The unhousing of national cultural policies – the conjuncture of industries in culture and technology in the Anglophone Caribbean

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Bio sketch

Suzanne Burke is a Cultural Studies scholar whose work employs the domain of culture as a pathway to Caribbean socio-economic transformation. Her research focuses on Caribbean culture, carnival, industries in culture, creative entrepreneurship, and management as these relate to the development and evaluation of cultural policies and programmes.

Abstract

The paper examines how global technologies are mediating the efficacy of national cultural policies on the industries of culture in the small island developing states in the Anglophone Caribbean. Through the deployment of national cultural policies primarily as mechanisms for curating cultural citizenship (Mercer, 2002), I examine how various technologies including AI and social media are subverting notions of national belongingness and inclusion for specific communities of creative practice in the Caribbean. By tracing the evolution of cultural policies in the post-independence period, the paper asserts that cultural policies have been used to privilege certain aspirations of citizenship they have traditionally marginalized certain social groups. The paper asserts that the introduction of newer technologies has given these groups greater access to global markets, ownership of their IP and promotion of their products. In this way, they are able to circumvent the impositions of national cultural policies and create alternative pathways to developing their craft. The case of *Trinibad* music is used to show how these technologies are dismantling the traditional role of Caribbean cultural policies and forcing new conversations about citizenship and belonging.

Keywords: Caribbean culture, cultural policies, and technology

The politics of policy building in the Caribbean.

The realm of cultural policy has been central to discussions about solving a plethora of developmental challenges in the Caribbean since the beginning of the independence era of the 1960s. Even though the policy focus has evolved over the last six decades, moving from the building of cultural confidence and encouraging diversity to generating income and employment creation, the realities of Caribbean development have remained fairly constant over space and time. Indeed, the challenges of poverty, social stratification along the lines of race, class, colour and ethnicity, and the precariousness of living in mono-economies have been persistent. The embeddedness of these economic and political systems have worked against the transformative agenda of successive cultural policies that were formulated to at liberate culture as a vehicle for development. The conflicting demands of international development policy paradigms, local and regional policy framework and the needs of ordinary citizens have all contributed towards making Caribbean cultural policy terrain a difficult and dynamic one, inevitably resulting in uneven performance.

The Caribbean cultural policy regime has developed in discrete phases since independence (Burke, 2007; Thomas, 2004). During the first phase, at the beginning of the independence era, cultural policies were used as tools for accelerated decolonisation. These policies sought to create an environment for Caribbean citizens to develop cultural confidence by celebrating their cultural expressions and venerating their cultural icons. However, this approach was mediated by the 'creole institutions[i]' which were established before independence and continued the philosophies of national groups (generally urban and educated) who lobbied for their formation during the colonial period. They drew heavily from UK arts policy frameworks that privileged forms of elite artforms over the folk expressions of ordinary people, inevitably resulting in the maintenance of the status quo.

By the 1970s, the recognition of the region's diversity in addition to the turn toward Democratisation of Culture frameworks in international regimes gave rise to a new policy phase that placed emphasis on spreading resources away from the urban cultural elites and their arts-based cultural policies. The state's central role in financing and curating of this policy agenda which required consistently high levels of investment. This approach took culture out of museums and concert halls and celebrated in the towns and villages where people lived and worked. This era also focused on the nationalisation of key elements in the cultural ecology such as print and broadcast media in efforts to grow local content drawn from ordinary forms of cultural expression. However, by the 1980s, the global financial crisis severely reduced state coffers and ushered in the belt tightening imperatives promulgated by the Washington Consensus. These factors severely delimited state involvement in cultural domain through their ownership and investment in areas such as media, festival, venues and training, effectively bringing an end to this era.

The turn towards industrialisation of the culture emerged during the last decade of the 20th century, promising significant developmental gains for the region. Emerging from the 'dead decade' of the 1980s, the deployment of culture as a platform for economic growth was particularly attractive to Caribbean governments as a novel way to shore up investment in jobs and technology, generate much-needed foreign exchange and increase the presence of Caribbean cultural products in the global marketplace. The economisation of culture agenda had severe implications for the socio-political framing of cultural policies. Indeed, this era is also renowned for the bifurcation of the cultural policy domains into distinct branches that either promoted the intrinsic or the instrumental values of culture (Pratt, 2005). The servicing of these two spheres under one banner created a whole new set of competing interests for visibility and investment, while precluding the harmonisation that is critical for the overall development of the cultural sector. Some technocrats and academics expressed scepticism about the splitting of the field but those voices were generally muted by deafening chorus of adherents to the catechism of cultural industry as the saviour of economic development. McGuigan's warning was indicative of the dangers inherent in this regime of thought, especially for developing countries:

As cultural policy immaterialises into economic policy in rich countries, curiously, it becomes a new way of thinking about development for poorer countries, which arguable obscures the realities of economic inequality and political domination (2004:).

Small, developing states were not generally in a position to benefit from promises that accompanied the cultural industry rhetoric. This was largely due to their relative powerlessness in relation to transnational companies who controlled the production and distribution of cultural products and services globally, even in areas such as reggae music where the Caribbean had some cachet (Witter, 2002, Alleyne, 2005). The high barriers to trade in desired markets (i.e. Europe and North America) as well as the denuding of the distinctive Caribbean cultural elements that accompanied this export-oriented paradigm effectively limited efforts at sustaining mainstream global success.

The under-performance of the cultural industry policy paradigm was also evident in the Commonwealth family of nations. In fact, many marginalised groups such as women, ethnic minorities, the working poor and immigrants fared the same fate that McGuigan identified as the fallacy of the policy's promise for poor nations. According to Oakley (2017), these marginalised groups benefited the least from the UK's much-touted cultural industry policies, as the lion-share of the state's resources were distributed to those in higher socio-economic classes. O'Conner (2022) also points out that the spirit of the UNESCO 2005 Convention with its focus on diversity and redressing inequalities in the global distribution of cultural goods and services was eclipsed by the colonisation of the field by economic imperatives. Overall, the net impact of the economisation of the cultural policy domain has resulted in even greater disparities and impoverishment than was before its introduction twenty years ago. For example, the 2020 Global Report on the Creative Economy estimated that 95% of all global exports of cultural services are from the Global North.

The previous discussion has shown that each phase of cultural policy was distinguished by different approaches to resolve the same permutation of factors existing in the Caribbean cultural ecology. However, despite the various policy permutations aimed at positioning culture and its attendant policy domain as a space for developmental action and change, the overall sentiment is that these efforts have not yielded the expected results. Indeed, the policy field is becoming more removed from the people they are meant to serve. Currently, Caribbean creatives more readily rely on their own networks for financial and professional support. When they do have to engage with cultural policies their approach is largely transactional, involving a careful assessment of what can be gained from the relationship. It is this field of engagement that we now turn our attention.

What is in it for me?

The Caribbean Cultural Ecology represents a dynamic field of operations. The cultural organisations and individuals that belong to it are constantly negotiating the various relationships and options within their fields of influence. For many, these choices are often based on the expediency of the moment rather than any medium to long-term considerations. This pattern of decision-making is particularly evident in the domain of policy, which is dominated by state arrangements. Primarily, the interactions between the creatives and the state are informed by the levels of trust between the parties to achieve the desired outcomes.

In an effort to map the range of choices that cultural stakeholders make in negotiating state policy, I developed a Five Factor Model (5FM) of Stakeholder Engagement (Burke, 2019). In this model, stakeholder choices were developed along a continuum that ranged from *no engagement* to *full engagement* based on their consideration of five opposing pairs of indicators including (i.)knowledge/ignorance, (ii.) capacity/incompetence, (iii.) governance/impotence, (iv.) authority/incapacity and (v.) leadership/irresponsibility (see appendiX0. This model posited that stakeholders deployed a complex set of rationales to inform their choice of engagement.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic a more incisive reading of the factors that inform policy engagement emerged. It was determined that access to resources was the most important factor for stakeholder involvement with the policy domain. In-depth interviews with respondents from across the Anglophone

Caribbean supported this finding. Additionally, a more nuanced mapping of the ecology because many governments used the opportunity during COVID period to obtain more information from industry participants by using this as a precondition to disbursing much needed grant. The information that was culled related to size, activities, employment, and networks of operations. The pandemic also showed that even the seemingly successful creative businesses were vulnerable, as one of the respondents from Barbados noted, many cultural organisations did not survive at all:

So, people are dropping out of the industry [...] or then leaving the country for other opportunities. So, in terms of the health of the industry, I would say very poor, and in terms of those persons working in the industry, there's a lot less noise than there would have been before.

The Caribbean was certainly not alone in this revelation about the growing inequalities in the cultural sector. For example, the global move towards the creative economy ushered in the impoverishment of many in the UK creative economy in the last decade such that the 'under-resourcing and low wages have nonetheless become the norm' (Smith, 2019:7). In fact, the pandemic re-set the cultural ecology and sharpened the decision-making process of key stakeholders. I developed the RENE framework to illustrate the key elements that shape their engagement with the policy domain. Constituents positively engage with national policies and programmes if they can benefit from one or more of these factors:

i. **R**esources – financial, human and material.
ii. **E**xpertise– knowledge about the requisite technology, innovation, business management, trade and investment.
iii. **N**etworks – arts, business and leadership at the local, regional and international levels.
iv. **E**xposure – brand creation, development and reputation.

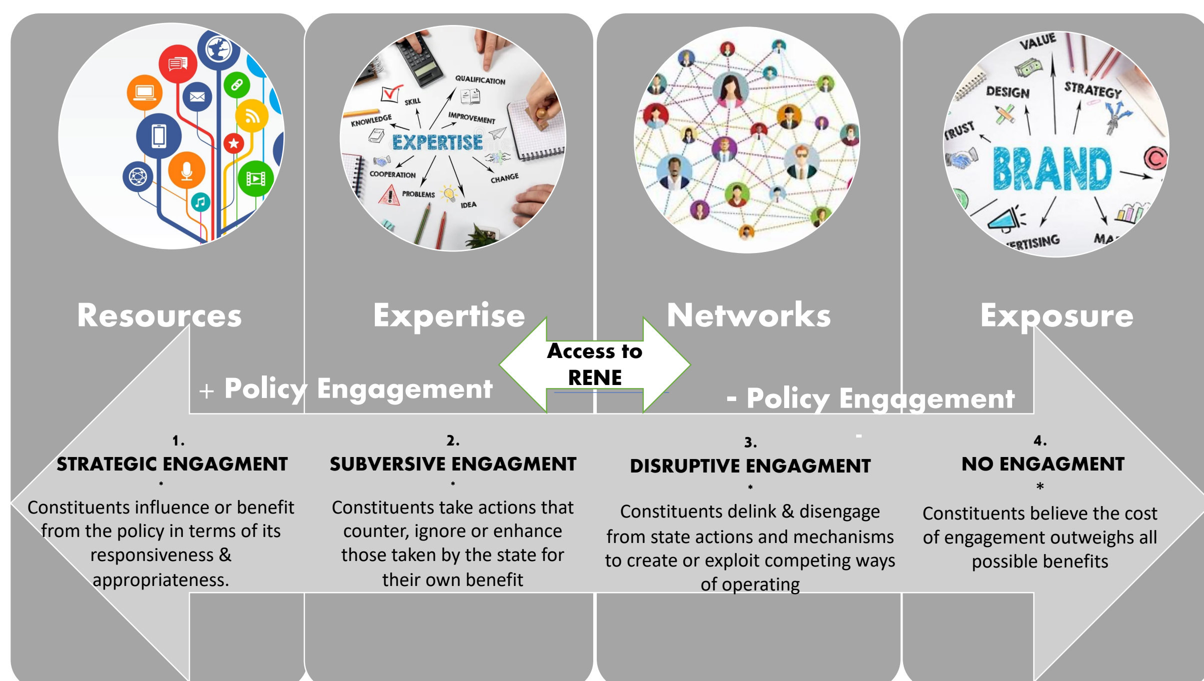

Figure 1 Framework of Stakeholder Engagement with Cultural Policy – RENE Model

The figure above shows how constituents make informed decisions about their engagement with cultural policies that move from positive (1. Strategic or 2. Subversive) to negative (3. Disruptive or 4. No engagement) based on their assessment of the possible benefits in each access area. Constituents in the positive engagement fields hold more altruistic views about the efficacy of the cultural policies to produce needed outcomes for themselves and the overall ecology. Meanwhile, constituents along the negative continuum hold more cynical views of policy engagement and seek to either disrupt or disengage from policy dynamics altogether. It is important to note that a constituent's choice of

engagement can change over space and time and within the cycle of the same project or over different programmes. Similarly, constituents can consistently choose the same type of engagement over time. We will now examine how the intersection of politics, power and the positionality of constituents inform choice in the cultural policy domain.

The Unhousing of Cultural Policy – De' Trinibad Music Scene
'I doh need nutten'. I going to do my thing' – Rheon Elbourne (Trinibad artist)

This section will examine the efficacy of national cultural policies by considering the case of how a new genre of Caribbean popular music, known as *Trinibad* developed. The RENE framework is deployed to analyse the functionality of the cultural policy domain in aiding its growth. My evaluation is informed by Mercer's definition which asserts that:

Cultural policy is about citizenship because it is about the resources which define, enable, constrain and shape, both positively and negatively, that most fundamental of human capacities, identity (2002:xix).

The choice of definition is deliberate because I focus on cultural policy primarily as the means through which cultural citizenship is enabled or delimited. Put more simply, it is the site where people's sense of belonging is shaped. Belongingness is measured by the ways the state chooses to use its resources and assets to cultivate citizenship at the individual and community levels. This framework also allows us to discern what the state views as *ideal citizenship* based on how it values the various ways of life and the cultural goods and services that emanate from the various groups in society. Immanent in this approach is the use of *difference* as a marker of citizenship which implicates the state and its gatekeepers in acts of boundary making and categorisation. Therefore, citizenship operates along a spectrum of proximity to or detachment from the ideal. According to Beaman (2016:850), 'citizenship is defined by those who are excluded from it' and evidenced by how these differences are policed by power structures within a society.

Trinibad developed as a genre of popular music during the last decade. It draws heavily from Jamaican dancehall for its aesthetic and sonic elements but is rooted in its homeland, Trinidad and Tobago for its distinctive cadence, context and ways of story-telling. Its main proponents are young, urban, males from lower class backgrounds. Its name is a *double entendre* that in one way represents the slang 'bad' which is meant to describe something that is good because the music is viewed as infectious, cutting edge, invigorating and trendy[ii]. On the other hand, the reversal of the first 'd' in the word Trinidad to a 'b', represents a very deliberate assertion about their sense of belonging to the country, one that is shaped by their lived experiences of it, which is bad, drawing from the traditional meaning of the word. So while the music itself is trendy, it often chronicles the harsh experiences of the artists' everyday lives. The music often stories the artists' struggles to climb the socio-economic ladder, gain recognition from by their peers often depicting the routes they take to get there.

During its short time on the music scene, *Trinibad* has gained global recognition. Some of its more popular artists such as Prince Swanny, K Lion and Rheon Elbourne have had hits amassing millions of views on YouTube. These artists have also garnered hundreds of thousands of followers on various social media platforms, confirming the music's reach beyond the Anglophone Caribbean. Like any other genre of popular music, the offerings run the full spectrum of aspirational to nihilistic; from hopefulness to hopelessness and chronicle the artists' joy and pain. Mainstream *Trinibad* music is widely known for its grittiness, violence and the glamourisation of a materialist lifestyle. For instance, King Swanny's 'Dreams' and 'Heathen' have amassed 16 and 14 million views respectively on YouTube. These songs detail his experiences with his group of friends and illustrate the psychic and physical violence they experience and cause on their pathway to economic success and fame. K Lion's 'Malandros' which shows how the commingling of guns, women and material success are integral to the lived experience of 'real, real Malandros,' amassed over 15 million views in his lifetime[iii] surpassing

the success of many of the renowned dancehall and soca artists in the Caribbean popular music scene. The viral success of the music has led to exposure not only in the Caribbean diaspora in the metropoles of New York, Toronto, London and Miami but further afield in countries as diverse as Bosnia, Iran, Ghana and Nigeria. The tour schedules of these artists also rival those of many who have worked in the music industry for decades leading to exposure on mainstream media in these locales.

Surprisingly, the global reach of *Trinibad* music has occurred without the benefit or sanction of policy support. Like many other forms of popular music produced by marginalised groups, the access to vital production resources was not available to the creators. For example, capital from traditional sectors such as commercial banks or government funding are not available to them due in large part to how they are differentiated culturally and economically from the ideal cultural citizen. Inevitably, resources to produce and distribute the music often originate from alternative sources. In this way, the production of the music's production mirrors that of other global forms of popular music emanating from disenfranchised groups including American swing, jazz, hip-hop and dancehall. For instance, it is well documented that Frank Sinatra got his start in music singing in NYC clubs owned by members of the Mafia where he would often 'pay to play', earning him lifelong loyalty to this group. The same pattern holds true for how many hip-hop artists financed their careers before success allowed them to leave the 'street' completely. For example, Jay-Z describes how he used capital from his illicit earnings to develop his rap career. More importantly, he also details how he converted his knowledge about distribution and promotion from selling drugs to his successful music career (Jay Z: 2010).

Closer to home, the young men who developed Trinidad's steel pan in the 1930s-40s represented the urban underclasses and were often involved in criminal activity not only to make ends meet but also to help finance the development of the instrument which they created out of discarded dustbin covers. As a class of citizens they were deemed uncouth and the antithesis of the model colonial subject. They received no tangible support from the authorities and were often harassed, jailed and beaten for their participation in this activity (Goddard, 1991). Calypsonians also received similar treatment by the colonial state as their songs were often reported in the mainstream media as vulgar and seen as promoting the differentiated values of the jamet[iv] underclass from which they came. Notably, differentiated status as unfit citizens did undergo some change once the country gained independence. During this time, the state became actively involved in re-organising and re-imagining steelband and calypso as part of its creole nation-building project.

Trinibad music is distinguished from these other examples because it has achieved success largely without the assistance of the normal interlocuters who traditionally determine production, distribution and promotion within the music industry such as record labels, agents, venue owners and marketers. Indeed, the majority of the *Trinibad* artists have made a way for themselves through self-financing and have achieved global reach without international recording labels, booking agents, marketers or copyright organisations. The Trinibad artist, Rheon Elbourne[v] explains how he did not have access to any of the factors detailed in the RENE framework. He explains that his own drive aided by his network of friends and extended family provided a much needed gateway into the business:

> *Like, I am from Kelly Village. I never had access to any type of technology, any type of anything. I'd never picked up a camera in my life. I never have [had] my own personal computer, to say, well, I could actually touch this device and figure out how the programmes work. I'd never seen a professional studio before. I'd never been on a movie set. I'd never been on an advertisement. I'd never heard somebody record an advertisement to say, 'come here, do this.' And I never had the money to pay for it, to learn, to go to school, to learn all of these things. And even though I believed to myself that I was great at that point in time, I never really proved it to nobody, or show anybody enough for them to say 'let me invest in you, I see where you want to go'. But I am seeing that for myself.*

Indeed, many of the artists in the genre are self-taught and gain access to the entire value chain on the strength of their own talent and earnings. This self-sufficiency can also be attributed to the fact that they have limited access to money to pay market rates for expert help – making the do-it-yourself

attitude a necessary survival mechanism. Elbourne explained that he was able to acquire skills in sound engineering, videography, and promotion by being exposed to creative networks through a friend in his network whose uncle is a sound engineer. This independent approach to creating and marketing *Trinibad* music directly correlates, the lack of traditional support for the genre underscored by the class of persons producing and consuming it. *Trinibad* has given rise to an autonomous value creating ecology that mimics but is totally delinked from the elements traditional music sector. Most notably in the areas of talent management, expert networks in music production and distribution traditional media exposure. Indeed, the popularity of music on the 'ground' has spawned alternative networks of performances, venues, and bookings. More importantly, the need for airplay on mainstream radio as an ingredient for success has been almost completely nullified. *Trinibad* artists do not attach high value added to radio airplay as their predecessors in soca and calypso did. They consider the looming threats and calls for government censorship of their music to be foolhardy. This attitude is buoyed by the fact the distribution channels for their music, such as Apple Music and YouTube are outside of national state control. According to Elbourne:

> *They don't control the minds and the mouths of the people anymore. Whereas before they would say, well, this type of music alone is accepted on the radio, make sure it's all censored, make sure it has these types of messages and stuff like that. They don't control that anymore*.

Technology has played a pivotal role in democratizing access to the creation and distribution of music for artists who have been traditionally under-represented in the cultural ecology. The relative affordability of technological inputs means that like many artists globally. *Trinibad* artists are less dependent on capital outlays from state or music executives to boost their enterprises. In many ways, they seem to be more amenable to embracing the technological inputs than the traditional artists. For example, they have embraced the use of artificial intelligence especially in song composition when compared to artists in other sectors of the ecology, such as actors and script writers for film and television, who largely view AI as a threat to their livelihoods. For example, at an AI workshop for the performing arts community,[vi] the speakers generally presented AI as another fillip to leapfrog into the global cultural industry sector. Members of the fraternity while generally receptive to the technology's role in their creative process, expressed concern about the technology's ability to copy and monetise existing creative works without the requisite permissions from the original creators. The matter of how the opportunities and threats of the technology could be balanced to the benefit of the artist was not completely resolved and as such, the role of national policies and laws to mediate these concerns were not directly addressed. *Trinibad* artists embrace AI primarily for its facility to enhance their creative process, increase their income and exposure. In this way, AI is a political tool that affords them agency that the previous creative paradigm. For example, Elbourne embraces this technology to help him craft songs, but signals its inability to produce the real human experience:

> *AI itself couldn't give me any melody. In order for me to ensure that the song still resonate with the people, I had to make the melody. I could not use the song word for word, I had to change certain parts to ensure it made sense. And AI does not have a soul. So, as much as we could listen to AI music, it really doesn't have a soul. It wouldn't hit as much as if a human is singing it… but I think it could aid right now, it could help.*

Most important for them is the immediacy the technology affords them to create and reap the benefits of their work:

> *My distribution right here (pointing to his phone). I can check on my distribution right now, I can upload a song while we talking here I can send this out to the world on Apple music, IG, snapchat and I can get all the excruciating details - who playing my music, in what country they playing it in, what is the age group, what they identify as, how much time they stream it. I have my own publishing and so on. I think it has a lot to do with technology and then nobody willing to wait, life so short. Why am I waiting on somebody to recognize me? I will make myself recognizable. That is why the music has so much spin in it right now.*

The *Trinibad* movement embraces and celebrates its alterity. The ways in which some of the artists flaunt their notoriety and material possessions through their videos and lifestyles, which are lived out large on social media have caused angst in some quarters of the society. Indeed, for these young persons who have been denied societal acceptance, the allure of money and fame afforded by the success of this lifestyle is extraordinary. Many of the music videos feature a dizzying array of jewelry, women, high end cars, trendy fashion and guns. These trappings form part of a lifestyle that endears them to other young people as Rebel 6ix[vii] asserted:

> *Everywhere I go people know me. People want pictures with me, they want video, crying and holding my hand and I does be like "whey boy." He says, "It change my life, it change my focus. Real youth in the ghetto look up to me cause they know I was a normal youth with nothing. Dancehall totally change my life (qtd in Dowrich-Philip, 2020).*

This deliberate embrace of difference also seeks to upend the status quo. In the case of Elbourne this alterity forms part of his brand which is clearly displayed on his YouTube channel:

> *To be DIFFERENT is to project a profound sense of self into a world craving creativity and inspiration. To inspire is to pioneer an evolution so cosmic, a paradigm shift begins. Rheon Elbourne is the epitome of DIFFERENT. Watch the movement unfold as he zones in on harnessing his creative expression and make a proclamation glorifying diversity*.

This desire to change things stems from their experiences of growing up as a member of the jamet class of citizens, or what I term *jametizens.* They live without much and this condition is the key motivating factor for their involvement in music. Prince Swanny in his song *Dreams* recalls 'days when mi nah eat, we remember days when mi nah sleep; we remember days when mi cyar smoke, this ah no joke.' He then goes on to describe how he is now living his dreams with all his friends, cars, alcohol, jewellery and guns his money can buy. The celebration of materialism is often presented in defiance of the status-quo, and illustrates how Trinibad artists internalise their outsider status and the stigma of being jametizens. In this way, their focus on material things represents a metaphorical slap in the face to the gate-keepers who actively build fences to keep them and their music out of society. According to Elbourne:

> *And this music is one of our greatest exports to the world and we are not making the best of it. The old guard is not embracing the new. You can get rid of all the old right now, who running things like this from the1900s, and put the younger, fresher brains to work. We know how to run it you know, but they just not giving us the opportunity. They still there, trying to tell us what to do, not realizing that we have surpassed them, not realizing that we done gone. We are looking at you like, … I doh care*.

The 'don't care' attitude has not gone unnoticed by those in authority. Respectability politics have caused many to decry the *Trinibad* artists and their followers as having a negative impact on society. Their concern for what they view as the crass materialism, violence and sexual nature of the genre is embedded in the popular discourses of society. Talk shows, social media, letters to the editors, public statements by politicians on either side of the government all decry the deleterious effect the music has on the society. As one writer who identified as a 'public health specialist' from an upper-middle class area asserted in a Letter to Editor:

> *The influence of Trinibad music on youth violence also has broader societal implications. It can lead to a culture of fear, disrupt community cohesion and strain healthcare and law enforcement resources. More alarmingly, it risks creating a generational cycle where the normalization of violence affects future generations. (Ornella Cyrus, Westmoorings by the Sea. Trinidad Express)*

In short, the music is viewed by many as a catalyst for society's ills. This approach to the music follows a long tradition where the cultural expressions of jametizens are blamed for the degradation of moral values and standards in the society. On the other hand, there are those who see the emergence of the

genre as a failure by civil society and government to craft policies that target these under-served jametizens. For example, in a scathing response to the rumour that the Prime Minister was threatening to ban *Trinibad* music from the airwaves one letter to the editor identified the futility of such a move and wondered at how government could turn a blind eye to the consistent neglect of this class as part of the context for the music's popularity:

> *Trinibad music will continue to rise in popularity because it incorporates local slang, soca, chutney, calypso, and dancehall beats while reflecting the anger, anxiety, and violence which is our current reality. A strategic thinker would recognize Trinibad music as a litmus indicator and create an action plan to help our society navigate our dismal reality and emerge as a re-energized people of fun and enjoyment. TT, the time is now for us to pivot towards the development of the creative industries. This means exploiting the interplay between "human creativity, intellectual property, knowledge and technology" to diversify our economy. Trinibad can help us. (Denise Demming: Newsday, Jan 24).*

Conclusion

The case of *Trinibad* music has shown the various ways that state policies in general and cultural industry policies in particular, have been deployed to delimit the rights and feelings of belongingness of jametizens. This 'othering' is clearly evidenced by the lack of tangible support and recognition for their cultural expressions and ways of life as was illuminated in the case of Trinibad music. Indeed, the previous discussion has shown that *Trinibad* artists operate on the negative side of the policy decision making spectrum by either disrupting the status quo or not participating it in at all. In so doing, they have unhoused the architecture of national cultural policies by carving out alternative routes to production and consumption activities. On this alternative path they are aided by transnational systems of production and distribution such as YouTube, Apple Music, and Spotify. These TNCs work in tandem with them to nullify the need and impact of national cultural policies.

Trinibad's popularity shines a light on how a successful artistic career can be developed without policy support and in so doing, has illuminated the diminished impact of national cultural policies as vehicles to catalyse growth, engender social inclusiveness and promote diversity in the Caribbean cultural sector. In this regard, the main challenge for national cultural policies is to identify, analyse and develop the mechanisms that would vitalise the alterity that makes its industries in culture distinctive in the global marketplace. Therefore, the impetus for these policies to be in lock step with the transnational nature of Caribbean people and their cultures is clearly indicated.

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Endnotes

[i] This period of policymaking is characterized as the Creolisation Policy Model (Burke, 2007)
[ii] Rheon Elbourne also explained that he used the descriptor '3bad' as a superlative to describe the trajectory of his career when he first tasted success. The word *3Bad* is tattooed on his arm. He recounted that he would first say to himself 'well, yuh ent do too (2) bad[ly] for somebody from Kelly Village, in fact yuh 3bad'. He would use the moniker as a mantra before embarking on any project – 'I 3Bad'. 3Bad eventually morphed into Trinibad. Personal interview.
[iii] K Lion died of a massive heart attack following a seizure while playing football in Miami, aged 26 in 2020
[iv] Jamet is a French creole word which describes persons living beneath the line of respectability – or diamètre.
[v] Personal interview. St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago. (January 2024).
[vi]' Together AI' was hosted by the principals of the Queen's Hall, a premiere performing arts venue in Trinidad and Tobago in September 2023. It garnered interest from members of the cultural sector and brought together international funding agencies (i.e. IADB), artists, technocrats, and entrepreneurs.
[vii] Rebel xi – real name Kyle George lost his life on July 5th, 2020, at the age of 26. He was shot in his home while playing video games. The police ruled the death as gang related.