THREE ESSAYS ON SOCIAL COGNITION IN THE FIELD OF JAZZ MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

Categories are persistent features of cultural fields and markets, used to delineate boundaries between different kinds of cultural products and cultural producers. Categories are dynamic social constructions, evolving over time as their constitutive practices and meanings change, through a variety of processes that scholars are still describing and unpacking. This dissertation explores, in three papers, the processes through which categories change over time in the context of the field of jazz music, describing mechanisms of category change and theorizing processes of category evolution and decline. The first paper (chapter two) examines the emergence of a novel subcategory of jazz, called bebop, in the mid-1940's, and the changes to jazz consumption practices and category meanings that bebop's emergence wrought. It contributes to the categorization literature by highlighting the role of consumption practices in shaping category meanings. The second paper (chapter three) examines the emergence of another subcategory, called jazz fusion, in the 1960's and 1970's, and unpacks gatekeeper responses to its emergence in the form of critical discourse, revealing how category gatekeepers codify category change by reordering their standards of value, quality, and category membership through their discourse. It contributes to the literature by showing how gatekeepers discursively modify categories as they make sense of new practices. The third paper (chapter 4) explores the processes through which subcategories are absorbed into broader umbrella categories, falling out of use even as their constitutive practices and meanings live on. This paper contributes to the literature by expanding our understanding of category decline. Overall, this dissertation contributes to literature on category dynamics and the practice turn in organization theory.

I dedicate this dissertation to my partner,
Emma Hornsby,
whose support, encouragement, and love
have made achieving this PhD possible.

and guidance through my teaching experiences; Mike Pratt for his openness, friendship, and steady presence; and the rest of the Management and Organization faculty for contributing to the development and maintenance of such a wonderful intellectual community.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Categorization theory has developed into a major pillar of organization theory over the past three decades (e.g., Zuckerman, 1999; Glynn & Navis, 2013; Kennedy & Fiss, 2013; Lo, Fiss, Rhee, & Kennedy, 2020). Although categories are ubiquitous and pervasive features of virtually all modern markets, much of the empirical work in this tradition examines contexts in fields of cultural production, such as art (Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010), film (Hsu, 2006), cuisine (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2005), and music (Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005). Categories are highly salient in these fields, making cultural production a logical and productive context for building theory about categorization and classification. In addition, there is a large literature on cultural production within sociology, some of which also examines categories and classification (e.g., DiMaggio, 1987; Lena & Peterson, 2008; van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2018). Much of the literature in both of these streams examines category change and evolution, describing the processes through which category meanings, boundaries, and/or membership criteria change over time.

Categorization research published since the turn of the century generally adopts a social constructivist perspective, attending to the transformational mechanisms through which people construct and maintain category meanings (Hedström & Swedberg, 1996). More recently, scholars of categorization are increasingly attending to the role of practices in constituting category meanings and driving their evolution (e.g., Delmestri & Greenwood, 2016; Pedeliento, Andreini, & Dalli, 2020), a development which could be construed as contributing to the broader "practice turn" in the social sciences (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & Von Savigny, 2001). By focusing on practices, scholars attend to the micro-level interactions between people which constitute and drive macro-level phenomena such as category emergence, change, and decline.

This dissertation contributes to the literature on category dynamics in organization theory, and also to the practice turn therein. I am driven by questions such as: how do novel practices emerge; how do they gain legitimacy and broader acceptance; how do gatekeepers and audiences interpret and make sense of them; and how do category-constituting practices evolve over time? To answer these questions, I conducted two empirical studies, seen in chapters two and three, and developed one theoretical essay, seen in chapter four. The second chapter examines the emergence of a new subcategory of jazz known as bebop, constituted by a set of novel practices centering around a new method of improvising, and explores how jazz consumption practices changed as a result. The third chapter examines the emergence of another subcategory of jazz known as jazz fusion, and unpacks critics' sensemaking processes in response to this new subcategory. The fourth chapter theoretically examines why and how subcategories fall out of use, drawing attention to the generative potential inherent in category decline. Together, these papers offer a view of three different kinds of category evolution, each delivering unique insights about the role of categories in fields of cultural production and the mechanisms through which they change over time. As this dissertation is designed to build theory around processes of category change and evolution, jazz represents an ideal research context: it is a category which has continuously evolved, in various ways, throughout its history.

In chapter two, titled *Cultural Resonance: Consumption practices and the constitution of cultural categories*, I analyze data from the *New York Times* and *DownBeat* magazine in an effort to track the emergence and legitimation of bebop, a nascent subcategory of jazz in the mid-1940's to mid-1950's. I induce a theory of category evolution centering around how shifts in consumption practices influence category meanings, exploring the question: *how do novel cultural products gain legitimacy in an established cultural category, and how do the associated*

changes in consumption practices reshape perceptions of the category's meaning? As audiences

began to listen to jazz in new sets of situations and for different reasons following the emergence

of bebop, social perceptions and attributions of the broader jazz category's social meaning

shifted. Drawing on Griswold's cultural diamond as a framework (Griswold, 2012), I argue that

the link between consumption practices and cultural products and producers establishes cultural

resonance, in the process shaping and reshaping collectively held category category meanings.

Extant literature acknowledges the role of multiple sets of actors in shaping category meanings,

but little work has examined the role of consumption practices in this regard. This paper

addresses this gap, offering insight into the interplay between cultural production and cultural

consumption in driving categorization processes.

In chapter three, titled *Category Change in Cultural Fields: Practice deviation and the

discursive maintenance of category meanings in jazz music,* I analyze album reviews published

in *DownBeat* magazine between 1968 and 1975 in an effort to show how critics make sense of

production practice deviation, and how they modify existing categories in the process. I ask the

question: *how do gatekeepers redefine an established cultural category to accommodate practice

deviations while maintaining a clear category meaning?* As musicians began to experiment with

new instruments and musical approaches in an emergent subcategory called jazz fusion, critics

refined and reordered their standards for value, resettling the broader jazz category as a broader,

more expansive but still coherent category as fusion gained prominence and acceptance. While

other scholars have acknowledged that gatekeeping is consequential in shaping category

evolution, the specific mechanisms through which this can take place are still being uncovered

and described. This paper contributes to the literature on category dynamics by illustrating three

specific discursive mechanisms through which gatekeepers codify changes in evolving

categories: categorization deferment, peripheral meaning redefinition, and core meaning reinforcement.

In chapter four, titled *Subcategory Fossilization: Dissolution and absorption as generative processes*, I offer a theory of category decline, pursuing the question: *how and why are subcategories absorbed by broader umbrella categories, and how does this lead to change and evolution in umbrella categories?* Both bebop and fusion, the subjects of chapters two and three, respectively, emerged as discrete subcategories of jazz but were eventually absorbed as part of the broader umbrella category of jazz, with their labels largely falling out of use in the process. Nevertheless, these subcategories' constitutive practices persist even today as relevant features of the jazz category. I theorize how this takes place, in a process I call subcategory fossilization, wherein new subcategories act as arenas of innovation and experimentation, but fall out of use as their constitutive practices gain legitimacy in established umbrella categories. Existing literature on categorization has a notable bias toward category emergence and change, with relatively few studies examining the antecedents and consequences of category decline. This paper addresses this gap in the literature, offering a theory of category decline and describing the potential consequences of a category falling out of use.

Overall, this dissertation offers a full-circle view of categorization in a cultural field, from the emergence of new subcategories, to their absorption into other categories where they are generative in shaping those categories' evolutionary trajectories, to their eventual decline. Additionally, the dissertation calls attention to the constitutive role of practices—social, production, and consumption practices—in categories more generally. I thus explore categorization from new angles, offering a perspective which synthesizes the vast array of work already published and lays a path forward for new research on cultural categorization processes.

CHAPTER 2

Cultural Resonance:

Consumption practices and the constitution of cultural categories

Abstract

In this chapter, I explore one example of jazz—as a category of music—evolving and changing over time as the consumption practices associated with the category shift. While scholars are increasingly attending to the role of practice in categorization processes, we know little about how consumption practices shape category meanings. Specifically, I study the emergence of a style of jazz known as bebop in the mid-1940's. Using data from the *New York Times* and *DownBeat* magazine, I examine the constitution of category meanings through consumption practices, showing that the social meaning attached to cultural categories are in part driven by the practices through which people consume and are exposed to cultural products. While initially polarizing, bebop nevertheless became the dominant form of jazz by the end of the 1940's, and accordingly, a new set of jazz consumption practices and category meanings emerged. I describe these occurrences as the *decoupling* and *recoupling* of consumption practices to cultural categories, and show how the cultural resonance of jazz was maintained throughout this period even as the jazz category's meaning shifted dramatically. This study contributes to the literatures on categorization and cultural production by drawing attention to the multiplicity of actors and practices responsible for shaping and maintaining category meanings. In the scope of this dissertation, this paper lays out my perspective on the practice-driven nature of cultural categories, focusing on the roles of artists and audiences in particular and setting the stage for chapter three, which examines the role critics play in category change processes.

In its first historically recognizable form, jazz emerged in New Orleans in the early 1900's. A mainly improvised form of music initially played in bars and brothels, popular music critics and the mainstream media generally considered jazz to be a low-status category for the first several decades of its existence as a discrete genre. Jazz was perceived—at least by non-musicians—as an entertainment-oriented category of music, rather than an art- or tradition-oriented category such as classical music (Johnson, 2002). The genre became wildly popular, seen by many as the dominant genre of American popular music in the 1920's and 1930's. A coherent set of social practices formed within and around the jazz category: musicians learned their craft not in schools but in "jam sessions"; people heard jazz in speakeasies during prohibition rather than concert halls; dancing was an integral part of any jazz performance; and improvisation was not only accepted but necessary in order to be considered a legitimate jazz musician (Ellison, 2002). For the first half of the 20th century, these practices and meanings were relatively stable in jazz.

In the mid-1940's, jazz changed considerably: musicians such as Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker eschewed the previous focus on dancing and entertainment, instead writing complex music, showcasing their virtuosity and thus demanding respect from musical "elites" such as symphony players, directors, and classical venue owners. This new style—termed "bebop"—stimulated meaningful changes in terms of how jazz was consumed, performed, and perceived. Bebop was musically complex relative to traditional jazz; it is characterized by fast tempos, meandering melodies, intricate chordal sequences, and extended harmonies. These musical characteristics caused a great deal of confusion and polarization among audiences, as they began to make sense of the emergent bebop style. Audiences began to consume jazz differently: the set of consumption practices in which jazz played a major role began to shift

(Wells, 2019). Jazz was no longer perceived as dance music, but as an intellectualized category existing for those willing to put the time and effort in to understand it. Schools and universities began teaching jazz, performances were held at Carnegie Hall and other traditionally "high-art" venues in New York City, and university degree programs were dedicated to the study of jazz. Jazz was recategorized as a higher status genre, and yet its popularity ultimately declined (Frith, 2007). I conceptualize jazz as a distinct category of music, and analyze changes to perceptions of jazz as a category that accompanied bebop's emergence. The notion that jazz's popularity declined even as its status rose is initially counterintuitive, but as I will show in my analysis, illustrates the nature of cultural resonance as a sometimes temporary, fragile, and contextually situated phenomenon: as bebop became the dominant style of jazz, jazz resonated with smaller audiences, but with audiences whose consumption practices were more in line with high art than "low-brow" art (DiMaggio & Useem, 1978). I explore these issues in pursuit of the following broad question: how was bebop legitimated into the established, thriving jazz category, and how did it engender changes to widely held perceptions of jazz's social meaning?

To answer this question, I analyze critical and media discourse to gather evidence of how people made sense of bebop and to track generalized trends in perceptions of jazz over time, using *DownBeat* magazine—a widely read jazz publication—archives and *The New York Times* as primary sources. Both the *Times* and *DownBeat* offer media/critical interpretations of jazz as a category of music, but both also have unique strengths as sources for this study: the *Times* offers insight into the New York scene in particular, and includes analyses of how the public responded to the emergence of bebop in the city; while *DownBeat* offers a more musicological approach to jazz criticism, providing an institutional backdrop for bebop's emergence and legitimation. I analyze this data, which was published between 1945 and 1955, inductively, iterating between

theory and data to unveil the major theoretical insights illustrated by my case study. *DownBeat* was first published 1934, and during the 1940's and 1950's was the most widely read jazz publication in the U.S., offering insight into trends, happenings, and challenges relating to jazz as a genre and category. Because bebop emerged as an avant-garde genre in New York City in the mid-1940's (Lena & Peterson, 2008), the *New York Times* represents a useful data source for examining the cultural backdrop and context within which this nascent genre emerged. Because my focus is on bebop's emergence and the ensuing changes to jazz's social meaning, I focus on the early years of its entrenchment, starting in 1945, and close my study period in 1955, at which point bebop had become the dominant form of jazz music.

My findings center on the changes in jazz consumption practices engendered by bebop's emergence and legitimation within the jazz category. Jazz consumption practices shifted as bebop gained prominence, such that people listened to jazz in very different settings at the end of the study period than at the beginning. The practices through which people consumed jazz music changed, with certain practices being decoupled from jazz as a category and other new practices being tied to it. I describe this phenomenon as the *decoupling* and *recoupling* of consumption practices to cultural categories. Decoupling refers to the detachment of practices previously associated with the consumption of a cultural category; for example, as explained later in this chapter, dancing was decoupled from jazz as bebop gained prominence within the jazz category. Recoupling refers to reestablishing a durable link between consumption practices and a particular cultural category—which may or may not be the "original" category; for example, as dancing faded away as a constitutive consumption practice for jazz, listening for listening's sake, or even as a somewhat academic pursuit, emerged to take its place. Note that recoupling does not necessarily need to refer to the reattachment of a previously attached consumption practice to a

cultural category; I use this term to refer to the reestablishment of a durable link between any consumption practice—new or old—to a particular cultural category. This decoupling and recoupling of consumption practices to cultural categories lends some fluidity to category meanings, as category meanings are produced and maintained by the lived experience audiences have with them: "audience members iteratively refine their understanding of a category label with each usage they encounter" (Kennedy, Lo, & Lounsbury, 2010, p. 375). As audiences engage with a cultural category through different consumption practices, the category's meaning changes, shaping its *cultural resonance*—"an audience's experienced personal connection with a frame" or cultural object (Giorgi, 2017, p. 716). I draw on the literature on cultural resonance (McDonnell, Bail, & Tavory, 2017) and on Griswold's theory of cultural production using the "cultural diamond" (Griswold, 2012) to describe how bebop's entrenchment in jazz led to changing audience perceptions of jazz's social meaning.

My study contributes to the literature on category dynamics by illustrating the processes through which category meanings change over time as production and consumption practices evolve. It makes two key contributions to the literature: first, I show how audiences respond to the emergence of novel cultural products within a given category, by decoupling some existing consumption practices from and recoupling other, novel practices to the category; and second, I show how these specific consumption practices shape category meanings by offering a channel for meaningful experience with cultural categories, reestablishing the category's cultural resonance. The resonance engendered by bebop's emergence as the dominant form of jazz in the 1940's and 1950's is unique in that jazz became less popular overall even as it gained status relative to other categories: bebop resonated strongly with a smaller set of audiences, rendering jazz less popular than in the past, but with audiences generally considered higher status than in

the past. My data reveal how bop's resonance took shape, and how it influenced audiences'

collective perceptions of jazz as a broader category.

CATEGORIES AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Market categories are ubiquitous in modern industries and are particularly evident in

fields of cultural production such as art, music, cinema, and literature. These fields are divided

into categories which often take the form of genres, such as impressionism, cubism, fiction,

mystery, rom-coms, thrillers, and countless others. Existing literature describes cultural

production—the creation and distribution of art in any of its many forms—as "a form of

collective action" (Becker, 1974, p. 767). Fields of cultural production such as popular music are

institutions which provide an infrastructure through which various actors create and "define and

produce the value of works of art" (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 319). Art production is routinized, with

producers, intermediaries, and audiences all understanding and enacting specific roles.

One major stream of research within the cultural production literature examines how

cultural products are classified, or grouped into categories and genres to facilitate production,

distribution, and consumption practices. In his most influential piece on the subject, DiMaggio

describes the "artistic classification systems" inherent to fields of cultural production: these

systems dictate "the way that the work of artists is divided up both in the heads and habits of

consumers and by the institutions that bound the production and distribution of separate genres"

(DiMaggio, 1987: 441). For example, film producers, cinemas, streaming platforms, retail stores,

and movie-watchers all rely on categories to distinguish between different kinds of movies.

Movies are divided into categories such as comedy, drama, horror, documentary, and countless

other standalone categories, subcategories, and category combinations (e.g., rom-com,

mockumentary, etc.). Genres are categories of cultural products, akin to what we commonly refer

to as market categories in other industries. I use the terms interchangeably in this paper (and throughout this dissertation), but prefer the term "category" for consistency with the categorization literature in organization theory. DiMaggio's argument that categories delineate production and distribution processes is consequential to my research here: if categories are defined by unique production and consumption practices, changes in these practices have the potential to change categories' meanings.

Categories in fields of cultural production exist for the same core reasons all market categories exist: to facilitate sensemaking (in terms of differentiation and comparison between organizations and/or products) for audiences and consumers and to define standards of legitimacy for category members and prospective entrants (Vergne & Wry, 2014). Historically, scholars conceptualized genres as clusters of cultural products grouped by similarity in terms of dimensions like "shared conventions," "social relations among producers," and "the audiences that support them"; DiMaggio defines genres as "socially constructed organizing principles that imbue artworks with significance beyond their thematic content" (DiMaggio, 1987: 441). Categories, in other words, carry social meaning that influences audience perceptions of the products embedded within them.

Because categories are persistent elements of cultural production processes, several studies examine fields of cultural production to generate insights relevant to the broader categorization theory literature in organization studies (see Hsu, 2006; Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010). Hsu explores how audiences react to and evaluate cultural products that span the boundaries of multiple categories, showing that audiences struggle to make sense of such products and thus evaluate them more poorly (Hsu, 2006). Khaire and Wadhwani (2010) offer an account of genre/category emergence, describing the process through which the novel

subcategory of Indian modern art emerged. They show how meanings and standards of value are developed for nascent categories, pointing to the key role that critics play in such processes. These studies illustrate the rich array of insights which may be generated by examining genre dynamics in fields of cultural production and make it clear that we have only scratched the surface.

Griswold's Cultural Diamond and Cultural Resonance

Cultural production is a collective process involving several actors, including creators, gatekeepers and tastemakers, distributors, and audiences (Peterson & Anand, 2004). In her 2012 book, Wendy Griswold offers a useful heuristic for conceptualizing cultural production and the multiplicity of actors involved in creating, disseminating, and consuming cultural objects (Griswold, 2012). She proposes a "cultural diamond," with its four points representing creators, receivers, cultural objects, and the social world, and emphasizes that it is within the links between these four points that cultural meanings are constructed and that cultural resonance is achieved. Griswold's cultural diamond can be seen in figure 2.1. This figure also includes my own additions, in italics, representing the lines linking the corners of the diamond together; these are explained further in the following paragraphs.

As I will show in this study, bebop's emergence triggered broad changes to perceptions of jazz as a higher order category; and yet, not all novel cultural products end up triggering such changes to perceptions of category meanings. Griswold argues that "new symbol[s]…wither unless conditions allow it to become known, used, functional, apt, and repeatedly triggered" (Griswold, 2012, p. 59). In other words, when new cultural products emerge, they must *resonate* with audiences in order to garner enough attention to stimulate reevaluations of the categories within which these products are embedded. Scholars define resonance as "coherence and

Figure 2.1. Adaptation of Griswold's 2012 cultural diamond.
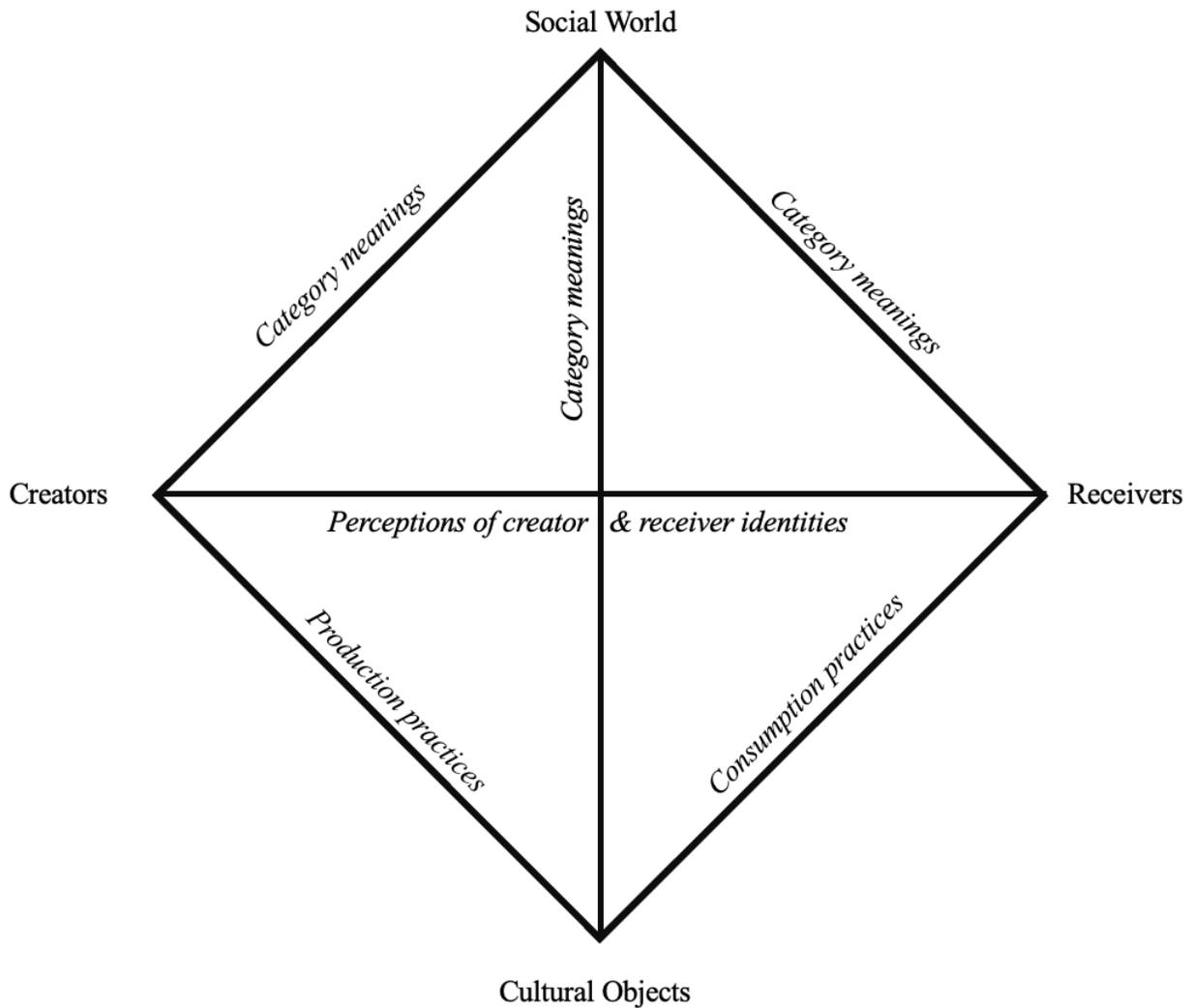
alignment between the meanings associated with a technology and the "cultural repertoire" of

frames in the surrounding society" (Lempiälä, Apajalahti, Haukkala, & Lovio, 2019, p. 1), or

more simply as "an audience's experienced personal connection with a frame" (Giorgi, 2017, p.

716). This personal connection can involve either or both cognitive and emotional elements, but

in either case involves "striking a chord with an audience" (Giorgi, 2017, p. 716). As such, I

define cultural resonance more broadly, as *the generative emotional and cognitive connection*

between audiences and cultural products, often engendered by and manifested in the cultural

practices associated with consumption. Cultural resonance facilitates the attachment of social meaning to cultural products themselves and the categories in which they are embedded (Kaufman, 2004). As I will show in my analysis of bebop's entrenchment in jazz, cultural resonance can initially fade when novel cultural products emerge, but can be reestablished by coupling new consumption practices to those cultural products, such as close listening and the appreciation of bebop as art, and by including bebop and jazz in university music school curricula.

McDonnell and colleagues note that resonance is "grounded in relations among objects, people, and situations" (McDonnell et al, 2017, p. 2). In this regard, we can think of resonance as existing along and between the lines connecting the four points of Griswold's cultural diamond (see fig. 2.1). Synchronicity—between consumption practices on the part of receivers, production practices on the part of creators, aesthetic features of cultural products [objects] themselves, and the meanings attached to the object in the social world—is necessary to establish resonance. As such, when one of the four points on the cultural diamond changes, this often stimulates changes to the other three points as well. Creators engage in production practices which result in the creation of cultural products, which are received by audiences; these three points of the cultural diamond are simultaneously embedded within a broader social world, but also contribute to its maintenance; the top corner of the diamond can be thought of as the social meaning of a cultural product, which is often tied to a category or genre. Creators and receivers are further linked because both groups develop perceptions of the identities of the other based on the production and consumption of cultural products. In the following sections I explicate the distinctions and interrelations between creators and receivers, in an effort to understand how meaning is applied to cultural categories when novel cultural products emerge. I adopt a

practice-theoretic perspective to do so, which entails focusing on practices as building blocks of cultural structures and social constructions such as categories (Schatzki, 2002; Whittington, 2011).

Production Practices and Consumption Practices

Practices are "shared routines" (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010: 192); they are "embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding" (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & Von Savigny, 2001: 2). Put differently, practices are routinized sequences of action through which people interact with each other and the world. Reckwitz (2002: 249) describes practices as "forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge."

My perspective on practice theory is mainly informed by Schatzki and colleagues' work (Schatzki et al, 2001; Schatzki, 2002, 2019) as well as work on practices in institutional theory, both prior to (e.g., Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012) and since the articulation of the more formal "practice-driven institutionalism" literature (e.g., Smets, Aristidou, & Whittington, 2017; Gehman, 2021). I view practices as constituting society; people are almost always engaging in routinized sequences of action for specific purposes. From mundane general practices such as going out for dinner, going shopping, or celebrating a birthday to complex, culturally-bounded practices like celebrating Christmas or the 4th of July, or engaging in worship of deities according to one's religion, our lives are governed first and foremost by practice. This is not to say that we do not have free will, just that many of the activities we regularly perform are at least partially non-conscious. Throughout the course of conducting any given practice, one will be exposed to a variety of objects, people, and abstract

structures such as categories. The lived experience one has with these things shapes the meanings they attach to them. For example, people are most frequently exposed to the market category of "single-origin coffee" when shopping in specialty grocery stores, going out to upscale coffee shops, or purchasing an online coffee subscription. These practices are often perceived as elite and are often quite costly to engage in, leading to the generalized perception of single-origin coffee as a high status market category. The practices in which people are exposed to market categories shapes their perceptions of those categories.

Practices drive social life in fields of cultural production, as well. The various actors— from artists to critics, venues and stewards, and audiences—involved in the production and consumption of cultural products engage in routinized practices through which art is accomplished and consumed. These include song-writing practices, performance practices, distribution practices, and consumption practices. Notably, in bebop and most contemporary jazz which draws from bebop as a primary influence, production practices are synonymous with jazz as a product. This is due to the importance of improvisation in jazz music: jazz as a cultural product or object (Griswold, 2012) emerges contemporaneously with jazz performance practices, unfolding moment by moment in front of an audience.

Production practices and consumption practices each play a critical role in fields of cultural production. Production practices refer to the activities of artists and their representatives (e.g., record labels) in creating a piece of art. For example, various styles of jazz, such as bebop and swing, each have their own set of production practices: audiences consume bebop in small clubs or large concert halls, with a focus on listening to the music for the music's sake; while audiences consume swing in dance halls, with a focus on using the music for the ultimate end of engaging in dance. Of course, there may be significant overlap between any two styles'

production practices. Consumption practices, in contrast, refer to the social situations and activities through which an audience consumes a specific category of art or music. For example, rock, pop, electronica, and hip-hop are common categories at outdoor summer music festivals, while chamber music and polka are not. The consumption practice of going to a music festival thus implicates the categories of rock and pop. In turn, these categories' meanings are influenced by their implication in such practices. Audiences' perceptions of a category's aesthetic instantiation, its social value, the morals and ideals it suggests, and its overall cultural resonance are shaped by the sets of consumption practices through which the category is received.

In this regard, category meanings are shaped by practices, and consumption practices in particular. Notably, of course, production practices predetermine, to a certain extent, the set of consumption practices in which a category is likely to be implicated. Put differently, there are objective features of certain categories that make them more or less suitable for certain consumption practices. As Reckwitz (2002: 252) argues, "carrying out a practice very often means using particular things in a certain way." For example, one would typically not expect to hear heavy metal music at a dinner party with colleagues from work, while it would be reasonable to hear jazz in such a setting. One would typically not expect to hear classical music, similarly, at a dive bar at 11:00pm, while rock and roll would not be unexpected. As such, when the dominant production practices in a given category shift significantly enough to alter the perceptions people have about the cultural products constituting that category, the set of consumption practices in which the category is implicated may also change.

Recent research in organization theory adopts a similar perspective on the role of practices in shaping category meanings. Scholars posit, for example, that "a category's meaning is derived not solely from consensus over its definitional properties…but also from the social and

cultural practices and behaviors associated with it and that give it expression" (Delmestri & Greenwood, 2016: 510). Others argue that "categorizing is contingent on the social context in which it takes place, embedding it culturally and institutionally" (Glynn & Navis, 2013, p. 1127). Category meanings emerge through collective processes of sensemaking and meaning-making as people engage with objects of categorization in consumption practices.

As a part of this culturally-embedded, practice-driven perspective on categorization theory, scholars are beginning to explore the processes through which categories evolve as the social practices which constitute them shift over time. Delmestri and Greenwood's (2016) study of the grappa category addresses these issues: they describe how grappa producers reframed their offerings such that the consumption practices in which grappa played a role changed; people began drinking grappa as they would drink a fine whiskey or wine, with great appreciation for the craft required to produce it. This engendered the increasingly widely held perception of grappa as a high-status beverage. Most studies of category emergence also tangentially address the constitutive role of consumption practices in defining category meanings. For example, the satellite radio category did not truly become legitimate until people began using it in practice, installing it in their cars (or encountering satellite radio systems in rental cars or stores such as Wal-Mart and Sears) and actually physically tuning in (Navis & Glynn, 2010).

Yet, little research explores the interrelationships between production practices and consumption practices through a market categorization lens. As such, many questions remain unanswered regarding how new production practices stimulate changes in the consumption practices constituting a given category, and in turn how these processes reshape category meanings. To think about this in terms of the cultural diamond again: we lack a detailed understanding of the relationship between creators, cultural objects, and receivers in terms of

how their practices shape cultural category meanings in the social world. In this paper, I address this gap in the literature by exploring the following research question: how do novel cultural products gain cultural resonance in an established cultural category, and how do the associated changes in consumption practices reshape perceptions of the category's meaning?

RESEARCH SETTING, DATA, AND METHODS

Jazz emerged in the early 1900's in Black communities in New Orleans. Born from diverse musical traditions, jazz is characterized by a rhythmic approach drawn from Caribbean and West African traditions, and harmonic and melodic approaches blending influences from European classical traditions and American delta blues. As a result, jazz is a distinctly American genre, as much a melting pot as the country itself. From its origins in the American south, jazz gradually spread northward, and by the 1920's was widely popular as dance music. Dixieland or "hot jazz" was the predominant style in the 1920's, which gave way to swing in the 1930's. During prohibition, jazz was commonly performed at speakeasies in New York, Chicago, and other cities, and as such it became perceived as a largely entertainment-oriented, as opposed to art-oriented, category. Musicians continued to develop the still relatively young category, refining and institutionalizing subgenres such as Dixieland and swing, among others. While several such subgenres existed, jazz remained a relatively cohesive category through this period. By the 1940's, jazz was the predominant form of popular music in the United States.

In the mid-1940's, however, a radically new style of jazz emerged in New York City, called bebop. Bebop, also commonly referred to as simply "bop," was more harmonically, melodically, and rhythmically complex than other contemporary forms of jazz, namely swing and so-called "hot jazz." Successful bop artists were typically virtuosos of the highest order, masters of their instruments with a keen and effortless sense of rhythm and an open-minded,

exploratory approach to harmony and melody. As Porter (1999: 422) explains, "the musical language of bebop included rapid tempos, dissonant chords and melodic lines, tritone and other chordal substitutions, extensive chromaticism, off-beat piano accompaniment ("comping"), walking bass lines, polyrhythmic drumming, and, perhaps most important, a focus on extended, improvised soloing on the front-line instruments." It is difficult to dance to and was polarizing during its emergent period, as it marked a significant departure from the established practices through which jazz was performed.

Bebop was a grass-roots innovation, cultivated in jam sessions in New York City. Minton's, a popular jazz club in New York which touts itself as "The Birthplace of Bebop", went so far as to bar non-musicians from entry on jam session nights, providing "a retreat, a homogeneous community where a collectivity of common experience could find continuity and meaningful expression…the stage was set for bop" (Ellison, 2002: 61). The social dynamics from which bebop emerged cannot be ignored: like jazz as a whole, Black Americans led the bebop movement. By the 1940's, jazz was being co-opted by white musicians, especially in northern cities like New York, even as the barriers for black musicians to learn, perform, and consume traditionally white genres remained firmly in place. The record industry, too, was rife with discrimination, and black jazz musicians—out of "a collective will to artistic excellence and a sense of African-American pride joined with a refusal of social, creative, and even national boundaries" (Porter, 1999: 426)—responded by experimenting deeply with novel ways to play that ambiguous music called "jazz."

This "thrust toward respectability" was driven in large part by black jazz musicians' desire to "rid themselves of the entertainer's role," a role exemplified by traditional jazz artists such as Louis Armstrong (Ellison, 2002: 69). In doing so, Black musicians demanded higher

status than many white audiences were willing to grant them; and yet, bebop musicians' efforts had a profound impact on jazz and catapulted the genre into the sphere of "high art," for better or for worse. Historians argue that by challenging many of the norms associated with traditional jazz, bebop musicians expressed in music many of the post-war African American community's broader social frustrations (Baraka, 1995). These dynamics underpin the (largely white) musical establishment's initial unease with bebop and set the stage for a significant shift in the meanings perceived in jazz as a category, driven by sweeping changes to the consumption practices constituting jazz as a category: for example, jazz concerts began to be held in high-status venues such as Carnegie Hall; and academic institutions began to offer curricula focused on jazz music, thus treating jazz as a respectable art form rather than a low-brow one (Peterson & Kern, 1996). Jazz scholars have referred to this period of time as the "'bebop moment': that early 1940s boundary separating jazz-as-pop from jazz-as-art" (Wells, 2019, p. 37).

Data

I compiled a set of archival data consisting of *DownBeat* magazine (a jazz-specific publication) articles and album reviews (n = approximately 250) and *New York Times* articles on jazz (n = approximately 600) published in the 10-year period between 1945 and 1954. My sampling window was deliberately chosen: bebop emerged in about 1945, and quickly rose to prominence in the jazz genre. By the mid 1950's, it was widely entrenched, and remained the dominant style into the 1960's (although by this point "hard bop" was more popular, which is nonetheless a variation on bebop itself). By examining data between 1945 and 1954, I capture bebop's emergence and its entrenchment in the jazz category.

There were many more than 250 *DownBeat* articles relating to bebop and 600 *New York Times* articles on jazz during the study period; these numbers reflect my curated dataset. I made a

series of decisions around which articles to select for inclusion for each source. I selected the *DownBeat* articles in my dataset based on whether they are in any way related to bebop. For example, I included bebop album reviews, interviews with bebop musicians, interviews with non-bebop musicians wherein they discussed bebop, or opinion articles describing bop and/or changes to the jazz field brought about by bop. This process involved manually skimming through all articles to determine which should be included in the dataset, allowing me to develop a robust understanding of the entire jazz field during this decade. I selected the *New York Times* articles in my dataset based on whether they included any notes about social perceptions of the jazz category. These include, for example, album reviews, performance reviews, and socially or politically oriented articles, while I excluded articles announcing performances and other more superficial articles which do not add meaningful insight into bebop's emergence or legitimation or the ensuing changes to perceptions of jazz as a category.

The use of critical discourse as a main source of data in cultural production contexts is supported by existing literature. Although not absolute authorities on cultural classification—cultural production and categorization are both collective accomplishments—critics play a large role in categorizing art, music, and other cultural products (Bourdieu, 1993). Bourdieu sees critics as integral actors in cultural production processes: "the production of discourse (critical, historical. etc.) about the work of art is one of the conditions of production of the work" (Bourdieu, 1983: 317). Baumann also notes the active role critics play as "influencers" (Baumann, 2001: 419), shaping cultural production rather than simply describing cultural products, while Hirsch (1972: 645) describes the mass media as "gatekeepers…selecting cultural items to be awarded coverage." Glynn and Lounsbury (2005: 1032) highlight the interplay between critical discourse and other production practices, arguing that critical reviews guide

"how people should understand and appreciate their experiences with cultural objects and performances." Critics are active participants in cultural production: their choices and activities—determining what products to review and award attention, determining what language to use to describe and appraise those products, and helping to determine the genre in which a given product should be classified—both respond to producers' activities and inform consumers' activities. They are critical links between diverse sets of actors in fields of cultural production, and attention to critical discourse can provide insight into the practices tying a given category together.

Analytical Approach

I used inductive methods to analyze my data, hand-coding each article in my data set following the tenets of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), iterating between theory and data as I attempted to abstract and extrapolate the insights from my archival sources into contemporarily relevant theoretical insights. Although I knew when I started my analysis that I was interested in how jazz evolved over the time period in question, I remained open to dynamics other than those reported here (Locke, 2001). In other words, I tracked the dynamics that were evident in my data set while also searching for other dynamics which I thought may be theoretically generative. I coded my data three times, each time re-categorizing the quotes and insights generated from each data point according to my increasingly solid understanding of how the genre changed over time (Grodal, Anteby, & Holm, 2021). In my first round of coding, my initial codes were highly descriptive and specific to each article; the majority of my initial codes include direct quotes. On my second round of coding, I aggregated related initial codes into focused codes, describing trends as I saw them emerge from the data. Subsequently, I recoded the data a final time, further refining my focused codes and eliminating redundancy between them.

As an example of my coding procedure, consider as an example the New York Times article titled "Bop: Skee, Re or Be, 'It's Still Got to Swing'," published on December 5, 1948. The article describes the still nascent style known as bebop as a "semicontrolled frenzy" performed for the purposes of "listening—rather than dancing…" The article goes on to describe bebop's "weird turns of phrase…extended rhythmic patterns and breathless tempos…largely responsible for taking swing bands out of the ballrooms and putting them on concert stages." During my initial round of coding, I noted these quotes in particular as I thought they spoke to some of the most striking changes introduced to established jazz practices by bebop musicians. During my subsequent round of coding—my first round of focused coding—I noted that bebop appeared to be incompatible with a long-standing tenet of jazz consumption practices: dancing. As such, I applied a focused code of "bebop incompatible with dancing" to this article. On my second round of focused coding, however, I reconsidered this code: I had come across several other articles which noted similar dynamics, and while this article calls to attention bebop's incompatibility with dancing, the specific reasons behind this incompatibility are more telling and much more theoretically relevant, warranting a more detailed description than my first focused code provides. As such, my second and final focused codes for this article are "consumption practice incompatibility" and "musical complexity," both describing the phenomenon illustrated by the article as well as its apparent cause.

I followed this procedure for each of the articles in my dataset, returning to the source texts often to deepen and contextualize my understanding of my evolving codebook. Insights emerged in DownBeat which were less apparent in the New York Times, and vice versa, illustrating the value in drawing from both critical discourse and media discourse. By cobbling together and identifying patterns in perceptions of bebop—and more importantly, jazz as a

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broader category—over time, I paint a picture of the overall social meanings attached to the jazz category and track how these meanings shift over time in parallel with bebop's legitimation.

FINDINGS

My findings illustrate how several of the practices—both production practices and consumption practices—which defined the jazz category changed as bebop was gaining popularity, altering the meanings audiences perceived in jazz. Bebop was polarizing: many critics derided it as cacophonous noise and suggested it was likely a passing trend which would soon fall out of fashion, while others described it as a potentially generative new frontier. Some critics and members of the media were notably incensed by bebop's emergence, evidencing the contested nature of bebop as a cultural production practice. For example, critics remarked that "jazz in New York stinks! Even the drummers on 52nd St. sound like Dizzy Gillespie," referencing a prominent bebop trumpet player. Others were harsher still: another critic remarked, "of all the cruelties in the world, be-bop is the most phenomenal…of course, I don't know what be-bop is. But it isn't music to me" (DownBeat, 1948); and another argued that it "bears the same relationship to music as tonsilitis and sounds like a hardware store in an earthquake" DownBeat, 1949). Traditionally oriented, established jazz musicians also contested bebop as a legitimate jazz production practice. Ella Fitzgerald once said, "Re-bop don't make a damn bit of sense…it won't last" (New York Times, November 16, 1947). Established members of the jazz category guarded the boundaries of jazz, treating bebop with skepticism because they feared it may dilute the overall coherence and integrity of jazz as a form of popular music. This is evidence of gatekeeping (e.g., Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005)

This hesitation, and sometimes even outright hostility, stems from bebop's increased musical complexity relative to traditional jazz styles. Bebop was played at fast tempos, its

melodies were meandering and technically difficult, and its harmony was complex and often perceived as dissonant to the uninitiated. Even Louis Armstrong described bop as "nothing but mistakes. Those kids come to a passage they don't dare tackle, so they play a thousand notes to get around it" (DownBeat, 1949).

The negative view of bebop, however, was not ubiquitous. There was of course a critical mass of musicians, most notably in New York City, who firmly believed in the virtues of the emergent style—but certain audiences, especially young people, also gravitated toward bebop. An entire culture formed around the genre, with listeners emulating popular bop musicians in terms of dress and style. Thelonious Monk, a bop pianist, is known for his trademark facial hair—a goatee or sometimes full beard—wearing sunglasses inside, and wearing unique hats. Young fans began adopting this style, to the point that critics deemed them to be "the by-products of bop (beards, berets, and exotic behaviorism)" (DownBeat, 1949). In an interview with DownBeat, a Dixieland musician who billed themselves as a bop act so that they could get hired for a gig described recognizing this style: "Then three kids walked in with goatees and horn rims. 'Oh-oh,' I thought to myself. These guys are going to know" (DownBeat, 1949). Some musicians established in traditional jazz idioms also began experimenting with bop. In another interview, swing musician Eddie Condon described how his band did exactly this, although Condon himself did not approve, a fact evidenced by his descriptive terms "slop" and "ka-lunk":

> *I just got back one night by plane and just had time to get over to the club an hour before closing. First thing I hear is that Re-Bop Slop, that Ka-Lunk. I figured the boys must be growing hedgework on their chins just like Dizzy; and sure enough, when I rushed up to them, their beards were getting rough. I caught them just before it was too late (DownBeat, 1946).*

Many critics also viewed bop as a positive contribution to the jazz idiom, admiring in particular bop musicians' technical proficiency: "[Dizzy Gillespie's] band handles rhythmic

irregularities, dissonances and humorous glissandos with apparent ease" (New York Times, September 30, 1947). Yet, in one critic's words, "be-bop faces hold little of interest if you're not a disciple" (DownBeat, 1947), illustrating the challenges associated with reestablishing the cultural resonance of jazz if bebop were to take hold of the category. Importantly, however bebop's "disciples" were not some fringe group, but instead were highly devoted and highly visible jazz fans, viewed as important audience members by jazz critics and record companies. What was initially perceived as a passing trend quickly drew an outsized amount of attention, leading to increased tension within the jazz category; the jazz world was divided for many years along the bebop fault line as the cultural resonance of the category became increasingly tenuous and fractured. These first few years following bebop's emergence, from about 1945-1947, are characterized by tension and the sense that the prevailing styles within the jazz category were shifting.

Bebop's Legitimation and Category Asynchronism

In the late 1940's, several events led to bebop's legitimation as a bona-fide style of music and as a sub-category of jazz. Most notably—and most externally visibly—was when Dizzy Gillespie and Ella Fitzgerald performed at Carnegie Hall on September 29, 1947. This event catapulted bebop not only to the forefront of jazz as a broader category, but also into the echelons of elite, high-status art. Carnegie Hall was an elite, high status concert venue in the 1940's, so to host a performance of a style—bebop—derided by so many as a non-serious form of music was quite powerful in terms of legitimating bebop. In another noteworthy development symbolic of bebop's legitimation, in 1949, DownBeat began publishing a recurring column called "The Bop Beat," which they described as "a series of technical articles on be-bop, the new

jazz, written especially for the curious and interested so that they may get a better understanding of this revolutionary music" (DownBeat, 1949).

By calling bop "the new jazz," DownBeat critics cemented its status as the ascendant and increasingly dominant form of jazz music. They went on to argue in the column that "harmonically and melodically, be-bop definitely is advancing to the level of contemporary classical music" (DownBeat, 1949), an argument which places bop on an equal playing field as other forms of high art. Bop's legitimacy was further solidified in 1950, when universities began hosting lectures and workshops by bop musicians, and began serious efforts to add bop to their curricula. Billy Taylor, a bop pianist who delivered such lectures to music students, described his goals as follows: "My objective is to do all I can to call attention to the fact that jazz, like any other art form, can and should be presented in an artistic manner" (DownBeat, 1950).

Bop's legitimation was not without opponents, and the continuing division between bebop and more traditional jazz led to the two styles being framed as oppositional to one another. Stan Kenton, a jazz musician who, while sympathetic to bebop, is typically not considered a bebop artist, argued:

> *"Popular music has been broken down into different categories—at least two—and until each is presented differently by the promoters and bookers, real jazz is going to suffer. It's impossible for us to even to attempt to satisfy more than half the crowd. The fans up front are mad when we play for the dancers. The dancers are griped when we play the style for which we've been fortunate enough to gain some fame."* (DownBeat, 1948)

The jazz category, at this point in time in the late 1940's, was characterized by a lack of synchronicity between cultural products and consumption practices, and thus the category ran the risk of becoming fragmented: the production practices associated with bebop were perceived as radically distinct from those associated with more traditional jazz, to such an extent that separate practices formed around the consumption of each. The editors of DownBeat went so far as to

send a poll out to their readers in 1949, searching for a new term for the jazz category altogether, one that would be more inclusive of a wider variety of styles of music. Presumably, they did so to ensure that bebop would remain tied to jazz rather than break off as a standalone category, thus avoiding competitive dynamics between jazz and bop communities as each fought for substantial—or at least sufficient—audiences. A majority of respondents to the poll indicated that the term "jazz" was sufficient to describe both old and new forms of the music—including bebop—a result which itself solidified bebop's position as a style firmly embedded within the broader jazz category.

Some musicians attempted to meld bop with more traditional styles, usually with limited success and lukewarm reception from audiences at best. They diluted bop in an effort to make it more palatable, but ultimately alienated both bop proponents and opponents. One group combined Dixieland with bop, and succeeded in getting the venue to change the way they described their concert in advertisements: "First billed as playing 'Dixieland,' they finally got it changed to just 'jazz'…their present music might be called bopsiland or dixiebop…" (DownBeat, 1949). Some traditional jazz bands began experimenting with "a bit of 'polite bop'" (DownBeat, 1950). These efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, pleasing neither bop fans nor fans of traditional jazz.

The popular press often pushed back against bop, something jazz critics noticed: for example, in a DownBeat article titled "Bop Gets Its Usual Press Going-Over," a jazz critic describes a newspaper article where the author argued, "bebop sounds like a concert by musicians trying to get the leader fired." The polarization in jazz became so extreme that some musicians attempted to actively distance themselves from category labels altogether: saxophonist Charlie Ventura said, "I don't like to be connected to the word bop…the word became such a

center of controversy" (DownBeat, 1949). As the tension between bop and traditional jazz matured, critics began to adopt the stance that bebop may simply be misunderstood by the public. One argued, "most of the people who put [bebop] down haven't taken the time to understand it" (DownBeat, 1949). This stance perhaps precipitated the increasingly common perception that jazz was pretentious, inaccessible, and high-status.

Musicians were aware of this growing perception of jazz as an esoteric and exclusive genre, and some tried to combat this dynamic, with little enduring success; Dizzy Gillespie is among the musicians who adopted standard, popular songs into bebop stylings, in an effort "to make his music more understandable to the average guy" (DownBeat, 1949). Some critics and musicians expressed dismay at the increasing tension between bop and traditional jazz, preferring instead to conceptualize jazz as a unified umbrella category (e.g., Boghossian & David, 2021) which contains a wide array of styles and performance practices. In an interview published in DownBeat, Miles Davis—a proponent and performer of bebop—stated, "I don't like to hear someone put down Dixieland. Those people who say there's no music but bop are just stupid…you've got to start way back there before you can play bop. You've got to have a foundation" (DownBeat, 1950). Ultimately, this population of actors succeeded in defining jazz as an inclusive and wide-ranging category, built largely around the concept of improvisation. One critic argued, "improvisation is the criterion by which all jazz, written or unwritten, is judged" (DownBeat, 1950). Despite this, the set of consumption practices in which the jazz category was implicated shifted dramatically following the emergence and legitimation of bebop.

De- and Recoupling of Production and Consumption Practices

Many observers in the media noted that bebop appeared to precipitate broad shifts in the consumption practices associated with jazz. Perhaps the key difference in consumption practices

associated with bebop versus traditional jazz is around dancing versus listening, a tension evidenced by hundreds of articles in my data set. For example, one jazz musician stated in a DownBeat interview, "I don't appreciate extreme bop. It's merely a lot of riffs and running chords, and it gets mighty boring…The public wants something it can whistle, sing, and hum— something to dance to" (Downbeat, 1949). Yet, as bebop became increasingly popular, audiences became increasingly comfortable with going to jazz concerts to *hear* music rather than *dance* to it: "its semicontrolled frenzy, however, epitomizes a strong new tendency toward popular music for listening—rather than dancing—and thus deserves a closer look this morning" (New York Times, December 5, 1948). Critics began to speculate on what bebop's growing prominence within the jazz sphere meant for the category writ large: "What we're wondering is whether this means that jazz is going back to something played for free by musicians in after-hours spots, smoky dives, and the like" (DownBeat, 1950).

Bebop's legitimation within the jazz category precipitated shifts in the pattern of consumption practices within which jazz was embedded. In other words, as bebop became the dominant form of jazz in the late 40's and early 50's, people started consuming jazz in new ways: the most important shift was toward consuming jazz as music to be *listened* to rather than *danced* to. These novel consumption practices established synchronicity between creators and audiences, allowing both creators and audiences to experience meaningfulness through their connection to cultural products and to each other. The lived experience people have with a category shapes their perception of its meaning; as such, the social meaning attached to the jazz category changed as a result of bebop's legitimation and the consumption practices it supported. This process, which involves the *decoupling* of certain consumption practices from the jazz category and the category's *recoupling* with other consumption practices, occurs when audiences

begin to interact with category members or products differently, abandoning previously held modes of engagement for novel ones. Figure 2.2 shows a list of quotes, and the accompanying focused and theoretical codes from my analysis, which outline these decoupling and recoupling processes in jazz, ultimately leading to the reestablishment of cultural resonance for jazz as a musical and cultural category. Figure 2.3 complements this, illustrating a rough timeline through which bebop's legitimation and the decoupling and recoupling of consumption practices to the jazz category took place.

Shifting category meanings. The decoupling and recoupling of consumption practices to the jazz category engendered by bebop had lasting effects on the meanings audiences perceived in and attached to jazz. Note that while bebop was viewed as a distinct subcategory of jazz, it nonetheless displaced more traditional styles as the dominant form of jazz music in the 1940's and 50's. Thus, the consumption practices associated with bebop were also associated with jazz as a broader category. As dancing faded as a prominent practice associated with jazz, educational institutions began affording jazz legitimacy as a bona fide art form. For example, those in the media argued that "jazz is 'healthy for the growing child'…jazz develops children's appreciation of its primary quality, rhythm, inherent in all types of music" (New York Times, June 1, 1946). Other educators contended that "we want the youngsters to know that jazz has a place separate from classical, but should be recognized as a music form" (New York Times, February 18, 1947). Universities began to offer jazz curricula and degree programs, with some even creating scholarship funds for students interested in the academic study of jazz (New York Times, June 22, 1950). These changes were driven in large part by bebop's increased musical complexity relative to more traditional jazz. This complexity led to perceptions of jazz as an intellectual art form, rather than simply as entertainment. This change is significant, as jazz was often set apart

Figure 2.2. Selected codes; illustration of stages of inductive analysis.
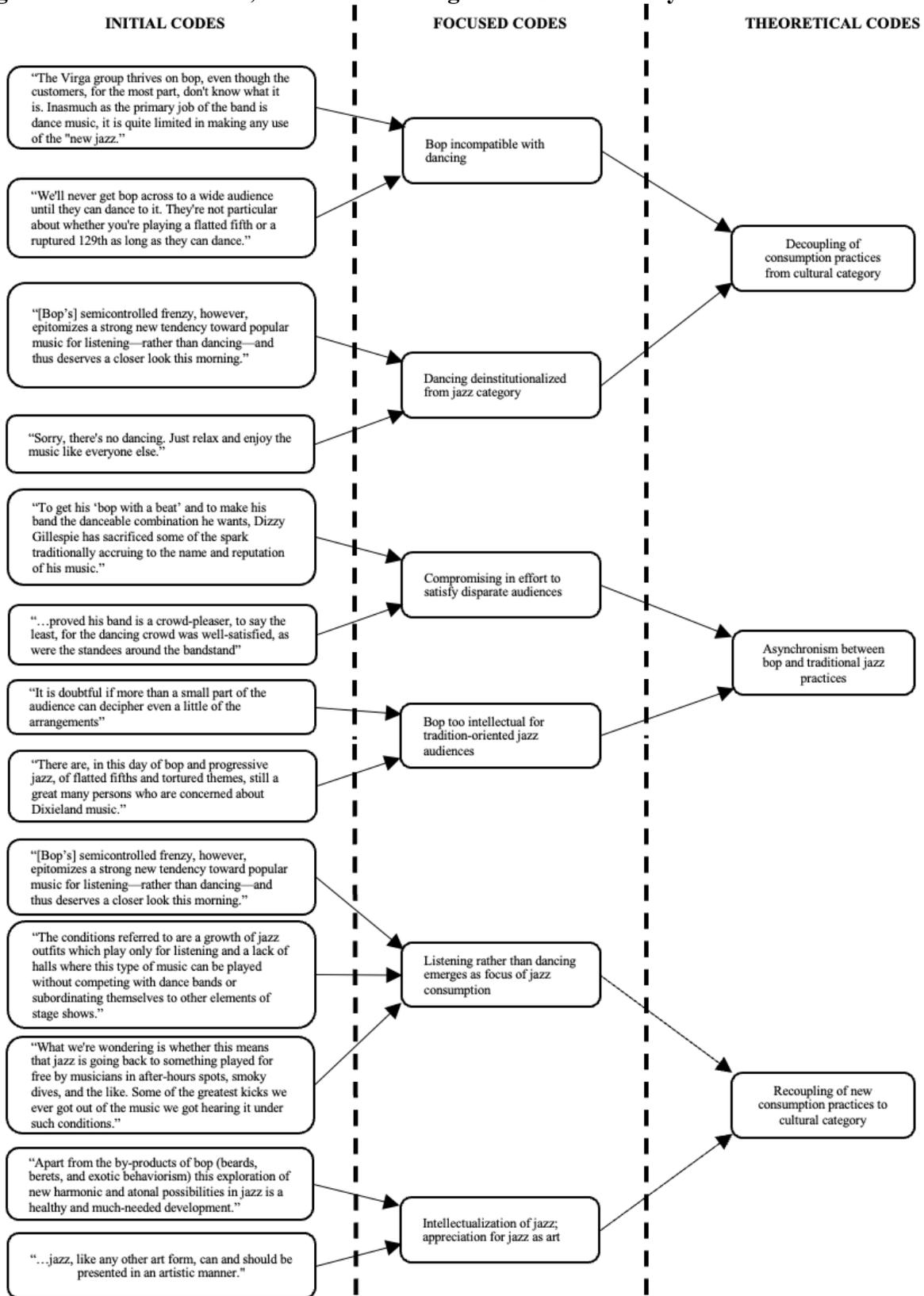
Figure 2.3. Timeline of bebop's legitimation and the decoupling and recoupling of consumption practices to jazz.

Decoupling of existing consumption practices from jazz

Bop legitimation

Recoupling of new consumption practices to jazz

"...it's impossible for us to even to attempt to satisfy more than half the crowd. The fans up front are mad when we play for the dancers. The dancers are griped when we play the style for which we've been fortunate enough to gain some fame."

"big band business...in a hazardous state"

"Bop is an interpretation of jazz...it's all part of the same thing."

"this exploration of new harmonic and atonal possibilities in jazz is a healthy and much-needed development."

"So bands began playing "listening," rather than dancing music, and everybody listened."

"We play...progressive music for listeners."

1945:
Bebop emerges; polarizes audiences

1947:
Bop rapidly displacing traditional styles

1947:
Bop concert held at Carnegie hall

1949:
DownBeat starts column called "The Bop Beat"

1949:
Bop added to US state department's "Voice of America" programs

1950-:
Close listening entrenched as jazz consumption practice

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from "serious" music prior to bebop's emergence. As performance practices changed and as musicians experimented with innovative harmonic approaches to music such as extended chords and altered scales, audiences perceived jazz as an art form worth *studying*.

In tandem with these developments, jazz shows began to be held at venues previously reserved for classical music: "A program, said to be the first of its kind to be given in a concert hall in this city, consisting of a combination of 'jazz and classical music…'" (New York Times, January 7, 1945); "be-bop, which squeezed into Carnegie Hall sideways during the Woody Herman and Norman Granz concerts, makes a full dress entrance Sept. 29" (Downbeat, 1947). Critics pointed to the musical content of bebop as the driving force between jazz's rapid rise in status: "Harmonically and melodically, be-bop definitely is advancing to the level of contemporary classical music. The composers and arrangers of bop have been compared to Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Schoenberg" (Downbeat, 1949). Jazz critics and musicians alike began demanding more respect for the category, placing certain jazz musicians on a level parallel with the most highly regarded classical composers. This was bolstered by jazz's entry into high-status venues, spaces designed for listening and the appreciation of music for music's sake, further decoupling dancing from jazz as a category. Notably, this change in status was not instantaneous, and jazz faced pushback in academic circles through the 1950's. For example, the University of Kentucky explicitly barred its professors from teaching jazz, contending that it was not "a fit subject for serious study" (DownBeat, 1951).

Nevertheless, the tides were irrefutably shifting, and jazz continued to gain status in the musical field. Over the summer and early fall of 1951, a group of professors and musicians convened on three occasions in Lenox, Massachusetts to discuss jazz's contributions to American culture, discussing topics such as specific styles including bop and ragtime, as well as

attempting to codify a definition of jazz as a category. By the close of the final roundtable session, the attendees had created such a definition: "Jazz is an improvisational American music utilizing European instrumentation and fusing elements of European harmony, Euro-African melody, and African rhythm" (DownBeat, 1951). Attendees "departed with the solid conviction that the study of jazz as a vital force in American civilization had finally been launched" (ibid.).

As evidenced, bebop musicians were largely responsible for stimulating these changed perceptions of jazz, from a form of entertainment to an intellectually rigorous cornerstone of American culture. Bebop musicians demanded a kind of respect previously not granted to jazz artists. Audiences began to see jazz as art worth studying and listening to with attentiveness and respect, rather than as entertainment in dancing and drinking establishments. And yet, these dynamics had an unintended and perhaps unanticipated impact: jazz's popularity declined in tandem with shifting perceptions of the category's meaning. Jazz's association with high art increased the barriers to entry in jazz, both for performers and listeners. Many musicians and critics lamented jazz's decline in popularity; one critic stated, "jazz—progressive jazz of the kind we stand for…may have to go underground for a while, back into the dives and beer joints where it started. But it will never die. Musicians will keep it alive, and someday it will emerge again and be accepted as what it is—something really big and important in American culture" (DownBeat, 1951).

Indeed, while bebop was admired by the musical and cultural elite for its intellectual and cultural contributions to American music, the public began to move away from jazz in response to bebop's increasing pervasiveness. For instance, Boston was once a hotbed of bebop, but by 1951 only one club in Boston, the Hi-Hat, consistently hosted bop and progressive jazz shows. True jazz was again driven underground, despite its newfound high status.

Around this time, classical musicians also began co-opting jazz practices for their own benefit. Composers such as Copland and Stravinsky began experimenting with jazz and specifically with ideas from bop. Despite this, the consumption practices supporting classical and jazz remained largely separate. Jazz musicians and audiences alike remained sensitive to tradition and to the core practices, such as improvisation and jam sessions, that had for so long defined the category. Perceptions of jazz, as a result, became increasingly broad, combining the traditional meanings of jazz as "extemporaneous," loose, and rambunctious with novel meanings attached to bebop like virtuosity, complexity, and innovation. One observer noted that "jazz is extemporaneous and classical music is worked over, reduced to perfection" (New York Times, January 16, 1949). Bebop became the dominant, prevailing form of jazz, leading jazz itself to be associated with other high-status categories, alienating many listeners in the process.

A Model of Cultural Resonance

The changes in consumption practices and category meanings engendered by bebop's emergence reestablished the cultural resonance of jazz, by providing an avenue for people to attach meaning to jazz as a category, and to derive shared meaning from their consumption of jazz music. In sum, the links between the four points of Griswold's cultural diamond became solidified by the emergence of new consumption practices enabling the application of meaning to jazz as a broader category of music, reestablishing the cultural resonance of jazz. These dynamics can be seen in figure 2.4, which is an adaptation of Griswold's cultural diamond (Griswold, 2012.)

The first step in the process involves the emergence of novel production practices. In the case of bebop, these practices involve complex harmony, fast tempos, syncopated rhythms, and rapid harmonic changes. Bebop clashed with the prevailing meanings and norms associated with jazz in the mid-1940's, and most importantly, necessitated changes in the practices through

Figure 2.4. A model of cultural resonance.
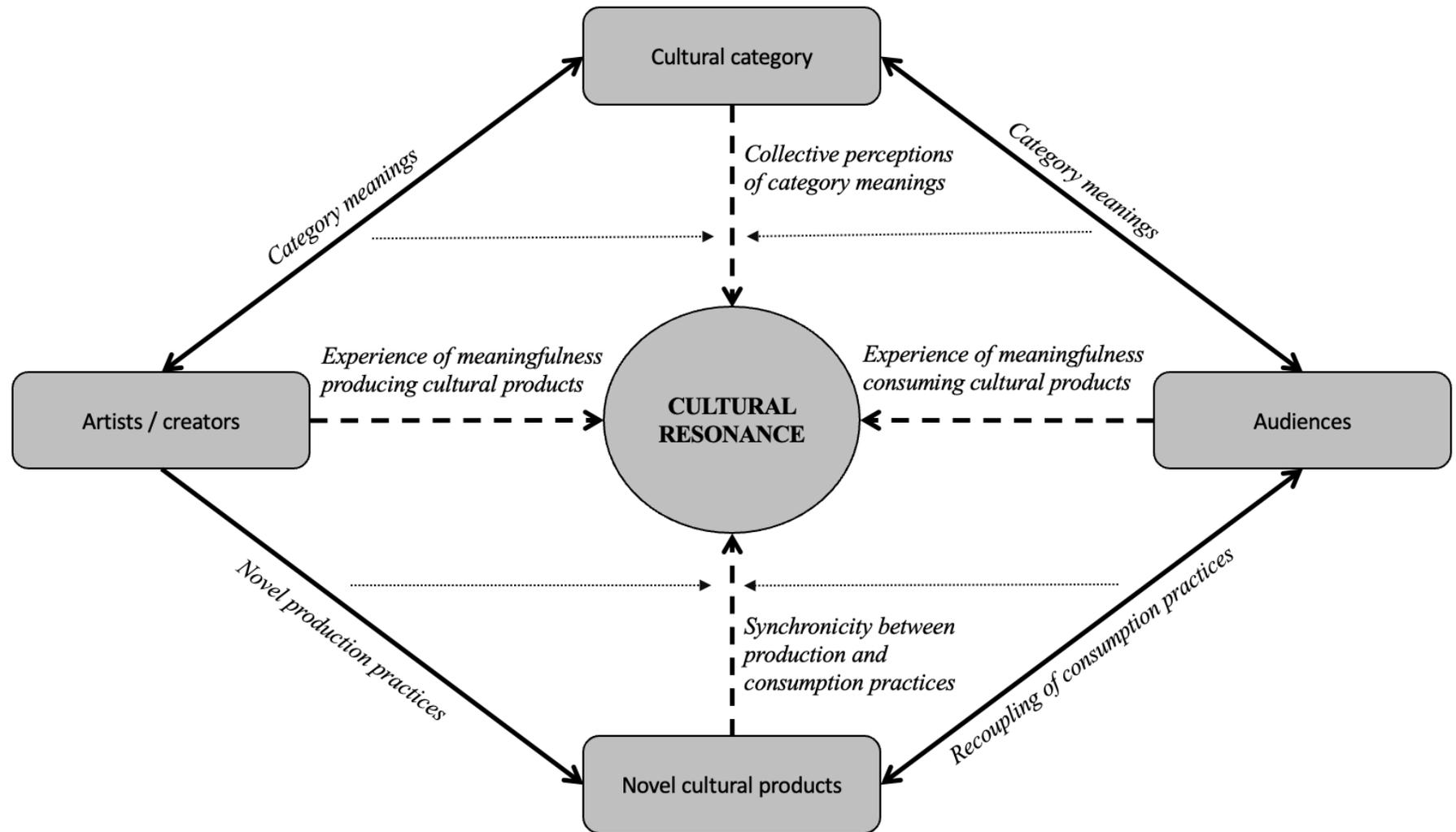
which audiences consumed jazz music. By decoupling existing consumption practices—like dancing—from the jazz category, and recoupling new consumption practices—like studying and close listening—to the jazz category, audiences could experience meaningfulness by listening to bebop, and performers could experience the same meaningfulness by knowing they had a sympathetic audience who "got it." Through the mid-late 1940's, the entrenchment of bebop and the novel consumption practices associated with it reshaped the collectively held meanings attached to jazz as a category, reestablishing the category's cultural resonance. By the 1950's, bop was the dominant form of contemporary jazz music and as such the consumption practices tied to bop shaped perceptions of the jazz category writ large.

DISCUSSION

This study describes the processes through which cultural categories and their meanings change over time in conjunction with changes in the set of consumption practices coupled with a given category. I make two major contributions to the categorization theory literature, and also contribute to the literature on cultural production. My contributions center around the interrelationship between novel cultural products, cultural consumption practices, category meanings, and the generation or maintenance of cultural resonance resulting from these interrelationships.

My first contribution is in elucidating how audiences respond to the emergence of novel cultural products through changes to the dominant consumption practices in a given category. In other words, I show how as cultural products in a given category take new forms when new styles and aesthetics emerge, people begin to consume these cultural products in different kinds of social situations. As bebop gained popularity within the jazz category, steadily overshadowing more traditional forms of jazz, audiences began to listen to jazz when engaging in a different set

of consumption practices. Instead of going out for a night of dancing with a jazz band as accompaniment, people went to jazz concerts for the purpose of intently listening to the music itself. The venues in which jazz was most often performed also changed, such that jazz was most often heard in either bars—specifically in jazz clubs—or concert halls. The latter is especially interesting, as it signals that the cultural elite in America began affording jazz higher status than it was previously granted. As dancing became decoupled from jazz, what was ostensibly a low-brow category gained respect from the cultural elite, a chain of events further supported by and culminating in jazz's appearance in high-status cultural institutions such as universities and Carnegie Hall. I illustrate this process by describing how existing consumption practices are decoupled from the category in question, and the category becomes institutionalized as a component in different consumption practices, whether novel or existing.

This notion, that the way a piece of music or art is performed influences the manner in which audiences interact with it, draws attention to a fascinating feature of category change in fields of cultural production: producers—artists—have the power to very rapidly stimulate profound shifts in audiences' perceptions and understandings of categories. This is not to say that they alone shape perceptions of categories; audiences, gatekeepers, and intermediaries like record labels and music venues all play active roles in processes of category construction and maintenance. Yet, the dissemination of new forms and styles of art, a process which begins with artists and producers, is often the stimulus behind category change in cultural fields (e.g., Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010). In jazz, a genre often experienced in a live format, especially in the 1940's before collecting LP's was common practice, category change began with artists experimenting in real time before live audiences. The practice of playing live music is synonymous with the end cultural product itself, meaning that each time an audience member is exposed to music they

perceive to belong to a certain genre or category, their understanding of what that category means and of where its boundaries lie shift, even if only slightly. In this regard, live music is socially generative and powerful in a way that most other products, cultural products included, are not. It unfolds before an audience in real time, with producer and audience each being exposed to the final cultural product at the same moment. The ensuing sense of interconnectedness can facilitate shared understandings of what a piece of music means, and—especially apt here—what a musical category means. Note that, of course, music is consumed in recorded form as well, and bop artists could be heard on the radio in the 1940's and 50's. With recorded music, the attribution of social meaning to cultural products and cultural categories may be shaped by other factors as well, such as the material packaging of recorded music, how the music was classified (by category) in a record store, or even by whom the music is being sold. Future research exploring the distinction between consuming live versus recorded music, especially as it relates to categorization and the attribution of meaning to cultural categories, could be illuminating and would deepen our understanding of categorization as it relates to materiality as well as consumption practices.

My second contribution is closely related to the first: I illustrate how consumption practices shape perceptions of category meanings, thus deepening our understanding of how category meanings change over time. The notion that practices shape perceptions of categories and their meanings is not novel (e.g., Glynn & Navis, 2013; Pedeliento, Andreini, & Dalli, 2020), yet little research has explored how shifting consumption practices drive changes in category meanings. Bebop drove jazz off the dancefloor, but into smaller bars and larger concert halls. As such, its meaning became associated with intellectualism, exclusivity, and esotericism. Bebop's musical complexity alienated those who did not have the willingness or capability to

spend time learning about it, thus reducing jazz's popular appeal substantially. As such, jazz bands could not garner large enough audiences to perform in large spaces, except for the particularly famous performers who could get booked at concert halls. As a result, jazz was performed in increasingly isolated spaces, such as late at night in small bars and clubs, leading to perceptions that it was esoteric and meant only for people who "got it." Its complexity similarly led people to study it intently for its music theoretical content, to the point that universities began founding programs for the academic study of jazz. This, too, led to perceptions that jazz was a high status, intellectual form of high art.

This contribution is relevant to how category meanings are defined in other fields and industries, as well. Collective perceptions of category meanings are maintained through consumption practices; in other words, people develop understandings of what a category represents by interacting with members of that category in their daily lives. For example, consider categories of physical formats of recorded music: .mp3's and other digital formats are widely considered to be modern and portable, while LP's are considered to be retro and collectible. Many other meanings are bound up in each of these categories: LP's, for example, are often romanticized in people's minds, holding a sort of collective nostalgia even for those who did not grow up with them. This perception is based on how people have been exposed to the category in a wide variety of practices: some people may have seen LP's only in a record store, where keen collectors discussed rarities and reissues; others may have seen LP's in movies; and others may recall flipping through their parents' or grandparents' collections. This is distinct from the immediate, first-hand experience most people now have with digital formats, and as such the two categories are meaningful for people in different ways and for different reasons, and they also hold distinct social meanings.

Categories are more than bundles of features; they elicit values, memories (including collective memories), emotions, and associations in observers. These meanings emerge as people encounter categories in their daily lives, and these meanings can thus change as people encounter them as components of different consumption practices. My study generalizes most readily to consumption practices relating to cultural categories—especially those experienced in a "live" setting—such as music, theater, and visual art, but also offers insight into processes of change in other categories. For example, perceptions of commercial air travel—a category of transportation—have changed over time in tandem with the consumption practices associated with air travel. Earlier in the 20th century, air travel was seen as an elite category, expensive and out of reach for most people. As air travel became more affordable and became institutionalized as a legitimate means of traveling from point A to point B, whether 100 miles apart or 3,000, perceptions of the category's meaning shifted. The causal arrow does not flow in one direction in this example: air travel became more common in part because it was perceived as an accessible and cost-effective method of transportation, and its prevalence in our culture in turn strengthened these perceptions.

It would be erroneous to point to either bebop performance practices or the consumption practices in which jazz is implicated as the sole driver of category meaning change; production practices and consumption practices are intimately tied to each other and are mutually reinforcing. Production practices influence consumption practices, which in turn shape category meanings. Bebop's musical complexity was initially met with confusion as people struggled to make sense of the new genre, and as they began to experiment with new consumption practices. Evolving understandings of bebop—and of jazz, by association—led to jazz music being implicated in different consumption practices, which in turn contributed to understandings of

jazz, and so on and so forth. This recursive and mutually constitutive cycle is a constant social force in fields of cultural production, as producers and audiences implicitly reevaluate a category's meaning every time they are exposed to it. When synchronicity exists between production practices and consumption practices, when both creators and audiences can experience meaningfulness through their connection with cultural products, and when category meanings are stable and collectively held, cultural resonance can emerge and be maintained.

Limitations and Future Research

Bebop's emergence and legitimation sparked major changes to perceptions of the social meanings held by jazz music. I contend—and my data supports this notion—that the decoupling and recoupling of consumption practices to cultural categories is the driving force behind these changes. Yet, the musicians responsible for articulating the bebop idiom are arguably the most consequential actors in this process. My data does not offer a detailed account of bop musicians' motivations and aspirations, and thus I cannot offer insight into whether jazz's meanings evolved in the way they intended—if clear intent even existed in the first place. Future research could focus on bop musician's biographies in an effort to document their goals in creating this new form of jazz. Cross-referencing these goals to the cultural phenomena I outline in this paper would provide an even more complete understanding of why perceptions of jazz have evolved as they have over time.

One particularly intriguing feature of bop's legitimation and the subsequent changes to jazz's meaning is the apparent inverse relationship between status and popularity. Generally, status is perceived as a beneficial social conferral (Piazza & Castellucci, 2016)), affording actors access to valuable resources, often in the form of increased audience reach and hence higher popularity (Lynn, Walker, & Peterson, 2016). In this case, however, jazz's status rose and its

popularity fell in tandem. Although jazz and jazz artists were granted newfound respect due to bebop's musical complexity and to jazz musicians' growing virtuosity, this respect did not translate into larger or more diverse audiences. Instead, jazz became increasingly esoteric, isolated from popular music as a form made by musicians and a relatively smaller group of devoted and well-educated fans. I do not have quantitative data outlining jazz's popularity over time; if such data could be accessed one could conceivably cross reference this with the prevalence and frequency of jazz performances in Carnegie Hall and other high status venues. Regardless, future research should explore the relationship between status and popularity, and in particular the conditions under which status and popularity are inversely related or positively related. It is likely that the underlying drivers of status changes are more important than quantitative status changes themselves, although this assumption should be empirically tested. In other words, because jazz's status rose because of its increasing harmonic and rhythmic complexity, one can expect its popularity to decline because these factors are alienating to many of those not educated in music theory. If, hypothetically, jazz's status had risen because a group of prominent movie stars publicly stated that it was their favorite style of music, one might expect its popularity to rise accordingly, at least in the short term.

Finally, my data does not directly address the role of race in bebop's legitimation and jazz's subsequent rise in status and decline in popularity. Nevertheless, race dynamics are undeniably important to the state of popular music in the United States. First, it is worth reiterating that jazz's roots are in Black communities in New Orleans. Black musicians are responsible for jazz's creation, its early distribution, and for establishing its overall aesthetic. By the 1920's and 1930's, white musicians had begun to play jazz as well, and some were able to perform jazz in venues where Black people were barred, in essence co-opting the genre.

Additionally, jazz in the 20's and 30's was generally thought of as entertainment rather than as art, while Black musicians in particular were viewed as entertainers rather than artists. It is not immediately clear which of these forces came first—jazz being perceived as entertainment or Black musicians being perceived as entertainers—and indeed, they were likely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. As mentioned previously, many scholars agree that bebop represents an effort by Black musicians to garner respect as artists rather than as simply entertainers. It is clear that they succeeded, as jazz became associated with high art and high status. And yet, it is possible that jazz's popularity fell because of these same racial dynamics, with the popular press decrying bebop not solely because of its complexity but because it was a movement driven by Black musicians in search of greater respect for their musical abilities and contributions. Future research should focus on these racial dynamics; jazz is often viewed as a genre which brought races together, and yet there are many other potentially harmful and negative forces bubbling under the surface which remain as yet under-explored.

Fields of cultural production offer unique contexts for study category dynamics, as spaces marked by constant creation, innovation, and divergence from established norms. Bebop's legitimation meant that perceptions of jazz's meaning would be forever changed; it was too distinct from more traditional styles, and was implicated in a notably distinct set of consumption practices than traditional jazz. Of course, the idiosyncrasies of more traditional styles can persist, housed within temporally-bounded historical categories such as swing, Dixieland, New Orleans jazz, and others, but the overarching meaning of the broader category jazz were generally over-written, or at least overshadowed, by bebop's entrenchment. Categories in fields of cultural production regularly shift, and while this study offers evidence of how and why these shifts—in meanings, boundaries, membership criteria, or other facets of categorization—occur, more

research is necessary to fully grasp how shared category meanings stabilize and destabilize in these and other fields.

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CHAPTER 3

Category Change in Cultural Fields:
Practice deviation and the discursive maintenance of category meanings in jazz music[1]

Abstract

In this chapter, I explore another example of the jazz category evolving over time. In this paper, I focus on critics' evaluative practices and gatekeeping strategies, examining how they make sense of new production practices and styles of music as they emerge. Deviation from normative practices is common in established categories, stimulating category gatekeepers to reevaluate their approaches to defining and enforcing category boundaries and meanings. While scholars agree that categories are mutable and dynamic, we lack a theoretical framework explaining the mechanisms through which practice deviation stimulates category change. Using structural topic modeling and inductive hand-coding of a large text corpus, I analyze critical reviews of jazz records between 1968 and 1975 to show the discursive mechanisms through which gatekeepers codify change in cultural categories. As jazz musicians experimented with new practices associated with a style now known as jazz fusion, critics discursively reordered their criteria for assessing membership, quality, and value in jazz music, expanding the jazz category into new realms yet retaining its semantic coherence. This paper contributes to research on category dynamics including change and subcategorization, and extends knowledge of category maintenance and gatekeeping in cultural fields. In the scope of this dissertation, it extends my theorizing about category change beyond artists and audiences to include intermediaries and gatekeepers as consequential actors in processes of category evolution.

"So we have to reach out to the world with new ideas and new forms and in music this has meant leaving the traditional forms…and playing something else altogether which maybe you can't identify and classify yet but which you recognize when you hear it."
– Ralph Gleason, liner notes to Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*, 1970

In the late 1960s, jazz musicians began to experiment with musical practices that broke the normative conventions of the jazz category. Borrowing practices from rock & roll and funk, jazz musicians began to experiment with electric instruments such as electric guitars, keyboards, and synthesizers, and with simple rhythms commonly used in rock and funk. The resulting style—termed "jazz fusion," or simply fusion—was initially perceived as deviant by critics, who were unsure how to evaluate and classify fusion. In reviewing early fusion records, jazz critics initially refused to categorize the music, drawing attention to the inadequacies of existing categories for assessing its value. As Fellesz (2011, p. 5) argues: "jazz, rock, and funk were positioned in diametrically opposed ways, and by mixing them together, fusion musicians participated in a larger shift, not simply in the categories but in the categorization process itself." Fusion's emergence in 1968-1969 forced critics, acting as gatekeepers, to reevaluate and redefine the meaning of the jazz category.

By 1975, fusion had been widely accepted by jazz critics and enjoyed immense commercial appeal. By association, the array of practices considered to be legitimate within the jazz category expanded: electric instruments and simple rhythms, previously non-normative in jazz, were open for experimentation and use. The increasing intra-category heterogeneity presented by fusion's legitimation, however, threatened the coherence of the jazz category as whole. In response, critics discursively emphasized the central, enduring elements of jazz which

characterized both fusion and already established styles, thus reinforcing a clear meaning tying all category members together. My goal in this paper is to explain why and how these changes occurred: how do gatekeepers redefine an established cultural category to accommodate practice deviations while maintaining a clear category meaning?

Categories are socially constructed conceptual groupings constituted by patterns of social practices and shared understandings (Glynn & Navis, 2013; Pedeliento, Andreini, & Dalli, 2020), functioning as communities that define normatively appropriate practices for their members (Porac, Thomas, & Baden-Fuller, 1989). Deviation from normative practices drives intra-category contestation, spurring sensemaking and enabling shifts in collective perceptions of category meanings (Lounsbury & Rao, 2005; Delmestri & Greenwood, 2016). Practice deviation is especially common in cultural production, where the continued pursuit of novelty is often implicitly valued (Askin & Mauskapf, 2017). In cultural contexts, category meanings are codified in discourse, as gatekeepers set guidelines for assessing quality and category membership by assigning value to certain aesthetic styles and practices (Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010; Bourdieu, 1983). Yet, we know little about how practice deviation drives change in established categories, and little about the role of critics as gatekeepers in making sense of and guiding these processes in their discourse.

My study describes the discursive mechanisms through which critics codified the jazz category's changing meanings and boundaries following the emergence of fusion. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, critics took steps to reinforce improvisation as a central, core meaning of jazz, while also redefining its more peripheral meanings so as to sanction a broader range of musical practices associated with fusion, including the use of electric instruments and simple rhythmic structures. To understand these discursive mechanisms of category change, I analyze

album reviews published in *DownBeat* magazine, a well-known jazz publication, between 1968 and 1975, using two forms of analysis. First, I use topic modeling to identify the most prevalent themes within jazz critics' discourse. This serves as a jumping off point for my second analysis, which is a grounded theory-based analysis of fusion album reviews in particular.

I offer a process model of category change, contributing to the literature on category dynamics by showing that category gatekeepers make sense of practice deviations by reordering the criteria they use to assess value, quality, and category membership, thus codifying novel perceptions of category meanings and boundaries through their discourse. My model affirms the importance of maintaining a coherent set of core category meanings through periods of change and evolution (Lo, Fiss, Rhee, & Kennedy, 2020), a phenomenon that remains underexplored in the categories literature.

THEORIZING CATEGORY CHANGE

Early research on categories in organization theory focused on appraisals of organizations' fit within existing categories (Zuckerman, 1999), a literature which expanded to encompass research on the consequences of category spanning and partial category membership (Hsu, 2006; Negro & Leung, 2013; Wry, Lounsbury, & Jennings, 2014). As research on market categories continued to gain prevalence in the early 2000's, scholars began to focus on the socially constructed, dynamic, and culturally embedded nature of categories (Kennedy, 2008; Kennedy, Lo, & Lounsbury, 2010; Glynn & Navis, 2013), leading to a growing body of work examining the processes through which market categories change over time (Delmestri & Greenwood, 2016; Pedeliento et al., 2020; Gollnhofer & Bhatnagar, 2021). To scholars in this research stream, categories are conceptual groupings which are "continuously changing, dynamic entities that actors reproduce through their interactions" (Granqvist & Ritvala, 2016, p. 6).

Among the instigating forces of category change identified in the literature is increasing intra-category heterogeneity, often engendered by practice deviation as actors experiment with new modes of production. Indeed, Lounsbury and Rao argue that "product categories are fragile cognitive structures that can be brought down when there is high performance variability and new entrants embody variations and disturb the status quo" (2005, p. 990). When actors deviate from normative practices in a given category, the resulting "internal heterogeneity opens space for debates and contestation" (Lo et al., 2020, p. 94). The literatures on category spanning (Montauti, 2019; Younkin & Kashkooli, 2020) and optimal distinctiveness (Zhao, Fisher, Lounsbury, & Miller, 2017; Barlow, Verhaal, & Angus, 2019) describe how actors engage in practice deviation by adhering to certain category features while diverging from others; however, this work focuses more on the consequences of practice deviation on firm performance rather than on any potential consequences for category structures themselves. Acknowledging this, Zhao and colleagues point to the fact that optimal distinctiveness is a moving target, because categorical backgrounds change over time (Zhao et al., 2017, p. 105). Yet, we know little about how practice deviation may engender such changes, for example by influencing shared perceptions of category meanings and boundaries.

Actors invested in the long-term viability of a category—whether category members, audiences, or gatekeepers—may respond to increasing internal heterogeneity by attempting to reestablish category coherence, by articulating clear category meanings, boundaries, and membership criteria (Lounsbury & Rao, 2005). It is these structural consequences of practice deviation that are of primary concern to me in this paper. Existing research offers clues as to how these processes unfold: for example, Alexy and George (2013) find that "category straddling allows organizations to extend the scope of behaviours that audiences would consider

appropriate," by capturing "legitimacy spillovers" which allow for experimentation without risk of negative sanctions (p. 23). Similarly, in a study of the emergence of the category "modern architecture," Jones and colleagues describe an initial period of "category expansion," wherein different subgroups of architects emphasize the relative importance of different concepts, thus contributing to an expanding, if increasingly incoherent, nomological net of meanings in the emergent category (Jones, Maoret, Massa, & Svejenova, 2012). Subsequently, these subgroups contest the validity of each concept relative to emerging shared perceptions of the broader category's meaning, eventually accepting pluralism but establishing a core set of concepts upon which all modern architecture subgroups agreed.

This process of zeroing in on a set of core meanings is a recurring theme in the literature, illustrating the importance of internal coherence as a goal category members, audiences, and gatekeepers implicitly work towards when making sense of practice deviations. Similar dynamics are evident in studies of craft beer where this is operationalized as "code centrality" (Mathias, Huyghe, & Williams, 2020), in satellite radio as collective identity (Navis & Glynn, 2010), and in art as "establishing common constructs and referents" (Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010). Other scholars adopt a theoretical approach to these issues based on framing and level of abstraction. One example is the mechanism of "inclusive category reframing," where stakeholders adopt very broad category definitions, such that many diverse actors are considered members (Chliova, Mair, & Vernis, 2020). The crux of this perspective is that defining categories at high levels of abstraction can address the problems of contentiousness and incoherence associated with practice deviation, by offering a broader and more inclusive map for category membership centered on a relatively small number of requirements (Alaimo & Kallinikos, 2021).

In other accounts of category change driven by practice deviation, discourse plays a central and consequential role. Siltaoja and colleagues describe how category meanings and boundaries are codified in discourse during periods of uncertainty and change, in a study of the "organic farming" category (Siltaoja et al., 2020). Initially, organic farming was stigmatized due to its association with biodynamic farming and certain practices generally perceived as unscientific and non-Christian. Over time, this stigma was diverted to the biodynamic farming subcategory as actors came to agree upon a set of meanings and features of organic farming which did not trigger negative evaluations or perceptions of illegitimacy. The authors argue that "category meanings can therefore be contested through symbolic boundary construction through discourse that seeks to define the core identity, membership and meanings of the category" (p. 997).

Discourse plays a significant role in categorization in cultural fields, where critics serve as "gatekeepers" (Hirsch, 1972) and "influencers" (Baumann, 2001). Several studies highlight the role of critics in codifying and institutionalizing category meanings and boundaries: critics discursively maintain category meanings by defining and rationalizing specific standards for assessing quality and value, creating guidelines for the social interpretation of cultural products (Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010; Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005). When musicians deviate from normative performance practices, for example, critics are faced with explaining how and why the deviation occurred, how it should be judged, and how it should be categorized. The resulting discourse helps to reshape the boundaries and membership criteria in the category, as critics "facilitate the intersubjective agreement among parties, clients, and producers" (Durand & Khaire, 2017, p. 101).

Although existing literature offers many examples of how category incoherence can be resolved through processes of category maintenance and change, there are two important gaps in our understanding. First, most studies of category change focus on relatively new, nascent categories and how their initially contested meanings are settled over time. As such, we lack sufficient understanding of the processes through which already established, stable categories change over time. Second, while extant literature provides many examples of how organizations deviate from normative practices, such as by spanning multiple categories, we know little about the effects of such processes on category meanings and boundaries themselves. Relatedly, we know little about how, if at all, critics and other gatekeepers modify their perceptions of category boundaries as they evaluate practice deviations. I address these gaps by exploring the following question: how do gatekeepers redefine an established cultural category to accommodate practice deviations while maintaining a clear category meaning?

RESEARCH SETTING, DATA, AND METHODS

Jazz is "musician's music" (Mack & Merriam, 1959, p. 213), a category marked by virtuosity, a sense of sonic exploration, and challenging harmonic and rhythmic content. It is unique among categories of music in its focus on improvisation; jazz compositions typically begin with a relatively short melody section, following which the musicians in the group take turns "soloing" or improvising over a chord progression, before closing with a restatement of the melody. Scholars note that "because of its emphasis on improvised performance, jazz has maintained a strong tradition of creative invention throughout its history" (Stump, 1998, p. 14). Indeed, by the late 1960s, a large and diverse array of styles and musical practices had emerged within jazz. Among these were free jazz, hard bop, cool jazz, and various flavors of the avant-garde. Nevertheless, these styles had many commonalities: most included acoustic instruments,

specifically horns, piano, double bass, and drums; and most were characterized by complex, syncopated rhythms. By contrast, rock music was characterized by the use of simple rhythms, electric instrumentation, and comparatively little emphasis on improvisation.

The mid-1960s marked "rock's eclipsing of jazz in popular culture," as rock and roll rapidly ascended to the forefront of American pop culture and as jazz continued to lose fans, venues, and market share (Fellezs, 2011, p. 3). *Downbeat* magazine—the most widely read jazz publication at the time—began covering rock music in 1967, in preparation for the founding of rock magazine *Rolling Stone* (Brennan, 2017). It was in the mid-60s that jazz musicians first began to experiment with rock styles; for example, Duke Ellington recorded an album of Beatles cover songs in 1966 (Fellezs, 2011). These recordings do not represent fusion as we understand it today; they did not use electric instrumentation, but rather were rock tunes adapted for a jazz band. Nevertheless, they foreshadowed things to come in the jazz category in terms of musicians acting on the realization that their popularity was waning. As Brennan (2017, p. 98) notes, "by 1967, musicians from jazz and rock backgrounds were beginning to get together to jam and form large ensembles like Blood, Sweat, and Tears, and Chicago; although these two bands would not release their debut albums until 1968…" The seeds of fusion were thus sown in the mid 1960s, but 1968 marked its true emergence in the form of physical recordings which would be reviewed by music critics.

More broadly, the late 1960s mark a notably turbulent period in history: the Vietnam war was ongoing, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, and the counterculture in the U.S. was arguably at its peak, contributing to a widely held logic of rebellion and a collective respect for those courageous enough to break long-standing boundaries, whether socially, politically, or artistically. Perhaps in response to these broader cultural dynamics, jazz musicians began to take

inspiration from rock music and the spirit of rebellion therein. These cultural dynamics may also have predisposed audiences and critics alike to look favorably on musicians who broke boundaries; the late 60s were marked by social boundary-breaking, contributing to a sometimes unconscious but nevertheless widely held logic of deviation and open-mindedness.

Data

I compiled a set of archival data published between 1968 through 1975 which illustrate how jazz critics discursively responded to fusion. Such an approach is consistent with other studies of category change, many of which also rely on archival, historical textual data (e.g., Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010; Anthony, Nelson, & Tripsas, 2016; Hsu & Grodal, 2020), and with studies of categories in fields of cultural production which highlight critical discourse as a codification of category boundaries (Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005; Bourdieu, 1983; DiMaggio, 1987). The earliest fusion albums were released in 1968 (Brennan, 2017), marking the beginning of my study period. By 1975, fusion was widely accepted as a form of jazz, and critics evaluated it in much the same way as other jazz releases, marking the end of my study period.

The term "fusion" was first used in *Downbeat* in a 1971 review of *The Albert's* eponymous debut album. Notably, this is a full three years after Downbeat published the first review of a record now identifiable as fusion in 1968. At the beginning of the study period in 1968, fusion was still a proto-category (Zhao, Ishihara, Jennings, & Lounsbury, 2018), and coalesced as an identifiable subcategory in its own right sometime around 1971, before ultimately being absorbed by the broader category jazz. Notably, this absorption was additive: fusion was not erased, but incorporated into an existing category, bringing novel practices and meanings along with it.

My data consist of all album reviews published in *DownBeat* magazine from 1968 through 1975. Each review contains one critic's evaluation of a jazz album, along with a rating on a scale of 0-5 stars. Musicologists often turn to *DownBeat* as a historical resource (Brennan, 2017; Ake, 2017) due to its status as a particularly influential and widely read jazz publication. My final dataset consists of 184 issues published between January of 1968 and December of 1975, comprising 1,837 album reviews averaging about 385 words each. As a supplement, I conducted 10 interviews with jazz musicians, professors, and critics, to affirm my understanding of fusion and its historical relevance. These interviews helped me to construct a coherent historical understanding of fusion's importance and influence on the jazz category.

To identify which of the albums reviewed in *DownBeat* were fusion albums, I used AllMusic.com's genre database and the crowdsourced database on Discogs.com, an online marketplace platform for LP's, CD's, and cassettes. Of the 1,837 album reviews in my dataset, 171 are reviews of fusion albums, or 9% of all album reviews. The total number of fusion reviews by year are shown in figure 1; annual reviews increased in every year except 1971 and 1975. I did not identify any specific reason for these two decreases from the data; it is possible that record labels were wary of over-committing to fusion in 1971, as it was still relatively nascent and some perceived it as a passing fad (Brennan, 2017). By 1975, fusion had largely been legitimated as a form of jazz, potentially confounding classification schemes; it is arguable that the retrospective categorization databases I rely on for my study identify releases from the mid-late 70s as jazz but not as fusion, even if they fit fusion's description. In other words, fusion may be best understood as a time-bounded subcategory, relegated to describing music from a specific period of time before it was ultimately absorbed into the broader category jazz. *Downbeat* does not publish reviews for every single album ever released, also potentially

explaining these decreases; however, *Downbeat* did publish reviews of most major label releases and covered the fusion movement relatively comprehensively. Fusion's peak years were 1973 and 1974, with 40 and 43 fusion albums reviewed, respectively.

Figure 3.1. Number of fusion album reviews in *Downbeat* per year.
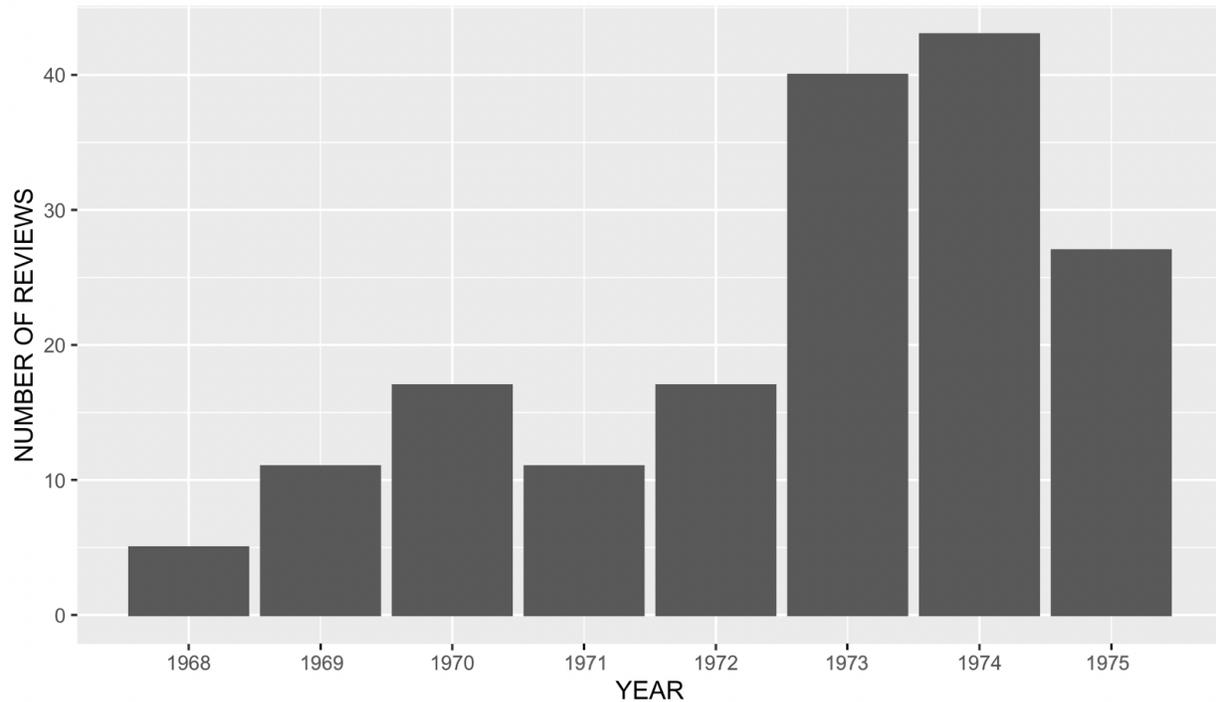
Analytical Approach

I use a combination of topic modeling and inductive, qualitative analysis to analyze my data. The topic model serves to identify themes in the data, representative of the overall meaning of the jazz category, which I analyze over time. My qualitative analysis begins with the insights generated through the topic model, diving deeper into fusion album reviews in particular to understand critics' sensemaking, evaluation, and categorization processes.

Topic modeling procedures. Topic modeling is a form of machine learning which uses linguistic statistical algorithms to uncover "latent topics—clusters of co-occurring words that jointly represent higher order concepts" (Hannigan, Haans, Vakili, Tchalian, Glaser, Wang, Kaplan, & Jennings, 2019, p. 589). Often used to study emergence, meaning, and change

(Croidieu & Kim, 2018), topic modeling is increasingly being used in conjunction with inductive methods, as researchers can leverage the strengths of both methods (Fligstein, Brundage, & Schultz, 2017; Nelson, 2020): topic modeling "enables the identification of important themes that human readers are unable to discern" (Hannigan et al., 2019, p. 590), while hand-coding allows researchers to exercise their deep knowledge of a given context to generate theory both from topic models and the original texts themselves.

I employed the R package *stm*—"structural topic modeling"— for my analysis (Roberts, Stewart, & Tingley, 2014), which allows researchers to attach covariates to each document in the corpus, facilitating the examination of how topics rise and fall in importance in relation to these covariates (Schmiedel, Müller, & vom Brocke, 2018). I included time as a covariate because I sought to understand how discourse relating to jazz's meaning changed over time, and I included album rating as a covariate in order to determine how discourse varied with perceived album quality.

To organize my data for topic modeling, I followed standard corpus preparation procedures, which include removing stop words, stemming each word, removing punctuation and non-English characters, removing words which appeared particularly frequently or infrequently, and removing words fewer than three letters long. To determine the appropriate number of topics, I followed the procedures laid out in the *stm* documentation (Roberts et al., 2014), balancing statistical robustness with qualitative interpretability in order to select a final model. My final model contains 37 topics. To interpret and name the topics in the final model, I examined the top 20 associated words for each topic and read the top 10 album reviews associated with each topic.

Grounded theorizing. The topic model enabled me to identify the broad topics critics discussed in their discourse around jazz album releases, but hand-coding enabled me to reveal how fusion influenced the meaning of the jazz category. I hand-coded the 171 fusion album reviews in my dataset following the tenets of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), iterating between theory and data, abstracting the insights from my archival sources into contemporarily relevant theoretical insights. I coded my data three times, each time re-categorizing the quotes and codes from the previous round of coding according to my increasingly clear understanding of the context, data, and insights therein (Grodal, Anteby, & Holm, 2021). In my first round of coding, my initial codes were highly descriptive and specific; many of these include direct quotes. On my second round of coding, I aggregated related initial codes into focused codes, describing trends as I saw them emerge from the data. Subsequently, I recoded the data a final time, further abstracting my focused codes into theoretical codes and eliminating redundancy between them (Charmaz, 2014).

FINDINGS

I identify three sequential mechanisms through which the meaning of the jazz category was discursively redefined by critics: first, *categorization deferment*, wherein critics refuse to evaluate early fusion records because they lack a set of criteria by which to assess these records' value; second, *peripheral meaning redefinition*, wherein critics legitimate the novel elements of fusion as a musical style, while also strengthening the boundaries between jazz and other categories; and third, *core meaning reinforcement*, wherein critics resolidified the central features of jazz—namely, improvisation—affirming the internal coherence of the category as a whole. Together, these mechanisms codified category change in jazz by establishing new

standards of value and membership, rendering salient the central meanings of jazz and expanding its boundaries in the process.

Topics of Critical Discourse

My topic model revealed 37 topics, including topics that represent specific substyles of jazz; topics that represent musical qualities such as improvisation and rhythm; topics that represent specific kinds of instruments like horns and pianos; and topics that focus on famous and commonly discussed musicians. The most significant topics, with representative quotes from album reviews, can be seen in table 3.1. Five topics are most relevant to my research question: *rock music, fusion and electric instrumentation*, *improvisation and influence, improvisational structure,* and *improvisational technique and tone*. The fact that improvisation is so prominent in the topic model suggests that improvisation remained core to the meaning of jazz throughout the study period.

To determine how jazz's meaning changed over the study period, I examined each topic's prevalence over time. The two fusion-related topics—*rock music* and *fusion and electric instrumentation*—both became more prevalent over time. This is because the number of fusion releases reviewed in *DownBeat* increased each year during the study period, barring decreases in 1971 and 1975. The prevalence of fusion topics over time, overlaid with the annual number of fusion releases during the study period, can be seen in figure 3.2. In 1973, the annual number of fusion albums reviewed in *DownBeat* rose significantly, from 8% of all albums reviewed in 1972 to 15% in 1973, while the prevalence of the two fusion-related topics did not rise at the same rate. It seems that 1973 was a turning point, at which point critics widely considered fusion to fall within the jazz category, rather than in the interstitial space between jazz and rock. It was around this time that critics began to review fusion albums without discussing rock music and

Table 3.1. Structural topic model; selected topics, associated words, and representative text.

Topic ID	Topic Name	Years of highest prevalence	Associated Words	Representative Text
2	Rock music	1970-1975	music, rock, record, play, funk, band, abstract, hot, pith, entertain	*"Their music is…structurally intricate, rhythmically and harmonically mercurial, yet ever rocking"* *"… proven rock cliche as the stuff of creativity"* *"The point is this: even the most trivial art offers some virtue, even the most evanescent entertainment, even the most utter jive…"*
3	Fusion and electric instrumentation	1973-1975	rock, guitar, string, electr, effect, compos, synthes, echo, array, rhode	*"This is not an album for the jazz connoisseur due to its funky commercialism, R&B-cum-rock concept and conspicuous excesses"* *"[this] album represents his continued effort to wring the primitive stomp of rock and liberating freedom of jazz from the sophisticated technology of a self-invented electronic synthesizer."*
5	Improvisation and influence	1968-1972	play, work, solo, improvis, influenc, jazz, perform, tone, construct, intellig	*"[His] statement of the Yesterdays theme on tenor has a rather misterioso quality. His improvising here is vigorous and lucid; he contrasts complex passages with simpler phrases intelligently."* *"[He] improvises some attractive lines…his style seems to be drawn from a variety of sources"* *"He is less dependent on stock phrases than the vast majority of jazzmen. On this LP his playing is inspired and imaginative."*
15	Improvisational structure	1968-1975	solo, structure, theme, improvis, idea, phrase, sequenc, variat, rhythm, present	*"Cascades of powerful ideas follow, offered in stunningly varied patterns, and you are overwhelmed by the urgency of his musical thought."* *"opens with single note lines, spreads into 3rd, 6th, etc. chords in the second chorus. Joe's favorite harmonic medium, a climactic method…suddenly broken phrases which finalize the sense of tragedy and loss so that when the first chorus is repeated it gains profound power. This kind of structural flow is uncharacteristic."* *"The second tenor solo is overwhelming. A great opening phrase is varied in a briefly extended sequence before being broken down. Some highly introverted phrases turned inside out, grace notes thematically developed, longer phrases…*
18	Improvisational technique and tone	1968-1975	solo, note, line, improvis, tone, phrase, invent, single-note, play, fast	*"Every note is clearly articulated, and every phrase is a model of musical organization."* *"his improvisations dance lightly and gracefully over the sometimes-sodden accompaniment."* *"His tone often veers into somewhat agonizing contortions…his ideas are compelling and his rhythmic concepts arresting.*

without discussing electric instrumentation; instead, they reviewed fusion albums as they would review any other jazz record, based on the merits of its musical content.

Figure 3.2. Fusion topic prevalence and number of fusion reviews over time.
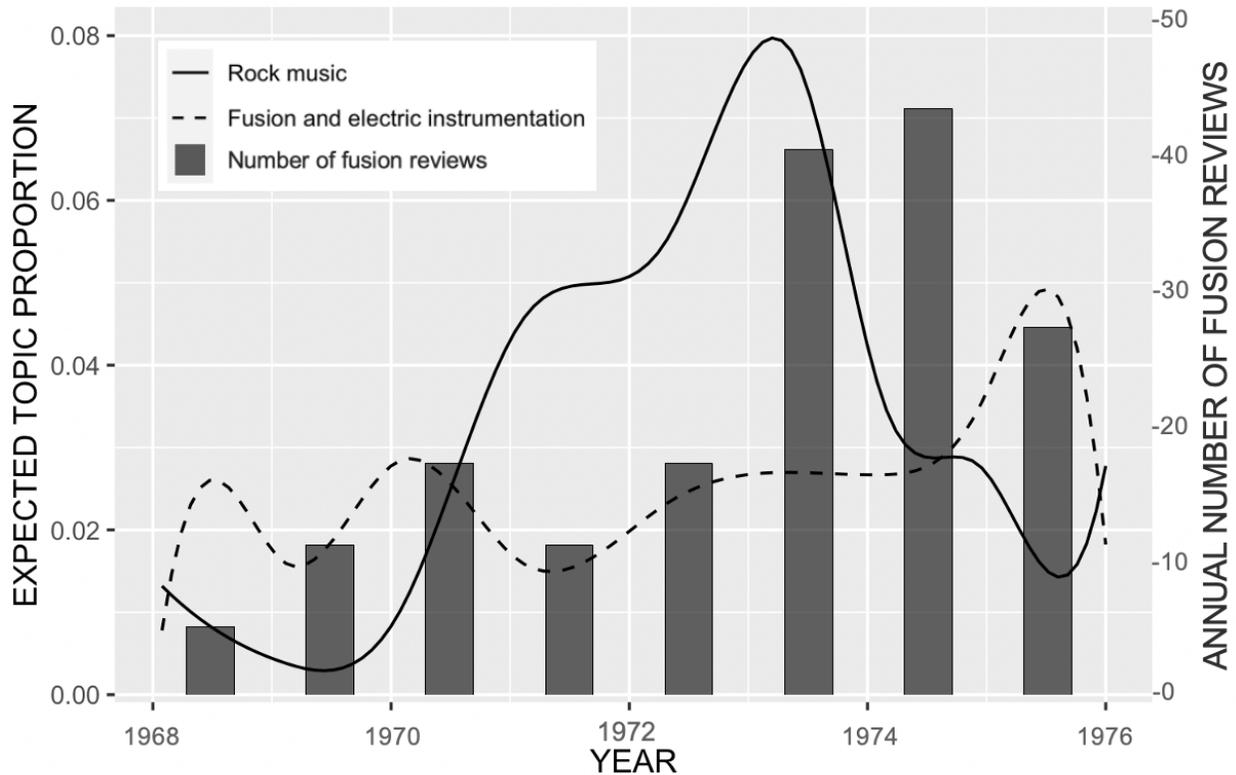
Additionally, the two fusion topics were slightly more prevalent in reviews which rank albums more poorly along *DownBeat's* 5-star rating scale. This relationship is shown in figure 3.3. Although one might speculate that this was because fusion albums were more poorly received than other jazz albums, this is in fact not the case: fusion albums have an average rating of 3.76 during the study period, compared to an average rating of 3.56 for all albums reviewed in *DownBeat.* This difference in average rating is not statistically significant. Therefore, the disproportionate prevalence of the fusion topics on low-rated albums is not due to an overarching bias against fusion; indeed, there appears to be no such bias.

Figure 3.3. Prevalence of "fusion" topics by album rating.
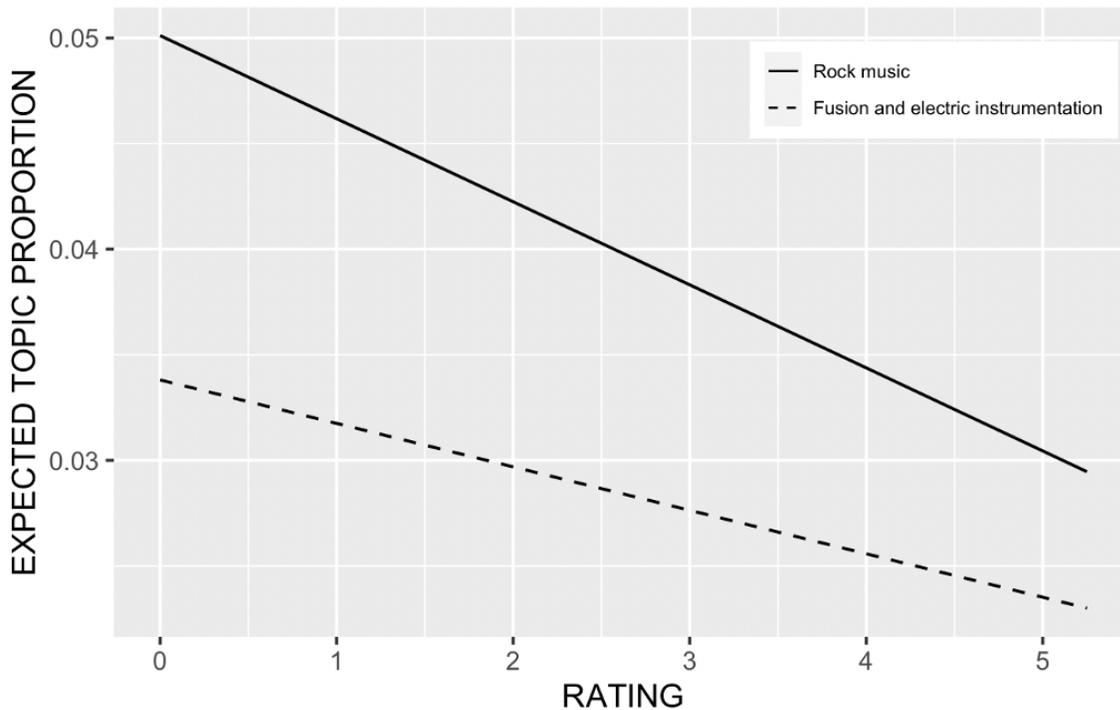
To understand why these topics were associated with low-rated albums, I examined the associated words more closely; the top terms in the *rock music* and *fusion and electric instrumentation* topics have very little to do with actual musical content, and instead relate to instrumentation and musical categories. Critics used terms like "rock," "funk," "commercial," and "electronic" when they wrote a negative review of a fusion album; yet, when writing positive reviews of fusion albums, they instead focused on the musical virtues of the record, such as instrumental technique and skill in improvisation. This is evidence of critics legitimating fusion as a form of jazz; when fusion musicians adhere to the most central values held by jazz critics, such as improvisational skill and harmonic creativity, critics are able to look past the deviant, non-normative elements of the music. They act as gatekeepers, modifying their standards of value so as to render legitimate the fusion albums which they perceive as contributing positively to the jazz category.

Improvisation is central to the meaning of jazz, evidenced by the emergence of three distinct topics which each focus on improvisation. Critics placed great importance on how musicians selected what notes and phrases to play in their solos, what influences they drew from as they did so, and on the work required to effectively implement these creative choices in an improvisatory setting. As seen in figure 3.4, *improvisation and influence* is equally prevalent across album ratings, while *improvisational structure* and *improvisational technique and tone* are more prevalent in higher-rated albums.

Figure 3.4. Prevalence of improvisation topics by album rating.
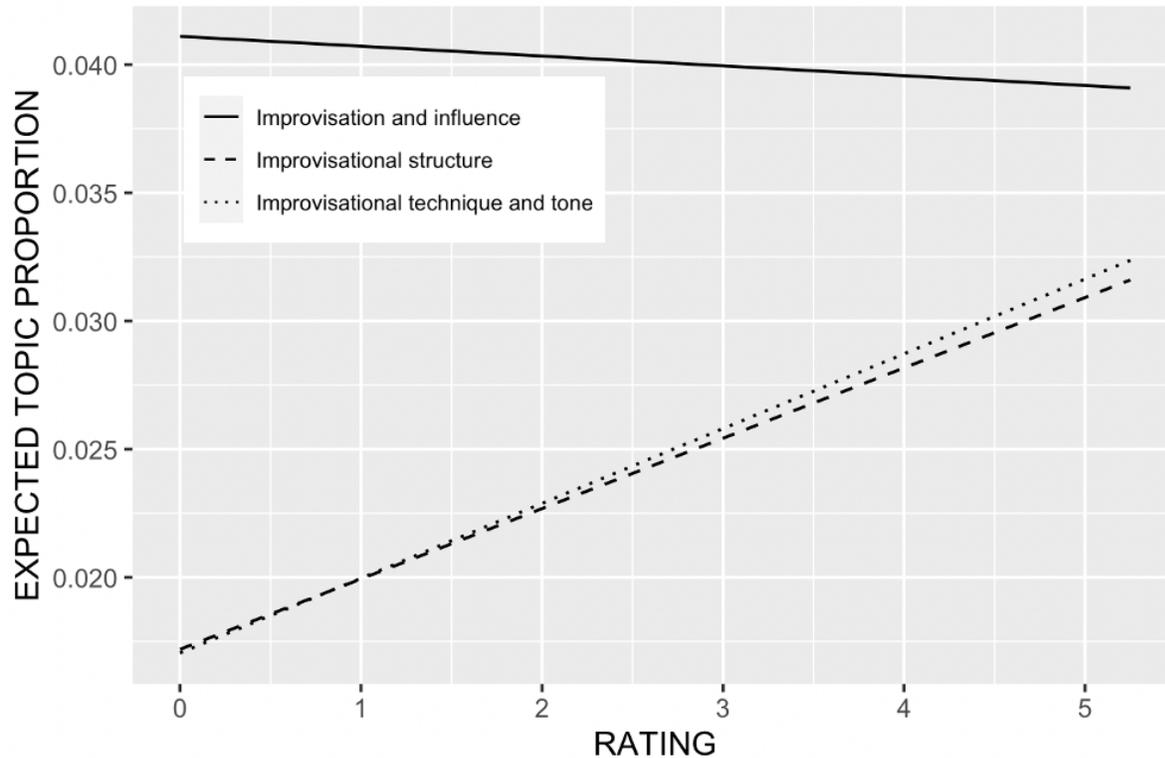
The topic model revealed the most common topics of critical discourse, reflecting the prevailing meanings of jazz. Improvisation in particular stands out as a core tenet of jazz, discussed often in both positive and negative reviews. The topic model also revealed two important dynamics: first, fusion albums were reviewed at an increasing rate over time, a rate which exceeded the increase in the prevalence of fusion-specific topics. In other words, more

fusion albums were reviewed each year, but critics increasingly evaluated form as a form of jazz and not as a practice deviation. Second, critics discussed fusion's deviant elements more often in negative reviews than in positive reviews, where they focused more on improvisational and harmonic content.

Mechanisms of Category Evolution

Early fusion releases in 1968 and 1969 were groundbreaking, and critics struggled to make sense of these albums. For example, Larry Coryell's album *Lady Coryell* was an early fusion release; critics remarked on the rhythmic repetition from the rock influence—"reiterated rhythmic figure"—as well as Coryell's "fertile improvisation" from his jazz influences (*DownBeat 36.19*). Notably, this record received a zero-star rating, not because it was perceived as poor quality but because critics had not yet developed a coherent strategy for evaluating fusion records, and because fusion was still new enough that critics remained focused on its deviant elements. This is, however, early evidence of critics recognizing the commonalities fusion shared with jazz in terms of improvisation. Spontaneous Combustion's debut album, *Come and Stick Your Head In*, was met with similar ambiguity: "Their music contains elements of…jazz and basic rock, but they fail to blend these ingredients and the result is an awkward mish-mash" (*DownBeat 37.02*).

As an increasing number of prominent jazz musicians deviated from traditional jazz styles, however, critics began to recognize the need to define a set of criteria through which to assess fusion's quality and value. Miles Davis' 1970 album *Bitches Brew* was a turning point; it was exceedingly well-received at the time of its release, and remains among the highest selling jazz records of all time. One of my interview informants said, "Miles was a trendsetter, and sort of gave fusion a stamp of approval." Indeed, the general tone of reviews shifted following

*Bitches Brew'*s release. In this regard, both critics and musicians exhibited agency in legitimating

fusion and redefining jazz: high-status musicians diverged from normative practices, creating a

new style which stimulated critics' sensemaking around fusion; critics, in turn, responded to

these deviations through discourse, solidifying fusion's position as a legitimate form of jazz and

codifying the changes to jazz category boundaries this entailed. In some ways, musicians were

the initial drivers of category change, while critics codified category changes in discourse.

Of course, these musicians held positions of high status for a reason. As another of my

interview informants stated, "these people are really master improvisers, they're harmonically

aware, they just decided they're going to compose differently because they're sick of playing 'My

Funny Valentine.'" Thus, critics may have paid attention to fusion musicians because of their

improvisational prowess and fluency in the jazz language, not simply because of their status.

Categorization deferment. Early critical discourse around fusion is marked by the

recognition that existing categories were inadequate for evaluating fusion, and by the frequent

refusal to even apply a rating to fusion albums: "When is a rating not in order? One of three

conditions must prevail: the music is so horrible that one does not wish to dignify it with an

appraisal; the music is so great that one feels unqualified to rate it; or, as is the case with [this]

album, *the music so successfully bridges various categories that there is no established set of

values by which it can be rated*" (*DownBeat 38.16*; emphasis added). Other similar critical

responses include: "there is no way to rate this album" (*DownBeat 36.19*); "there is jazz and

there is rock in this group but it doesn't quite come out as rock-jazz or jazz-rock..." (*DownBeat

37.03*); and "he is seldom equaled in rock, if indeed his music may be so simply classified"

(*DownBeat 37.25*). I call this process of discursively recognizing the inadequacy of existing

categories for the evaluation of certain practice deviations and new cultural products

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categorization deferment. Critics defer an assessment of quality, noting that existing categories do not offer an appropriate framework through which to assess certain cultural products.

Categorization deferment is the first mechanism enabling category change, as actors discursively prepare the field for change by calling attention to the classificatory inadequacies inherent therein. Jazz labels continued to release fusion records, musicians continued to perform fusion, and consumers continued to purchase fusion records; critics, thus, began to move from categorization deferment toward more active attempts to categorize fusion, redefining jazz in the process. Figure 3.5 shows how categorization deferment and two other key mechanisms— discussed in the following paragraphs—emerged from the album review data, moving from raw quotes at the left to focused codes, then theoretical codes, and finally mechanisms on the right.

Peripheral meaning redefinition. As fusion continued to gain popularity, critics began a concerted effort to more directly make sense of and legitimate the deviant aspects of fusion— simpler, groove-based rhythmic structures and electric instrumentation. They called attention to these deviant features in conjunction with fusion musicians' improvisatory capabilities, discursively expanding the meaning of jazz to include a wider range of peripheral elements. Importantly, critics accomplished this while also differentiating fusion musicians' use of electric instruments and simpler rhythms from musicians in other categories such as rock and funk. My interview informants confirm this view of fusion, describing its origin as "a harmonic and conceptual approach that came from more traditional jazz, paired with rock rhythms and rock instrumentation," where "the form and improvisational aspects are from jazz, but sonic elements from rock, like distorted guitars."

Figure 3.5. Discursive mechanisms of category change

INITIAL CODES

- "There is no way to rate this album" (1969)
- "the music so successfully bridges various categories that there is no established set of values by which it can be rated" (1970)
- "…jazz-rock, or something, but it doesn't really make it." (1970)
- "Not for purists on either side of the musical fence, this album is recommended for open minded listeners" (1972)
- "The rhythmically stimulating pop material is short and tasteful while there is plenty of room to stretch on the jazz." (1972)
- "Extremely creative music that does not compromise the jazz feeling but does incorporate some rock rhythms as well." (1973)
- "Harmonically simple and rhythmically earthy…he has both the skills and creative vision to escape the trap of repetition that the deceptively simpler approach will now present to him." (1974)
- "knows the possibilities of sheer beauty in an aggressive, electric context" (1974)
- "the concept of chordal freedom has allowed musicians to fade in and out of the impressionistic electronic network" (1974)
- "Though electronic effects are prominent, art, not gimmickry, prevails and the music protrudes mightily." (1970)
- "electronics have been used sparingly and with great taste" (1973)
- "his synthesizer is programmed to produce wildly oscillating spirals of sound" (1974)
- "The soloing is suspiciously unspontaneous" (1973)
- "The music feels artificial and homogenized, while spontaneity, and a certain raw edge are lacking"(1974)
- "While a certain "sameness" tends to envelop the two volumes, the improvisational strengths of the artists keep the session on such a high level that the music consistently sounds fresh and spontaneous"(1973)
- "improvises with clarity, sureness, and often substance as well" (1972)
- "It's nice to be able to conform to the style that the band you're in happens to be playing, but not at the sacrifice of your own individuality" (1973)
- "He's an interesting soloist who sets up many challenges for himself." (1974)

FOCUSED CODES

- Categorically ambiguous music is difficult to judge
- Quality and category are decoupled
- Improvisation legitimates rhythmic simplicity
- Improvisation legitimates electronic instrumentation
- Normalizing electronic instruments
- Improvisational shortcomings
- Improvisational strengths
- Soloing and individuality

THEORETICAL CODES

- Established categories inadequate for evaluation
- Deviation is legitimate given congruence with core category meanings
- Legitimation of new practices
- Focus on most central features of category
- Core meanings tie different practices together

MECHANISMS

- Categorization deferment
- Peripheral meaning redefinition
- Core meaning reinforcement

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For example, in a review of the Mahavishnu Orchestra album *Between Nothingness and Eternity*, critics remarked: "Many groups have tried to weave jazz and rock into a workable musical fabric. But the Mahavishnu Orchestra - driven by the superhuman energies of Mahavishnu himself - have thus far created the most dynamic, wholly unified sonic tapestry of all…his ideas are infused with a lyricism that acts to balance the riffy nature" (*DownBeat 41.03*). Lyrical, creative compositional and improvisatory ideas balance any negativity associated with the repetitive—"*riffy*," in this critic's words—aspects of the music drawn from rock and roll. Other reviews were similar: "the rhythmically stimulating pop material is short and tasteful while there is plenty of room to stretch on the jazz" (*DownBeat 39.18*); "a balanced fusion of form and freedom, of structure and spontaneity" (*DownBeat 40.01*). By signaling that peripheral deviation is acceptable as long as musicians maintain adherence to core category meanings, critics lessened the importance and value placed on rhythmic and instrumentation practices. In doing so, critics redrew the boundaries of the jazz category, making the category more expansive and inclusive.

By qualifying the appropriate use of simple rhythmic structures and electric instrumentation in jazz as dependent on the simultaneous presence of improvised musical content, critics rebuilt the boundary between jazz and other styles of music which also use simple rhythms and electric instruments. If electric instruments and simple rhythms occur in the presence of high-quality and unique improvisation, the resulting music could now be considered "jazz"; this differentiates jazz from rock, funk, and other genres which rely on simple rhythms and electric instruments but are not focused on improvisation. Fusion's emergence initially blurred the boundaries between jazz and rock, and yet by engaging in *peripheral meaning redefinition*, jazz critics legitimated fusion as a practice deviation, clarifying and expanding jazz's boundaries in the process. This explains why negatively reviewed fusion albums were

discussed in terms of instrumentation and rhythms, while positively reviewed fusion albums were discussed in terms of improvisational strength. Critics strove to make clear that good fusion records were qualitatively different from good rock records, because of fusion musicians' improvisational capabilities.

Of course, categories must not only be easily differentiated from other categories, but must hang together as internally coherent (Lo et al., 2020; Glynn & Navis, 2013). By focusing on the differences between how fusion musicians and rock/funk musicians used electric instruments and simple rhythms, critics risked losing sight of what held various forms of jazz together as a single category. Without a clear understanding of why fusion and jazz should both be grouped in the same broad category, critics ran the risk of fragmenting or bifurcating jazz into at least two smaller categories (Sgourev, 2020). With jazz's popularity waning, critics sought to remain a united front; some even hoped that fusion might "revitalize jazz culture" (Brennan, 2017, p. 161). As such, critics took steps to identify the most central, core meanings of jazz, clarifying the ties that bind fusion and more traditional jazz together.

Core meaning reinforcement. As time passed, critics' approach to evaluating and measuring quality in fusion records grew more coherent. Critics identified improvisation as sacred common ground, a practice deeply embedded within and inextricable from the jazz category. They used improvisation as a benchmark for assessing value in all forms of jazz, fusion and otherwise. Critics remarked that one fusion artist "improvises with clarity, sureness, and often substance as well" (*DownBeat 39.01*). Fusion musicians were praised for "freedom and experimentation within a solid framework of musical structure" (*DownBeat 40.17*), and in signaling that creativity is so critical to improvisation, critics remarked that "there's enough invention here to warrant paying attention to this album" (*DownBeat 41.11*).

At the same time, fusion musicians who did not improvise effectively were negatively evaluated. For example, critics described one poorly rated album as "highly arranged so there's very little room for improvisation" (*DownBeat 38.16*), and derided fusion musicians when "they execute rather than spontaneously, genuinely create." Critics, therefore, began attempting to evaluate fusion using some of the same criteria through which traditional jazz was evaluated. Rather than zeroing in on the deviant aspects of fusion, critics reinforced the core meaning of jazz and used that core meaning as a method of assessment. The discursive process of *core meaning reinforcement* permits the evaluation of practice deviations along a simpler, stripped-down set of criteria, sanctioning certain practice deviations which would be considered illegitimate under a more specific set of evaluation criteria.

This explains why the two fusion topics in the topic model rose in prevalence at a relatively slow rate, even as fusion albums were reviewed at an increasing rate over the study period: as critics became increasingly comfortable with fusion over time, they began to treat it as jazz rather than as a separate style. By the end of the study period, fusion had been legitimated as a form of jazz, tied to the broader jazz category because of its focus on improvisation.

By reinforcing the core meaning of the category, critics maintained jazz's internal coherence (Lo et al., 2020). At the time of fusion's emergence, jazz was perceived as a primarily acoustic style of music marked by complex swung rhythms and the use of horns. Had fusion, with its simple rhythms and electric instruments, been immediately accepted by critics as a form of jazz, audiences and consumers may have been confused as to what jazz actually stood for. By stripping jazz down to its core meaning as improvised music, critics highlighted the commonalities between fusion and jazz, accepting fusion as jazz while maintaining the jazz category's internal coherence. Improvisation remains central to jazz as a category today; my

interview informants say that "the main spirit of jazz…has to do with the improvisation aspect of it," and "jazz isn't so much a style as it is a process...everything you play is with intent, it's created at that moment."

A Process Model of Category Change

The process model of category change induced from my study can be seen in figure 3.6. The first step in the model involves a practice deviation coming to the attention of critics in a given category. The practice deviation in this case includes features of the focal category but also of other external categories. As critics make sense of this practice deviation, they first take stock of what the category means and how the practice deviation does or does not fit within the category. In the case of fusion, they do not initially classify fusion into any existing category because no existing category offers satisfactory evaluation criteria. This process—*categorization deferment*—paves the way for category change, by calling into question the category's utility in classifying and evaluating novel, emergent practices.

Next, critics engage in *peripheral meaning redefinition*, wherein they address standards for evaluating the elements of the practice deviation which were initially incongruent with the original category. They discursively call attention to the novel features of the practice deviation, but distinguish these new features from other categories in an effort to maintain external distinctiveness. This is depicted in the model as an expanding circle representing the focal category, which expands to encompass the practice deviation as it gains legitimacy. The practice deviation is, at this point, becoming perceived as less deviant, hence the lighter shade of its circle in the model. While *peripheral meaning redefinition* is a means of reestablishing the external distinctiveness which separates one category from another, *core meaning reinforcement* is a means of reestablishing semantic coherence. Critics tied fusion and jazz together by articulating

Figure 3.6. A process model of the relationship between discourse and practice deviation (P.D.) in effecting category meaning change
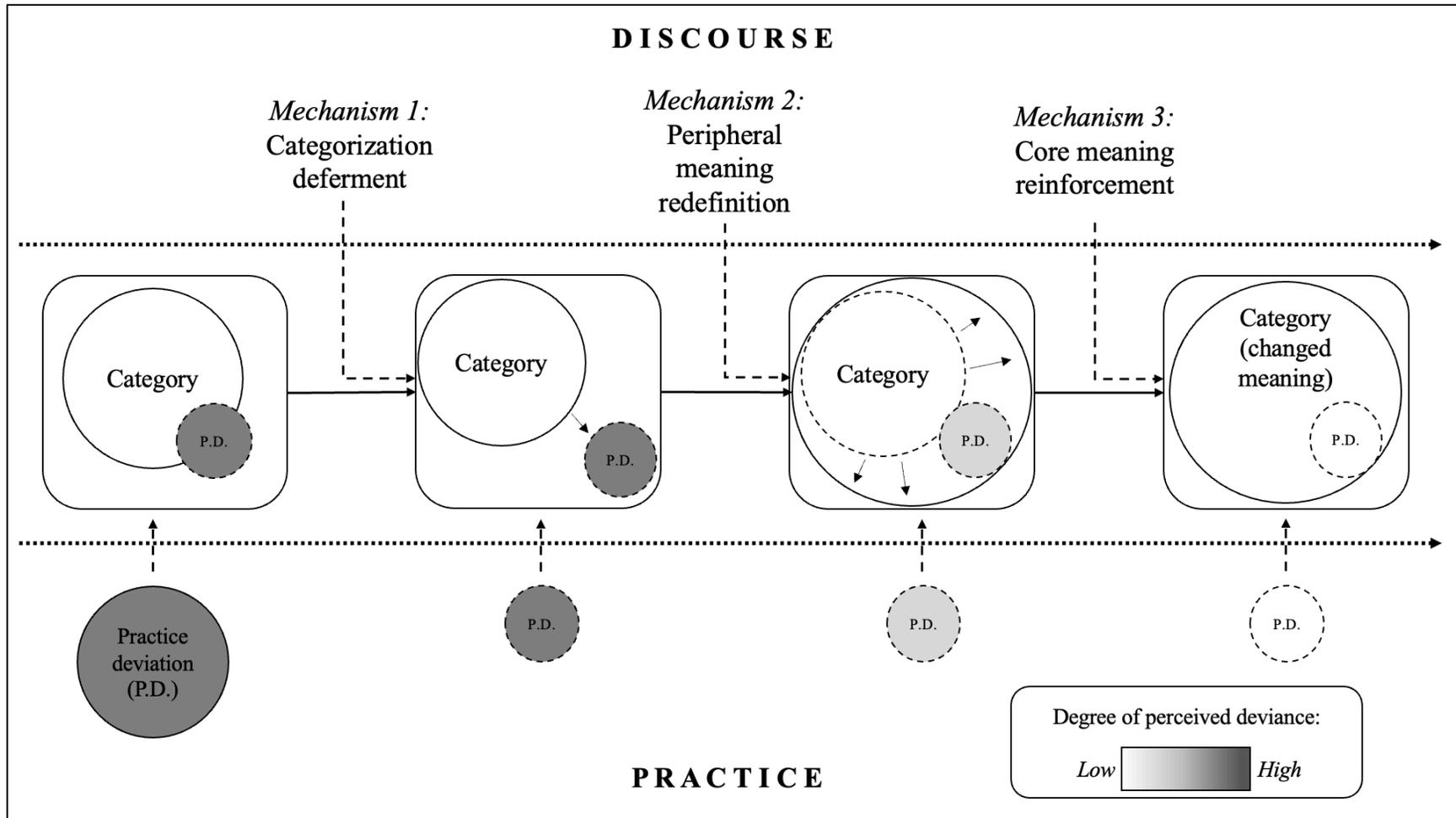
improvisation as a core, central practice used both by fusion musicians and traditionally-oriented jazz musicians. Following core meaning reinforcement, the category has a changed meaning which is no longer at odds with the practice deviation. Although actors in the field continue to engage in this practice—performing fusion music—it is no longer considered deviant.

Note that the jazz category is depicted as expanding so as to accommodate fusion as a practice deviation. Rather than replacing other forms of jazz, fusion was legitimated as a style alongside already established styles of jazz, and as a result, the range of musical practices considered to fall within the jazz category expanded. This entailed a reordering of the features and practices used to assess membership and quality in the jazz category. The model is depicted as unfolding sequentially over time; in reality, these mechanisms blurred together and unfolded contemporaneously, although they did roughly follow this sequence. Critics varied in terms of when they focused on core vs. peripheral meanings, and when or if they explicitly called attention to the inadequacies of current evaluative standards for assessing fusion records, although these discursive mechanisms are identifiable across different individual reviewers and generally follow the sequence depicted in figure 6.

DISCUSSION

This study has shown how gatekeepers redefine a focal category over time as certain practice deviations gain legitimacy. It makes three key contributions to the literature on category dynamics.

My first contribution is in illustrating how category gatekeepers address the increasing intra-category heterogeneity engendered by practice deviation, by discursively redefining the category in question and attending to both distinctiveness and coherence. This process is described in detail in the preceding paragraphs. The discursive mechanisms through which critics

codified the shifting meanings and boundaries of jazz share commonalities with other mechanisms in the literature on category change and redefinition, as seen in table 3.2. The mechanisms I propose differ from those identified in table 3.2 in several important ways. Most importantly, all the existing mechanisms outlined in table 3.2 focus on the emergence and settlement of a new category, rather than on modifying an already established category. *Categorization deferment* is most similar to Khaire & Wadhwani's case (2010), where art auction houses saw existing categories as insufficient for assigning value to certain styles of art. Rather than redefine existing categories to accommodate these new styles, as occurred in the case of jazz and jazz fusion, however, auction houses contributed to the establishment of a new category. *Peripheral meaning redefinition* is most similar to Wry and colleagues' conceptualization of "growth stories," where actors in emergent categories tell stories intended to rationalize certain practice variants, contributing to category expansion in the process (Wry, Lounsbury, & Glynn, 2012). Jazz critics rationalized fusion in a similar fashion, although they did so through evaluative practices, making assessments of value as a mechanism of category expansion rather than weaving narratives. Finally, *core meaning reinforcement*'s closest analogue is in Jones and colleagues' notion of "accepting pluralism," where subgroups of architects moved beyond contestation over the meaning of the category "modern architecture" and accepted basic commonalities between their approaches (Jones et al., 2012). In the case of jazz, however, it was gatekeepers rather than producers who codified these central category meanings. Overall, the mechanisms I propose are unique in their applicability to the maintenance and redefinition of established categories, and in their focus on gatekeepers' discourse and evaluations as categorization tools.

Table 3.2. Related mechanisms of addressing distinctiveness and coherence in the categories literature.

Authors & Context	Problematization of category	Legitimating deviation	Establishing coherence
This study Jazz and fusion	*Categorization deferment*: refusal to categorize or evaluate cultural products using current classification systems	*Peripheral meaning redefinition*: distinguishing novel elements of practice deviations from similar elements in other categories	*Core meaning reinforcement*: rendering salient the central meaning of the category
Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010 Emergence of Modern Indian art category	*Redefining institutional language*: questioning the suitability of existing categories for the valuation of cultural products	Creation of dedicated market spaces for emergent category to increase visibility and the perception of boundaries	*Establishing common constructs and referents*: organizing "key concepts, themes, and metaphors" to showcase unique identity of category (p. 1291)
Wry, Lounsbury, & Glynn, 2011 Theory of collective identity legitimation	Organizations' strategies for differentiation can lead to low coherence in nascent categories	*Growth stories:* stories told by category members to rationalize practice variation	*Defining collective identity stories:* narrative outlining a "core set of distinguishing practices" (p. 452)
Jones, Maoret, Massa, & Svejenova, 2012 Emergence of modern architecture category	*Category contestation*: internal disagreements regarding definition of nascent category	Discursive focus on the use of new materials and new logics	*Accepting pluralism*: actors "united concepts that had anchored distinct logics" (p. 1538)
Arjaliès & Durand, 2019 Contestation of socially responsible investing category	*Judgment questioning:* recognition that a category is symbolic and not truly distinct from other categories	*Judgment inclusion:* measuring category membership based on adherence to a common set of normative and moral elements	
Chliova, Mair, & Vernis, 2020 Ambiguity in social entrepreneurship category	Collective perception of ambiguity resulting from divergent uses of the same category label	—	*Inclusive category reframing*: Actors "maintain allegiance to their espoused frame while presenting it as part of a single, broader category label" (p. 1034)

The mechanisms I propose occur in other categories too, even beyond fields of cultural production. For example, tablets such as the iPad or Microsoft Surface are increasingly being classified as part of the laptop computer category rather than a standalone tablet category. When tablets initially emerged, they were treated as distinct from both smartphones and laptops, offering functionality somewhere in between the two, although generally being used for entertainment and communication purposes rather than for work. However, as tablets are increasingly equipped with the processing power and software capabilities necessary to perform work, they are increasingly presented and perceived as members of the laptop computer category. While improvisation served as the core feature tying fusion to jazz, processing power serves as an analogous feature in the laptop-tablet relationship.

My second contribution is related to the first, in that this study deepens our understanding of the influence practice deviation can have on category structures more generally. Specifically, my study suggests the presence of a threshold at which point category gatekeepers begin to offer attention to emerging practice deviations. This threshold involves both the qualitative characteristics of practice deviations themselves as well as the social dynamics surrounding their emergence and diffusion. Fusion adhered to the long-standing central values of the jazz category as an improvised form of music, such that gatekeepers could rationalize fusion musicians' use of electric instruments because they were still doing the very thing that makes jazz unique as a category. Thus, actors engaging in practice deviation are most likely to stimulate category change if they do not stray from the most sacred, institutionalized features of the category. These insights are also relevant to the literature on optimal distinctiveness: although scholars note that optimal distinctiveness coevolves with emerging proto-categories (Zhao et al., 2018), extant

literature does not offer much insight with regard to how the pursuit of optimal distinctiveness may actually shape category development.

Achieving an appropriate balance between normativity and deviation is only the first step toward disrupting the equilibrium of a category sufficiently to demand discursive attention from gatekeepers. Status was a key component of this threshold: the release of Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew* in particular cemented fusion's legitimacy as a subcategory of jazz. In fields where consumer demand is important, the popularity of a given practice deviation also likely plays a role in defining the threshold for gatekeeper attention. Critics ignore practice deviations which do not resonate with audiences, while giving them attention if they offer an opportunity for revitalizing the broader category from which they emerged. Finally, sheer volume likely plays a role: without a critical mass of musicians, critics may not have seen the need to redefine the jazz category's boundaries and meanings so as to acknowledge fusion as a form of jazz.

Categories' contextual features also contribute to the possibility of a threshold for critical attention. Research in institutional theory suggests that values can become embedded in social structures, shaping evaluation processes in those structures (Kraatz, Flores, & Chandler, 2020). The jazz category, for example, exhibits improvisation as an enduring value, which necessarily involves breaking beyond existing boundaries. Jazz musicians' deep focus on improvisation and spontaneous expression leads them to regularly deviate from normative practices, as they create and discover new modes of expression through harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, or any combination thereof. As such, jazz musicians and audiences may be more receptive to practice deviation than actors in other categories (Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005).

My third contribution is to offer insight into the role of subcategorization in guiding superordinate category change. Although fusion was eventually absorbed by the jazz category, it

emerged as a distinct subcategory located within the broader category jazz, calling into question the interrelationships between category fragmentation, absorption, and expansion. Existing literature treats category absorption and fragmentation as two separate paths toward category change (Lo et al. 2020; Kennedy et al., 2010), and yet in the case of jazz fusion both appear to occur simultaneously. Rather than fragment the jazz category and risk further diminishing jazz's popularity, critics made efforts to incorporate fusion into the category. Because fusion musicians used practices endemic to other categories, the broader jazz category expanded as a result of fusion's absorption. Therefore, the creation and absorption of new subcategories may offer one pathway toward category expansion. The emergence of the crossover category of automobiles illustrates these dynamics. Crossovers are a style of SUV (sport utility vehicle) which are often built on a car platform rather than a truck platform. Despite this distinction, most people associate crossovers with the broader SUV category rather than the car category, including most automobile manufacturers. The SUV category, thus, covers an expanded set of vehicles than it did before the emergence of the crossover subcategory, as the emergence of crossovers expanded the peripheral meanings of the SUV category while leaving the core meanings—aesthetic ruggedness and spaciousness—intact.

Limitations and Future Research

My study is subject to certain limitations relating to data availability and cultural dynamics specific to my context. The first concerns the role of status. Research shows that very high- and very low-status actors are more likely to deviate from normative practices than their medium-status peers (Phillips & Zuckerman, 2001; Durand & Kremp, 2016). High-status actors do so to differentiate themselves, while low-status actors do so because they are often "indifferent or even hostile to prevailing practice" (Phillips & Zuckerman, 2001, p. 386). Indeed,

most fusion albums were recorded either by relative newcomers to the jazz field or by venerated jazz veterans. Additionally, studies show that status influences the degree to which deviant actions are sanctioned by stakeholders (Sharkey, 2014), as innovations which are championed by high-status actors are more likely to gain legitimacy (Howell & Higgins, 1990). The fact that many fusion musicians were already known as reputable jazz musicians may have primed critics to be more accepting of fusion. Thus, status represents a scope condition in my study. We might ask: is high status practice deviation a prerequisite for categorization deferment, peripheral meaning redefinition, and/or core meaning reinforcement? It is plausible that if low-status actors deviate from normative practices, critics would see no need to defer a categorization decision, ignoring the low-status actors or classifying them as outside the boundaries of the category. A second scope condition concerns the cultural context in which category change occurs. In the late 1960s, popular culture in the U.S. was characterized by a general spirit of rebellion, potentially making critics more receptive to reimagining established categories. Relatedly, teasing out critics' and gatekeepers' motivations—both explicit and implicit—for redefining existing categories represents a fruitful avenue of future research.

Another limitation of this study involves the nature of my data. I focus on critical discourse as evidence of category change, and cannot tease apart the role of audiences and musicians in contributing to category change. Of course, musicians and audiences were also important drivers of category change in my study: musicians' creativity sparked fusion's emergence, record labels' decisions to release fusion albums ensured the emergent genre would see the light of day, and audiences' receptivity ensured its staying power. My study design facilitated an analysis of the jazz category's musical features as they were interpreted and codified by category gatekeepers, relatively independent of audience reactions to practice

deviations or musicians' motivations and intentions. Future researchers might explore the roles and interactions of a wider range of actors in cultural fields during periods of category change.

Additionally, my study is limited by the retrospective nature of the category databases I use to classify *DownBeat* reviews as fusion or not. To my knowledge, no historical database exists which shows contemporaneous categorization information for records released from 1968-1975. Using present-day databases to determine album category could have resulted in some albums that were considered to be fusion at the time of their release to be excluded from my analysis, and vice versa. Although the list of fusion records in my sample appears to be relatively comprehensive and historically accurate, this limitation remains important to note. Future researchers could explore category change in a context where contemporaneous categorization data is available.

Understanding how and why categories change over time has implications for category members, potential entrants, intermediaries, and audiences. This study provides a foundation for future research on categorization processes, especially in contexts such as cultural production where creativity, innovation, and deviation are key components of production logics, and where categories are ubiquitous. In these contexts, categories are dynamic and sometimes even ephemeral, but leave a deeply influential imprint in cultural institutions, facilitating the social attachment of meaning to cultural products and practices.

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CHAPTER 4

Category fossilization:

Subcategory dissolution and absorption as generative processes

ABSTRACT

Categories are pervasive features of fields of cultural production, delineating styles of music and art and serving as touchstones of identification for artists and audiences alike. In cultural fields, categories exist at multiple levels of abstraction, with smaller subcategories nested within broader umbrella categories. While umbrella categories tend to persist over long periods of time, new subcategories emerge and dissolve frequently. Yet, as shown in the empirical studies in chapters two and three of this dissertation, subcategories can be generative in their dissolution, leaving traces in the form of newly legitimate practices that persist long after the subcategories housing them fall out of use. We lack theory explaining how and why this is the case. Drawing on prior work about genre trajectories, I explore how and why even the most popular and culturally resonant subcategories fall out of use, and theorize the impacts these processes have on already existing umbrella categories. In doing so, I introduce the concept of *subcategory fossilization*, a process wherein certain subcategories are effectively retired, relegated to describing historically-bounded subsets of cultural products, even as the practices, aesthetics, and values associated with these subcategories live on and remain culturally resonant. This paper contributes to the literatures on category and genre development in both sociology and organization theory, and lays the groundwork for future research on subcategorization in cultural fields.

Categorization has become one of the more prominent areas of research within organization theory, with a growing body of research focusing on the processes through which existing categories change over time (Delmestri & Greenwood, 2016; Siltaoja, Lähdesmaki, Granqvist, Kurki, Puska, Luomala, 2020; Pedeliento, Andreini, & Dalli, 2020; Glaser, Krikorian Atkinson, & Fiss, 2020). Many of these studies examine categories in cultural contexts: for example, Hsu examines the film industry (Hsu, 2006; Hsu, Hannan & Koçak, 2009); Khaire and Wadhwani examine modern art (2010), while Glynn and Lounsbury examine symphony orchestras (2005). Although categories are ubiquitous in virtually all modern markets, they are especially salient in cultural fields, which are often characterized by complex classification systems composed of countless overlapping and interrelated categories, often conceptualized as genres both in sociology and in the common vernacular (e.g., DiMaggio, 1987; van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2018).

Categories in fields of cultural production exist at multiple levels of abstraction, with broad umbrella categories housing increasingly specific subcategories at lower levels of abstraction within them. For example, the category of jazz houses smaller categories such as free jazz, acid jazz, smooth jazz, and progressive jazz, among countless others. This notion is fundamental to categorization theory, with Mervis and Rosch arguing in their pioneering work on categories that "any object may be categorized at each of several different hierarchical levels" (Mervis & Rosch, 1981, p. 92). More recently, this idea has seen increased traction in organization theory with the introduction of the concept of "umbrella categories": scholars argue that "categories are organized vertically, with product categories nested under larger umbrella categories" (Boghossian & David, 2021, p. 1). For example, bebop and jazz fusion, the subjects of chapters two and three of this dissertation, are subcategories of the umbrella category jazz. For

clarity's sake, in this paper I use the term *umbrella category* to refer to broad categories and the term *subcategory* to refer to the smaller, more specific categories nested within umbrella categories.

Umbrella categories tend to be relatively durable, enjoying high levels of viability (Lo, Fiss, Rhee, & Kennedy, 2020) over long periods of time. In contrast, new subcategories emerge regularly and have higher propensities to fall out of use over time. This is evidenced by the empirical examples discussed in this dissertation: both bebop and fusion have largely fallen out of use as contemporarily relevant classifications. No modern jazz is being lumped into these subcategories (although they are sometimes used as descriptive terms, e.g., to describe something as "fusion-esque" or as "drawing from the bebop tradition"), although the practices these subcategories helped to legitimate are still very much relevant features of jazz as an umbrella category. I describe this process as *subcategory fossilization,* a process wherein a subcategory's label falls out of use, while its constitutive practices and cultural products remain relevant and resonant but become associated with broader umbrella categories. As suggested by the outcomes observed in chapters two and three, where both bebop and fusion gained legitimacy and subsequently (after the study periods ended) fell out of use, subcategory fossilization can be generative in that it facilitates the association of novel practices and cultural products to already established umbrella categories, potentially broadening their appeal and strengthening their cultural resonance. This notion poses an interesting and as yet unanswered question: how and why does subcategory fossilization occur, and how does it lead to change and evolution in established umbrella categories?

I answer this question by exploring how subcategorization as a process facilitates the legitimation of new practices, even those initially considered deviant by gatekeepers of

established umbrella categories. I argue that subcategories function as arenas of experimentation and innovation, spaces where established normative pressures and values associated with umbrella categories are treated with less rigidity. As novel practices grow and develop within nascent subcategories, they can start to gain broader legitimacy, even outside subcategories' boundaries. Such an occurrence renders the subcategory label somewhat unnecessary, as its constitutive practices and identities have gained credence in already established spaces, and can be classified within other, longer-standing umbrella categories. In essence, subcategories have the power to either imbue existing umbrella categories with new practices and values, to reinforce and strengthen existing values, or both. I draw on research on category absorption (Lo et al, 2020) and genre trajectories (Lena & Peterson, 2008) to build a theory of category fossilization, a process which is both generative and destructive, marking the death of subcategories while breathing new life into umbrella categories.

I begin by reviewing selected literature on category evolution and change in organization theory, focusing on studies which examine how novel practices, values, and identities gain legitimacy in established categories, and on studies which examine how existing practices and values are reinforced. Next, I review literature on genres and categories from sociological traditions, illustrating what we do and do not know about how and why cultural categories develop over time as they do. I draw mainly on Lena and Peterson's 2008 analysis of musical genre trajectories in this section, as well as several studies from the literature on music scenes (e.g., Bennett & Peterson, 2004). The literature review reveals a bias toward studies of category emergence rather than category dissolution in both organization theory and cultural sociology, despite glimmers of evidence that dissolution can be a generative force in processes of umbrella category change and evolution. I then present a theory of subcategory fossilization, again

focusing on the generative nature of this process for legitimating novel practices and imbuing existing umbrella categories with new practices, values, and meanings. I close by discussing my contributions to organization theory and by offering several potentially fruitful avenues for future research. The paper contributes to the literature on category dynamics and change in organization theory by showing the power of examining interrelationships between categories at multiple levels of abstraction, and contributes to the sociological literature on music genres and categories by showing that even when categories fall out of use, they can make their mark on popular culture for decades to come. Finally, my theory offers insight into the social construction of history and the pervasive role that categories play in structuring art and music's roles in society.

CATEGORY DYNAMICS

Parallel literatures in organization theory and sociology examine category dynamics, each offering valuable insight into category development and the role that subcategories play in broader systems of classification. The literature on category change and evolution in organization studies shows that categories are dynamic social constructions, changing regularly as new practices emerge and gain legitimacy from gatekeepers, audiences, and producers (Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010). Category meanings evolve over time through a variety of mechanisms, driven by both practices and discourse. This duality permeates the previous chapters of this dissertation, as well: cultural products are both created and consumed through social practices, while audiences and gatekeepers make sense of cultural products and the categories within which they are embedded through discourse, such as in the form of critical reviews. Extant literature provides examples of category change which focus on each, and both, practice and discourse as stimulating factors.

Category Change and Evolution

Before turning my attention to how subcategories, and specifically their falling out of use, can lead to umbrella category change, it is important to lay the groundwork on what is known about umbrella category change in existing literature. First, discourse is consequential in codifying and recording category meanings and boundaries as they emerge and change over time. For example, in their study of the "elite" category in the luxury hotel industry, Lockwood and colleagues show how "societal tastes and values change over time…and lead to symbolic boundary disruption" which "prompts discursive efforts…to address this disruption" (Lockwood, Glynn, & Giorgi, 2021, p. 33-34). The result is that the "elite" category's meaning evolved considerably over time, as as perceptions of what constituted "luxury"—as codified in trade journals and popular press articles—shifted with societal and cultural values.

In another study of how discourse drives category change, Siltaoja and colleagues show how the "organic" farming category evolved over time in Finland (Siltaoja et al, 2020). Organic farming was initially stigmatized due to widespread perceptions that it was non-Christian and relied on practices perceived by some to be associated with occultism, perceptions perhaps better attached to the category "biodynamic" farming which was commonly perceived as synonymous with the organic category. Over time, farmers and other actors associated with the category diverted this stigma from the organic category to the biodynamic category "through discursive reconstruction of the central and distinctive characteristics of the category" (p. 993). Organic farmers highlighted similarities between their practices and conventional farming methods, while also highlighting the scientific basis of organic farming practices, before eventually describing what set organic farming apart from conventional farming.

In chapter three of this dissertation, I showed that critical discourse is consequential in codifying shifting category boundaries and in resolidifying and reinforcing existing category

meanings. Jazz critics conferred legitimacy onto new practices associated with jazz fusion through their written album reviews, using their discourse to reshape jazz as an umbrella category, specifically by expanding the range of legitimate practices in jazz but also reinforcing improvisation as a glue holding the entire umbrella category together. They reordered their standards of value in response to the emergence of new cultural products which they were initially unable to categorize or evaluate. Together, these studies show that discourse drives category changes by solidifying and codifying the legitimation and acceptance of novelty, whether in the form of new practices, new values, or new identities.

Other studies focus more on practice and on the production of novel, sometimes deviant objects of categorization as stimulating forces for category evolution. Recent work has pushed the categorization literature beyond the strictly cognitive realm, as scholars recognize that "categorizing is not purely cognitive, but socio-cultural as well because it is anchored in the context in which categorizing occurs" (Glynn & Navis, 2013, p. 1127). Similarly, Delmestri and Greenwood (2016, p. 510) argue that "a category's meaning is derived not solely from consensus over its definitional properties…but also from the social and cultural practices and behaviors associated with it and that give it expression." The crux of this line of thought is that although categories are social perceptions, they are brought to life and materialized in practices, imbued with values and beliefs which serve as raw material for social cognition. In a recent example of this perspective, Augustine and Piazzo describe how the practices associated with abortion in the United States contributed to the evolution of the category "abortion providers" over time. They show that as "values-driven providers"—physicians seeking to make abortion more accessible— entered the category, generalists began to exit the category, forcing abortion providers to directly target a specific customer base and thus involuntarily specialize as abortion providers rather than

general practitioners of medicine (Augustine & Piazza, 2021, p. 7). These practices of directly targeting customers and opening standalone abortion clinics led to the evolution of "abortion providers" as a separate, standalone category.

In another study of category evolution, Zhao and colleagues show how optimal distinctiveness acts as a moving target as emergent categories gain recognition and acceptance (Zhao, Ishihara, Jennings, & Lounsbury, 2018). By examining proto-category emergence in the console video game industry, the authors show that "in the early stages of proto-category emergence, conformity with the exemplar's features is positively associated with new entrants' sales," but "as a proto-category evolves, a moderate level of differentiation becomes important" (p. 588). This finding is enlightening because it suggests that new subcategories facilitate deviation from normative practices; as new categories and subcategories gain recognition, they begin to act as arenas for innovation and experimentation as organizations seek to differentiate themselves from their competitors in these nascent spaces.

Jones and Massa address the processes through which initially deviant practices become accepted, describing how "a novel practice that challenges cultural assumptions *becomes* a consecrated exemplar" in the context of religious architecture (Jones & Massa, 2013, p. 1100). In particular, they show how the use of reinforced concrete in church building, considered transgressive and deviant when this architectural practice first emerged, became institutionalized as a normative practice due to the increasing recognition of many symbolic and practical advantages inherent to concrete as a material in church building. Many of the values associated with using concrete—its utilitarianism, the tranquility it induces by muffling sounds—became associated with the broader category of religious architecture as a result.

It is worth noting that category evolution does not always involve change, per se, but sometimes the maintenance and refinement of existing category elements; in some cases, categories evolve as their constitutive values and practices are reestablished and reinforced as sacred pillars of the category itself. For example, in a study of a symphony orchestra and efforts by management to commercialize the category, musicians in symphony orchestras held deep values relating to "artistic excellence," and resisted efforts from the management division of the orchestra to prioritize marketability and "economic utility" over the pursuit of art for art's sake (Glynn, 2000, p. 285). The musicians considered artistic excellence and creativity sacred to the category of symphony orchestras, to the extent that they staged a strike in revolt to the encroachment of values they considered antithetical to their collective identity as orchestral musicians. In a later study of the same context, Glynn and Lounsbury (2005) examine how values associated with commercialism eventually came to coexist with the already deeply embedded values of creativity and artistry, with gatekeepers playing an important role in policing and guarding these values. Regardless, both studies reveal the constitutive role of values in categories and genres, the stickiness they can exhibit when they become institutionalized, and the deep connection category members have with certain practices and values. Relatedly, in chapter three of this dissertation, I showed how the legitimation of fusion as a subcategory reinforced improvisation as a feature and deeply held value of the jazz umbrella category.

Category dissolution and absorption. As the preceding review of the organization literature on category evolution reveals, there is a notable bias in the literature toward studies of category emergence rather than category dissolution. Most studies of category change tend to examine the emergence of a novel category and the processes through which its meaning is settled, and sometimes resettled, over time. Comparatively, there are remarkably few studies

which examine category decline (e.g., Kuilman & van Driel, 2013; or non-emergence, e.g., Navis, Fisher, Raffaelli, Glynn, & Watkiss, 2012). In a notable exception, and one which is particularly relevant to my theorization here, Rao and colleagues describe how the boundaries between the "classical" and "nouvelle" cuisine categories were eroded as chefs traded practices across the two categories (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2005). As classically oriented chefs began experimenting with new ingredients and new presentations in their famous dishes, and as nouvelle-cuisine oriented chefs began blending their innovative new techniques with traditional ones, both categories became less meaningful as they became less oppositional. This study offers a glimmer of empirical evidence that category dissolution can be generative: although the categories themselves have fallen out of use as descriptive labels representing clusters of specific practices and values, their constitutive practices live on and can be drawn upon by actors in the culinary field with greater freedom than in the past, driving innovation and experimentation in the broader umbrella category of French cuisine.

In a recent theory paper, Lo and colleagues describe the process of category absorption, which unfolds in a manner similar to how I describe subcategory fossilization: through the absorption of one category, and all its constitutive practices and values, into another broader category. The authors describe a category's "viability," or usefulness for sensemaking purposes, as being contingent on its internal coherence and external distinctiveness. They argue that categories are at risk of absorption by other, broader categories when they are highly coherent but not very distinctive, meaning that they are considered specific variants of other categories (Lo et al, 2020). Yet, we know little about how high levels of coherence and low levels of distinctiveness might emerge; my findings in the empirical chapters of this dissertation suggest that this is a gradual process which occurs as practices associated with emergent subcategories

which are initially considered deviant gain broader legitimacy in umbrella categories, rendering the subcategory unnecessary for enforcing a distinct and oppositional boundary. I further explore the oppositional nature of subcategory emergence in my theorization of subcategory fossilization later in this chapter.

Category Evolution in Fields of Cultural Production

The sociological literature on categorization and genre dynamics in popular music offers useful evidence of category evolution and dissolution, as scholars in this tradition devote significant attention to umbrella categories and subcategories. A significant stream of research in this tradition examines "music scenes," localized (geographically or otherwise) clusters of artists and audiences who collectively construct new subcategories by innovating and experimenting with new aesthetics, technologies, and styles (Bennett & Peterson, 2004). Scenes generate subcategories as "new aesthetical styles…become routinized and institutionalized into conventions" (Friesen & Epstein, 1994, p. 9). When scenes generate sufficient attention, they can become sufficiently resonant as to spill outside of their local boundaries. Whether or not the subcategory persists independently after this, falls out of use altogether, or is absorbed into a broader umbrella category, varies.

Some scholars posit that most scenes are relatively short-lived. For example, Lee and Peterson argue that "in months, or at most a few years, the creative energy of local scenes is spent, the music becomes commodified, and new fans increasingly seek entertainment free of any serious lifestyle commitments" (Lee & Peterson, 2004, p. 198). Intriguingly, the authors also argue that "scenes develop around music that is seen as different and special, and they atrophy as that magic is lost…the music may be absorbed into another genre of music, or it may become normalized and incorporated into the ongoing mix of commercial music…" (p. 200). This

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argument is highly relevant for my theorization here, as it suggests that as the initially novel and deviant elements of new subcategories become legitimated, the subcategories themselves may fall out of use even as their constitutive elements live on within longer-lived umbrella categories. Notably, it is the subcategory *labels* that fall out of use in these examples of music scenes, a point which draws attention to the distinction between a category and a category label. Categories are more than their labels—they are constituted by practices, collective identities, and values—and yet, labels exert binding forces, facilitating collective identification and solidifying category meanings and boundaries. In terms of subcategory fossilization, it is the category labels which fall out of use, as (at least some of) their constitutive features persist as part and parcel of other categories.

Lena and Peterson outline a typology of four kinds of musical genres, analyzing various musical genres throughout history to theorize several distinct trajectories through which genres may move from one type to the others over time (Lena & Peterson, 2008). The first two types they discuss are avant-garde categories and scene-based categories, both of which emerge within small groups of artists and tend to begin as subcategories of umbrella categories. Scene-based categories are "communit[ies] of spatially-situated artists, fans, record companies, and supporting small business people" (Lena & Peterson, 2008, p. 703), akin to what DiMaggio would refer to as a "professional classification" (DiMaggio, 1987). Some categories further evolve into "industry-based" categories, which have "simplified…highly codified performance conventions, or into "traditionalist" categories, which "preserve a genre's musical heritage and inculcate the rising generation of devotees in the performance techniques, history, and rituals of the genre" (Lena & Peterson, 2008, p. 706). Yet, many avant-garde and scene-based

subcategories fizzle out before they reach these stages, instead sometimes being absorbed into broader categories.

Although they do not devote significant attention to absorption as a process genres may undergo, they do acknowledge its existence as a phenomenon, arguing that "country boogie and hard bop were both absorbed into into other genres" (p. 709), and questioning what happens to failing genres when they are replaced, calling for future research exploring whether "they get absorbed by the winning genre" (p. 713). Category absorption is an intriguing phenomenon, in that it can be additive and generative, imbuing existing categories with novel practices allowing for further experimentation and innovation. Yet, existing research tells us little about the after-effects of absorption, a gap I aim to fill in this paper. As such, I introduce the concept of subcategory fossilization to describe the process through which subcategories fall out of use, but are generatively absorbed into other umbrella categories.

SUBCATEGORY FOSSILIZATION

Subcategory fossilization can occur from any genre type, whether avant-garde, scene-based, or industry-based. Traditionalist categories offer the closest analogue in the sociological literature to a subcategory falling out of use, and indeed subcategory fossilization often coincides with the transition to a traditionalist genre type. For example, Lena and Peterson describe bebop as a traditionalist category, and although it does still exist as a historically-bounded classification, its constitutive practices have been absorbed by jazz as a broader umbrella category: modern musicians still write new music which tightly adheres to the conventions of bebop, but it is not often referred to by that term, rather being simply called "jazz." The same is true of jazz fusion, which Lena and Peterson describe as declining during the industry phase of its trajectory, never reaching traditionalist status. Yet, both subcategories have been absorbed by

the jazz umbrella category in that their constitutive practices persist in contemporary jazz production. Thus, an additional and supplemental category type—fossilized categories—seems necessary to describe these categories which live on *in practice* after falling out of use *in name*, whether or not they have been venerated as traditionalist categories or not.

The empirical studies in this dissertation describe examples of emergent avant-garde subcategories, which both then become scene-based subcategories, later becoming absorbed into broader umbrella categories. The novel practices they bring with them become legitimate and are sometimes even considered new benchmarks of normativity in these umbrella categories following their absorption. The subcategories themselves fall out of use as contemporarily relevant classifications, but remain relevant as historical benchmarks. Because parts of the subcategories' constitutive elements persist, even as the category label falls out of use, this is a specific kind of category decline, marked by the category's absorption into another, usually broader, category (Lo et al, 2020). Notably, however, fossilized subcategories do not fall out of use entirely, but are simply not actively maintained as contemporary social constructions. Lo and colleagues allude to this phenomenon in their 2020 paper on category viability, arguing that "for categories already falling out of use, increased viability makes them less likely to be forgotten entirely and more likely to be remembered, and perhaps still used, albeit as archaic" (Lo et al, 2020, p. 86).

Perhaps because they have largely fallen out of use, these categories lack the tightly guarded boundaries characteristic of traditionalist categories. Instead, they are not actively populated or maintained with new artists or new cultural products (or with tribute festivals, etc.), existing as classificatory fossils used to describe specific periods in the past or as descriptive terms used for contemporary cultural products which are nonetheless grouped into other,

contemporarily relevant categories. The metaphor of "fossilization" is apt here: when species of flora and fauna go extinct, their features live on in their evolutionary descendants. In the same way, I argue that when subcategories fall out of use and ultimately die, their features live on in the categories with which they are related and within which they become embedded and absorbed. Category fossilization is a specific kind of category absorption, generative and involving the importation of previously non-normative practices, technologies, identities, values, or any combination thereof into another umbrella category.

Subcategories as Oppositional Constructions

How and why, then, does subcategory fossilization occur? To explain this, I explain how and why subcategories emerge and how their constitutive practices become absorbed into extant umbrella categories. Even in cultural fields, which are driven by logics of creativity and boundary-breaking, novel production practices, technologies, and cultural products face an uphill battle in terms of gaining legitimacy in already established categories. The artists presenting such new cultural products, thus, have no categorical home, and as such, new subcategories are often articulated to describe novel cultural products which have not yet been accepted into established categories. In this way, subcategories are oppositional social constructions, created to provide safe haven from the illegitimacy discount associated with unclear category membership or non-membership (Zuckerman, 1999; Zhao, Ishihara, & Lounsbury, 2013). Rather than exist in a classificatory vacuum, subcategory members embrace a collective identity that allows them to gain recognition as part of a cohesive group—a subcategory—that exists at least partially independently from more well-established umbrella categories. In a recent example of oppositional category positioning, Hsu and Grodal describe the emergence of the e-cigarette

category, a subcategory articulated in opposition and contrast to the broader umbrella category of cigarettes (Hsu & Grodal, 2021).

Yet, this oppositionality inherent to subcategories may arise either externally or internally: in an external sense, gatekeepers may create new subcategories to discursively separate novel, emergent practices from established and already legitimate ones; in an internal sense, artists and audiences may create subcategories to enforce their own separation from, or even disdain toward, established umbrella categories (e.g., punk rock; Gosling, 2004). Indeed, in many cases, subcategories provide much more than a safe haven from illegitimacy discounts, serving—for example—to foster collective identification (Navis & Glynn, 2010) around the use of technology in particular ways (as in the case of jazz fusion), or around novel values (as in the case of punk rock).

Arenas for experimentation. Subcategories represent spaces where the strong norms and boundaries associated with established umbrella categories do not apply, or at least apply with significantly less force. Because of this, they function as arenas for experimentation and innovation, spaces where artists and creators can test new ideas and technologies without facing penalties for not-conforming to the normative restrictions of established umbrella categories. Subcategories, thus, stimulate creativity and innovation by encouraging bricolage (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2005), or the combining of disparate elements and resources in an effort to create something novel. Especially in their emergent stages, subcategories tend to encourage creativity and practice deviation, as category members collectively construct novel production practices which separate them from actors in established umbrella categories.

By functioning as arenas for experimentation, subcategories potently enable the emergence of new identities, practices, technologies, and values. They can be discursive tools for

progress in fields of cultural production: by carving out spaces for creativity and innovation somewhat above the fray, as it were, of the normative pressures of established umbrella categories, fields can stimulate their own evolution. This does not always occur—some subcategories fizzle out at the avant-garde or scene-based stages, with their constitutive practices and identities losing adherents and with the subcategory label truly falling out of use. The fact that subcategories can function as arenas for experimentation is evidenced by both the case of bebop and the case of fusion: by carving out new subcategories for each of these styles when the practices constituting them initially emerged, jazz umbrella category gatekeepers facilitated the development of new practices, which they later deemed legitimate within the umbrella category, eliminating the need for a separate subcategory label.

Eventually, many subcategories end up fostering their own systems of norms and boundaries, enforced with varying degrees of rigidity. Hodgkinson argues that this fate "befell psychedelia, punk, indie," and post-rock, among other subcategories (Hodgkinson, 1994, p. 235). This is an interesting paradox, indicative of a broader tension categorization processes inject into fields of cultural production, in that normativity and boundaries necessarily constrain creativity and innovation, the lifeblood and underlying logic of music, art, and cultural production more generally.

__Resolving oppositional positioning.__ Over time, as shown in chapters two and three of this dissertation, the practices and values constituting subcategories can gain legitimacy in established umbrella categories. When this occurs, the subcategories themselves become somewhat unnecessary, as there is no basis for oppositional category positioning. If the practices and values constituting the subcategory have gained legitimacy and acceptance in other umbrella categories, the subcategory becomes less useful as an insulating, separative, identity-fostering

device. Lo and colleagues would argue that at this point, audiences would no longer see the subcategory as viable, because it lacks distinctiveness when compared to other existing categories, leading to its absorption into another broader category (Lo et al, 2020).

As the practices associated with novel, emergent subcategories finally do gain legitimacy and acceptance within broader, already established categories, the subcategories created to describe the novel practices in the first place fade away, and are no longer used to describe new cultural products, instead relegated to describing only specific temporally- and historically-bounded sets of cultural products. Subcategory fossilization is actualized, with the subcategory label falling out of use but its constitutive practices and values being absorbed by another existing umbrella category. The subcategory's absorption into an umbrella category represents the culmination of the fossilization process, a partial death but also a rebirth: the label dies, but its practices gain new life as legitimate and perhaps even institutionalized elements of umbrella categories, structures which typically enjoy better longevity than subcategories due to their expansive reach and generally larger audience sizes.

Fossilized Categories from Beyond the Grave

It is worth noting that fossilized subcategories are often used to *describe* new cultural products in contemporary times, a social fact which is initially confusing. There is a meaningful distinction, however, between *description* and *classification*. For example, much modern jazz is described as "fusion," but this is distinct from being classified into the subcategory of fusion. The subcategory fusion itself is no longer actively being populated by new musicians or new cultural products; for example, no new albums are classified as "fusion" by major classification systems like Apple Music or Spotify. When jazz artists and critics discuss fusion as a category, they are referring to jazz music which was played with electric instruments between roughly the

years 1968 and sometime in the late 1970's. Yet, the term fusion remains useful as a descriptive tool, as it signals the partial adherence to a certain set of normative characteristics. This adherence, however, can only ever be partial, because modern jazz artists are not a part of the temporally-bounded scene within which the fossilized subcategory fusion has been locked.

Fossilized categories cannot be actively maintained through the production of novel cultural products; instead, they are maintained by audiences and gatekeepers venerating them as consequential and generative additions to contemporary umbrella categories. These actors serve as custodians, maintaining fossilized subcategories' original meanings and boundaries even after they have fallen out of use. Certain subsets of audiences often remain deeply attached to subcategories even after they become fossilized, driven by a kind of collective nostalgia: "a distinct form of consciousness characterized by a heightened focus on things past, which is accompanied by considerable musing and mild detachment from everyday life, and which flatters both the nostalgic and the object of his/her nostalgia" (Brown & Humphreys, 2002, p. 143). This nostalgia drives traditionalist categories as Lena and Peterson describe them (2008), but also maintains the relevance of fossilized subcategories even when they are ostensibly dead and no longer being populated by new artists and/or cultural products.

The subcategory maintenance processes engendered by collective nostalgia can generate "a collective sense of socio-historic continuity" (Brown & Humphreys, 2002, p. 143). Subcategory fossilization can thus contribute to the vitality of the contemporary umbrella category responsible for their fossilization process, by contributing to the development of a historical narrative for the umbrella category itself. For example, the bebop era is widely viewed as among the most consequential periods of jazz history, with bop artists venerated as legends and with bop (and post-bop, a subsequent subgenre widely considered to be an extension of

bebop combined with other subcategories such as modal jazz and free jazz; Waters, 2019) tunes

constituting the bulk of the jazz canon as reflected in fake books (songbooks made up of rough

charts used in jazz jam sessions) such as The Real Book. Yet, like fusion, bop is a fossilized

subcategory, not used to classify modern jazz artists or their output. The collective nostalgia

experienced for this highly vibrant and generative period of jazz history is enough to both

maintain bop as a fossilized subcategory, and to continuously breathe life and energy into the

broader umbrella category jazz as it exists today.

Beyond maintenance, can fossilized subcategories be truly revived or resurrected? In

order for such a process to occur, the practices and identities which have been absorbed into an

umbrella category—as part of the fossilization process—would need to once again be separated

from the umbrella category as non-normative or deviant. Only then would the subcategory

actually be necessary as a modern classificatory mechanism again. This scenario is imaginable,

but scarcely occurs. As a hypothetical example, consider jazz as an umbrella category: if

musicians gradually stop using electric instruments over the next few years or decades, such that

their use is again considered deviant, the subcategory jazz fusion may once again be necessary to

describe jazz which uses electric instruments. Subcategories, again, emerge mainly as

oppositional spaces where artists can experiment free of illegitimacy discounts inherent to

established umbrella categories; when such illegitimacy discounts dissolve, the subcategories

become somewhat unnecessary.

Figure 4.1 shows a process model of subcategory fossilization, depicted as unfolding over

three stages. In the first (uppermost) phase, novel practices emerge and are categorized within a

new subcategory, created as an oppositional construction in contrast—but embedded partially

within—an established umbrella category. In the second stage, the novel practices associated

Figure 4.1. Stages of subcategory fossilization.

CATEGORIZATION

SUBCATEGORY-CONSTITUTING PRACTICES

Umbrella category

Creation of subcategory to insulate from normative pressures of umbrella category

Sub-category

Novel, deviant practices (practice = ▲)

Subcategory emergence

Umbrella category

Increased familiarity with subcategory; acceptance as part and parcel of umbrella category begins

Sub-category

Practices gaining legitimacy within umbrella category

Legitimation of subcategory's constitutive practices

Umbrella category

Subcategory label falls out of use, constitutive practices endure within umbrella category

Sub-category

Practices constitutive of umbrella category, rather than subcategory

Subcategory fossilization

with the subcategory have begun to gain more widespread acceptance and legitimacy within the umbrella category itself, and the subcategory is becoming less viable for this reason. In the third stage, the subcategory label falls out of use, as its constitutive practices become constitutive and representative of the umbrella category instead.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Subcategory fossilization describes the process through which subcategory labels fall out of use as their constitutive practices, identities, and values are absorbed into umbrella categories. While extant work touches on processes of category absorption and decline (Lo et al, 2020), we still know relatively little about how these processes unfold, and even less about their consequences and the potential generativity of their consequences. This paper begins to address these gaps, making three broad contributions to the literature on category dynamics in organization theory.

My first contribution lies in expanding our knowledge of the interrelationships between categories at multiple levels of abstraction. Although early work in psychological traditions emphasized that categories exist at multiple levels of abstraction (e.g., Mervis & Rosch, 1981), it is only very recently that organization theorists have begun to pick up this thread and examine its consequences in organizational fields (Boghossian & David, 2021). Category fossilization is a process which explains one aspect of the interrelationships between categories at different levels of abstraction. Fossilization involves the absorption of a subcategory into an umbrella category, illustrating the fluidity of classification systems and drawing attention to the fact that category evolution often does not occur in isolation, that is, independent of other related categories and subcategories. This contribution has two important implications for future research. First, in a general sense, future research in categorization theory should further explore how category

absorption occurs in an empirical sense. This absorption may occur between different levels of abstraction, or may involve—as other research has shown (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2005), the merging and melding of multiple categories at a single level of abstraction. Regardless, categories researchers should strive not to examine categories in isolation, but rather to examine their neighbors both within the same and between different levels of abstraction. Second, scholars of categorization should strive for the utmost clarity in defining and describing the level of abstraction at which the focal categories' of their analyses exist. Careful descriptions of categories' level of abstraction will help researchers to determine the extent to which, and conditions under which, their empirical findings will generalize to other contexts.

Second, this paper contributes to the literature on category dynamics by furthering our understanding of category decline. More specifically, I suggest that category decline can be generative: categories do not simply fade into oblivion, but leave traces akin to what other scholars have described as an institutional "residue" (Glynn, 2008, p. 1137). In the case of subcategory fossilization, these traces—or this residue—is visible in the umbrella category into which a subcategory has been absorbed. Future research focusing on category decline, and specifically exploring the many forms it may take (e.g., absorption, fossilization, death), would help to address the bias in extant literature toward emergence and evolution. While studies of emergence are practically relevant because they explain how organizations and entrepreneurs can expand their webs of influence into new domains and new categories, studies of decline have the potentially to be equally practically relevant by explaining how organizations can remain relevant even as the categories within which they are situated start to fade away.

Finally, I contribute to our understanding of how categories contribute to the social construction of history (Suddaby, Foster, & Trank, 2010). Subcategory fossilization relegates

certain subcategories to the annals of history, causing them to be reserved for describing subsets of cultural products produced only during specific time periods. When contemporary actors refer to fossilized subcategories—whether in a traditionalist sense, as in releasing an anthology of jazz fusion, for example, or as a way of enforcing the hierarchical position of a certain umbrella category (DiMaggio, 1987), such as by referencing Baroque composers in an effort to showcase the long historical tradition associated with classical music—they are socially constructing history so as to achieve certain goals in the present. Future research could further explore the roles categories play in socially constructing the history of industries and organizational fields. Additionally, it could be enlightening to further study how contemporary organizations draw on "dead" categories to inform their contemporary strategies and actions (Tripsas & Gavetti, 2000)

Overall, this paper highlights an as yet understudied dimension of category dynamics, by explicating a specific form of category decline. Subcategories invigorate cultural fields, serving as arenas for experimentation which facilitate broader acceptance and legitimation of novel practices, imbuing fields with new meanings. When subcategories are eventually absorbed into broader, more enduring umbrella categories, they may fall out of use but do not cease to be generative. They leave evolutionary traces and categorical residues, becoming seared into collective memory through the social construction of history. Future research should further explore subcategory dynamics in empirical settings, with particular attention to the potentially generative consequences of subcategory absorption and decline.

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CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusion

In this dissertation, I examined categorization dynamics within the field of jazz music, describing how jazz's meaning has evolved over the course of its history. The empirical studies highlight the power of various actors in fields of cultural production to drive category evolution processes, from artists and audiences to gatekeepers and intermediaries. What has become abundantly clear to me through the course of working on this dissertation is that categories are very much collectively defined and collectively constructed, and that their meanings are widely dispersed. By widely dispersed, I mean that it is not possible to gauge a category's meaning, its status, or its boundaries by looking in only one place, or by examining only one group of actors and their practices or discourse. Category meanings are cobbled together by various actors, embedded in various contextual landscapes, brought to life through wide arrays of practices.

Jazz's meaning, for example, is a collective accomplishment: artists have their own perceptions of what jazz is, which they espouse sometimes through discourse but sometimes non-verbally, such as through music itself; audiences have their own perceptions of what jazz is, which they espouse sometimes through discourse and sometimes non-verbally, such as through their purchasing and listening behaviors; and gatekeepers have their own perceptions of what jazz is, which they similarly espouse through a variety of modalities and methods. What jazz *actually* stands for and what it actually means is the common ground between these perceptions, but also the idiosyncratic stand-alone perceptions on the margins. To understand a category to the fullest extent possible is to examine it from a variety of perspectives and to explore how it is brought to life in practice. The inductive, interpretive approach I have employed throughout this dissertation facilitates generating such an understanding of jazz as a cultural category.

Summary of Findings

Above all else, this dissertation shows that categories are never static, but rather constantly evolving. Chapter two, the study of bebop, represents an example of category change, where jazz's meaning evolved relatively radically over a period of just a few years. In this chapter, I explored the question: *how do novel cultural products gain cultural resonance in an established cultural category, and how do the associated changes in consumption practices reshape perceptions of the category's meaning?* Drawing on work on cultural resonance and cultural production which focused on the multiplicity of actors responsible for constructing and interpreting cultural categories, I showed that consumption practices are consequential in shaping category meanings.

Specifically, I found that as bebop, a new style of jazz which emerged in the 1940's, gained prominence within the jazz category, the consumption practices associated with jazz shifted. People stopped listening to jazz as dance music, and started listening to it as an art form, akin to—for example—classical music. Concurrently, high status venues such as Carnegie Hall began hosting more jazz concerts, and academic institutions began to confer legitimacy onto the jazz category. I describe these occurrences as the decoupling and recoupling of consumption practices to cultural categories, and show that it is through these processes that category meanings evolve over time, reshaping the category's cultural resonance in the process.

Chapter three, in contrast, represents an example of category maintenance, where the jazz category evolved but did not change as radically as in the bebop case. As fusion—a style of jazz that emerged in the late 1960's—gained prominence within jazz, category gatekeepers discursively reordered their standards of quality and value, reshaping category meanings in the process. In this chapter, I asked the question: *how do gatekeepers redefine an established*

cultural category to accommodate practice deviations while maintaining a clear category meaning? Drawing on the literature on practice deviation and variation, as well as work relying on discourse as evidence of the codification of category meanings and boundaries, I describe the mechanisms through which category gatekeepers make sense of novel practices through their discourse, a process which I find involves both category maintenance and evolution.

Using critics' reviews of jazz albums as my primary data source, I find that fusion's emergence spurred critics (acting as category gatekeepers) to double down, in a way, on improvisation as the central meaning of jazz as a category. They reordered their standards of value, quality, and category membership, focusing less on instrumentation and less on rhythmic approach and focusing more on the quality of improvisation evident in jazz records. They did so via a three stage process: they first discursively prepared the category for change by declining to make classification decisions in a mechanism called *categorization deferment,* and subsequently redefined category meanings by reordering their standards of value, via *peripheral meaning redefinition* and *core meaning reinforcement*.

In chapter four, I theorized that even the death of subcategories can be generative, spurring change in and breathing new life into other, already established and still relevant categories. I explored the question: *how and why are subcategories absorbed by broader umbrella categories, and how does this lead to change and evolution in umbrella categories?* My theorization centers around the distinction between a subcategory's label and its constitutive practices. I argue that subcategories function as arenas of experimentation, where new practices and styles can gain acceptance and legitimacy with wider audiences. As a subcategory's constitutive practices gain legitimacy within already established umbrella categories, the

subcategory's label loses importance, and the subcategory fades out of use, even as its constitutive practices persist and live on.

Theoretical Contributions

This dissertation makes several contributions to existing literature on category dynamics and cultural production, among other areas. Perhaps the most exciting overall contribution, to me, is the marrying of a practice-theoretic perspective to categorization theory that I have accomplished in the three papers constitutive of this dissertation. Organization theory is in the midst of a practice theory renaissance, as practice-theoretic perspectives are being applied to a wide array of existing theories, from technology, to strategy, and institutionalism. The power in a practice-based approach to categorization theory lies in the focus both these literatures have on meaning: practice theory shows how meanings are generated through sequences of action and interaction, while categorization theory shows that we apply meaning to and derive meaning from the social world by constructing and maintaining categories. A practice-based approach to categorization facilitates the study of meaning-making, and thus pushes both literatures forward.

A second broad contribution this dissertation makes is in describing and illuminating the full life-cycle of a cultural category. Many studies focus on category emergence and change, while fewer studies explore category decline. Thus study shows how two subcategories—bebop and fusion—emerged, and subsequently gained legitimacy and acceptance, reshaping the broader umbrella category of jazz in the process. Yet, both bebop and fusion have now largely fallen out of use as subcategories. Chapter four describes why and how this has occurred, filling a long-standing gap in the categorization literature and setting the stage for future research on category decline and absorption.

Each chapter also makes several more specific contributions to the literature on category dynamics. Chapter two contributes to the literature by showing the importance of consumption practices—and specifically the coupling of consumption practices to specific categories—in shaping category meanings. I find that as new subcategories emerge, they often engender new consumption practices, which subsequently precipitate changes to collectively held category meanings. This chapter draws attention to the wide array of actors responsible for cultural production and categorization, and may stimulate future research on the interplay between audiences and producers in categorization processes.

Chapter three contributes to the categorization literature by showing how category gatekeepers make sense of practice deviation, and by illustrating the power of practice deviation more generally in stimulating category evolution. It also suggests that subcategorization can precipitate lasting changes to umbrella categories, a notion I explore further in chapter four. Chapter three is particularly exciting to me because it shows that even category maintenance can contribute to category evolution: maintenance and change, contrary to how they are often treated in the organization theory literature, are two sides of the same coin, and are certainly not mutually exclusive processes. Sometimes—perhaps usually—change involves maintenance, and maintenance results in change, however incremental it may be.

Chapter four contributes to the literature by theorizing how and why subcategories fall out of use, especially when they are absorbed into existing umbrella categories. Additionally, it highlights dynamics related to categories' level of abstraction, and suggests that future research on the interrelationships between different categories within the same classification system may be valuable. I hope that these ideas will stimulate future research on the entire "life-cycle" of categories, perhaps addressing the bias in extant literature toward studying category emergence.

This notion, that even category decline spurs change and evolution in other categories, raises important questions for future study. The ideas I introduced in chapter four also show that categorization is ultimately secondary to practice: we fit categories to the social world, but the practices constituting the social world move forward even as categories fall in and out of use. This is not to say that categorization is not itself a consequential practice—it very much is, as I hope I have shown in chapters two and three especially—but rather that without an object of categorization, categories can't exist, and even if specific categories fade in and out of use, the objects which populate them persist independently of their labels.

Conclusion

Although categories are ubiquitous in fields of cultural production, and even though they are useful social constructions in that they carry social meaning which people can deploy for any number of purposes, they necessarily constrain artists and audiences alike. This is precisely because they carry social meaning, priming audiences and imposing identity onto artists. The philosopher and novelist Aldous Huxley expressed this sentiment in his 1954 book *The Doors of Perception* in a way that is, for me, particularly memorable: "…we must preserve and, if necessary, intensify our ability to look at the world directly and not through that half-opaque medium of concepts, which distorts every given fact into the all familiar likeness of some generic label or explanatory abstraction." Although categories are much more than explanatory abstractions and generic labels—as I have argued in this dissertation, they are constituted by practices—this point highlights a hard problem about categories in modern cultural fields. We rarely see or hear cultural products without attempting to impose some kind of category onto that which we are consuming, and thus we allow those categories to shape our understanding of cultural products.

As such, it is impossible to interpret art or music in a "pure" way, unaided by preconceived notions of category and genre. If anything, this problem (if indeed it is a problem) speaks to the importance of research on categories, such that we can more fully understand how and why categories shape our understandings and perceptions of cultural products. I hope this dissertation has answered some questions, but I also hope it raises many others. Categorization is a complex and consequential process which permeates many aspects of social and organizational life, and which warrants further study in a variety of contexts, using a variety of methods, and drawing from a variety of theories.