commuters, at least until a few years ago when local authorities painted it over.

Toward the end of 2014, a new word appeared, painted in wide black strokes on that same spot: ‘FUGAZI’ (Kelly 2014). Nobody knows who did it, but the symbolism could not be clearer. Many geographers have echoed this, understanding how “the conquest of territory, even in fantasy, is always an act performed for an audience. Locations have a meaning; to claim access to an inaccessible location is to make a claim of primacy for oneself” (Ley and Cybriwsky 1974, 49). In cases such as these, regardless of the social position of the person responsible for the art, graffiti are “highly geographical expressions of dissatisfaction with dominant and domineering authorities and ideologies” (Moreau and Alderman 2011, 110).

More than a decade after their final show, Fugazi still enjoys iconic and iconoclastic status, representing a powerful transgression against the domineering narrative of Washington, DC. They shunned any assistance from major labels or mainstream media. Where DC was a geographic lynchpin of the global capitalist superstructure, Fugazi never once made personal profit from playing a hometown show. Notoriously, and perhaps one of the trends within the punk genre with which Fugazi was most associated, they kept all of their shows all-ages and \$5 at the door. This bucked not only DC’s capitalist reputation, but also the city’s overbearing bar

culture. Though Fugazi were not a straight-edge band (despite having a member who wrote the song in 1981), they were not content with aiding and abetting the alcohol industry by restricting their shows to the 21-and-over crowd. They toured internationally for almost fifteen years and sold more records than any other DC-based band, even appearing on the Billboard 200 a few times. Still, many motorists had no idea what that graffiti meant. Some motorists may have even flashed back to the Vietnam era, where the term ‘fugazi’ (‘fucked up, got ambushed, zippered in’) first appeared, but punk fans knew its broader meaning and significance in terms of place and music.

Fugazi as DC Geography

MacKaye has cited his family’s archival tradition, as well as a general dedication to self-representation and cataloging prevalent in the punk scene. In a 2013 address to the Library of Congress about “digital cultural heritage,” he spoke about his grandmother Dorothy MacKaye (pen name Dorothy Disney), who wrote a marriage advice column for *Ladies Home Journal*. She would tape record conversations with troubled couples, which Ian would discover as a teenager. Outside of MacKaye’s dedication to archiving his music, the band’s attitudes about international touring were both equally influenced by the cultural geography of Washington DC. First, Fugazi made it a strong point to perform in as many sites as possible when over in Europe, especially if American punk bands had rarely if ever made it there.

Ian MacKaye: We were really pushing to play in Italy and also France. We really pushed to do those gigs. There was a real resistance from the German [promoters] and the Dutch [bookers], saying "there's nothing there," and we were like "we wanna fuckin' go." I think it was because we were from Washington, DC, and early on, bands would come to America and just play New York and L.A. And so we have a sensitivity about being the place where people were like "ehhh, nobody really plays there." And we were like, "yeah, and that's why we're gonna play there" (MacKaye 2016).

Second, the band's collective origin in one of North America's most tourist-heavy cities informed their attitude and approach when travelling internationally.

"We were not going [to Europe] as tourists, to be sure. We were doing a cultural exchange. I mean we were traveling and doing the drives and doing the shows, but then we wanted to coexist with these people, and actually just be part of them. We didn't want to be an American band, we wanted to be a band. And I think largely justified, sort of preordained idea about what American cultural imperialism was all about in Europe, that people expected the American bands to behave like many American bands do. There's an ongoing joke that the American embassy is really just McDonald's, because that's where Americans would go as soon as they'd get into another country. First of all, I never ate at McDonald's because we were all vegetarian and second, we would never go to a fuckin' fast food restaurant, we'd want to eat the food of whatever's going on... Maybe it was the French sensibility; I think it was just being a world citizen sensibility. We just felt at home wherever we went. I appreciate that, though. People would say 'you're just like one of us' and that made us happy... That's the thing: we grew up in Washington, DC, which is the center of United States tourism, so tourism was like a real anathema [to us]" (MacKaye 2016).

The collective dedication of Fugazi to absorb local culture and fit into the quotidian landscape was not lost on their growing legion of French fans. This reflected back upon French impressions of Fugazi's hometown.

Natasha Herzock: "To me, Ian MacKaye sounds to me like more European. More enlightened guy. A guy who observes. Maybe to understand, and Washington- I feel this town is like this. With people smiling, but observative. I can feel it like this: to learn, and curiosity, but at the same time people from Washington, I don't know how to express this. [They are] curious, but [still aware of how] "we are from Washington. [This is] the crew" (Herzock 2015).

Though MacKaye was outspoken about the band's dedication to blending in wherever on the globe they found themselves, the band's secret weapon in France and French-speaking places was the other, more explosive vocalist and guitarist. Guy Picciotto's upbringing was also a byproduct of Washington, DC demography and civic history. His father was born into a French-speaking family of Italian origin who lived in Aleppo, Syria for many years. As a teenager, his father moved to Lebanon and then to Paris to attend University, heading to DC for graduate

school shortly thereafter in the late 1950's. There, he met an American woman, fell in love, and decided to stay. Guy was born in Washington, DC in 1965, growing up in Northwest, attending the Georgetown Day School, and then Georgetown University as the nascent hardcore scene grew in the nearby neighborhood. He founded the groups Insurrection, Rites of Spring, and One Last Wish. The latter two groups are both frequently cited as founding concerns behind what zinesters labeled "emotional hardcore" (later termed "emo"). After One Last Wish broke up in 1986, MacKaye convinced Picciotto to join his new, then-unnamed project. Reluctantly, Picciotto became the group's backup singer and mascot of sorts, dancing animatedly around the stage while MacKaye, Lally, and Canty jammed. Though he would not begin playing second guitar with Fugazi until 1989, the band quickly became established in the American underground and set out for their first tour of Europe in 1988, beginning in the Netherlands that October.

According to varying accounts, Philippe Roizès and Manu Casana implored the band to make a last-minute decision to go to Paris and play at Club Gibus, their only French date on that first tour. A video filmed by Philippe Roger shows a packed house for their November 22 show. Despite the band's objections, the rowdy French punks escalated the crowd violence over the course of their first few songs. At one point early on, Picciotto gets on the mic and implores the audience (in French) to control their dancing, since it made it hard for him to sing with the microphone bashing into his face. Picciotto remembers:

"I recall [Fugazi's] first couple of shows there were a bit tough but that could just have been because of unfamiliarity with the group and bad luck with a couple of venues. By the time we'd been back a couple of times it really changed and the reaction and support were amazing as it was throughout France. For me being in a "foreign" country where I could understand the language made a huge difference to me. Being able to communicate and interact with the crowd on equal footing were really important to us and in countries where we had a language block that was made much more difficult. In France I could follow what was going on and I could interpret for the rest of the group" (Picciotto 2016).

Elsewhere in France over the following years, Picciotto would normally assume duties as the de facto front man. Theatre Barbey, in Bordeaux, became one of the band's favorite venues in Europe. They played successful shows there in 1992, 1995, and 1999; recordings reveal MacKaye being uncharacteristically silent between songs while Picciotto engages the crowd exclusively in French, despite how many of their fans could understand English. This did not go unappreciated. Thrashington, DC / Syndrome 81 singer Fab Le Roux, who saw Fugazi perform while studying for a year in Brighton, England, remarked how much he and his friends would appreciate when English-speaking bands would make an effort to even memorize and recite one or two phrases.

The “D.C. Sound” Goes Global, 1984-1994

Interviewer: Right now, where would you go if you could go anywhere?

Skeeter Thompson: Paris (*Pit No. 2*, 1987).

“Paris is an amazing city and one of my favorite places in the world independent of my experiences as a musician... it's beautiful, a great walking city, great diversity with culture and history everywhere as well as wonderful people. Very guide-book attitude but true nonetheless”- Guy Picciotto (Picciotto 2016).

On December 12, 1989, Fugazi made their second appearance in Paris, playing at Forum de Grenelle, an unassuming venue in the 15th Arrondissement. This came roughly one year after their Paris debut, a hastily thrown together bill with Treponem Pal and Krüll at Club Gibus on November 22, 1988 (See Figures 17-19). This time, though, their show was going to take place a short kilometer from the Eiffel Tower, but culturally, the event could not have been farther from the touristic purview of the city. However, despite Fugazi's paradigmatic encapsulation of the “ideal” American underground band, their relentless touring through the previous two years had attracted some attention from the corporate industry.



Figure 17. The flyer for Fugazi's first show in Paris at Club Gibus, Tuesday November 22, 1988. From the Fugazi Live Series on Dischord.com.



Figure 18. Ticket from Fugazi's second Paris show at Forum de Grenelle, December 11, 1989. Apologize and G.I. Love opened. Ticket from Dischord Archive.



Figure 19. Fugazi playing at Forum de Grenelle, Paris. December 11, 1989. Photo by Philippe Roizès, from Dischord Archive.

This show sat at the end of a 26-date fall tour of Europe that spanned the Netherlands, England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Germany. Philippe Roizès, who had organized this show as he had Fugazi's first Paris show at Gibus, booked his band Apologize to open. Before the show began, a small group of men approached Roizès, having been directed to him when they asked who was in charge. They told him they were representing a record label in London and were interested in introducing themselves to Fugazi. Roizès decided to deliver the message. He walked to a small room off a corridor behind the stage where the four quiet Americans were sitting and reading. Roizès recalls opening the door, and in a creepy synchronicity, MacKaye, Picciotto, Canty, and Lally all looked up from their books. Philippe told Ian that a couple of label men from England were out front and wished to speak with him. Ian, almost instantly and presciently, replied “Tell them I hope they enjoy the show, but no need to meet; we have nothing to talk about” (Roizès 2016).

The Forum de Grenelle show would hardly be the last time that the band would confront major-label attention. In fact, the 1989 anecdote feels like a presage to the major-label feeding frenzy that would ensue within two years following the Grunge explosion. The immense pressure that Fugazi faced to operate within the major-label universe is a key focus on Joe Gross' *33 1/3* volume on 1993's *In On The Kill Taker*, the band's best-selling release and high-water mark of their ‘mainstream’ popularity. Though Fugazi attracted the curiosity of the mass media, they democratically maintained their decision to continue operating independently, a distinct province of their underground orientation. As Thornton wrote, “more than anything else, the underground define themselves against the mass media... [their main antagonist] who continually threaten to release their knowledges to others” (1996, 117).

Few better examples of this convergence between the corporate mainstream and underground exist than Ahmet Ertegun's pursuit of the band in the early 1990's. According to Picciotto, the Atlantic Records chief showed up backstage after a Fugazi gig in New York. Though the band would have rather just heard stories about bands they loved from Atlantic's history, they respectfully listened to his pitch with no intention of taking it too seriously. Ertegun did not know that Atlantic was not the first label to make the band an offer; A&R people from several labels were aware of the members' past projects, so when Fugazi began touring in 1987, they carried a "DC super group" tag among indie aficionados (Foreman 2015). Ertegun succeeded in signing Jawbox in 1993; they were the first Dischord band to leave for a major, and they opened the door for Shudder to Think to do the same soon thereafter with Epic. Fugazi, however, were not budging. Dischord was not a poor label and most of the artists on it were on decent financial footing. This reality ran contrary to some French punks' impression of it, which romanticized the DC bands they were discovering at the time (Dauvillier 2015).

But as punk's success globalized, so did its corporatization. The inherent contradiction here is that punk's very corporatization was integral to its globalization; many less-developed countries like Indonesia would not have thriving punk scenes today (see Wallach 2008) if Green Day hadn't released major label records that had well-marked conduits for international distribution.

"Bourdieu has argued that the cultural intermediaries who work in artistic production do not gain their positions as a result of formal qualifications, nor are they promoted through a bureaucratic occupational meritocracy. Instead, admission and advancement is acquired by exerting influence within class-divided networks of connections gained through shared life experiences formed among members of distinct social groups. ... I have adopted the term *culture produces an industry* to stress that production does not take place simply 'within' a corporate environment structured according to the requirements of capitalist production or organizational formulae, but in relation to broader culture formations and

practices that are within neither the control nor the understanding of the company” (Negus 1999, 19).

For several reasons, Fugazi were uniquely able to become the ambassadors for DC punk; they toured much more intensely and existed longer than most any of their contemporaries²⁸. The band played over 1000 concerts across almost forty countries on five continents between 1987 and 2002. The band recorded a majority of these performances, over 800 of which have been remastered and made publicly accessible on the Dischord website.

Fugazi were the most iconic, best-selling, and spiritual leaders of DC punk and in the eyes of many critics, still the standard-bearers for punk's artistic viability (see Pappalardo 2014). While not every fan of the 'DC sound' or 'DC scene' cites them as their favorite, their influence and achievements for a band on their level are singular. That Dischord's label owner was one of the four members had some bearing on the band's role as ambassadors of the DC scene, but Fugazi might have succeeded as a major label band. That being said, it was best left to mystery, considering how they still represent a platonic ideal of successful independent musicians to many international fans. In turn, their hometown DC has become something of a platonic ideal for DIY culture and anti-corporate resistance.

²⁸ Scream and Government Issue both technically existed longer than Fugazi, but mostly in name. Scream's classic core lineup (Franz Stahl, Peter Stahl, and Skeeter Thompson) still performs on occasion, and Government Issue never technically ended until Jon Stabb's death in May 2016. Though Scream beat Fugazi to France (performing in Paris in 1986 with Sherwood Pogo), they were not quite as prolific or successful.

Chapter 11:

Earthquakes Come Home²⁹: French punks pay Washington a visit

Given the mythical following Fugazi and the greater DC scene have accumulated in some parts of France, it is not surprising to find French punks traveling to the US and making a point to stop in the District. The anecdotal experiences of French punks visiting DC, largely under the influence of, or on the trail of, the spaces and places of hardcore, have come to underscore multiple geographic theses on tourism. These include the discourse on tourism and place heritage, the spectrum of “clean” versus “dirty” tourism, social space in the context of travel, and how underground tourism ultimately contributes to the symbolic accretion of value to (otherwise) unremarkable places.

Washington, DC receives visits from an unreported yet significant number of French citizens every year, many of whom came over during formative years of their lives. Many French students who would go on to love (as well as live) DC punk would visit the city on holiday before learning about what was happening underground. Such was the case in 1982 for Maïe Perrauld of Lyon as well as for Craig Wedren of Cleveland. Perrauld, 16 at the time, was a French boarding school student who was on her first trip to the States as part of a cultural exchange program. Her group’s visit focused on New York, but included a side-trip to DC. Perrauld was listening to punk, but wasn’t familiar with Dischord records until years later when her collective Gougnaf Movement booked Fugazi’s 1990 and 1994 shows back in Lyon. Wedren, who was 13 and on his eighth-grade class trip in 1982, would move to DC during the zeitgeist of Revolution Summer in 1985 and form the band Shudder to Think the following year. “If I had

²⁹ This title pays homage to an album track on Shudder to Think’s *Pony Express Record* (1994, Epic Records). Though the band had drifted from DC by the time they signed with Epic, the song is particularly informed by challenging time signatures and a non-traditional pop structure, both largely inspired by their early contemporaries.

known what was going on [in DC in 1982]," he reflected, "I would have hopped right off that tour bus." Shudder to Think eventually played Lyon on their first summer tour in 1990 (see Figure 20).

Though DC scene reports and harDCore recordings were circulating in France and playing on shows like Radio Bellevue's 'Western Front' as early as 1981, few French punks had a network in place nor the resources to dig deep enough into 'L'Amerique Profonde' and get much farther than New York or Los Angeles. Perrault cites the weekly TV show *Musique California* as one of few mainstream outlets for American punk in France back then, and that (aptly) focused on bands from Los Angeles and San Francisco. The first two American bands she saw, both at age 16, were the Los Angeles new wave group Wall of Voodoo and the Sacramento garage punkers The Cramps. Though she still holds DC's legacy in high regard, she has never returned there, instead following the trail of California's influence to San Francisco at least eight times in her adult life. She recalls first reading about Dead Kennedys in *Best* magazine, which quickly led her to discovering Alternative Tentacles, that band's label that influenced her imaginary of San Francisco's landscape in that way that Dischord had for DC. After ordering her first Government Issue Record, she discovered Minor Threat, which led her into contact with Stéphane Cressard, the record-trading bassist for Parisian punk group Flitox. Shortly thereafter, Maïe "bought a subscription to *Maximumrocknroll*, and then it was over," she laughed.

Long seduced by the lure of 'the real America,' French punks had been travelling to and catching shows all over the United States well before the punk era. Guessing whom the first French visitor to experience the American punk underground via a specific show would be impossible, but there is evidence that Gérard Miltzine of Grenoble attended hardcore shows in



Figure 20. Shudder to Think equipment load-in in Paris, May 1990. (L-R) Four unidentified fans, STT drummer Mike Russell, STT bassist Stuart Hill, Sink drummer James Kermack, STT guitarist Craig Matthews, and the bands' local driver, Ecky. Photo courtesy of Stuart Hill.

DC on holiday as early as 1982 (Maimone 2016). These cases were rare at the time, though, as the only outsiders who knew about what was happening were those closely associated with the bands and Dischord. Wedren, for one DC scene veteran, is skeptical:

Craig Wedren: “There was no way that any tourist would have known to come to DC Space or a house show that was happening in the early 80's, it just was so far under the radar. I imagine it was probably the same in France. The music scene in France was so weird ... My impression [at the time Shudder to Think started touring] was that basically before the French house scene started happening, there was virtually nothing happening... we really didn't know, when we toured there, where to go? What to do? Where's the music? Where's the new thing happening? I mean, there's the music that's been unearthed over the past 30 years... but I never got the impression of any kind of cosmopolitan scene, whereas in most other scenes there was something going on. And also the tourist aspect of it, where like everything was geared toward mainstream tourist interests...” (Wedren 2016).

By many accounts, the first Parisian punk to visit DC for reasons specifically motivated by hardCore was Manu Casana. In 1984, in addition to singing for Sherwood Pogo, he ran a fanzine called *Dekapsuleur* and managed a small record shop called Terminal Export. He set out in April of that year to establish contacts with American indie labels and artists to import and eventually to help other French indie distributors. He landed in Los Angeles in mid-April, spending a total of ten weeks in the States. Manu spent three weeks in Los Angeles, two in San Francisco, three days in Seattle, three days in Chicago, and two and a half weeks in Washington, DC. He would return to Paris from New York at the end of June 1984 (Casana 2015).

Like many punk-influenced DC visitors, Casana stayed at the Dischord house in Arlington. Even in the early 1980s, those who lived there were accustomed to international travelers:

Ian Mackaye: [Before I ever went to France,] I had met French people- I had met Manu, I had met Philippe and Arnaud, but I knew them as Europeans. International travelers stayed at Dischord House all the time... at one point I remember we had two Germans, a Norwegian, a Swiss woman, and a Dutch woman all staying at the house” (MacKaye 2016).

Most touring bands and friends of the label would usually be around for a few nights before heading back out on tour. Casana stayed for about sixteen days. He did create a few headaches but remained beloved in the process. Ian MacKaye claims a photo someone snapped of him remained on the wall at Dischord for well over a decade. Manu's prodigious height, tough countenance, and radical accoutrements made him stand out among the Dischord crew (or, anywhere). Whenever he went outside, he always wore a handkerchief and a pair of goggles around his neck. “When I asked him why he always wore them, he said ‘in case I get caught in a riot!’ to protect him from tear gas or something” said MacKaye.

Anecdotes of Casana's time in DC read like a sitcom script about a visit from a wacky foreign cousin. More than once, he left in the morning for typical tourist activities like visiting the Smithsonian museums, and then called the Dischord house late in the evening from a payphone, lost, miles away from any of his original destinations. Once, he encountered a small crowd in a tent near the National Mall, the smell of food having drawn him inside. Within minutes, he was eating free food and chatting with members of the group, helping himself to generous servings. He had assumed it was a socialist barbecue like those to which he was accustomed in Paris, where local workers and less fortunate had an open invitation to stop by and enjoy a meal. It was actually a family reunion; the picnic-having family found the gregarious French twenty-something entertaining in his getup and broken English, so they let him stay and invited him into several photo ops. Within days of that incident, he got lost after joining a group of people who appeared to be 'running from something' across Memorial Bridge in the direction of Arlington National Cemetery. He figured he would find safety from whatever the imminent danger was. Clearly, jogging was not a common exercise back in Paris, or at least in Casana's scene. In hanging around the house in Arlington, MacKaye also remembered Manu being "blown away by these little creatures; he couldn't stop looking at them." Apparently, he referred to them as "little long-tailed monkeys," which gave Ian the impression that squirrels did not exist in Paris, either.

The Dischord crew quickly got used to Casana's quirks and embraced him as a temporary fixture. The trip ultimately bore fruit for his ventures, too, helping to lay groundwork for a greater international record distribution within France. After his return to Paris, Sherwood (Pogo) put out one full length LP *Liberté* (1986) on his label Autodafé before dissolving. He would eventually land in promotion and production for rave, another underground genre that fetishized

desiccated North American and British urban landscapes. Though it has been decades, Casana's legacy as a veritable Parisian punk pioneer, at least in the sense of his experience as an unconventional music tourist can be understood, keeps him in recent conversations about the history of the scene.

At the time, the Paris cadre of hardcore fans would meet every Saturday at Café Verdun, a dive around the corner from the Gare l'Est station. The group, which often included hardcore fans and singers Philippe Roizès and Arnaud Gabelli, would meet at noon to trade music, share ideas, gossip about the scene, and nurse one drink for several hours. The ones who managed to escape Paris to explore greener punk pastures saw their statures elevated, their stories eagerly anticipated upon their return. In July of 1987, Roizès and Gabelli, both 20 at the time, paid an extended visit to Dischord while on holiday in the States (See Figures 21 and 22). Roizès recalls that he expected DC to be more 'lively' than it was, but everybody he met while hanging out in essentially a one-mile radius of Georgetown was nice and welcoming (Roizès, Personal conversation, 5 July 2016).



Figure 21. Philippe Roizès, age 20, on the Key Bridge with the Watergate Hotel in the background, on holiday in DC in July 1987.

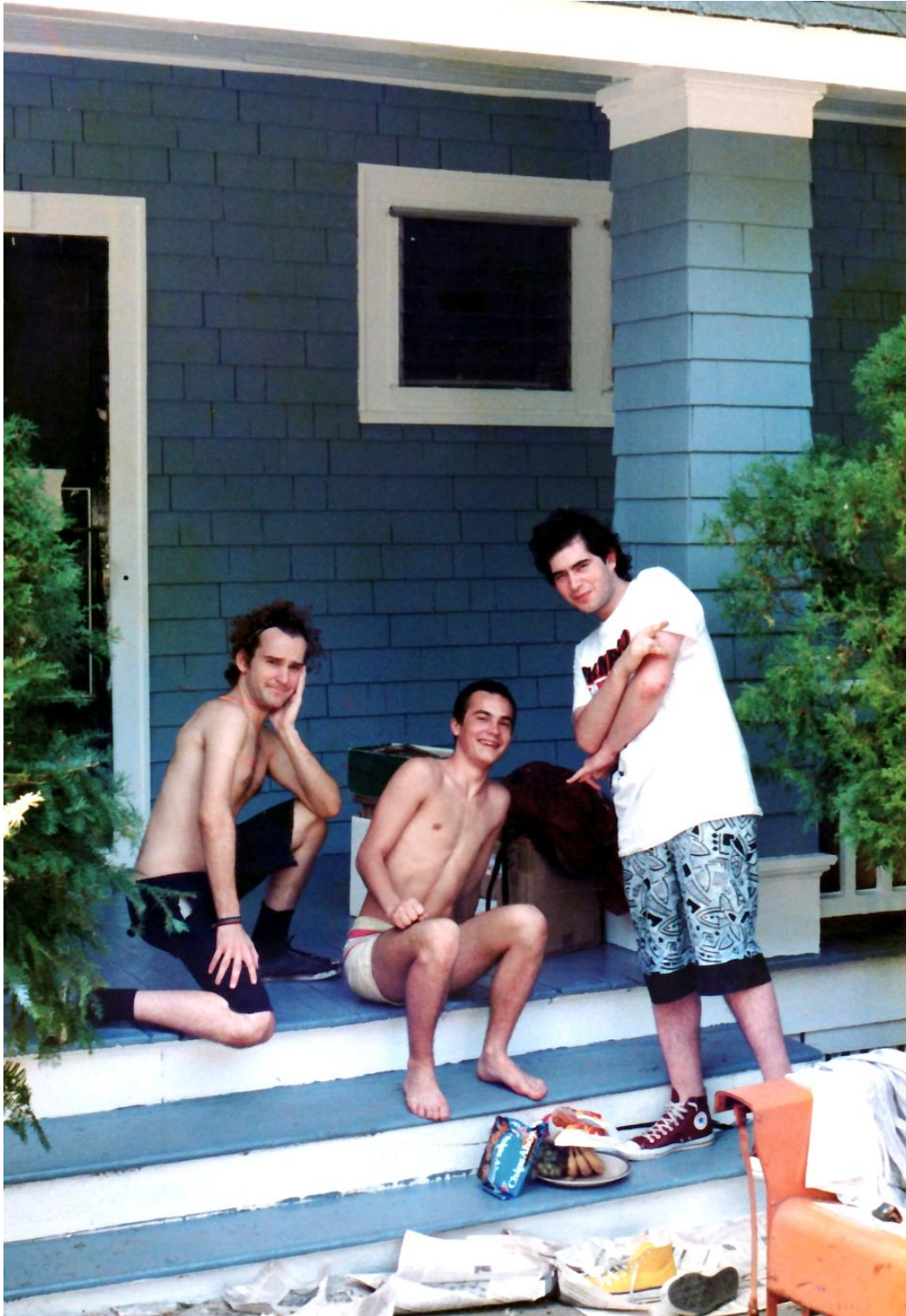


Figure 22. Ian MacKaye with visitors Arnaud Gabelli and Philippe Roizès (L-R) on the steps of the Dischord House, Arlington, VA. July 1987. Photo courtesy of Roizès.

DC's Political Landscape as Punk Landscape

Banned in DC did not pay as much attention to the city's bland federal landscape within its pages, but that city's drab urban ethos permeated a long list of the narrative's corners. Many people pictured and quoted in the book could attribute their DC roots to the government, including Kenny Inouye, whose father David served as a US Representative and Senator from Hawaii until his death in 2012. "It was always so exciting. You had the feeling that when you went to the show you were in the middle of something really big. Something was really happening," said Inouye about his experiences first going to shows in spring of 1981. He would eventually found the quintet Marginal Man, one of few local bands from that era "other than Minor Threat, Government Issue, and Scream... to get out and tour the country" (<http://www.dischord.com/band/marginal-man>).

The rapidly right-shifting federal government also brought Cynthia Connolly to DC from Los Angeles in that monumental year. Her mother had accepted a job in the new Reagan administration. After reading an article in *The Washington Post* that described Georgetown as a haven for teenage punks, Connolly and her sister convinced their mom that they needed to live there. Their mother agreed, and they bought a house on Hawthorne Street NW, about a mile north of the MacKaye family's house on Beecher Street, and two miles north of Georgetown's core at M and Wisconsin (Connolly 2016). The Georgetown neighborhood, while perhaps the flagship of DC's most intense gentrification, was a pivotal center for the performance and networking of quotidian punk culture for most of the 1980s and even most of the 1990s. In the first issue of her zine *Capitol Crisis*, DC punk trailblazer Xyra reviewed a Teen Idles set opening for veteran rockers S.V.T. at the new 9:30 Club:

“Between songs, the T.I.’s and their fans chanted “Georgetown Punks” repeatedly, which meant nothing to anyone else. I found it hysterical, sad & confusing, as the last place in the world you’d ever expect apparently rebellious youth to identify with would be the Posh shopping district of Georgetown! I guess they all live around there and it’s their way of thinking they count, as a few colorful characters, dotting the busied street” (1980).

Although most of the record shops like Record and Tape, Penguin Feather, and Orpheus either closed or moved to cheaper areas by the end of the century, Smash! held on to their location near M and 34th until 2006, when rents and a changing culture in Georgetown sapped their venture of any sustainability. Smash! would relocate to the Adams-Morgan neighborhood, which became a key cluster of record shops that by 2010 also included Crooked Beat, Red Onion, and Joint Custody³⁰. While they were hardly carbon copies of one another, all four paid a degree of homage to harDCore (Sonnichsen 2016).

In the early 1980s, however, Georgetown became the epicenter of punk culture in the District. As Mark Haggerty, the guitarist whose resume included Iron Cross, Gray Matter and Three, told Connolly:

"You'd start at the top of Georgetown and you'd go to Haagen-Dasz, say hello to people, go to Crumpets, get day old free stuff, say hello to people, then you'd walk to Swenson's, say hello to Danny [Ingram of Youth Brigade] then you'd go to Record and Tape. It was just like, say hello to people and get some free stuff" (Haggerty, quoted in Connolly, Clague, and Cheslow 2016, 47).

Many punks would retain various jobs in the neighborhood over the course of the 1980s. When Roizès and Gabelli first visited from Paris in 1987, they experienced a still highly Georgetown-centered community. Most of the activities in which they engaged happened within

³⁰ As of this writing, Crooked Beat has relocated to Alexandria, VA due to persistent problems with rats in their building. During my trip to DC in the summer of 2016, the shop’s owner told me that contractors estimated that the construction of a new hotel off the nearby U Street corridor displaced over 100,000 rats, many of which took up residence in the less-kept-up buildings along 18th Street. Joint Custody and Red Onion, two more subterranean shop a few blocks up 18th, have also relocated to nearby U Street as of this writing.

what felt like a one-mile radius of Georgetown. The social spaces of the DC punk landscape presented a stark counternarrative their preconceived notions about the District.

The first French punks to visit DC, particularly Casana and Mension, both found a community that was as politically charged as it was musically creative. Minor Threat, Scream, and other bands in the Dischord family grew up in the shadow of the engine (DC's war machine) which made '60s protest music such a necessity. This tense dynamic equally intrigued and confused French fans discovering DC's scene:

Gael Dauvillier: My [American] friends were [emailing] to me about [Iraq War protests in 2003], and I thought there was definitely repression here [in France], but nothing comparable. I remember them telling me there were these protests where people were riding bikes, and during the whole protest there was a helicopter flying over them, crazy things. In the early 2000s, I would never imagine something like that happening in France. Not even now. Now there would be drones (laughs)... If you have a French flag at home, you might have some problems. That means that you're really super patriotic, which people really aren't here. I remember going to my friend's parent's house [on a trip to the US around then], and there were American flags *everywhere*. I knew it [was different in the States], but I was still like "holy shit!" I realize that Fugazi were taking stances against wars led by the US, and imperialism, and these were progressive ideas and this was something very inspiring to me. And I heard about the DC women's rights rally, and about the connections between DC and Bikini Kill and Riot Grrrl, and I thought 'damn, this is really what I am into.'... My parents were involved in the 1968 protests ... [and] in France, everyone knows, or has a family member that is a radical in some way" (Dauvillier 2015).

Politically, the Dischord family and other denizens in the history of DC hardcore were a mixed bag. Many in the scene, especially those attracted by Iron Cross, supported right-wing causes and administrations, though generally DC's legacy as a progressive hotbed won out. Although most of the DC punk scene came from middle class backgrounds, the Positive Force community understood the maxim that "problems are more rhetorically fruitful for movements than solutions" (Knupp 1981, 383). They prized community and grassroots political action as

forceful statements and ‘beginning at home’ idealism. 1985 marked ‘Revolution Summer’ as the hardcore kids came of age, mixing pop with politics in a socially constructive way.

Though the DC punks confronted social injustice domestically, they also used their resources to confront international injustice like Apartheid. Rock stars like Steven Van Zandt, Bruce Springsteen’s guitarist and eventual television star on “The Sopranos,” organized an all-star cast of musicians to declare a boycott of concerts sanctioned by the South African government in “Sun City.” The mid-1980s became the golden age of all-star rock singles, between Artists United Against Apartheid, USA for Africa’s Lionel Richie and Michael Jackson-penned “We Are the World,” and Bob Geldof’s Band-Aid single “Do they Know it’s Christmas?” But way outside of the pop music radar, the DC punks realized that, unlike superstars like Bono and George Michael, they had the ability to take to the streets and create disruption in their own DC backyard.

The South African Embassy sits on Embassy Row on Massachusetts Ave NW, a mile north of Georgetown, a mile northwest of Dupont Circle, and a few blocks from then Vice-President Bush’s home at the Naval Observatory. Punk percussion protests became common across the street from the Embassy by late 1985, continuing a longtime international protest tradition that continues today globally, and

“represents the violation or trespassing of an imaginary limit or border. They mark what is outside the boundaries of consensual politics. An instance when the status quo is no longer tenable. They rarely articulate a clear counterproposal or hoist a political figure or party” (Minuchin 2014, 201).

The musicians who helped “liven up” the protests in 1985, including Rites of Spring, fit this descriptor. As singer/guitarist Guy Picciotto said at the time, “I’m not going to try and propose any solutions. I’m just vocalizing my rage, that’s all.” Picciotto, along with band mates

Eddie Janney and Brendan Canty, all around 20 years old at the time, related the genesis of their band's involvement in the Embassy protests to the zine *Truly Needy* that year:

Picciotto: [The protesters already there] would show up every day and do the same march. We thought we'd inject a little spontaneity into it.

Janney: It was really cool. About 50 people showed up...

Picciotto: With drums, beating the shit out [of] them in front of the Embassy...

Canty: ... for two hours straight.

Picciotto: We screamed 'Freedom, yes, apartheid, no!'

Canty: The people there really dug it. There was a guy playing drums. They invited us over and kind of welcomed us into their own thing.

The punks' involvement in the anti-Apartheid protests became a uniting event, transforming an otherwise unremarkable stretch of grass next to the road into a site of historic political activity. An enormous cadre of local musicians, fans, and friends filed to the Embassy after school and work in the afternoon. It also changed the acoustic signature of a massive radius of Northwest DC, which was then filled with many uptight, conservative employees of Reagan's White House and the House and Senate, including Cynthia Connolly's mother. Mike Hampton, then the guitarist in Embrace, could hear the thumping from his house in Georgetown, a mile away through Rock Creek Park (Connolly, Clague and Cheslow 2016, 166).

Cases like these demonstrate how urban counternarratives affect hegemonic, semiotic landscapes of power. To the common tourist, the South African Embassy may not have been a crucial stop on a sightseeing tour, but the fact that South Africa's government was long responsible for a crime against humanity created a disruption that manifested itself musically. Leandro Minuchin, writing about the *Cacerolazos* drum protests around the Argentine election in Buenos Aires in 2001, goes on to explain how these exhibitions affected urban spaces:

“They reveal a set of sequences when noise, discursive fragments, and opposing positions rely on adaptable structures and existing surfaces to experiment and test the suitability of words, associations, actions, and disturbances...the tensions between sound and space prompt a political temporality that has often been ignored; a sequence of events that situates, in an uninterrupted line, passages and

transitions that allow for noise and cacophony to ignite a political process and obtain the consistency of an alternative political language” (Minuchin 2014, 205).

The protests created a disruption that visiting punks from Paris were more than enthusiastic to join and informally unite their home scene with this exciting new one they were approaching. Not only did DC provide this opportunity for participatory action, but it also gave them the microcosmic platform for grassroots political action in the world’s most powerful city. It gave these alternative tourists a mainstream sense of belonging. One of whom, Heimat-Los singer Norbert Mension, offered this account:

“When I was in DC in 1988, there has been a big march for peace in Washington DC. Reverend Jesse Jackson, who was a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, participated to it. And I think the same day or a few days later, Positive Force, a punk activist collective from DC, organized one of these protests against apartheid. I was staying in the same place than Mark Andersen from Positive Force. Most of the musicians and music activists participated to it. There were people from Dischord Records. We all brought percussion instruments and we had to hit them very loudly just in front of the South African embassy to disturb people working inside. This protest existed from 1985 to 1990. They had this concrete involvement making a link between music and politics” (Mension 2015).

Others visitors from Paris in that span also found their way into the sea of banging drums and pots on Massachusetts Avenue. Stories like these, of immersive punk experiences, circulated back to France with the visiting Parisians who experienced them. When Philippe Roizès and Arnaud Gabelli took an extended trip in 1987, they felt like celebrities among the group of punks who would gather at Café Verdun every Saturday next to Gare de L’Est. Roman Jaskowski, then the bassist for Apologize and Krüll, recalls those Saturdays fondly. He remembers enjoying his friends’ stories about this increasingly mythologized city before he and his band mates left to go meet up with some metalhead friends at the FNAC in Montparnasse.

Roman Jaskowski: All the impressions [I had of DC] were through stories that were told by Philippe, who already had spent so much time in the Dischord

House, and he had so [many] cool stories, so when I went there, I already felt like I knew everyone (Personal interview, 25 July 2015).

In September 1990, Jaskowski arrived in Washington, DC for the first time and felt an immediate culture shock, having immense difficulty both understanding English and being understood in English by officials at the airport. He quickly found comfort among the rapidly evolving punk scene there, despite presuppositions about how rigid or straight-laced they were:

“I was definitely not disappointed by the warmth and the openness of people. It felt right away like we were part of a big family. So as far as how welcoming and how funny and open discussions can be and endless. At the time I discovered the states, I didn't realize it, but there was more culture more knowledge, more wit, as far as being European, I felt that the city where I can relate to people as far as conversations was DC. So I felt real comfortable, but I'm upset to be honest that at that time I was already partying a little bit. I liked funk music and smoking and drinking and dancing. And to me, DC always had this seriousness and righteousness, which I am not saying in a negative way... it could be relaxing and wise and soft-spoken, real adult” (Jaskowski 2015).

Jaskowski's 'in' with the DC crowd, other than word of mouth from Philippe, was Shudder to Think, whom Krüll had opened for earlier that summer in Paris. Roman got Stuart Hill's phone number, and wound up staying at the bassist's group home in Silver Spring. During his visit, Hill would routinely come home with a couple of new song mixes from his band's upcoming EP, *Funeral at the Movies*.

Stories like Jaskowski's call attention to the fact that circulation is much more than simply information and ideas spreading between scenes; a large component of it is an emotional geography of mythologizing and belonging.

The Dischord House as Alternative Tourist Destination

The Dischord house and other sites associated with punk continue to inform French punks' mental maps of DC's landscape as much as museums or monuments. While most musical

geography research on specific scenes has focused on the musicians and venues, indie labels themselves have received relatively little attention. More specifically, because many indie labels have historically been bedroom operations, most proprietors have laid bare their mechanics. Where the major labels were conducting business behind closed doors, the indies prided themselves on accessibility. Where big business closely guarded the details of their deals, the underground prided itself on disclosure. The Manchester pop-punk godfathers Buzzcocks diagrammed the expenses of their first seven-inch *Spiral Scratch*, a radical move when it arrived in early 1977. Though small labels dedicated to jazz, country, and blues released music to committed small audiences for decades before punk or even rock ‘n’ roll (Dunn 2016, 129), independent labels have embraced multiple methods of disalienation, or making themselves honest and more personally accessible to their fans. This has come in the form of personal home addresses, emails, and phone numbers included with their products.

This transparency, in pinpointing sense of urban place for visiting music fans, has had both positive and negative consequences for labels worldwide. Michael White, in his 2016 history of Bristol-based indie paragon Sarah Records, addressed the dynamic:

“[Label founders Clare] Wadd and [Matt] Haynes' resolution to remain in Bristol... soon produced an unexpected consequence. Anglophile indie kids from all over the world, who never before would have considered Bristol a must-visit detour while visiting London, began making pilgrimages to the city with alarming regularity, often multiple times a week. And almost invariably, they would make a beeline for the flat on Upper Belgrave Road, its address prominently listed on every Sarah release. The couple were flattered. But every time one of them answered the door to find an excited, awestruck young person from Tokyo or Berlin or Toronto standing in the garden path, hoping for a glimpse into their magical world of buses and aerial views and pop music, they knew their workday was going to extend several hours further into the night. ... Before he and Wadd had an opportunity to move house and start renting a PO Box, they took to sometimes hiding when an unfamiliar face appeared in the front path” (White 2016, 88).

Having had the same impact in the minds of DC punk fans, Dischord started to experience a similar phenomenon early in the label's existence. Beecher St. NW, an unremarkable residential street off Tunlaw Road in Glover Park (about a half-mile from the U.S. Naval Observatory/Vice-Presidential residence), became a pilgrimage site for punks worldwide. Even those in the neighborhood, including a teenaged Stuart Hill, contributed to the symbolic accretion of the MacKaye family home over the 1980s. Today, even though most fans differentiate between the house Ian, Alec, and Amanda MacKaye grew up in and the place where Dischord holds its offices, the Beecher Street address retains a high status in the international imaginary of the District:

Florian: "What I really like about Dischord is that – you were talking about where Ian MacKaye lives? – the Dischord house is [in Virginia] ... but on the records? It's reading Beecher Street, right? It's Ian MacKaye's parents' house. And what I really like, as Geography is involved, the perception of the city for me is the address. Every time I had a record of Dischord, there was this address written on it. And it made me want to check it, because it's really important for me- the place where things are made. You have the feeling like faraway, you can get the vibes of the thing... and that's the perception of the place for me, it's big, I know this address, it's Beecher Street. If you go there, you only go first to places you want to see, and what is the address, it's a written thing you know? So you type it on your GPS or your phone or whatever...and you ask people, and I like in the US how you go to a corner of two streets..." (Lyon Group Interview, 26 July 2015).

Lyon's Hugo Maimone, on a trip to the US with a Dance Company in the Fall of 1989, walked miles up into Glover Park in an attempt to deliver a copy of his band's LP to Ian MacKaye, finding the hallowed address in what seemed to him like "the middle of the woods" (Maimone 2016). He knocked on the door, stood back, and an older woman answered. Maimone will likely never forget that moment, horrified that this woman would call the cops on him. She said hello, and he asked for Ian. Ginger MacKaye smiled and replied that she was Ian's mother, invited Hugo in for a glass of water, and got Jeff Nelson on the phone (Fugazi was, ironically, on tour in Europe at the time). This was not the first time this had happened. When Ian moved out

of the Beecher St. house in 1981, he left a letter for all of his fans who visited explaining that he grew up and ran the early iteration of Dischord records in that house. He decided to keep his parents' home as the official address for Dischord correspondence because, unlike Ian, they were likely to stay put for a long time. This meant that within 18 months of Dischord's first release, the label's releases had generated enough mail to necessitate a stable mailing address that would prevent changing the address on future releases and risking returned letters and, in the case of international fan mail, dead ones. Undoubtedly, Ginger MacKaye's support for her son's project prevented him from the other obvious solution of purchasing a P.O. Box. Circulation relies upon strategic gatekeepers and conductors, and musicians' personal and family networks were crucial to this proliferation as well. Ginger would remain a valued ambassador for the label and DC's punk scene to visitors from across the globe for years until her death in 2004 (<https://www.dischord.com/history/page04>).

While the Dischord mailing address has remained the same for the lifespan of that label and prominent within the mental cartography of DC for French punks like Pons, the Arlington house has provided the visual accompaniment for DC Hardcore in the international imaginary. One of the house's strengths as an alternative de facto tourist monument or pilgrimage site has been its ostensible unremarkable quality. It looks no different from any other house on Beecher Street NW, as the Dischord house on 4th Road in Arlington also blends into its quiet neighborhood. Unlike historical places, of which there are countless within a two-mile radius of either address, there is no official signage, no museum, and visiting unsolicited is discouraged. Perhaps this is another reason for the sustainability of the label, as all of the tourists (including unsolicited visitors) understand that they are going to experience a 'real' place that has not been altered for or by the tourist gaze.

“Tourism interests and advertising agencies thematise local traditions, famous buildings, landmarks and other heritage sights to the point that they become ‘hyperreal’, by which people lose the ability to distinguish between the ‘real’ and ‘illusion’ (Gotham 2005, 1738)

Where DC’s most famous addresses gradually accrete enough symbolism and memorial meaning (see Dwyer 2004) to transition to “hyperreality,” DC’s punk landmarks remain quotidian and humble. Most of the ones that have survived gentrification, like the Wilson Center, remain in use as a functional community center in Northwest. Those sites which have not have closed and quickly been subsumed into the quotidian urban landscape. D.C. Space, the Penn Quarter club that hosted the first harDCore music festival in late 1980, closed in 1991 and eventually became a Starbucks (Connolly 2016).

These unwitting tourist destinations throughout DC - the Dischord Houses, the 9:30 Club, Wilson Center, D.C. Space, and many others – follow no geographic pattern and, unlike most proper tourist destinations, are not under the control or influence of the hegemonic landscape. City hall and the Federal Government may control property taxes and zoning, but the meaning and counternarrative role of these places are both well in place. Perhaps the lack of historicizing or memorializing (especially for former venues that are now chains) is helpful. They make possible the preservation of the network – the virtually private, guarded ownership of the sites’ meaning by a knowledgeable minority. Sometimes, these underground geographies are content to remain underground while they still can.

Urban Life and Political Contrasts

While the “pull” factors, or landscapes of attraction, are understandably foregrounded in discussions of tourism, the motivating and enabling “push” factors (see Dann 1977) must also be

considered. Those from the most developed countries engage in the majority of global tourism, so touristic conceptions of place cater to the imaginaries of those who can afford to visit (monetarily or time-wise). Consequently, the same economic and social classes dominate much of the discourse on tourist landscapes. Many factors of French culture and citizenship helped punk fans spend time away from France. Those who worked full-time jobs had a well-documented abundance of leave time, which has always made it easier for French bands to tour as long as the touring circuit has existed in Europe. This discrepancy between French and American leave time was a stark contrast that several of my informants mentioned during interviews, some in a tone more ridiculing than others. Leave time, however, was just one of multiple cultural-political factors which often generate a heated debate about France's Social-Welfare model versus the Anglo-Saxon business-welfare model.

For the lifespan of the Republic, France has emphasized “liberté, égalité, fraternité” down to its motto. This has permeated innumerable cultural mores, which has landed to the advantage of French musicians in many respects. Even if the National Assembly did not take punk seriously, it recognized all music as a vibrant part of culture. Especially for the 1980s generation, the legacy of François Mitterand's administration has remained crucial:

Maïe Perrauld: “When Mitterand was elected, the left wing is very cultural, you know, we are in France and in France there is a strong philosophical and artistic culture, and he wanted to magnify it, this culture. And he gave a lot of money for people to do artistic things. And in the 80s all the young people, those who are now 55, at the beginning of the 80s wanted to make music and play in bands, and they could do it. And they invented a special status for ‘the music workers,’ for all the artistic world, there was a new ‘intermittent du spectacle,’ which means people who worked part-time for cultural wealth...I think that the Mitterand years did a lot for culture and opening the doors and to let people from all over the world come here to play and to show what they were doing” (Perrauld 2015).

Coming from the other side, American touring musicians found that environment to be a breath of fresh air compared to a neoliberal, capitalist model that limited leave time and in

general de-valued artists unless they generated major income. This rang especially true for artists from a relatively “uncultured” town like DC, where they had to make their own scene:

Ian MacKaye: “I was talking to someone recently who told me one of the principles when they were rebuilding Europe in the 40's and 50's, there was a lot of focus on creating culture. They were putting a lot of money into culture; you could get paid for playing music. Maybe they saw it as branding in a way, but they thought ‘this was important; we need to promote our cultures.’ And certainly if you think about things like healthcare – that issue in [the U.S.] strangles creativity... If you have a job that gives you health care, you're on the fuckin' wheel, every day. But I think healthcare and living accommodations are really central. Not that it's so cheap to live in Paris, but at least you get a fuckin' band aid for free. So, I think in Paris at least culture is taken seriously, and not in purely commercial terms, so that's why I think there's always been an appreciation for American culture.... I think they kind of validate artists over here because the only way you get validated over here is to win an award...As a punk rocker, we take ourselves pretty fuckin' seriously. Americans don't take us seriously, because we're not making any money for them. But over there, they're like ‘you're legitimate.’ And I think that’s what most human beings want is to think they're legitimate, and what they're doing is real” (MacKaye 2016).

Similarly, the following generation of bands who carried the DC/Dischord cultural cache to Europe were able to enjoy the spoils of the groundwork previously laid through the circulation of harDCore.

Alec Bourgeois (Capital City Dusters): “Being from DC always made a positive difference when we toured in Europe and in places like St. Etienne and Lyon specifically. If nothing else there was an awareness of, and respect for, the landscape that we were coming from. The DIY punk ethos was taken very seriously and in some respects had a more lasting cultural impact in Europe than even in the States -- in part because the communities are smaller and the space between them is not as vast so the networks tended to be stronger. Many of the underground touring circuits from the mid-late 80s were still around in '99 when we were there. I think also that there is more of a historical connection to the avant garde and leftist political traditions that people are still aware of. I definitely felt that way about St. Etienne -- we played at a tiny avant garde theater space there on our 2nd tour in 2003 and it was AWESOME” (Bourgeois 2016).

When possible, soul-searching French people made opportunities to leave the country and spend time in foreign places that had captured their imagination. Maxime Charbonnier, after his band Sixpack broke up, decided to leave the small provincial town of St. Etienne looking for a

new life. The previous year, the DC power-pop group Capital City Dusters played a show in St. Etienne he had helped book. The Dusters, comprised of singer/guitarist Alec Bourgeois, drummer Ben Azzara, and bassist Jesse Quitslund, toured extensively for much of their seven-year run between 1996 and 2003. Bourgeois worked for Dischord at the time and with that he carried some cultural cache in addition to that which the band already had abroad, being from DC. The Dusters did an interview with Natasha Herzock for *Positive Rage #8*, which greatly affected her impression of DC:

Alex Bourgeois: Nous sommes déçus, bien sur, de ne pas jouer a Paris, mais en même... C'est ca qui est représentatif d'un pays. Nous ferons sans doute les musées plus tard. Aux States, c'est vraiment dur. Tu joues souvent sans être payé ni même nourri, et tu dois te débrouiller pour dormir. On ne te loue pas d'hôtel, et tu finis souvent par dormir par terre. On joue régulièrement dans des endroits miteux, qui puent la pisse. Nous sommes donc très contents en Europe. Nous sommes bien recus et bien mieux payés. Le contact est vraiment différent.

(Ben (batterie) nous explique que la ville est tres particuliere. Il n'y a pas de quartier noir ou latino comme dans d'autres villes des Etats-Unis.)

Ben: « Il y a la partie clean et aisee de la capitale, et une autre où l'on retrouve les gens moins aises, avec toutes les ethnies melangees. Ce n'est pas comme à New York par exemple. C'est d'ailleurs dans cette partie de la ville qu'habite la grande majorite des groupes indes. »

Alec : C'est vrai, on se connaît tous. On vit tous dans les meme quartier, et on se sencontre souvent en faisant les courses, ou chez le disquaire du coin. Tu sais, j'ai moi-meme travaillé pour Dischord, au bureau (rires)!

Alec Bourgeois: "We are disappointed, of course, not to play in Paris, but in the same way ... This is what is representative of a country. We will probably do the museums later. In the States, it's really hard. You play often without being paid or even fed, and you have to manage to sleep. We do not rent a hotel, and you often end up sleeping on the floor. We play regularly in shabby places, which stink of piss. We are very happy in Europe. We are well received and much better paid. The connection is really different."

Ben (drums) explains that the city is very special. There are no black or Latin neighborhoods like in other cities in the United States.

Ben: "There is the clean and comfortable part of the capital and another where we find the less comfortable people, with all the mixed ethnicities. It's not like New York, for example. It is in this part of the city that the vast majority of Indian groups live."

Alec: "It's true, we all know each other. We all live in the same neighborhood, and we often meet by shopping, or at the local record store. You know, I myself worked for Dischord, in the office" (laughs)! (Herzock 2000, Translation via Google and the Author).

When they played in St. Etienne that year, the Capital City Dusters made a great impression on Charbonnier and told him he was welcome to come visit them in DC when he had an opportunity. The following year, looking for a change of pace, he decided to take them up on their offer. He arrived in Washington in spring 2000 with no real directive other than hoping to escape France for a while. Similar to others' early visits to town, his local habitus kept him within a steady orbit of musicians' group homes, work places, and venues (in some cases places that overlapped all three).

He spent the first few days staying with Quitslund on 14th Street NW near the Black Cat (see Figure 23), where Jesse bartended. He then moved less than a mile northwest to Adams-Morgan where he stayed with Bourgeois. Through Alec, he met a steady stream of people he had only heard on records and read about in zines and online. On his first day at Bourgeois' house, Maxime was looking after the house while Alec was out, and he heard the doorbell ring. He went to open the door and saw Ian MacKaye standing there, who asked for Bourgeois. All he could describe it as was "stupor," barely able to form the words in English to tell MacKaye how cool it was to meet him.

Though University would eventually drag Charbonnier back to St. Etienne by the fall of 2000, he wound up spending a total of four months in DC, learning local history, blending in, and walking up and down 14th Street. He spent much of that time span renting a room from the



Figure 23. Maxime Charbonnier (Sixpack) with Jesse Quitslund (The Capital City Dusters), 14th St NW, Summer 2000. Photo courtesy of Charbonnier.

photographer Pat Graham in a group home in a then- “edgy” neighborhood at 14th and S Street, a block away from The Black Cat. He describes that house as “punk rock heaven,” routinely getting to spend time with Ian Svenonius, Guy Picciotto, Brian Baker, among several others who passed through. He also took advantage of the informal economy that circulated and had developed around the underground music scene. The Dusters’ friends set him up with temporary under-the-table gigs at a French restaurant north of Dupont Circle. He also worked for a short time in an Adams-Morgan hair salon popular among many people connected to the scene, further reflecting the profound social dynamic to cultural circulation, connecting with people and their social practices.

“Social place, including urban space, is of course a social product. It exists as a result of past decisions and practices, situated in particular relations of power and wealth. In that sense, it cannot be conceptualized as the monolithic, unchanging structure in which human interaction takes place. It is also true that in any contemporary present, social actors negotiate the physical and cultural structures of given spatial systems, thereby incrementally transforming them. But it does not follow that these structures are phantoms” (Wolff 1994, 130).

Charbonnier, for someone in a marginal geographic position within France’s punk scene, came to DC and almost immediately became a part of the mythologized scene he had grown up hearing about, mythologizing, and absorbing through recordings and zines, realizing a sense of place he had only imagined prior. His affection for DC and his then-alienation from St. Etienne went hand-in-hand, as a common “push factor for travel lies in the desire to transcend the feeling of isolation obtained in everyday life, where the tourist simply wishes to ‘get away from it all’” (Dann 1977, 187). Maxime still acknowledges, however, that foreign experiences of place in the United States are heavily predicated upon personal and empirical connections:

“I loved the city. I loved every minutes [sic] of my stay. The city is beautiful, lots of things to do if you’re into ART/CULTURE. Cruising the city with my bike were priceless moments. I loved the smell (which can be challenging), the weather ...everything. But, if not introduced that well as i was, it may be a little

hard to find the good spots and meet the right people. Better came to DC not of the blue is preferable I think” (Charbonnier 2016).

Charbonnier’s experiences in DC were obviously singularly fortunate, as he entered the scene as a fan (trying not to overtly act as one) and within weeks was sharing a group home with some of his heroes. However, they speak to a greater social aesthetic and approachability that most music scenes in the States simply did not have. They also speak to a valuable lesson about the circulation of musical culture, in that music operates as embedded within social and spatial lives, not apart from them. The *habitus* of those in the DC punk and indie scene transcended music, as the places of their daily lives became part of one fan’s permanent impression of the landscape. When Charbonnier first met the Capitol City Dusters, all he knew about the Dischord House came from photographs in Minor Threat liner notes and small-press photo books. The next year, he and his friend Stéphane Delevacque were hanging out with Alec Bourgeois, Cynthia Connolly, and other luminaries at the label offices (See Figure 24).

Maxime had a quintessentially local or “insider” tourist experience, at least based on the components of his visit which he related in correspondence. His surreal luck even transcended the local into the hegemonic tourism experience on one incident on his second day in town. He went to visit the Smithsonian American History Museum, where he laughed upon finding the leather jacket worn by Henry Winkler playing Arthur Fonzarelli (aka “The Fonz”) on *Happy Days*, an internationally popular show that charged much of the European imaginary of 1950s Americana. An hour later, he was walking down the street on the way back to Quitslund’s house and he spotted someone familiar looking. It was Henry Winkler, smoking a cigar outside of his hotel. He was in town to appear in a staging of Neil Simon’s “The Dinner Party.” Maxime approached Winkler, who was very enthusiastic to learn this young man was from France, where he spent a lot of time over the years.



Figure 24. Scene at the Dischord office, Summer 2000. (L-R) Melissa Quinley, Alec Bourgeois, UPS driver Oliver, Cynthia Connolly, and visitors Stéphane Delevacque and Maxime Charbonnier.

The symbolism embedded in this encounter merely began with how Winkler himself (a Jewish actor best known for playing an Italian-American character) represented the synergy of cultures that incubated the New York punk scene (see Beeber 2014). It ended after a long consideration the profound impact Winkler (and the rest of *Happy Days*) had on the French imaginary of *L’Amerique Profonde*. The landscapes depicted carried the connotation of “a place lost in the past, a refuge for 19th century values and pioneer attitudes bizarrely embedded in a slapped-together landscape of the 20th century” (Adams 2007, 157). Though Maxime still laughs about the serendipity of that encounter (see Figure 25), it still dominantly shapes his personal sense of place of DC more than any experiences visiting DC’s hegemonic tourism sites.



Figure 25. Maxime Charbonnier bumps into Henry Winkler in downtown DC, Summer 2000. Photo Courtesy of Charbonnier.

The DC visits of French punk musicians and fans like Maxime Charbonnier, Hugo Maimone, and Maïe Perrault were of varying significance, motivation, and quality. Every agent of cultural circulation has their individual set of experiences that inform their sense of place. Some, like Perrault, were visiting for mainstream reasons and unimpressed with a city they did not know had such a vibrant underground scene. Others like Maimone were in DC for reasons unrelated to punk, but got to dig into the punk landscape in parts. For others, like Charbonnier, the District brought so many American fantasies to life that had it not been for photographic evidence, their friends back home would not have believed them. Just as the push and pull-factors of tourism lie on a spectrum, so do the individual relationships between visitors and their destination. Whether the tourist visits the city motivated by musical sites, or whether their visit preceded their education about the underground scene, the circulation of urban ethos relies on complex sets of representations that they acquire individually.

PART IV:
PARISIAN REFLECTIONS ON DC
LANDSCAPE

Chapter 12:

Punk and Unproblematic Urban Landscapes of Tourism and Gentrification

Human agents of cultural circulation, like members of Fugazi and Shudder to Think going one direction or Manu Casana and Philippe Roizès going the other, are engaging in different shades of tourism. Their objectives and directives all varied, and the only common thread was music, but they were all reflecting what Tim Edensor (2009) refers to tourists as “semioticians.” Their engagement with urban landscapes within the punk cultural framework hints at prior conversations in tourism studies literature about hierarchies among tourists, as “divisions [among tourists and locals] are highly fluid based around mutual construction of identity” (Hough 2011, 98).

The circulation of underground culture between DC and Paris is a good background for an examination of contemporary discourse on tourism theory. Both geography and tourism studies have an ample index of work that studies the intersection of the two with music. Australian geographers Chris Gibson and John Connell have published extensively on how music drives the relationship between tourism and sense of place, how “through a recourse to nostalgia and claims to authenticity, music may also reveal ideas about the nature of tourism” (Connell and Gibson 2004, 3). Tourism, considering how it went largely ignored in both geography and musicology until this century, also proposes challenges both qualitative and quantitative:

“It is ... difficult to define music tourism and tricky to conduct straightforward economic or social impact analysis. There are no typical music tourists, given the range of participants and experiences, and the ability of individuals to move between them. Music tourism constitutes evolving clusters of tourists, activities, locations, attractions, workers and events that utilize musical resources for tourist purposes. Related sites exist within sets of networks of transport and tourist infrastructures, social relations, business linkages and cultural performances that support certain activities and economies. Music tourism can be seen as a range of practices where sites of music production and expression (whether in past or

present ‘scenes’) become the points of attraction for tourists, and may also become central to strategies employed by the local state, tourist promotion boards and companies to market musical heritage and a musical environment” (Gibson and Connell 2007, 167).

Music has been a motivating factor for the progression of tourism research. For many years, a disproportionate amount of data collected and analyzed on tourist activities performed and observed on-site ignored many of the geographic, sense-of-place factors that motivated visitors to be there. As Graham Dann lamented forty years ago, “few investigations begin with the question, ‘What makes tourists travel?’ (Dann 1977, 185).

The act of touring, as a performing artist, is rarely considered in the conversation about music tourism. Tourism is frequently conceived as an act of consumption (sights, sounds, food/drink, and experiences) rather than as an active creation of these things. Fugazi toured Europe extensively, motivated by the desire to bring live music to as many people and places as possible. Their motivation was ostensibly financial, but it was genuinely driven by their belief in music circulation and geographic and cultural expansion and exploration. Most obviously, though, this lacking is curious because touring artists do not spend one-hundred percent of their time onstage. Outside of promotional activities (signings, interviews, recording), a majority of touring is composed of down-time where the artists have the opportunity to engage in traditional tourist practices.

Punk networks, however, provided ample opportunities for those among the underground exchange to be non-traditional tourists, or at least engage with post-Fordist tourism practices as both artists on tour and fans visiting sites motivated by music. Tourism resides on a spectrum in between “Fordist” practices³¹ (pre-packaged, standardized, guided, manicured, and often white-

³¹ “The term ‘Fordist spectrum’ is used ... to refer to the continuum of development, which is conceptualized around the notion of Fordism including: pre-Fordism, Fordism, post-Fordism

washed) and “post-Fordist” practices (unmitigated, unsupervised, or immersive) that, when viewed in complex or critical terms of analysis “provide[s] a useful theoretical framework” (Torres 2002, 112). In turn, the interdisciplinary field of tourism studies has begun to greater focus on “specialization and niche tourism, rather than standard, package tours” (Kruger and Trandafoiu 2014, 5). In simple terms, this spectrum of touristic practice illustrates, on multiple levels, the conflict between “the rough” and “the clean” (Fremaux and Fremaux 2013, 310). Tourism frequently draws from both conventional, “clean” activities like staying in a hotel and visiting museums versus “dirty” activities like staying on friend’s couches, visiting local hangouts and engaging in potentially illegal activities.

The ‘Clean’ and the ‘Dirty’ in Tourism

Washington DC and Paris both provide many opportunities for visitors to engage in both ‘clean’ and ‘dirty’ tourism. Paris, particularly the Pigalle neighborhood in the shadow of Montmartre, “became the capital of pleasure and entertainment with its dance halls, cabarets, and circuses, such as Le Moulin Rouge, Les Folies Bergeres, Le Chat noir, and Le Cirque Medrano” (Millan, Rigby, and Forbes 1995, 51). Between 1892 and 1900, the number of brothels in Pigalle ballooned from 59 to over 100 with Moulin Rouge at the core (Wetzel 2012, 87). Though Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec’s paintings of the establishment have remained in the public eye, Baz Luhrmann’s 2001 film based on the Moulin Rouge’s fin-de-siècle mythology did wonders to increase visibility of the legendary cabaret in contemporary popular culture. Though the provocative can-can dance originated there, the original windmill atop the building burned down

and neo-Fordism. In an attempt to move away from dichotomous shifts, the notion of a spectrum recognizes that all variants can coexist over time and space” (Torres 2002, 113).

toward the beginning of World War I. Today, tourists herd in and out of the simulacrum in record numbers, subjected to excessive costs for nearly every activity within the club.

Meanwhile, other strip clubs and flophouses line the Boulevard de Clichy, providing libidinous attractions for stag parties while benefitting from the district's accessible presentation of a quintessentially 'dirty' tourist activity.

Paris' institutionalization of its red-light district is a similar paradox found though other European cities, especially Amsterdam and Hamburg. Prior to the end of World War II, Americans best knew all three cities through stories from troops and Naval officers who went ashore in these towns and found multiple vices ready and waiting. For many of the young men who had grown up with little exposure to American inner cities, this was a pivotal point in their lives. As the World War I-era hit song about Paris rhetorically asked, "How you gonna keep 'em down on the farm (after they've seen Paree)?" so did the newfound sexual freedom afforded these young visitors. Hamburg became Germany's epicenter of hedonism for these reasons. The Reeperbahn area, home to many seedy nightclubs where the young Beatles would hone their musical chops in the early 1960s, became such an institution for visitors that local preservationists even became invested in it. Facing the current wave of gentrification and private sector investment among cities in Western Europe, Fremaux and Fremaux (2013) noted how, "the St. Pauli Preservation Society...laments the decline of the Reeperbahn's hedonistic heritage" (304).

Though somewhat paradoxical that sex and drugs would become a hegemonic driver for international tourism, cities like these still found manners through which to present these institutions less problematically. Though Washington, DC's formalized red light district disappeared around the time of World War II, other U.S. cities like New Orleans and Las Vegas

came to market themselves as hedonistic party towns in the vein of Amsterdam. This process belies a wide spate of serious quotidian issues faced by the city's residents in the name of securing greater investment from curious outsiders:

“The typical method of neutralizing the threat of negativity is to impart an unthreatening and unproblematic representation using themes such as romanticism, nostalgia and other flattering images. Indeed, the purpose of marketing cities is to accentuate the positive elements of the city and, perhaps deliberately, to overlook the problems” (Gotham 2005, 1744).

Both DC and Paris both lean heavily on tourism industries and in the process need to present ‘safe,’ unproblematic versions of their landscapes. In many of my informal conversations about cities transformations in the past decade, friends and family members have lamented how little they saw of the town during their normally brief stays. The prototypical eighth-grade trip to DC is an American tradition for anyone within a days’ drive of the Capital (that is, most anything east of the Mississippi River). Paris is a similar magnet for French students coming of age and learning about cultural and civic life. For locals in both cities, the tourist icons have little to contribute to their daily life; they are just ‘there.’ When I lived in DC, I only visited the Smithsonian Museums (save for the Portrait Gallery, which was on my way to lunch breaks) when I had friends and family visiting from out of town. Olivier Firminhac, the owner of Crapoulet Records in Marseille, proudly told me that in almost thirty years of living in Paris, he never once went to the Eiffel Tower.

Tourism is generally mutually exclusive with the concerns of the quotidian, as “tourism necessarily involves day dreaming and anticipation of new or different experiences from those normally encountered in everyday life” (Chhabra, Healy, and Sills 2003, 712). Punk tourism, as a significant splinter of wider musical tourism, suggests that this dichotomy could actually be

less rigid than tourism theory has suggested. I noticed this in multiple responses from informants who had never been to DC, or even the United States.

Noemie Rimmer Ventura: Well, I have never been to the US, so I have never visited DC. I think that my perception of it is very much based on all the stories and interviews I have read from all these very interesting people :) I imagine that DC still has a good grass root/ indie scene... There seems to be a lot of free thinkers out there, in the arts, the crafts and the music scene. I think that there used to be a very active punk/hardcore scene in the 80's/90's and it seems that there are still quite a lot of free thinkers and independent spirits there :) I imagine that it may be a natural consequence of having the US government based there. This city must be very monitored so as a reaction there is a strong indie scene... That's my theory anyway (Email Correspondence, 2016).

Natasha Herzock: I can imagine things [about DC] but I don't know if it's real. I can imagine things with music and the people I've met. It was a really interesting interview with the [Capital City] Dusters, because they told us about geography and how people mixed. Washington sounds to me like an interesting town with what the Dusters told us (Personal Interview, 2015).

Mathieu Gélézeau: “In France, [our perspective on DC is] strange because ... New York, it's more famous. Washington, DC is the capital, but it's not very interesting for the French guys. We know very much Los Angeles, New York... I don't want to go to DC because I don't like to go to just say ‘Hello, I'm a fan’ [to the older punk musicians there]. If I do something with [artists] there, then I go there because I [would] do something. But not just to (mimes taking pictures) ‘click click clack’ - I don't want that. If I go there, I want to do something [artistic] there” (Personal Interview, 2015).

Whether tourism influenced by either performing or enjoying punk music is legitimate is no longer up for debate. Granted, music tourism is still often at the crux of the discourse over the ‘clean’ and the ‘dirty’ presentations of tourism, given the “tendency for cities to celebrate and promote a ‘safer’ music heritage aimed at attracting relatively prosperous and international tourists, rather than more ‘edgy’ scenes that may defy packaging” (Long 2014, 52). However, visiting a site because your favorite band was photographed in front of it or because they sang a song about it (or even mentioned it) may be among the purest forms of tourism, or at least the most high-involvement:

“...the consumption of place either by visiting or listening to songs about locations can be described as high involvement activities. Emotions have socio-cultural and psychological roots and their significance will influence level of involvement, particularly if these are relevant at key life changes” (Leaver and Schmidt 2009, 221).

Music’s ability to influence emotional attachments to unfamiliar sites in unfamiliar cities is paramount. It demonstrates the power of all media representations in informing narratives of place, and how music frequently helps add nuance to those impressions. It is at that cultural crossroads where counternarratives develop and separate themselves from hegemonic interpretations of these cities.

A place like the White House, one of the most photographed buildings in the United States, reinforces how “places are contested and continually in the process of becoming, rather than essentialized and fixed, open and porous to a variety of flows in and out” (Hudson 2006, 627). Numerous French punks, in their roles as tourists, reflected this. In some cases, the most recognizable building in DC provided a location for intersecting narratives:

Fabrice Le Roux: We met a guy just in front of the White House, he was like 40 or 45, and I was wearing a Black Flag t-shirt (see Figure 26), and he stopped me and said ‘oh, Black Flag, cool band! I used to play in Millions of Dead Cops.’ I don’t know if it was true or not, but we just thought it was funny, talking to a guy about Black Flag in front of the White House. We wanted to do the photo in front of the White House. We were fucking tourists, in the end (Personal Interview, 2015).

During our conversation about the White House, Le Roux also introduced me to one of France’s strangest architectural stories. An early episode in Franco-American cultural circulation, the White House bears a strong resemblance to le Chateau de Rastignac outside the provincial town of Périgeaux. Experts long debated the historical veracity of statements that the Chateau directly influenced the White House, or the other way around, depending on their respective dates of completion and state visits (Johnson 2006). The White House (1802),



Figure 26. "We were fucking tourists, in the end." Brest's Thrashington DC in Washington DC, August 2009. Photo courtesy of Fab Le Roux and thrashingtondc.blogspot.fr. Note the "I [Heart] BMO" shirt on guitarist Régis Rollant (aka Curtis), for the band's home region, Brest Métropole Océane, which informed the title of and multiple songs on their first LP.

completed in time for Jefferson's term as President, was completed about fifteen years before the Chateau (1817), but the commonly accepted theory is that Thomas Jefferson saw the designs for the Chateau on a State visit in 1789. Ironically, the Chateau has become a popular tourist destination for Americans and other foreign nationals, a bizarre remnant of the trans-Atlantic circulation of neo-Classical architectural concepts.

Gentrification in the Age of Underground Circulation

"Punk presents itself as one of the best investigative objects for addressing the urban space from a musical point of view. Born in the United States and England, around the cities of New York and London, and in the midst of deep political, economic and social crises of the 1970s, it is connected to a political, economical and social system in deep and disorienting transformation. By keeping distance of an utopian revolutionary positioning, punk sought in the reality of urban chaos, the basis for its constitution" (Santos 2015, 136).

It would be impossible and irresponsible to omit discussion on gentrification as an omnipresent dimension within the discourse about the urban landscapes of Washington, DC and Paris. Arguably, the political, social, and physical conditions of the cities were what made punk and hardcore scenes grow and circulate prior to the heavy onset of ‘urban renewal.’ In today’s neoliberal and market-driven climate, which has seen money, development, and related human capital pour into these cities, the spaces and places where underground music thrive have been deeply compromised. Simone Krüger recently noted how attempts “to offset these negative consequences of globalization are ... conceptualized under the theme of ‘creative cities’” (Krüger 2014, 136). Those who propel creative cities have been immortalized in academia and policy as ‘the creative class,’ most famously by geographer Richard Florida (2002). In these cases, circulation has become an inextricable component of these changes in urban landscape, both positively and negatively:

"Cities become marked and differentiated by their capacity to receive and absorb influences, by the manner in which they act as nodes, or clusters, within the circulation of modernizing forces. The collective reflection of city dwellers upon these circulating forces, and anxieties over their impact, help to shape the sense of temporality and change that is so prominent within urban life" (Boutros and Straw 2010, 5)

Both DC and Paris are among the most expensive in which to live in their respective countries, and due to strict zoning laws; space was at a premium in both even before gentrification. The DC Metro region grew particularly fast following World War II, the region tripling in population between 1940 and 1970. However, this growth was predominantly suburban, as Maryland and Virginia suburbs grew about 700% while the District only grew 14% over the same time frame (Klemek 2014). Both cities profoundly restrict skyscrapers within their respective district borders; outside, however, tall buildings dominate peripheral landscapes. The capitalist intentions, however, are different.

Traditionally, in Western Europe, the wealthiest landowners have held onto their property right near downtown, and those middle and underclass were never able to live in the inner city. Therefore, as the wealthy elite in Paris “have always favoured central neighbourhoods for their residence, ... the idea of a movement ‘back to the city’ seems inadequate for social categories that never left it” (Prétecielle 2007, 12). Until somewhat recently, Paris has had some exceptions, including Belleville and other locations on the Eastern end (see Figure 27). In his landmark work on the revanchist city, geographer Neil Smith echoed Carpenter and Lees’ (1995) assertion that Paris presents “the direct inverse of the traditional Anglo-Saxon concentric-zone social structure model developed by the Chicago School” (Smith 1996, 181). He elaborated on the contrasts:

"A number of issues are generally raised in this context: the longer history of monetized production relations vis-à-vis the built environment in Europe; the shallower levels of disinvestment in European cities; the more laissez-faire involvement of the state in the urban land and housing markets in the US (whence so much of the gentrification literature has emanated); radically different histories of racial differentiation and homogeneity; and different cultural economies of consumption. Together these issues are often raised in support of the notion that European gentrification is systematically distinct from that of the US" (Smith 1996, 163).

The literature on the redevelopment and gentrification of Paris is also couched with discourse on “embourgeoisement,” in which the city systematically redefined itself at the behest of old money and the middle class in pursuit of that lifestyle (see Clerval 2008). This dynamic has conflated with extant research on gentrification to problematize bearing the two cities’ respective gentrification processes side by side. The majority of French research on gentrification/embourgeoisement has “given a key role to the state when English or American ones saw first of all a market dynamic, whether they favoured a supply-side approach ... or a demand-side one, based on cultural transformations” (Prétecielle 2007, 11).

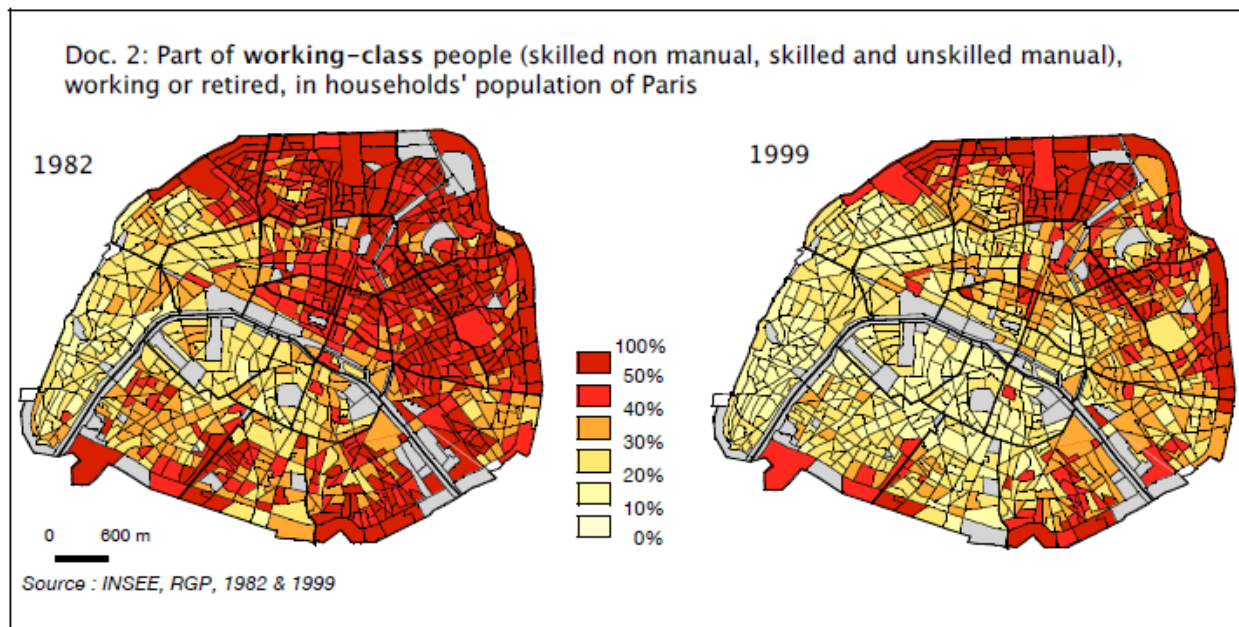
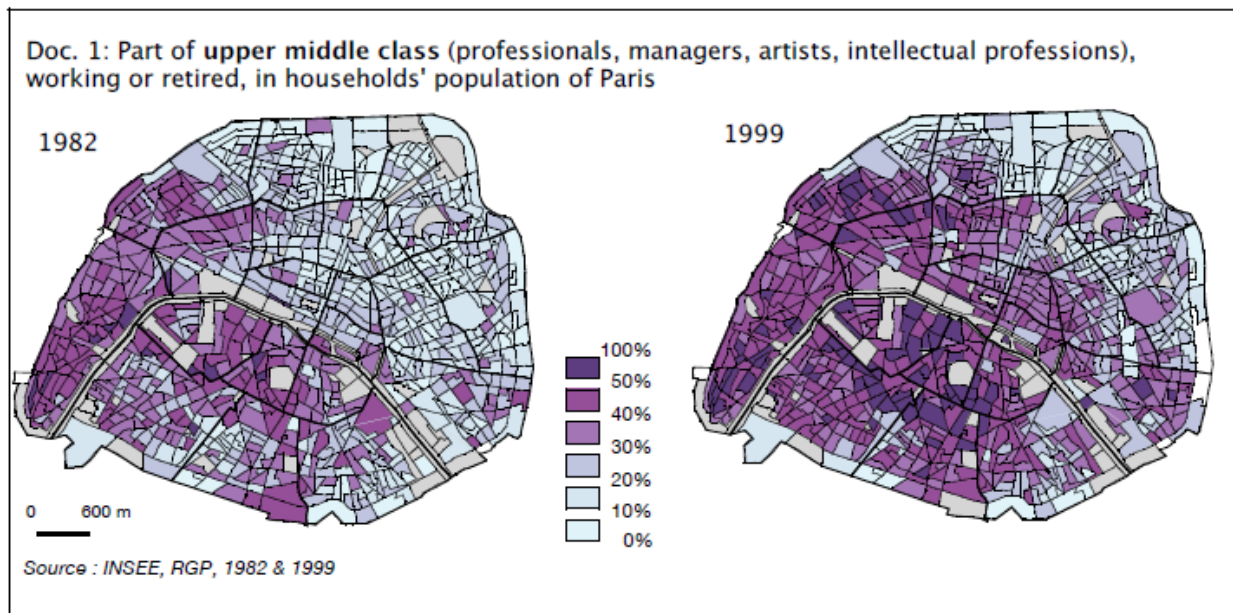


Figure 27. Maps by Dr. Anne Clerval juxtaposing demographics and visualizing gentrification in Paris. Presented originally in Clerval, A. (2008). *La gentrification à Paris intra-muros: dynamiques spatiales, rapports sociaux et politiques publiques*. Université Panthéon-Sorbonne-Paris I. Reprinted with permission.

In the 1980s especially, when various “islands of renewal in seas of decay” (see Smith 1996, 95) throughout Northern and Eastern Paris disintegrated into warzones for the younger generation, heavily militarized urban palaces made it strange for punk fans.

Natasha Herzock: “Paris has too many people, flats are very expensive and small, and it's too crowded. I used to live in Paris...when I was a student... I was listening to punk rock music and it was not the temper of the area [in the 12th Arrondissement]. It's a very bourgeois. And I was punk. I like classical music, but (laughs)” (Personal Interview, 2015).

It was not until the 1980s that “rapid and highly visible gentrification... really came to Paris” (Smith 1996, 181), which, similar in its timeline with receiving, adapting and interpreting American popular music, made it lag behind similar cities in Western Europe. This class division was one of the obstacles that stunted the growth of the underground punk and hardcore scene Paris. Philippe Roizès, who grew up in a lower middle class family in the western suburb Colombes, was often unable to stay in the city for punk shows late at night. If shows took place on weeknights, the last Metro train that could get him back to Colombes left around 11 PM. Hardcore matinees at places like La Cithéa were more accessible, but in the mid-1980s roving skinheads made the neighborhood dangerous. Roizès was fortunate, however, to get to attend high school in Paris in the early 1980s close to New Rose, the city's preeminent punk boutique. The shop, also often swarming with skinheads, became a valuable point of cultural exchange for Philippe and his new group of friends from the city. The suburbs, though they had plenty of punk fans, offered little in the way of cultural hubs or meeting places. Still, the suburbs became shorthand for underclass cohesion and rebellion for some:

Stéphane Delevacque: “I think there was a difference between the people living in the suburbs and the people in Paris. The people in Paris were richer, and had access to more culture. ... Most of the people I met at the time [who liked hardcore] we met in Paris, but we were all living in different parts of the suburbs...I would have loved to be able to live in the city, because living in the suburbs it was always a nightmare to come home after the gigs and sometimes

miss the train and have to sleep on a bench and catch the first train back in the morning ... Most people who were into hardcore were the outcasts, they were not the ones who went into school and work. Being out there [in the suburbs] it gave us a realistic vision of what we could do, trying to build something with a different approach than money and things” (Personal Interview, 2015).

In his book on punk record labels and cultural *habitus* (see Bourdieu 1984), Alan O'Connor (2008) mentions Paris and DC in the same breath in a discussion of social spaces of punk scenes (“perhaps it might be a cafe in Paris, a punk house in Washington, DC, or a cheap bar on the Lower East Side” p. 17). This demonstrates both the relevance of Paris and DC within discussions like these, but also the tight-knit dynamic of the punk community.

Every Saturday in the mid-to-late 1980s, Roizès and his cohort in the Paris punk scene met at Cafe Verdun, nursed a drink for hours (much to the chagrin of the cafe's management), and talked about what new music they had discovered from the States and anywhere else abroad. From 1981 on, the members of Minor Threat, including Ian MacKaye and Jeff Nelson lived in an unassuming house on 4th Rd. in suburban Arlington, Virginia. From there, they conducted business for their label Dischord, booked shows for their own musical projects, and hosted a variety of punks from around the world, including, at varying times over the years, Roizès and numerous players in the Paris scene.

Both of those locations are (or were) epicenters for the expression and ultimate spread of punk culture internationally. The ratty Cafe Verdun closed down years ago, and much like the rest of the neighborhood around Gare de L'est, has reinvented itself as a finely manicured signpost of gentrification. Pre-gentrification spots like Verdun are proof that “when ‘reading’ the cultural landscape, it is easy to forget the impact of that which has been rejected” (Burman 2010, 104).

Punk music, like the rock ‘n’ roll tradition that preceded it, often set itself against a “backdrop of urban decay and isolation, [and] to better understand this relationship, we need to look at the nature of the city” (Keeffe 2009, 145). The landscape of late-1970s DC that created the subculture which remains so unchanging and mythologized in the minds of punk fans worldwide has given way to insurmountable gentrification:

“As neighborhood demography changed, home prices escalated in Mount Pleasant and adjacent Adams Morgan, from a median sales price of \$200,000 in 2000 to \$530,000 in 2012. Further to the east, in Brightwood Park, Crestwood, and Petworth, median home sales prices more than doubled in the same period, from \$186,000 to \$455,000” (Gillette 2014, 2).

The house in which Minor Threat played their first show in 1980 (1929 Calvert St. NW) would sell, more than 33 years later, for a price that nobody at the time would have believed was possible. Legendary performance spaces for this unique punk identity, deeply rooted in place, have mostly vanished as the District area has proven that, as Ian MacKaye sang in Fugazi’s “Cashout” (2001) “what development wants, development gets” (MacKaye 2001). Even the 9:30 Club has long since left its original downtown location at 930 F St NW and moved into an old radio station building on V St., close to Howard University. Symbolically, the nearby Howard Theater, one of the first integrated music venues during the city’s pre-civil rights era, fell into disrepair over this time period. A well-intentioned local coalition would, by 2013, save and restore the theater as a testament to the city’s reverence for its black musical tradition. These publicly funded motions to ‘protect’ DC’s increasingly-recognized musical heritage unwittingly reinforce the idea that “the ones who have an understanding of the value of these [folk] traditions are empowered (or even mandated) to try and save them, to rescue them from oblivion... because what is disappearing folk adds value in the larger white, middle-class cultural exchange system” (Regis and Walton 2008, 410). DC’s most mythologized underground musical movements,

namely harDCore and go-go, have been rediscovered on a civic level as a fulcrum for symbolic urban landscape preservation. Retroactively crafting musical heritage out of the changing city in an example of how “heritage is thus created and re-created from surviving memories, artifacts, and sites of the past to serve contemporary demand” (Chhabra, Healy, and Sills 2003, 705).

As was common of North American urban centers post-World War II, DC’s suburban development and freeway construction drew the predominantly white middle and upper class out to the periphery of the city. By the end of the 1950s, cities had already taken a huge demographic, architectural, and administrative hit. When they sought to reinvent themselves in this new neoliberal climate, American cities (under the umbrella 'The City Beautiful' movement), actually objectified icons of European urban design. However, as Jane Jacobs warned:

“For the underlying intricacy, and the life that makes downtown worth fixing at all, can never be fostered synthetically. No one can find what will work for our cities by looking at the boulevards of Paris, as the City Beautiful people did ; and they can't find it by looking at suburban garden cities, manipulating scale models, or inventing dream cities” (Jacobs 1958, 142)

Urban renewal in the States, like the European version of it that soon thereafter hit Paris (as much as World War II had aided in large-scale destruction), was fraught with these types of contradictions. In the 1960s and 1970s, the major trends in urban redevelopment and late modernist design belied how that time was “a watershed in the institutionalization of urban fear” (Zukin 2013, 356). From the 1980s until today, regardless of crime statistics and on-the-street lived experiences of the cities, redevelopment has shaken older modernist ideals. Under new urbanism or neo-traditionalism, planners “have valorized the urban forms that predated the automobile era of American cities...[expressing] nostalgia for a bygone pre-industrial relationship between culture and nature” (Hagerman 2007, 289). Though some American colonial cities like Boston and St. Augustine have translated their pre-industrial geographies into

tourist revenue, most of the United States, DC included, happened during the industrial era. Much of the “pre-industrial” nostalgia prevalent in American cities, seen in attempts to centralize population and reinstitute public transit, takes as much a cue from quintessentially ‘European’ cities as it does pre-‘White Flight’ American ones. The respective peripheries of Paris and DC, though both more Metro-accessible now than thirty years ago, did not enjoy the windfalls. Though the U.S. Department of Housing, looming over the inequality mollifying throughout DC, issued a report in 1979 devoted to minimizing displacement of vulnerable individuals; “Legates and Hartman (1986) estimated that during the mid-1980s gentrification was displacing an estimated 2.5 million people a year in the United States” (Flanagan 1993, 69).

To those fortunate to have avoided these windfalls, especially those fortunate enough to move *into* DC during the city’s era of increasing gentrification (this writer included, in 2005), the growing reverence for the idealized pasts of harDCore and go-go has provided a forum for disalienation. Yi-Fu Tuan wrote how “people look back [to the past] for various reasons, but shared by all is the need to acquire a sense of self and of identity” (1977, 186). Geographers, when investigating the value of cultural ‘meaning’ of place, have echoed this sentiment since. As Doreen Massey wrote in 1994:

The search after the ‘real’ meaning of places, the unearthing of heritages and so forth, is interpreted as being, in part, a response to desire for fixity and for security of identity in the middle of all the movement and change. A sense of place, of rootedness, can provide – in this form and on this interpretation – stability and a source of unproblematical identity (Massey 1994, 151).

In Paris, the bleak outlook is strikingly similar. Frustration, one of Paris’ most popular synth-punk bands, eulogized the old Paris in their song “Dying City.” A few years ago, activists in Paris would place flyers on doors of priced-out bars and restaurants that read ‘FERMÉ POUR CAUSE DE VILLE MORTE. Merci de vous adresser à la capitale d’à côté...’ (‘closed because

of the dead city, please address yourself to the capital next door...') (Straw 2010). The underground music scene coalesced in response to the domineering mediocrity of the mainstream, and so was this process mirrored in the palimpsest life of the city.

“In Montreal, as in Paris and several other cities, one of the most widely perceived threats to a certain kind of culture has come with the transformation of almost every available space into a restaurant or bar. Retail book or record shops, and small music venues are dying. The restaurants which replace them are not usually corporate or obviously evil; they are very often opened by genuinely creative people for whom food and drink are full participants in the new culture of urban creativity. But here, again, many of the cultural processes we once associated with music are now taken over by food and drink” (Straw 2015, 413)

Anti-gentrification movements (often artistically inspired) rise and gather momentum in the face of development. In other words, “new temporary alliances and mutual affective investments are created through oppositional politics, which reopen a sense of possibility: something is absented, something is created” (Burman 2010, 105). In this way, cities like DC and Paris, often lamented as different from the ‘old’ iterations of the towns by scene veterans, provide transforming platforms for these cultures to circulate. Ironically yet predictably, the marginal voices and scenes get squeezed as “urban centers become spaces of culture and the arts, spectacle and play, conspicuous consumption and the accumulation of collective symbolic capital” (Markley and Sharma 2016, 389). The ways in which that circulation has changed, then, tends to reflect how the cities have changed themselves. Whereas punk and the rock ‘n’ roll foundation that preceded it both sanctified the ‘ugliness’ of the city (see Gillet 1970), could either truly thrive in ‘the city beautiful?’

Chapter 13:

The ‘Frenchness’ of DC Punk

A component vital to understanding cultural circulation is the investigation of how one culture effectively restructures or recontextualizes the other. My working hypothesis here was that DC’s urban ethos had recognizable characteristics that were stereotypically or quintessentially ‘French.’ Fugazi’s appeal, like that of many indie and DIY bands, was beyond simple representation. The band’s aesthetic, rather than specifically the quality of their recordings or live performances, was a driving factor for many when evaluating the band’s subcultural impact in France. Fugazi’s traction among French punk fans appeared in innumerable iterations throughout this project. Perhaps the most noteworthy, from a mainstream perspective, came in July 2015, when the French supermodel Caroline de Maigret shared a short clip from the *Instrument* documentary (Cohen 1998) with 580,000 followers on her Instagram page (see Figure 28). Many of my informants have similarly used social media through which to share music, images, and other representations of DC’s impact on their identity construction.

Geographers have used musical performance as a fulcrum upon which to balance non-representational theory; this approach can “draw attention to what can be recovered from spaces filled by... human relationships which are beyond words” (Wood, Duffy and Smith 2007, 882). Qualitative ethnographic research also leans on intangible cultural characteristics that often rely upon stereotyping and essentialism. To imply that there is a catchall definition or understanding of “Frenchness” would be irresponsible. Moreover, the implication that music (particularly Anglo-Saxon style) has somehow deconstructed Frenchness would be a “patrimonial dimension... based on a complex set of representations” (Looseley 2005, 198). However, in qualitative study, obtaining individual perspectives on what constitutes ‘Frenchness’ is perhaps



Figure 28. Caroline de Maigret July 2015 Instagram post, including a clip of Fugazi performing “Shut the Door” in Olympia, WA in 1995 as featured in Jem Cohen’s 1998 film *Instrument*.

the closest thing to obtaining a loose definition thereof.

This is why asking my informants about Fugazi’s appeal in France was pivotal, viewing how DC punk engaged a particular niche within French society and ultimately reflected the greater pale of a contemporary perspective on ‘Frenchness’ or wider ‘Europeanness.’ In particular, one could view the process of music performance as an “emotional process that builds identities, creates spaces of community and belonging, and has the potential to challenge paradigms and empower agency” (Wood, Duffy and Smith 2007, 885). I will allow many French informants’ thoughts and interpretations to stand on their own. In many interviews, I posed the question about Fugazi in a straightforward manner that was open to my informants’ interpretation.

Ben Pothier: “Fugazi for me had that kind of melancholia; that kind of ‘dark chocolate,’ a kind of ‘dark coffee,’ that kind of feeling. And that is very close to

European mood, I think...of course it's very urban music; it's the music of the city, but you've got that kind of- I don't know what, even nostalgia, something like this you can feel. It's not even rock 'n' roll or about punk, it's something more poetical. You have hints of poetry and political activism, and DIY, and I think it fits pretty well with the French perspective of what art can be" (Personal Interview, 2015).

Natasha Herzock: "Some people are very interested by the political messages, and I think Fugazi, it's interesting that they brought new ideas, mixed with ancient ideas, and it's...so you've got the political message, you've got a new kind of music, and it's still punk and hardcore, but it's a combination of many things...Defiant but with a very positive message, I think. It's not anarchist- it's more than this... It's not prophetic, but you can do [as you please]... I think it's maybe they're famous [in Paris] because they gather many kinds of [subcultures within punk] ... I think Fugazi succeeded because they united all of these groups...It's iconic" (Personal Interview, 2015).

Maïe Perrault: "[Fugazi connected with French audiences] because of their discourse and because of the quality of their music and lyrics. ... the energy is so amazing. You understand that something is happening...Most of the French audience that doesn't understand English is really captured by the energy and the meaning of what they're seeing onstage" (Personal Interview, 2015).

Like the elements which bound Seattle bands of ostensibly different styles together under one subcultural umbrella, DC's "sound," particularly among French fans, has less to do with musical style than it does honesty, positive attitude, and a constructive way of being. Though Fugazi were the best-known paradigm of that DC urban ethos in Europe for many years, this non-representational interpretation of the "DC sound" obviously far transcended them. DC bands who never made it to Paris (e.g. Minor Threat, Rites of Spring) enjoyed iconic status for French fans due to the circulation of images and ideas through recordings, zines, and word of mouth. However, those who did tour in France (e.g. Fugazi, Scream, Jawbox, Slant 6, etc.) brought those ideas and images to life in Paris, Lyon, and wherever they could find stages. Very rarely (if ever) did DC bands contradict the reputations which preceded them into France; none of my informants had anything but positive, affirmative experiences to share about their gigs and interactions.

Philippe Cadiot (Sherwood Pogo): “We had the possibility to [play] 3 gigs with Scream in France at that time, they were amazing, and to be involved in Fugazi's first show in France too, a great experience! I think Minor Threat was already split when I [heard] them the first time but the impact was tremendous. They did never play in Europe I think! I've been to the USA very often but only once in DC. What i keep in mind about DC bands is ENERGY first and thru Dischord records a strong independent / Alternative way to do things” (Email Correspondence, 2015).

Natasha Herzock (Kimmo): “I think [the DC Sound] to me it's not really... I won't define DC like this. It's a way of thinking, an approach. There is a link with the different bands in DC, but each band's- it's more like feelings, it's more related to a way of thinking, a style of living maybe. Because you have Slant 6, you have Fugazi, you have Dusters, you have Jawbox, and I think each band [has] its own sound, but the link to me it's a kind of elegance and way of thinking, and maybe a great friendship. I don't know. DC sounds? I don't know” (Personal Interview, 2015).

Mathieu Gélézeau (Pregnant / Kimmo): “[DC hardcore is] strange, because there are different periods. The first one is very basic, very prime. There is Bad Brains, very specific. But for me, the important things, the very personality, it's when there is – you know Rites of Spring, Fugazi - something more emotional. The hardcore is more aggressive, but this was more mindful. Something more pop? More emotional. It [presented] something new for me, a new thing, a new sound. ... They do politics, but not like the bands I know. ... Fugazi do that, but not like [giving] a speech, but they do something they want, and for me there is no other band like Fugazi. They do the DIY, but they are big. There is only one band like this. I think it's the picture for me from Dischord of these things. And something not very [obvious just from listening to] the music” (Personal Interview, 2015).

Norbert Mension (Heimat-Los): “For a long time we had no interest to know from which city was a foreign band. It's after a while you make links between bands and you understand more about a scene, the specificities of it. Then I discovered Minor Threat, Scream and some others like Beefeater. Musically speaking, very quickly, bands had their own style. What was new to me in most of these DC bands was the fact that their lyrics were more in connection with real life. I mean most of the hardcore bands wrote about refusing to conform and government policies. And sometimes it sounded like caricatures. DC bands wrote about true and deep human feelings. There was something more smarter, introspective and romantic about it in a way. They authorize themselves to write on new stuff. Other bands used to be against this and that... DC bands did something different” (Email Correspondence, 2015).

Fab Le Roux (Thrashington, DC / Syndrome 81): “To me, the DC sound is more [about] exploring, it's more an experiment. Even the Bad Brains, they experimented a lot. Minor Threat gave birth to Embrace and Fugazi in the end. It's

more, it's punk, it's emo ...everyone who loves music can find something [they like in the Dischord catalog]. I think it's always quality. For me it's more the spirit than the music. It's the mythology” (Personal Interview, 2015).

Reflective of Bell’s (1998) closing assessment of Seattle’s musical urban ethos, various DC bands and DC-rooted bands have earned respect around the world simply by being from DC. This came true even for this writer at that show at Le Pix bar in 2010, where the mere mention of my being from DC at a show led to numerous questions from Parisian punks about that scene: Do you ever run into any of these musicians around town? Are Fugazi ever going to get back together? (I honestly replied that I wasn’t the person to ask about that). Considering how it benefitted me as a music fan almost a decade after Fugazi’s last show, it follows that DC bands connected with the punk scene enjoyed a variety of advantages all over the world.

DC Imagery and the French Imaginary

“Images, from early maps to picture postcards, have not simply reflected real city spaces; instead, they have been imaginative reconstructions - from specific points of view - of a city's monumentality. The development of visual media in the 20th century made photography and movies the most important cultural means of framing urban space, at least until the 1970s. ... since then redevelopment came to focus on consumption activities, the material landscape itself... preserving old buildings and small sections of the city re-present the scarce ‘monopoly’ of the city's visual past. Such a monopoly has economic value in terms of tourist revenues and property values” (Zukin 2013, 353).

Before any discussion on the circulation and impacts of punk imagery between DC and Paris, the dynamic of imagery in general must be understood. Sharon Zukin’s quote, above, hints at the multivariate impacts that pervasive images may have on circulating place narratives of cities, which in turn can impact processes like gentrification and urban development. Pervasive as the most common images of DC may be, “it is the embedding of images in wider discourses that generates meanings” (Crang 1996, 434).

DC's psychogeographic role within popular culture has been predominantly symbolic. Most television shows and films that take place (even for one scene or episode) in Washington reinforce hegemonic public impressions of the city as the concentration of American federal power and little else. These hegemonic cultural landscapes, "as explored from an iconographic methodology, are representations that inevitably serve someone's interest and, in this way, are never neutral or value free" (Hoelscher 2009, 132). Punk's propensity for counter-narratives is vital in deconstructing and understanding how these images are inherently political, insidious, and in many ways counterintuitive.

Rather than provide a passive, placeless backdrop for narrative film, the city's frequently one-dimensional existence assumes a role in the action. Recent hit television series like *House of Cards* (Netflix), *The West Wing* (NBC), and *Veep* (HBO) all center on the transgressions of political figures and individuals whose conflicts are all tied to their government roles. Few motion pictures have attempted to circumvent this clichéd simplification of the urban landscape. *Dave* (1993), starring Kevin Kline in the titular role, focuses on a private citizen in Georgetown whose life becomes engulfed by the federal government when he is tapped to replace the ailing president. *Head of State* (2003), written by, directed and starring Chris Rock, feigns to represent the "real DC" (Rock's character is an alderman in DC's fictional 9th Ward) but quickly shifts its focus to a satire about the two-party system and the Federal Government.

Filmmakers and television producers, ironically, expand the *reel* DC when the *real* DC doesn't offer sufficient places to satisfy their narratives. Rock's creation of a fictional 9th Ward is a clear nod to Marion Barry's blighted 8th Ward, which includes much of the predominantly-Black Anacostia and Congress Heights. When the Simpsons visited Washington, DC in an episode first aired on September 26, 1991, writers George Meyer, Al Jean, and Mike Reiss

invented a memorial to a fictional feminist icon named Winifred Beecher Howe, a clear reference to multiple American suffragettes like Susan B. Anthony. "Mr. Lisa Goes to Washington" (homage to the 1939 Frank Capra film *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*) was one of the highest-rated episodes of the show's first three seasons, and it proved pivotal in the show's transition from farcical sitcom to acclaimed socio-political satire. It was also, notably, the first time the Simpsons left their fictional town of Springfield to travel to a real-life city³², so the production team learned to adapt the urban iconography into their cartoon universe. A catalog of easily recognizable DC landmarks provided foils for the Simpsons' jokes, including the Smithsonian Museums, the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Kennedy Center, the Jefferson Memorial, and the Watergate Hotel (where the Simpsons stay). These representations of place carry meanings across the world as they are transmitted and translated internationally. As many of my informants verified, the trans-Atlantic circulation of these images became a crucial component of their place-experiences in the States.

Fabrice: Even in the history and the geography of the US, you learn it in The Simpsons, so when you go there, it's like you're in the movies and some stuff. [My band Thrashington DC] went to the beach one day [in New Jersey] before going on tour; it was like [being] on *Boardwalk Empire* (Personal Interview, 2015).

Claire: [Olivier and I have] never been to DC before, but we saw [the movie] *Independence Day* (laughter).

Olivier: You can imagine a city full of people who are working for government, I think it may be the case, and not the fanciest city because [in science fiction] aliens tend to go to San Francisco or Los Angeles- and for one movie they go to Washington, so I don't think it's a fancy city. But I think it's a quiet city, too, except for what happened with hardcore, but I think all the rest is pretty calm. And quiet.

Claire: I guess it's like if you talk to people from abroad, about Australia, we

³² The Simpsons had previously traveled to Detroit in Episode 7F16 "Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?" (aired February 21, 1991), in order for Homer to meet his half-brother Herb Powell. However, that episode did not feature any real-life landmarks of Detroit as the action was centered on Herb's compound and the offices of the fictional Powell Motors.

would say Sydney is the capital city but it's really Canberra, but we forget because we don't really care (laughs). I think people sometimes forget DC is the capitol city. People think it's New York. It's the biggest city, people think- you know particularly for France, Paris is the capital, and is the biggest city, and is the most cultural- and Washington looks [like] some small city [in the] countryside, something with old ladies, it doesn't look that cool, actually. When we see it on TV shows, it's always something with politics, or White House destruction...

Olivier: You notice when a movie is in New York, the monster destroys New York-

Claire: King Kong, too!

Olivier: Or like Superman, what he does fly over New York... when a movie is in Washington, it destroys *one house*. It is one big house, and it's over, and you don't have any images of the rest of the city.

Claire: For me, it just looks really quiet, just a bit boring, if you compare it to New York (Group Interview, 2015).

Hugo Maimone: "I didn't really have a clue about DC [growing up in the 1970s]. I was way more impressed and interested in NYC or California, both for the places and for the music. The musical heritage and stories from those places seemed like the real American Dream to me. I grew up listening to bands from those 2 places and even bands that I loved like Pere Ubu or Devo [both from Ohio] were linked to those in my teenage mind! So DC didn't mean anything to me before I got into the [hardcore] scene. It wasn't a place that you actually saw on TV, in series or movies. It was only talked about for politics, which I didn't care at all about" (Email Correspondence, 2016).

Nabil Ortega: "It's funny; the reason I want to go there is not necessarily because of Dischord ... it's more like I enjoy more and more the touristy stuff, I realize. And I really want to check out the monuments, and I really want to tour the White House because you see it on TV so much. When I was watching 'House of Cards' with my girlfriend, and we were saying it would be really cool to check out all those places and go to DC... and she's from Strasbourg which has all the European institutions, so she kind of knows that stuff, but even going to Strasbourg, I enjoy [seeing] that; 'wow that's huge, that's where they pass all the bills and stuff, it's crazy.' So I'd like to see the reason why we're so fucked - oh, there's the White House (laughs). If we can go to see the Dischord house, well then great but that's not my goal. I want to go to Joint Custody more than that, because I'm a record nerd" (Group Interview, 2015).

Though DC is a small city compared to New York or Los Angeles, it may be among the most geographically and iconically reducible of North American cities, similar to Paris' stature among European cities. Paris' most recognizable icons - the Eiffel Tower, the Arc du Triomphe, the Louvre, and the Cathedral on Montmartre - routinely serve a similar function for those

simplifying the landscape in marketable images and tourist impressions. The Eiffel Tower, in particular, “has become such an integral part of daily life that it is almost a natural phenomenon like stone or the river, and there is scarcely a place in Paris, except the top of the Tower itself, from which it cannot be seen” (Millan, Rigby, and Forbes 1995, 46). In this respect, it is similar to the monolithic Washington Monument in terms of visual domineering and multifaceted symbolism. Citing Roland Barthes, Millan, Rigby, and Forbes (1995) conceptualized the tower as “a symbol of Paris, of modernity, of communications, of scientific progress, or of the nineteenth century, resembling a rocket, the stalk of a plant, a derrick, a phallus, a lightning conductor, or an insect” (46). Noted feminist geographer Gillian Rose recently put the publically mitigated ‘meaning’ of sites like the Eiffel tower into context:

"As an intertextual method, iconography is most often applied to Western figurative images and to architecture, usually from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. During that period, compendia of symbols (in the loose sense of the word) were written for both artists and for patrons... Iconography needs a thorough grounding in historical context to be successful, therefore" (Rose 2012, 204)

These mainstream images of both DC and Paris are unavoidable in understanding the circulation of harDCore imagery, mainly because people discover world cities before they discover punk music. The *narrative* needs to exist in order for the *counternarrative* to address or deconstruct it.

HarDCore Imagery and the French Imaginary

“Music and images are social, commercial, and political representations. They correspond, intersect, and inform each other, impure and inviting. They depict, bear, and transform cultures and cultural values. Together, they demonstrate the pervasive interconnections between visual and music cultures, their abiding and intricate appeals to "youth" audiences, and their insistence on their own sense of urgency and immediacy. This sense of time passing suggests a more profound aspect of these intertwining representations - their understanding of and ease with the instability of identity” (Fuchs 1999, 185).

One of punk's most recognizable (and most parodied) photographs was snapped by Glen Friedman in 1981 (see Figure 29). While a couple of alternate takes have circulated (including one with a dog mixed in with the band), the most iconic one features the band sitting on the front porch steps through a fish-eye lens. Jeff Nelson, Lyle Preslar, and Brian Baker sit on the porch level (Nelson and Preslar in rocking chairs and Baker on an inverted Pepsi crate). MacKaye, hands folded in front of his chin, sits one step down in the foreground. A skateboard featuring Cynthia Connolly's iconic 'black sheep' logo (which would become a popular tattoo) sits propped against the left column next to Nelson's right leg. On the ground between the steps and a shrubbery sit a mannequin's disembodied leg and a push reel lawn mower. Friedman barely remembers the finer details of this photo shoot, and MacKaye's only recollection was how meticulous Friedman was with his film. Friedman delicately arranged and composed each shot prior to snapping the shutter, as if he could predict the effect that this image would have in circulating hardcore around the world.

One of hardcore's most persistent ethics, as it had been in early punk, was the lack of a barrier between the performers and audience. In this sense, it relies on circulation on infinitely smaller scales. Much extant performance footage of Minor Threat, particularly after they pressed their short songs onto vinyl and mailed them around the world, featured Ian MacKaye handing the microphone off to acquaintances and strangers jammed into the front row. Hardcore bands, predisposed to anthemic, scream-along choruses, have continued in a tradition which Minor Threat are icons. As Shayna Maskell wrote, "the communal and underground nature of the punk scene bred a certain intimacy between the performers and their audience, allowing for a better appreciation of their markers of sameness" (Maskell 2009, 420). French punk labels like



Figure 29. Iconic Glen Friedman photograph of Minor Threat on the steps of the Dischord House, Arlington, VA 1981. Used with permission from Friedman.

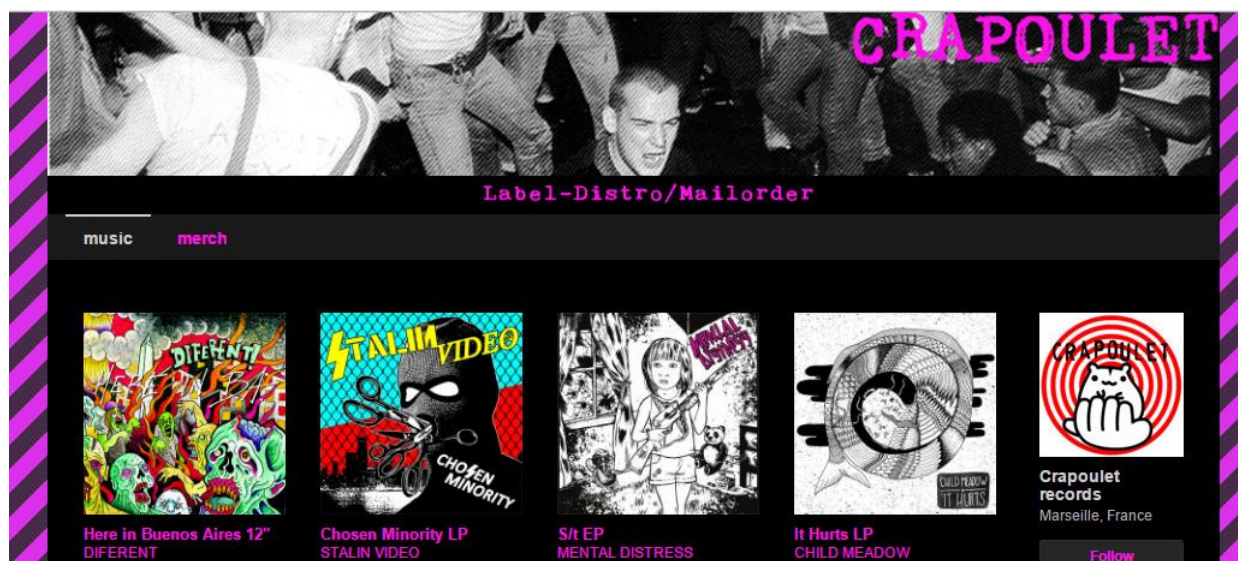


Figure 30. Header from the Crapoulet Records Bandcamp page, featuring a cropped Glen Friedman photo of Minor Threat playing at CBGB's in New York in 1982. Captured from crapouletrecords.bandcamp.com, March 2017.

Crapoulet make liberal use of Minor Threat's imagery as icons of this intimacy in their online presence (see Figure 30) and their merchandise for these reasons:

Olivier: I use [a live photo of Minor Threat] because the picture is really nice, it's an important band for me, and he's got the same market as me. It gives a good definition of hardcore because the singer is in the crowd, the crowd is happy to be there... that's an important photo for me. That's why I use it (Group Interview, 2015).

The images that Minor Threat published with their music, though not their sheer intent, differentiated the band within punk. The quotidian photos of the band laying around the Dischord house, goofing off and drinking Coke, stood in stark contrast with the predominant punk imagery, especially to French fans who discovered them in later years. Nico Gresser, now a longtime Straight Edger with a prominent Minor Threat logo tattoo across his lower back, discovered a used copy of Minor Threat's Discography CD in a Dijon thrift shop in the mid-1990s. The photos in the liner notes made almost as much of an impression on him as the music did, and this dichotomy demonstrates the latent importance of imagery in circulation:

Nico Gresser: "I was quite [struck] by the fact... like all the imagery on the Minor Threat discography... where they are like sitting in front of the Dischord house, when I was fifteen, all these looked very American to me (laughs). It was funny because to me, punk rock was related to Britain... because my older brother was into typical punk rock like The Clash, like Exploited, like other bands from the English scene...and the imagery, to me, was really American. That may sound funny, or cheesy, but... you had these guys handling Pepsi bottles and Coke cans - that was funny, it wasn't like typical punk imagery. They looked pretty normal [like skaters and nerds], and drinking Coke, but their music was like the punkest music ever" (Personal Interview, 2015).

Nico's insights on Minor Threat are hardly unique and call to attention how dominant British iconography was in punk, even through the late 1990s. In a way, it still is. The hegemonic images which these visual markers of "American-ness" altered reflect "how media constructs and constitutes cultural meaning, social difference, ways of seeing, and social reality (Lukinbeal 2014, 44). In DC, some unremarkable landmarks become remarkable to the musical tourist due

to images and mythology. For a time in early 1981, one of the Georgetown gathering posts was the Haagen-Dazs Ice Cream shop near the corner of M and Wisconsin NW, where a 20-year-old Henry Rollins was assistant manager. Some of the most popular quotidian photographs of that era in hardCore include pictures of Rollins and MacKaye goofing off in the shop after hours. The story of how Rollins came to join Black Flag also imbues the shop with layers of mythology, juxtaposed with the realism of the changing city in the outsider imaginary:

Florian: “[If I could go back to DC], I would go to the White House, I would go to Congress, then If I had time, if it still exists, I would go visit the ice cream shop where Henry Rollins was working, when he went up to New York to see Black Flag, and got to jump onstage and sing with them, then drove back to DC because he had to open it in the morning, then [Greg Ginn of Black Flag] called him there to ask if he wanted to join the band. I just think it would be neat” (Group Interview, 2015).

Despite Georgetown being an ostensible epicenter of wealth and commerce within the District, the site of countless popular restaurants, a nationally renowned University, numerous famous sites from *The Exorcist* (including the highly photographed staircase), the most important spot to those who are plugged into the underground landscape is a tiny ice cream shop. Remarkable images and their contextual stories, circulated through social and musical networks that inform sense of place can, in this way, completely refocus the tourist gaze. It calls to mind the point in *Distinction* where Pierre Bourdieu addresses the power of images:

“Because the image is always judged by reference to the function it fulfils for the person who looks at it or which he thinks it could fulfill for other classes or beholders, aesthetic judgment naturally takes the form of a hypothetical judgment implicitly based on the recognition of 'genres', the perfection and scope of which are defined by a concept” (Bourdieu 1984, 42).

And, ultimately, it highlights the importance of understanding the role images play in the dissemination of musical narratives and counter-narratives. Geography has made great strides in understanding these connections over the past decade.

PART V:

IAN MACKAYE IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN DC³³

³³ This is a reference in two parts. The phrase is a nod to the popular 1970s musical *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*, a revue that translated and reinterpreted the Belgian *chanson* singer's hits for English-speaking audiences. This also references a bizarre internet hoax sent around in 2007 that Ian MacKaye had died suddenly at age 45. The DCist website called him and he picked up the phone, unaware of the rumors circulating.

Chapter 14:

Concluding Thoughts

The goal of this dissertation, as previously stated in slightly different language, has been to reinforce the role that punk has played (and continues to play) in the development and escalation of geographic counter-narratives. Punk has remained just as viable, through the practices associated with the word have changed greatly over the years. But in its endurance, it provides a valuable chapter in the long and varied story of Franco-American cultural circulation, and on a larger scale, reinforces Tuan's (1977) thesis on how culture "strongly influences human behavior and values... but it overlooks the problem of shared traits that transcend cultural particularities and may therefore reflect the general human condition" (5). However, this also points to a need for more sophisticated conceptions of music circulation, diffusion and globalization within music and cultural geography.

The symbiotic underground relationship between DC and Paris casts light on how the cities perceive one another and grow and adapt to the needs of both their citizens and their subversive scenes. The two cities of focus are both among the Western world's most symbolically powerful and powerfully symbolic cities, integral in the development of their respective countries' national identities while both factoring into urban theory writ large. On the power of their respective national symbols and repositories of culture, both cities are among the world's biggest tourist magnets and therefore do not need to rely on music as a preeminent fulcrum for commoditization.

Regardless, both cities' punk histories, largely developed in comparably inauspicious circumstances and far outside the mainstream public eye, have met a level of legitimization and museumification that would have been unforeseeable for the scene progenitors who produced the

songs, the records, the zines, and the shows. This retroactive public acceptance and curiosity has spread throughout the world, especially to other urban centers in Europe. Mirko Hall, Seth Howes, and Cyrus Shahan recently wrote about this phenomenon in light of Berlin, another city on Paris' level of significance to art, culture, and philosophy:

“Exhibitions, exhibition catalogs, reissue series, coffee table books, and even punk-themed walking tours of Berlin - all these undertakings are inherently retrospective, and aim to excavate the sights and sounds of German punk. Ensconced on pages, in exhibit vitrines, or in the historical imagination of Berlin pedestrians for perusal, punk becomes at times a phantasmagoric marker for the affirmative, resistive, and legitimizing discourses of Germanies past and present... All these efforts and affects... evince a deep belief in the significance of materiality, of the artifact, for punk history. Just as serious is their commitment to the idea that punk was not just made but lived, experienced, and inhabited in real time. That understanding of punk was not created after the fact, but rather is audible in punk's own time, in all of punk's own times, as a problem needing to be worked through” (Hall, Howes and Shahan 2016, 168).

Though Mark Andersen (Positive Force DC) had been giving walking tours of the sites of DC punk history for years, other sources have been targeting tourists as well as the city's emergent young professional population. In 2015, the Travel & Leisure website (hardly a niche recreational publication) posted an article promoting a DC Punk walking tour, hosted by Cynthia Connolly, through the DC Public Library's Punk Archive³⁴. So many people bought tickets, they could not even operate the tour logistically and had to move it inside³⁵. In DC and Paris, this post-hoc sensationalism of “living” that era, absorbing that urban ethos in real time, may be impossible, but the emotional curiosity these cities have accrued over the past three decades in the wake of hardcore has shed light on a new way of thinking about humans' relationship with cities. This has also shed light on these geographic counternarratives and their meanings today. Thought the past has been, to quote Tuan (1977) rendered and made more accessible,

³⁴ <http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/washington-dc-punk-archive>

³⁵ <http://www.dclibrary.org/node/50123>

questioning to whom these counternarratives are important and why they are important to those individuals is key. Circulation, like the music itself, has different meanings for different people, as do the cities.

We must keep in mind, then, how important democratically and oppositionally produced art is to affecting a public and private sense of place. Few branches of art embrace the idea of democracy and accessibility more actively than punk music, and DC has an urban ethos more inextricably linked with those ideals than anywhere. The case study of that scene's historically framed interaction with Paris, this underground cultural circulation, demonstrates how the global community reinforces that. This becomes even more important as 'globalization' becomes a buzzword in American politics and those in power, seemingly unaware that punk ever happened, drive wedges between 'Westernness' and 'Americanness,' as Paul Adams reflected upon a decade ago:

"France's heritage of artistic, intellectual and philosophical resources contributes profusely to contemporary Western thought and if Americans dismiss the French as irrelevant it is most likely because they tend to view the world in black and white, up or down, winners and losers, whereas a more sensitive view includes many shades of grey. The French are famous for attending to the greys, and if their worldview deserves our attention it is not only because of their claims to distinction mentioned above, but in equal measure because the future course of world politics (and American politics as well) is better captured by half-tones and shadows than by the simplistic dichotomies that dominate the geopolitical imaginary in the US, the Middle East, and elsewhere" (Adams 2007, 4).

This ideal of Europe as static in the American imaginary is exceedingly harmful. People who think less critically often fetishize counties in the EU as pockets of delicately preserved monolithic cultures, which is categorically untrue. The 2016 Brexit vote, similar to the 2016 American Presidential election, leaned heavily on these idealized, exclusionary ethnic landscapes with the facetious benevolence of 'protecting' culture from outside threats. This is incredibly unfair, and no different from French writers who never visited the States immortalizing "the idea

of America, the image of Americans, and views about Americans in Paris [that] often coincide, sometimes collide, but in most cases are difficult to separate from each other” (Green 2015, 221). Watching the Eurocup brought this to my mind, even the Swiss national team has a diverse group of players. Isolationism does not work, and it is even stranger how delicate this idealized bubble of Europe is, given how abundant these icons of multiculturalism are. It is almost as if these imaginaries are ingrained (the tourism industry, a heavily modernist byproduct of World War II, is complicit in this) and it is up to both underground cultures and their nemesis the media (see Thornton 1996) to break down and diversify the global imaginary.

One outgrowth of punk is to help to disintegrate this colonialist worldview, and as Kevin Dunn recently wrote, provide “an interesting vehicle to explore the processes involved in contemporary globalization, some of globalization's contradictions, and the ways in which globalization is resisted and/or restructured” (2016, 98). It also reminds us of the value of parity in urban revanchism and maintenance of the ‘right to the city’:

“There needs to be a marriage of heritage with culture, though not necessarily culture in a purely historical sense. Cultural history can be an important theme for some places, but the heritage needs also to be able to accommodate the culture and lives of today in suitable spaces. Towns cannot simply be museum pieces, but need to be able to live in today’s world as well” (Sparks 2015, 17).

The landscape counternarratives associated with underground music call attention to the need for livable cities for both those engaging with the neoliberal, capitalist engine as well as those who want to operate (even in their leisure time) outside of it or on its fringes. Punk, at the time of its emergence, may have problematized the dichotomy between urban art and commerce. Understanding the circulatory nature of punk as well as underground music in general has further nuanced our understanding of numerous dichotomies: high culture versus low culture, heritage tourism versus package tourism, and folk culture versus the popular. It continues to do so, and

these urban backdrops and the people who propel the circulations of the city remain at the heart of the process.

Chapter 15:

The Future of the Circulation Model and Music Geography

A few months after my fieldwork in France ended, I sent an email to thank and follow up with Philippe Roizès. His response:

Because of your interviews, Roman [Jaskowski] and I have been deeply back into the DC scene. And we started to work together on a project of a tribute show to the DC scene. The idea is a backing band (Roman will be on bass) playing DC cover songs for the whole show with guest singers of the French scene (including Manu [Casana], Norbert [Mension], Stéphane [Rad Party] and I). Songs and guests will be from the 80's to the nowadays scene. So there will be singers from 20 to 55 years old performing DC material. All because of you!
Best,
Philippe

I had proposed research that did not intend to facilitate musical practice, but whether or not Philippe and Roman's DC tribute project was a success, it inevitably did. Human subject research undeniably has an impact on the informants, and that impact is well outside the control of the researcher. However, as I discovered over the course of this dissertation, a substantial part of ethnographic geographic research is about simply "rediscovering" and "reassembling" subjects. As much literature on ethnography and oral histories has alluded, individual mobilities have (at varying paces) led people away from those geographies through which these subcultures circulated. I cannot expect all of my informants to remember every detail, and as helpful as it may be in authoritatively retelling their stories, nor should I necessarily want them to. One of the gifts of a circulation model in music geography is the emphasis on what about the impact of this cultural exchange still matters to them today, more than thirty years on.

In Chapter 2, I discussed how the quest for academic rigor necessitates an expansive acknowledgment of both my positionality and my way of allowing "the research situation to guide research procedures in order that they may gain access to human experiences" (Baxter and

Eyles 1997, 506). Philippe's post-facto email lends even more credence to Thien's (2011) argument that removing both researcher and their research motivations (i.e. emotion) from the investigation belies "the spatiality of emotions" (313), or in this case, musical inspiration.

If critics of musical geography insist on tagging music as an inherently non-academic subject, then those same critics must accept that academic research on music has an even more profound impact outside of the academy. Bradley Garrett echoed this sentiment, as "in a traditional PhD thesis or Masters dissertation ... the end result, a massive piece of bound papers in a university library or a costly, bureaucratically quarantined electronic document, is inaccessible to almost everyone outside of the academy" (2011, 530). "Crucial also is recognition that heritage is not merely about the past. It is also, vitally, about the present and the future. That makes heritage "not the exclusive domain of experts, but something accessible and owned by the wider community" (Cohen, Schofeld, and Lashua 2010, 107).

As the field of music geography expands, it will continue to embrace and encompass other fields of study and areas of inquiry, both academic and popular. In fact, studies that approach punk from an intellectual (perhaps, as appropriately, classically French) perspective have continuously disintegrated barriers between the 'academic' and 'popular,' as one cannot exist without the other in context. This dissertation suggests the importance of engaging with circulation in studies such as these, perhaps furthering the development of a circulation-model for studying musical geography or ethnomusicology.

Perhaps the cornerstone of a more effective circulation-model for understanding musical diffusion is conceptualizing music in light of the cities it represents. Music is perpetually circulating and changing, just like how cities perpetually cycle in capital, resources, and above all, people. This model, like all models, certainly has contradictions; trying to capture particular

moments in any circulation is very difficult, similar to taking an ethnographic or qualitative ‘snapshot’ of a city block. Geographic realities are highly subjective, and lived experiences around both urban landscapes and music scenes are individualized and research should acknowledge that.

Today, DC and Paris both have punk scenes that are producing great music and ideas, but the “DC sound” and the “Paris sound” have both changed dramatically. This should surprise no one; DC and Paris have both changed dramatically. Of course both cities will always have loud-fast-rules hardcore bands playing in the style of Minor Threat or Sherwood Pogo, but this is not necessarily because they are trying to relive the past. Especially in the case of DC, this is more simply because those bands were inspirational, and driven to high levels of innovation by local geography. This is also because their music and the urban ethos they propagated have been made accessible through a growing cultural circulation. As the internet has sped up, so has the movement of music and ideas, which explains why this dissertation needed to focus more on the more trace-able twentieth century. That said, this argues for an active participation of musical geographers in cultural stewardship and archival practice. Other concentrations within the discipline, including urban geography and qualitative methodology, have much to gain from investment in oral histories and the archive. Musicologists and communication/media studies specialists have been engaging with this for some time.

This dissertation also suggests that future research on this circulation of urban landscapes is inevitable, as both DC and Paris continue to grow and defy common accepted consensus on cities. Despite activists’ understandable lamentations of a “dying city,” Paris is alive in almost every sense of the idea. Every time I visit DC, I notice a remarkable change in the landscape that may have seemed impossible even when I moved away in 2011. As in 2012 Dick

Hebdige revisited *Subculture* (1979) with the eternal benefit of hindsight, I hope to revisit this manuscript in three decades, knowing what we are going to know then about what miracles, hardships, and multilayered circulations these cities and scenes are experiencing today.



Figure 31. Roman Jaskowski, Phil Roizès, and Karl of Apologize (L-R) on the Paris Metro riding home after a Fugazi show at Espace Ornano, November 5, 1990. Photo by Bertrand Laidain, courtesy of Philippe Roizès.



Figure 32. Roman Jaskowski (L) with the author (R) in Roman's kitchen. Malakoff, France, July 2015.

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Alien #1, 1994, Grignon (FR)
Altruzine #2, 2001 (DC)
Brand New Age #1, 1983 (DC)
Capitol Crisis #1, 1980 (DC)
Capitol Crisis #2, 1980 (DC)
Capitol Crisis #3, 1981 (DC)
Capitol Crisis #4, 1981 (DC)
Capitol Crisis #5, 1981 (DC)
Comet, Vol. 2 #1, 2001 (DC)
Crack DC #3, 1991 (DC)
DCene #1, 1983 (DC)

Descenes, 1979 (DC)
Dischords, March 1981 (DC)
If This Goes On, 1982 (DC)
Lime Lizard, 1991 (UK)
Maximumrocknroll #91, 1990 (San Francisco)
Maximumrocknroll #93, 1992 (San Francisco)
MilkShake #4, 2010 (Antwerp, Belgium)
Mole #3, 1993 (DC)
Mole #6, 1994 (DC)
Pit #2, 1987 (DC)
Positive Rage #8, 1998 (Paris)
Positive Rage, #9, 2000 (Paris)
Rad Party, various (Paris)
Sidekick #1, 1990 (DC)
The Skills of Defensive Driving #9, 1994 (DC)
Slickzine, 1985 (DC)
Suburban Voice #29, 1990 (Boston)
Truly Needy #10, 1985 (DC)
Trust, 1988 (Germany)
Uno Mas #3, 1991 (DC)
WDC Period #6, 1984 (DC)
Whack, Oct. 1991 (DC)
Whack, Dec. 1991 (DC)
Zone V #1, 1983 (DC)

Appendix

Appendix A:

Twenty Songs

1. Gray Matter (DC) – Gray Matter
2. Minor Threat (DC) – Minor Threat
3. Thrashington, DC (Brest) – Bottled Violence (Minor Threat Cover)
4. Bad Brains (DC) – Banned in DC
5. Void (DC) – Dehumanized
6. Heimat-Los (Paris) – Negative Mental Obsession
7. Kromozom 4 (Paris) – J'en Ai Marre D'être Vert
8. Rites of Spring (DC) – Remainder
9. Nation of Ulysses (DC) – Hot Chocolate City
10. Jawbox (DC) - Savory
11. Smart Went Crazy (DC) – DC Will Do That To You
12. Bérurier Noir (Paris) - Vivre Libre ou Mourir
13. Fugazi (DC) - Cashout
14. Prohibition (Paris) - Active
15. Gâtechien (France) – Faux Départ
16. Shudder to Think (DC) – Lies About the Sky
17. Kimmo (Paris) - National Plan
18. Frustration (Paris) – Assassination
19. The Dismemberment Plan (DC) – The Other Side
20. Scream (DC) - Fight/American Justice

Vita

Tyler Sonnichsen was born in Boston, MA to Robert and Leesa Sonnichsen in 1983. When his sister Brittany was born in 1986, their family moved to Madison, CT, where Tyler graduated from Daniel Hand High School in 2001. Tyler moved to Syracuse, NY to study at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. He completed his degree in Television-Radio-Film in 2005, earning a dual minor in Geography and Spanish.

After graduating, Tyler moved to Washington, DC mostly because the city intrigued him. He spent two years working as an audio editor for a Library of Congress contractor in Bethesda, MD, and part time as an agent's assistant at Bullitt Bookings in Georgetown. In July 2007, he accepted a position as an Assistant Account Executive at Strauss Radio Strategies, Inc, a private radio-centered public relations firm, where he spent four years. While in DC, Tyler also became deeply involved with the local comedy scene. He performed and produced successful independent stand-up shows, and volunteered as an associate producer for Hexagon, a politically active non-profit musical revue.

Tyler left DC in 2011 to return to academics in Long Beach, where he earned his Master of Arts in Geography at California State University with Dr. Deborah Thien. He graduated from Long Beach State in 2013, moving to the University of Tennessee in Knoxville to pursue his Doctorate in Geography under the advisement of Dr. Derek Alderman. He completed the PhD program in Spring 2017, and will be continuing in academic education and research in cultural geography and the humanities.