

Surfin' U.S.A. or Surfin' California?

An analysis of place-based aesthetics in the genre of surf music.

Thesis info

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Abstract

This paper suggests and tests a ‘place-based aesthetics model’ in order to show the importance of place in the process of retrospective cultural consecration. By studying place as a social construct, two important dimensions of place are distinguished: ‘sense of location’ and ‘sense of locale’. In contrast to the more practical approach towards these dimensions of prior research, this study treats these dimensions in a ‘symbolic’ manner, in the sense that it makes the shift towards the social meanings and values attached to locale or location. In order to study this, a surf music dataset of 2.548 surf tracks was used. While taking into account the effects of more general predictors of retrospective consecration, the paper includes both dimensions of place in one model. The results suggest the existence of a ‘California-aesthetic’ in the genre of surf music, while associations with locale, or the material setting of social interaction, seem to be unimportant. By controlling for different forms of concurrent success, the paper concludes that this importance of ‘location’ cannot only be credited to the economical and production side advantages of the vibrant music scene of California but should partly be ascribed to certain symbolical effects of ‘place-based aesthetics’ in surf music.

1. Introduction

In the field of music, Texas is often seen as the ‘home’ of country music, while cities as Chicago and Detroit are often referred to as the geographical origins of respectively the genres of house and techno music (Lehr, 1983; Van Venrooij, 2015). Likewise, the genre of hip-hop is regularly evaluated in terms of originating from the ‘streets’ or the ‘ghetto’ (Cheyne and Binder, 2010; Negus, 1999). But to what extent do these place-based categorizations impact the development of a specific genre? Prior research has shown how assigning categorical identities to artists or products can affect the likelihood in achieving cultural success (Zuckerman, 1999). The current

paper is concerned with these categorical identities of place in the case of surf music. This music genre emerged and peaked during the early sixties and was succumbed nearing the end of that same decade (Blair, 2015). To analyse how these ‘place-based aesthetics’ influence which artists are remembered 20 to 50 years later, this paper approaches place from different dimensions as distinguished by Agnew (1987). Both a ‘sense of locale’ (the material setting: i.e. beaches, bays, seas, shores, etc.) and a ‘sense of location’ (geographical setting: mostly California and coastal states of the US.) are hypothesized to have an effect on the retrospective (sub)cultural consecration in this specific field. The question central to this research therefore reads: *To what extent is retrospective cultural consecration in the field of surf music between 1980 and 2010 influenced by place-based aesthetics?* In order to answer this question, a database of 2.548 surf tracks was used to see to what extent the different dimension of place have an influence besides more general predictors of retrospective consecration.

Prior research has touched upon the effects of both dimensions of locale and location, (see for examples Cheyne & Binder (2010) or Phillips (2013)), but has never examined the effects of both dimension at once. This paper aims to fill this gap by studying simultaneously the effects of these different dimensions on the process of retrospective cultural consecration. By examining these ‘place-based aesthetics’, I add to the understanding of how narratives on specific musical genres can affect our collective memory of this genre. This is not only of academic interest, but can enhance cultural practices within the field of music on different levels. On a governmental level this study can be beneficial in strategies and regulations on city branding and cultural policy making, while on the level of the music industry or the individual artists the paper might be informative for the positioning and marketing in the music field.

In this paper I will first show how place can be approached as a social category, by discussing the application of the three dimensions of place that Agnew (1987) distinguishes. Subsequently, the data based on the discographical work done by John Blair (2008) and my application of this in a negative binomial regression analysis will be described. It shows how place-based aesthetics, through what I call ‘sense of locale’ and ‘sense of location’, is applicable to the case of surf music. By doing this, the paper answers to calls for further analysis of the three dimensions of place and the interconnection between locational attributes in music (Brandellero &

Pfeffer, 2015) and calls for the study of place as a social construct (Cheyne & Binder, 2010).

2. Toward an understanding of place-based aesthetics in music

2.1 Place as a social category

The relation between music and place is often analysed from perspectives of economic concentration (Florida, Mellander & Stolarick, 2010) or competition between different markets or industries (Molotch, 2002). Prior research has shown how certain locations, such as New York, Los Angeles or Nashville, are designated as the major musical centres that produce most of the ‘hits’ in the musical industries. Yet, these approaches sometimes lack the “resonance, emotive importance, politics and cultural meaning bound up in music” (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p. 7-8). Therefore, following Molotch, an argument could be made that there is also something about specific places that influences the music created there. Rather than being musical centres where musicians, organisations and resources are concentrated (Florida, et al., 2010), places can also have more symbolical implications for the music that originates there. By use of a more symbolic understanding of the concept of place, we can understand why ‘emplacement’ of musical products is important in understanding or constructing musical genres or products (Phillips, 2013; Van Venrooij, 2015). It is this more symbolic relation between music and place with which this research is concerned.

My research takes the following question raised by Cheyne and Binder (2010) as a central theoretical premise: “What does it mean to think of place as a meaningful social category?” (p.337). Rather than merely being the stage of social interaction, places can add a social meaning to our understanding of music field or genres and its cultural products. Following Cresswell (2004), thinking of place as a social construct “means that the way we experience that place and the meanings we attach to it is constructed through society” (p.30). We therefore have to consider place not just as a geographical location, but as a way of experiencing the world. Our shared understanding of places attaches values and meanings to these places, of which cultural traits, such as music, is one (Agnew, 1987; Carney, 2008). It is in that sense that we have to understand place as a social construct.

To consider place as a meaningful social or symbolic category, the division of place made by political geographer John Agnew (1987) will be adopted as the theoretical pillar of this paper. In this division, Agnew distinguished three elements of place: locale, location and sense of place. The first dimension of place is differentiated as ‘locale’, which can be defined as the material settings for social interaction (Giddens, 1983). In essence, ‘locale’s’ psychical settings are not related to geography, but are the actual shapes and contours of place in which people live, social relations are constituted and everyday interactions are routinized (e.g. streets, parks, buildings, beaches, rooms). This microsociological emphasis on contextuality focuses on how locales can explain human behaviour that takes place in concrete milieus or contexts. For surf music, the locale required to enable the interactions typical for surf culture are probably portrayed by material settings like the beach, the sea, the bay, etc.

Agnew’s (1987) second dimension is distinguished as ‘location’, defined as a geographical space or specific position found on a map. Locations form a “material topography of place”, which allows for the discernment of patterns, similarities and order in geographical space (Cresswell, 2004, p.11). Giddens (1983) has argued that only focusing on microsociology will induce missing the impact of the *longue durée* structured practices on human behaviour. We therefore have to take into account location as a macro-order dimension of space, enabling us for example, to compare phenomena occurring in different cities, countries or on different continents. This shows how different locales are related to each other and how this macro structure is implicating human behaviour on the micro level.

The final element of place Agnew (1987) distinguishes is people’s ‘sense of place’, which refers to the subjective or emotional attachment between people and place. Place can be an “object of identity for a subject” (p. 27-28), meaning place is socially meaningful to people through the identity given or derived from certain localities. For example, people throughout the world hold an idea or image of California without ever having visited this state.

Particularly in this final dimension of place, there is a connection to the idea that place can be important for musical genres. Genres often emerge through a process of consolidation of identifiers and consensus about the goals and characteristics of the music (Lena, 2012). The understanding of place within musical genres is one of these stabilised signifiers, which can later on become a convention in

understanding the genre (Becker, 1982). Therefore the current research focuses on the importance of these three dimensions of place for music on a symbolic level. By “symbolic level” I mean the research does not focus on the importance of place as for the production of music, but rather the ‘place-based aesthetics’ in music—a subtle but important distinction. While much research has examined where music is produced, this paper takes a different tact by examining how place is symbolically important for the consumption and evaluation of music. I focus on the dimension of “sense of place” since this connects to how people are using place in their consumption and evaluation of musical products. The other two dimensions of locale and location will mostly be understood in terms of the sense of place. This means that I focus on the importance of the sense or understanding of location or locale for the consolidation of surf music as a genre. Therefore, in the following sections I will first discuss the sense of place as some sort of umbrella concept and subsequently I will consider the dimensions of location and locale in a symbolic fashion. Therefore, these latter dimensions are in a way treated as the ‘sense of locale’ and ‘sense of location’, that together comprise a certain ‘place-based aesthetics’ specific for the genre of surf music.

2.2 ‘Sense of place’ in the field of music

The dimension ‘sense of place’ is defined by Agnew (1987) as the shared meaning attached to a certain place through social interaction. This does not mean places are unambiguously understood by all people and their meaning is agreed upon, but places are rather “contested terrain of competing definitions” (Harvey, 1996, p. 309). In collective memory research, places are often thought to give meaning through the perpetuation of certain memories or meanings at the expense of others. This means that the sense of a place is determined by how places are remembered. This attributes the ‘locales’ or ‘locations’ with a social or symbolic meaning, attached by the agency of social actors (Brandellero & Pfeffer, 2015). The concept of sense of place becomes clear in the ‘state-idea’ as formulated by Dikshit (2006), which entails that people living in a specific area have common understanding what that area means to them and these complex traditions and experiences are made up, for instance, of written history, national language and art forms such as music.

Music may serve as an ideal art form for a case study of sense of place, since

in the social sciences music is often considered as the most quintessential art form used for structuring individual and social worlds (see DeNora, 2000). For example, audiences have been shown to attach meaning to music by connecting the art form to their memories, experiences, and idea of self. Thereby, I emphasize place's importance for those aesthetic forms which are often used to structure individuals understanding of the material world (Adorno 1941; DeNora 2000), especially since music is more than sound, and rather tangled up in activities of everyday life (Connell & Gibson, 2003). This makes music an example of 'mediascapes' *par excellence*, as Appadurai (1990) has defined it, in the sense that it shapes the images we have of the world. In such conceptions, music is identified as "an active ingredient in the formation of consciousness and thus knowledge formation" (DeNora, 2003: 59). We can therefore expect a certain synergy between the construction of meaning in music and place. In other words, musical genres influence the way we attach meaning to places, while in turn these meaningful places influence the way we evaluate musical products (Connell & Gibson, 2003). Consequently, the "place-specific" genre of surf music may influence the way audiences perceive the state of California (Carney, 2008 p.10). At the same time this perception of California – often considered the birth place of surf music (Blair, 2015) – will influence the way we evaluate or perceive surf music from all over the world.

Many places or regions where specific musical production and consumption occur become associated with certain styles, genres or sounds (see for example Van Venrooij, 2015 or Cheyne & Binder, 2010). An important factor here may be the concentration of musical infrastructure, but equally important seems the symbolic understandings of place or, in the words of Connell and Gibson (2003), the "mythologizing" of place. This would mean that socially, economically or politically experienced circumstances of these places are somehow captured within music that originates there. The distinctiveness in music of different places rests on the assumptions that there is a relation between the characteristics of a certain place and the characteristics of the sound produced in that place (Connell & Gibson, 2003; Negus, 1996). Thereby, musical media become a sphere in which the specific narratives of place are produced and articulated. These narratives shape a connection between place and music, which impact the evaluation of music, especially through the notion of authenticity. In this context, we can define authenticity in music as "interpretations of validity of music from particular contexts and in certain modes of

consumption” (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p. 28). In other words, when music is made in congruence with the narratives about genre and place, it is more often perceived as authentic, while music that goes against the narratives will fall by the wayside. This idea of incongruence connects to the idea that products that do not live up to their (intended) category expectations are seen as a ‘illegitimate role performance’, and will therefore be penalised (Van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2013; Zuckerman, 1999).

These notions of authenticity or legitimacy of certain places are often produced (or ‘marketed’) from within by music creators, venues, record companies and the music press and is sometimes appropriated by state or tourist promotions. However, this often goes beyond the people in these specific places, generating a mythology of place generally accepted through society (Connell & Gibson, 2003). Notions of origin and roots have shown their importance for musical styles and products and the connection with authenticity paved the way for depicting certain products as ‘exotica’ or as ‘otherness’. Music is often given meanings of authenticity, exotica or otherness by embedding it into place and thereby the credibility of genres or styles arises from their origins (Connell & Gibson, 2003).

Such embedding is demonstrated for the genre of rap music by Cheyne and Binder (2010), who have developed an analysis of ‘place meaning’ and argue how such could be applied to the discourse of elite music critics. They illustrated how critics deployed place as a resource in their discussion of rap music and how this place-based rationale was part of their aesthetic judgements. The authors argued the concept of place “has a constitutive ability to organize social perception” (p. 338). In their perspective, place is an important narrative in the genre of rap, which is fundamental for the genre’s cultural identity and for the way critics legitimate their preferences. This is supported by Brandellero & Pfeffer’s (2015) finding that certain discourse or narratives have helped to enhance the visibility or changed the identity of certain places in the Dutch music field. It is this visibility or identity of certain places that have a symbolic value for the music originating there. In this sense, music serves as a medium for expressing identities, especially applicable to opposing subcultural genres. Here, musical genres and attitudes become part of oppositional subcultures. A subcultural community can gain visibility when defined as cutting edge, authentic or underground, opposed to more mainstream music industries (Connell & Gibson, 2003; Thornton, 1995). Within these communities, these defining narratives create a symbolic distinction between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. Especially in scene literature,

scholars have revealed salient identifiers of scene-based genres, one of which is place. Place, both as locale and location, is thus used as a source of inclusion and exclusion. These sources, when consolidated over time, can become conventional tools in evaluating music (Brandellero & Pfeffer, 2015; Lena, 2012). The following paragraphs are concerned with how locale and location are wielded as tools in evaluating music and how the dimension of ‘sense of place’ can be applied to the other dimensions, in a way turning these concepts into ‘sense of locale’ and ‘sense of location’.

2.3 ‘Sense of locale’ and ‘sense of location’ in the field of music

As described in the introduction, ‘locale’ is concerned with the “microsociological content of place” (Agnew, 1987, p. 5) and is defined through the places in which everyday interaction occurs. According to Cresswell (2004), academic writing on place is most often reserved for things such as neighbourhoods, villages or cities and there is little writing dedicated to places smaller in scale. However, in regards to music, some scholars refer to place categories that can be seen as belonging to the ‘locale’ dimension. Prior research has shown how music associated with different locales can also be differently evaluated (see Cheyne and Binder, 2010 or Negus, 1999 on hip-hop and the myth of the street or ghetto; Brandellero & Pfeffer, 2010 on the Dutch music field and inauthenticity the context of the studio; and Cohen, 1991 on rock music’s belongingness to big city rather than small villages). Association between music and locale can raise a certain ‘mythologizing’ of music genres, in which assumptions about the social locale of specific musical forms are uncritically accepted (Negus, 1999). Brandellero & Pfeffer (2010) argue that even when (geographical) locations are seen as pivotal cultural centres of musical production, locale can have an impact on how acts originating there are remembered. They give the example of how, despite the fact that Hilversum has been an important cultural centre for popular music in the Netherlands for decades, the dominant narrative in this field is influencing how musical acts based there are perceived as inauthentic studio-acts.

Furthermore, many cultural sociologists and cultural geographers argue for the importance of what I call a ‘sense of location’. In Agnew’s (1987) definition, location refers to the ‘macro-order’ of places; to how the face-to-face society is embedded in a

wider territorial society of geographical locations. Locations therefore cannot be seen in isolation, but they are in a complicated relationship with the past and with other locations near and far (Cresswell, 2004). Prior research into the association between locations and music has shown how music is used to conjure up images or feelings of locations important to that musical forms (see Cohen, 1996 on Yiddish music and Jewish homelands in Eastern Europe; Lehr, 1983 on the almost universal meaning of Texas as 'home' in country music; Sinton & Huber (2007) on important US cities in Polka and the Eastern European roots of this genre; and Stewart (2000) on the importance of New Orleans in the development of Funk).

Besides researching the relation between certain genres and locations in terms of origins and associations, Phillips (2013) demonstrates how one genre can be differently evaluated when coming from different locations. He explains such a place-based evaluation in the genre of jazz, where difficult-to-categorize jazz fared better when it had its origins in (for jazz-standards) unconventional locations. On the other hand, conventional jazz was evaluated better when originating from more conventional centres within jazz (e.g. Chicago, New York, London). Clearly in this example, and in other research, there seem to be existing expectations from music that causes us to perceive artists as 'inauthentic' when the combination of their geographical origin and genre mis-fits existing cognitive schema's (Johnston & Baumann, 2007; Cheyne & Binder, 2010). Therefore, we can expect that when this cognitive association between location and genre is strong, the congruence between location and genre is of increased importance.

Together, this demonstrates how I argue that the dimension of 'sense of place' can be applied to both the dimensions of 'locale' and 'location'. Firstly, as a manifestation of a 'sense of locale' in the music field, in which the social or material setting in which music is produced is important for how it is evaluated or remembered. Secondly, there is a 'sense of location' in which geographical locations possess a certain aura that is important when evaluating the music originated there.

2.4 The role of place for retrospective consecration

To address the question which surf songs are remembered over the years, I turn to the concept of retrospective consecration. Bourdieu (1991) has described (contemporaneous) consecration as the social process by which a division is created

between those cultural products that are worthy of esteem and respect and those products that are not. Therefore, retrospective consecration can be understood as the remembrance of cultural products as exemplars of a specific field over a prolonged period of time (Allen & Lincoln, 2004). When this remembrance of exemplar artists become institutionalized (through textbooks, universities, conservatoires, etc.) this collection of exemplars becomes a canon (DiMaggio, 1982). These canons are often considered in the context of highbrow arts. However, popular or subcultural music (such as surf music) also tends to possess a hierarchical organization within itself, which in a way creates a subcultural canon (Lizardo & Skiles, 2008; Thornton, 1995). It is the subcultural canon of surf music, which is shaped through the process of retrospective consecration, that is of interest in the current research.

Prior research on retrospective consecration in the arts has shown the importance of contemporaneous success factors. The importance of different types of contemporaneous recognition or gatekeepers for retrospective consecration is repeatedly demonstrated in the past (see for example Allen & Lincoln, 2004; Braden, 2009; Lang & Lang, 1988; Schmutz, 2005). The present research adds to this the importance of place-based aesthetics to the process of retrospective consecration. Prior research has theorized how categorical identities of cultural products or players can impact the extent of their success achieved (Zuckerman, 1999). The aim of this research is to take the dimensions of place outlined above as categorical identities and test them on an independent influence besides the more general predictors.

3. The genre of surf music

At the dawn of the sixties, young rock bands were taking advantage of the innovative instruments and amplifiers by Fender to create the raw staccato picking and reverb sound characteristic for the genre of surf music. Artists like Dick Dale or Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys are often seen as important driving forces behind the growing popularity of this genre among teenagers in the sixties. As young artists they created a sound (either instrumentally or vocally) that was imitated by youngsters in garages throughout the country and even the world (Blair, 2008; Crowley, 2011). Surf music is often thought of as having its roots in California and being highly mingled up with the surf culture and beach communities present in this state. This ‘mythology of surfing’ is seen as a distinctive feature of California where surf culture became a

popular lifestyle. While surf music's popularity caused a spread of the genre throughout the country, this lifestyle remained somewhat exclusive for California, often labelled as the surfing state. In contrast to other coastal states, while having the 'contextual recourses' to imitate such a lifestyle, California seemed to develop this surf culture to a substantially greater extent (Blair, 2015; Crowley, 2011).

Within the genre, there is a clear distinction made between vocal and instrumental tracks. Nationally, surf music gained popularity through the vocal songs of bands like the Beach Boys and Jan & Dean, while on a more local level a multitude of instrumental teenage bands were representing the genre. These Instro's, with their aggressive lead guitar solos in lieu of lead vocals, are often regarded as the truly authentic surf music. Vocal tracks have more influences from R&B and jazz, while instrumentals often distinguish themselves from these genres by their focus on the Rock 'n' Roll feeling. Dick Dale was one of the most important instigators of the instrumental side of surf music and his attempt with this music style was to musically reproduce the feeling of standing on a surfboard. On the other hand, vocal tracks within the genre were mostly covering the surf culture through their lyrics. Because of this emphasis on surf culture for this genre, it seems to be associated with a very specific 'locale'. In contrast to succeeding music styles, surf music was specifically associated with the beaches, bays, piers and coasts of California (Blair, 2015; Crowley, 2011; Schmidt, 2007).

Around 1963 surf music was spread out through the United States (and beyond) and was experiencing a boom in popularity. The great majority of the surf bands arose during this period and artists usually working in different styles jumped on the bandwagon (Blair, 2015; Crowley, 2011). However, more towards the end of the sixties, the popularity of the genre diminished as sudden as it emerged some years earlier. The 'British invasion' caused a spread of bands like the Beatles towards the U.S., resulting in a shift towards different music styles. This decrease set in during 1964 and towards the end of the decade the genre had its sunset when "music turned away from the beaches" (Blair, 2015, p. 57).

Based on this genre biography and the theoretical arguments above, I hypothesize that in retrospective consecration of music, it is important for music tracks to enjoy a certain congruence between the actual place-based aspects these music tracks hold (both location and locale) and the existing expectations within the genre about of these music tracks. In this paper, I hypothesize especially that this

congruence plays an important role for the retrospective consecration of surf music from the 1980's onwards. The pressure of this congruence can result in favouring those artists who fall within this congruent overlap and the hypothesis here is twofold, in the sense that it takes into account both (1) the existing idea of the importance of California as geographical location and (2) the idea of the importance of material settings that enable the existence of a broader surf culture (e.g. beaches, bays, seas, shores). Derived from this, a last difference in retrospective consecration is hypothesized between coastal states and non-coastal states, with the former having access to the 'correct' locale due to proximity of the ocean and beaches.

4. Data & Methods

4.1 Research Sample

In order to conduct this research, the data collection relies on discographical data from John Blair's (2008) 'The Illustrated Discography of Surf Music'. This discography contains information about thousands of surf music tracks from the period around the early sixties. Blair's discography is often regarded as the most complete overview of all surf music released in the early 1960s and has been used in prior research from a multiplicity of disciplines (see, for example, Carney, 1999; Ford & Brown, 2006; Osgerby, 1999). A great advantage of the discography is that it includes not only more renowned artists in surf music (e.g. The Beach Boys and Dick Dale), but also more minor or unknown artists. By using the section on 'Singles' of the discography (p. 1-140), information on 2.548 surf music tracks released between 1958 and 1970 are sampled, with 'tracks' being my units of analysis. Blair compiles this collection of surf songs by systematically defining both instrumental and vocal surf songs. This categorization is done on basis of, for instance, instrumentation (two guitars, bass, drums and sometimes piano and saxophone), sound (reverb on the guitars) and song titles and lyrics. For a detailed understanding of the selection process I refer to the detailed explanation in Blair's discography (p. vi-vii).

In order to collect possible data missing in Blair's discography, a multitude of online databases is consulted. When general information about tracks, artists or labels is missing, auction websites for (rare) vinyl (www.discogs.com; www.45cat.com; www.popsike.com) and genre specific websites (www.reverbcentral.com;

www.surfguitar101.com) prove to be particularly helpful. These user-generated websites are largely based on the knowledge of an active surf music community, which seems mostly valid since here surf music enthusiasts indicate a living history being recorded on the Internet.

4.2 Dependent variable

To understand how place is important in the genre of surf music, the conceptual dependent variable of the current paper is retrospective cultural consecration. To measure this, I examine what surf tracks are remembered and distinguished from the heyday of the genre during the sixties. Historical distinguishment is operationalized through quantifying how often tracks are included on surf compilation albums from 1980 to 2010. This period for “retrospective consecration” was selected for both theoretical and practical reasons. The start year is set at the 1980s because this time is widely-considered as an important year for the revival of the genre of surf music. This ‘second wave’ popularized the genre with a new audience and mainly did so with reference (and some reiteration) to its roots in the sixties (Crowley, 2011; Schmidt, 2007). The end year of 2010 is set for the more practical reason of the facilitation of the data collection—particularly, since in the process of scraping the website that serve as a source for these compilation albums, it was most convenient to select on decades. This collection of compilation albums is regarded as still up-to-date, since the end year was only 6 years ago

My variable for ‘compilation album inclusion’ is constructed using an online discographic database and auction website called *Discogs* (www.discogs.com). This user-generated database has a focus on Vinyl and CD recordings and with over 16.000 releases categorized as ‘Surf’ serves as a useful database for the current research. By use of a website scraper, the tracks included on 1.177 compilation albums, with at least a partial focus on surf music, are collected. Again, I argue this list of tracks is a form of ‘subcultural canonization’, reflecting the tracks considered most important for surf music as genre. Subsequently, I generate a database in which the units of analyses from the discography by Blair (2008) are matched with the tracks that were scraped from the compilation albums. Thereby, all the units of analysis in the database are assigned a frequency of appearance in the ‘compilations album canon’.

4.3 Independent variables

To analyse how place is of influence on consecration in the genre of surf music, both the dimensions of ‘location’ and ‘locale’ are taken into account. The dimension of location for all songs is examined by the geographical origin of the artist¹. Following prior research, in the evaluation of music the location of the artists is often seen as a good proxy for the location of the song (Cheyne & Binder, 2010; Brandellero & Pfeffer, 2015). In gathering the geographical origin of the artist, I focus on the artists’ countries (external to the USA) or states (internal to the USA) of origin. Inside the USA, geographical location is measured on the level of states, rather than cities, because of the theorized central position of California and the expected difference between coastal and non-coastal states. In order to analyse these expected impacts of geographical location this independent variable is coded as a dummy variable containing four categories: California, coastal state, non-coastal state and international (or non-US). Since a dummy variable implies the categories are mutually exclusive, the songs categorized as “California” are not categorized as coming from a coastal state. Therefore, the category of coastal states is conceptualized as those coastal states beyond California, as I hypothesize that California stands out as an exceptional geographical location in regards to its importance for place-based aesthetics.

The second independent variable measures the place dimension of ‘locale’. This dimension is measured by examining locale terminology (e.g., references to “sand,” “beach” or “ocean”) in both the name of the track and name of the artists. The idea here is that when songs or artists make associations with the details of locale important for the surf culture, they are more likely to be remembered and valued. Specifically, the following references to locale are taken into consideration: ‘beach’, ‘bay’, ‘shore’, ‘coast’, ‘reef’, ‘sea’, ‘pier’, ‘water’, ‘sand’ and ‘tide’. This locale terminology is inductively determined and taken from both the track titles (e.g. ‘On the Beach’ or ‘Lonely Sea’) and the artist names (e.g. ‘The Beach Boys’ or ‘The Ebb Tides’). After determining this specific vocabulary, this independent variable is coded

¹ Originally, the geographical location of the label was also taken into account. However, this showed a very high correlation with the geographical location of the artist and is therefore not included in the regression. Nevertheless, this high correlation strengthens my point to use location of the artist a measurement of location of the song.

dichotomously, as either containing locale terminology or not containing local terminology. The language used in both the track titles and act names are taken together here, since there is no reason to expect a difference between their terminologies for locale. This dichotomy thus divides the units of analysis in (a) a group of artists without any surfing locale terminology and (b) a group of artists that used locale terminology in either the track title or the artist name at least once.

4.4 Control variables

Besides the main independent variables, the analysis includes control variables in order to make sure the effects found for the independent variables are rigorous and not a product of other factors. That is to say, the control variables are expected to have an effect on the retrospective consecration of surf music tracks, alongside the expected effects of the variables of 'location' and 'locale'. These control variables are mostly structured around contemporary success of surf tracks, since this has proved to be a strong indicator for retrospective consecration (Allen & Lincoln, 2004; Schmutz, 2005).

First, the research takes into consideration that the more successful actors in the field of surf music will simply be more easily remembered. Therefore the contemporary success of the 2.548 individual tracks is the first control variable. Contemporary success is measured by looking at the Billboard Top 100 and by listing for every track whether it attained a position on these hit charts between 1960 and 1970. Thereby, this variable controls for the current success of the tracks in the time they were released. The measure is based on the assumption that tracks that fared well during the sixties, considered the heyday of surf music in the United States, are more easily consecrated retrospectively than those tracks that were fairly unknown in their own time. This variable is therefore constructed as a dichotomy in which tracks are either labelled as 'hit' or 'no hit' during the sixties, and is obtained from the official websites of Billboard (www.billboard.com).

Relatedly, a second form of success that might be of influence is the success the artists had prior to the time of consecration. As with the contemporary success of the tracks, this variable is constructed by looking at chart listings. The frequency of inclusion in the Billboard Top 100 and UK Singles Charts up to the 1980's (the starting year of the 'late period') is used to measure the prior success of the 1008

different artists in the database². The UK Charts are included as representation of the contemporary success the artists had in Europe, especially since most of the non-US artists originated from the UK. This chart inclusion is obtained from the official websites of both these national charts (www.billboard.com; www.officialcharts.com).

The last type of success to be considered is the success of the label on which the song was released. This measurement is based on the assumption that songs released on bigger labels have an increased chance of being remembered (due to, for instance, a larger marketing budget and an increased involvement in the production of the late compilation albums). This variable is operationalized by looking at the amount of tracks released on each of the albums included in the discography by Blair (2008). Large labels that released more tracks during the heyday of surf music (again, the 1960s) are expected to have an influence on the tracks included on the compilation albums produced 20 to 50 years later. Contemporaneous recognition has proved to be of importance in a variety of ways (Allen & Lincoln, 2004), and these control variables are constructed in order to cover the concept ‘prior success’ in its broadness. Overall, in taking this subdivision of prior success, the control variables are expected to cover most of the factors that influence the consecration of surf tracks.

In addition to these various ways of measuring prior success, the distinction between instrumental and vocal surf songs is controlled for. As the section on the field of surf music illustrates, different actors were active in either instrumental surf music (e.g. Dick Dale, often regarded the ‘founding father’ of the genre) or vocal surf music (e.g. The Beach Boys, regarded as responsible for the commercial and international success of the genre) (Blair, 2015). These actors have different authenticity claims when it comes to the ‘true surf music’ and the producers of the late ‘compilation albums’ are therefore expected to favour one of these styles of surf music. This makes it necessary to control on the nature of the song, included as a dichotomy, being either ‘vocal’ or ‘instrumental’, and retrieved from the discography by John Blair (2008).

² The Australian national charts weren’t included, despite the important role this country played in surf culture. These charts only started in the seventies, very close the starting year of the ‘late period’ of this research. Therefore, inclusion within these charts is considered a less valid operationalization of the ‘prior success of artists’.

4.5 Negative binomial regression

Negative binomial regression was used to model the retrospective consecration of surf music tracks, since the dependent variable is constructed as count data or non-negative integers. Even though Poisson regression is usually applied to model count data, this type of regression is based on the assumption that the variance and the mean of the count data are equal ($E(y_t) = \text{Var}(y_t)$). However, in the count data for the current research, the variance exceeds the mean, resulting in overdispersion that can lead to an underestimation of the standard errors. This ‘long-tail distribution’ of the data can therefore result in erroneously rejecting the null hypothesis. Negative binomial regression resolves this problem by estimating a log-transformed overdispersion parameter that helps in correcting the standard errors. The fit for this model is showcased by the Pearson Chi-square goodness of fit test, which is much better for negative binomial regression (1,727) than for Poisson regression (7,846) and so is the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) (3777,22 compared to a BIC of 6505,655 for a Poisson regression).

To test the effects of the different dimensions of place, the independent and control variables are entered in blocks. Thereby, the negative binomial regression shows whether the place-based aesthetics still have an affect after adding the control variables. In order to measure the fit of these different blocks, the log-likelihood of these different nested models is compared to each other and to the null model (with only the intercept, log-likelihood = -2072.738) using the following formula:

$$(-2) \times [(\text{log-likelihood of model A}) - (\text{log-likelihood of model B})]$$

This formula gives a log-likelihood ratio chi-square that can be used to evaluate the improvement of fit per model. The degrees of freedom, used for the test of significance, equal the number of unique variables from model B. Besides that, the B-coefficients can be converted by using the following formula:

$$100 \times [\exp(B) - 1]$$

This formula demonstrates the effect (in percentages) that a one-unit change in a variable (X) will have on the expected number of compilation album inclusions. This

conversion allows for better comparison between the different independent and control variables.

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive statistics

Before turning to the outcomes of the negative binomial regression, some descriptive statistics are covered that illustrate the distribution of surf tracks over the United States and give an idea how references to locale are distributed among the total of surf tracks. Figure 1 shows that only four of the 50 states of America didn't contain any surf tracks (being Wyoming, Utah, West Virginia and Alaska). This figure also demonstrates the expected dominancy of California in the geographical origins of the surf tracks. With 897 of the 1,836 tracks coming from this state it produced almost half of the dataset's tracks between 1959 and 1970. Other states that were seemingly dominant in terms of the production of surf tracks are New York (104), Texas (89), Ohio (60), Minnesota (54) and Illinois (52). All of these states represent over more than 50 of the surf tracks each, of which the former two are considered coastal states, while the latter three are coded as non-coastal states. However, these more dominant states all originated only a limited number of tracks compared to California. This dominancy of California is confirmed by the descriptive statistics in table 1, which shows a considerable higher mean of number of late compilation album inclusion for California (1.76), compared to the categories of coastal states, non-coastal states and international (respectively 0.46, 0.56 and 0.29). The expected increased likeliness for coastal states to be retrospectively consecrated (because of the 'correct' locale present at coastal states) is for now falsified by the comparable means of coastal states and non-coastal states (if anything, non-coastal states even score slightly better).

Besides that, table 1 provides us with an inside on the locale references made in the different geographical locations. As the percentages in the second column show, there are only minor differences between the four location categories and their references in terminology to the 'correct' locale. Songs originating from either California or other coastal states only refer slightly more often to locale (respectively 8.9% and 11%) than non-coastal states and international tracks (respectively 5.3% and 6.1%). In total, only 8.1% of the tracks contained a local reference in either their title

or in the name of their artists.

Figure 1
The distribution of surf tracks produced between 1959 and 1970 over the United States

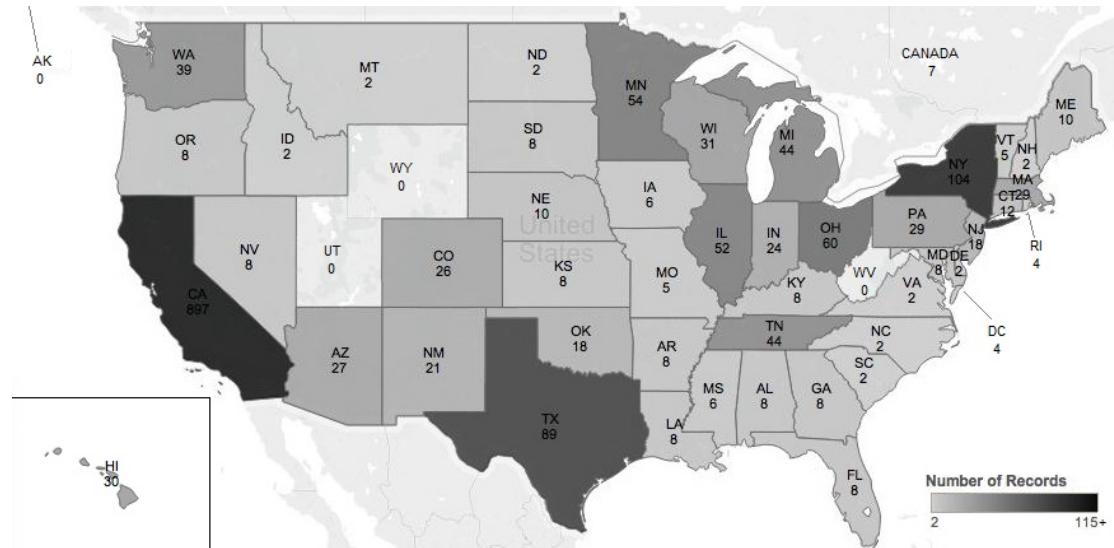


Table 1
Descriptive statistics divided over each of the categories of the variable 'Artist's Location'

	N	Locale reference	Late Compilation Album Inclusion				
			Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
California	897	8.9%	0	99	1.76	7.34	53.89
Coastal States	399	11%	0	50	0.46	2.73	7.450
Non-Coastal States	506	5.3%	0	62	0.56	3.01	9.055
International	49	6.1%	0	4	0.29	0.76	0.58
Missing	696	7.6%	0	4	0.09	0.43	0.184
Total	2547	8.1%	0	99	0.83	4.74	22.48

N= 2547

5.2 Results negative binomial regression

In order to analyse the effects of the different dimensions of place on retrospective consecration, alongside the effects of often argued control variables, table 2 presents

five models in which the compilation album inclusion is regressed on the different locations, the locale reference and four control variables. Since for not all tracks the geographical origins are known, this analysis includes 1836 cases. Comparing the log-likelihood with the formula provided above gives improvement of the fit of each model (for which calculations are presented in the following paragraphs).

In model 1 and 2 the two independent variables of locale and location are modelled individually. Model 1 in table 2 only includes the effect of Locale terminology on the likeliness of inclusion on the late compilation albums. The model shows a significant negative effect of this variable that should be interpreted with tracks that contain local terminology as reference category (coded as 1). Therefore, the inclusion of locale terminology in either the title of the track or the name of the artists has the expected positive effect on the inclusion in the compilation albums between 1980 and 2010, since there is a negative effect for not including terminology (coded as 0 and compared to the reference category). Converting this effect into change in percentages indications us a decrease of 50,1% per one-unit change in X (through the formula $100 \times [\exp(-0.695) - 1]$). This means that excluding locale terminology from track titles or artist names prompts a 50,1% decrease in the number of times tracks are included on the compilation albums.

Model 2 introduces the dummy variable of location with California as reference category. As table 2 shows, all the other categories show a significant negative effect in comparison to California. On the basis of an ANOVA-test the other categories didn't show any significant differences among each other and therefore the only significant effects are interpreted in comparison with California. Converting the B coefficients to change in terms of percentages shows that compared to California, tracks from coastal states, non-coastal states and international are all less likely to be included in the compilation-canon (respectively 73.8%, 67.9% and 83.5% less likely). Therefore, this model shows that geographically originating from California has a significant positive effect compared to the other categories in this model, thereby confirming the expected importance of California in the place-based aesthetics of surf music. This 'California-aesthetic' is consolidated by the fact that there is no significant difference found between coastal and non-coastal states. Using the formula to assess the improvement of these first two models demonstrates that both model 1 and 2 are a significant improvement to the null model (respectively: chi-square = 10.21, df = 1, p < 0.01; and chi-square = 86.962, df = 1, p < 0.01).

Model 3 includes both of the independent variables and enables a comparison between the effects of location and locale. This model shows significant negative effects for both of the variables, however the effect of the variable locale is reduced while the effect of location remains almost the same. This indicates that part of the effects of the variable locale is explained by the variable location. This combined model shows a significant improvement in comparison to both model 1 and 2 (respectively: chi-square = 81.068, df = 1, p < 0.01; chi-square = 4.316, df = 1, p < 0.05).

The control variables are introduced in model 4 all together. This model proves to be a strong significant improvement compared to the null model (chi-square = 383,79, df = 4, p < 0.01). The effect of the hit dummy, the label size and the nature of the track all show a significant result. First of all, the effect of the hit dummy is very strong and, when converted to a change in percentages, tells us that tracks scoring in the hit charts in the 60's are about 30 times more often included on compilation album (an increase of 3123.33%). This indicates that in regressing the compilation album inclusion the hit dummy is a very strong predictor. Subsequently, the positive effect of the ratio variable label size is converted as a change of 3.6% per one-unit change in X. With a maximum label size of 77 this is a fairly substantial control variable besides the hit dummy. At last, the nature of the tracks turns out to have a significant negative effect, which has to be interpreted with instrumental tracks as reference category. Converting it to change in percentages tells us that when a track is vocal rather than instrumental this prompts a 64.9% decrease in compilation album inclusion. Although this is not as strong an effect as the prior two control variables, this genre specific control variable still explains a significant part of the variance in the inclusion on late compilations.

The last control variable of prior hits of the artist shows a fairly weak and insignificant result. Besides the other control variables the prior hits the artists scored until the 80's is not having a predictive effect. This insignificance of this variable can be explained by the high number of hits scored by artists like 'Pat Boone', 'Chubby Checker' and 'Ray Stevens', who mostly experienced their success outside of surf music. As the story of surf music goes, after its initial success many bands jumped on the bandwagon to share in the genres popularity (Blair, 2015). Some of these artists have been very successful in other genres, but the current paper shows that in subcultural canonization they are not remembered for their surf tracks. The strong

Table 2**Negative binomial regression models of late compilation album inclusion**

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
Intercept	0.728***	(0.2245)	0.567***	(0.0885)	0.949***	(0.2161)	-0.689***	(0.0808)	-0.411^	(0.2389)
Not containing 'locale' terminology	-0.695**	(0.2352)			-0.449**	(0.2259)			0.103	(0.2300)
Coastal states			-1.340***	(0.1723)	-1.303***	(0.1725)			-1.080***	(0.1555)
Non-coastal states			-1.136***	(0.1159)	-1.092***	(0.1566)			-0.669***	(0.1369)
International			-1.799***	(0.4621)	-1.741***	(0.4616)			-0.925*	(0.4144)
Hit dummy							3.473***	(0.3237)	3.367***	(0.3089)
Prior hits artist							0.004	(0.0057)	0.005	(0.0061)
Label size							0.036***	(0.0037)	0.030***	(0.0036)
Instrumental track							-1.048***	(0.1266)	-0.930***	(0.1261)
Log likelihood	-2067.633		-2029.257		-2027.099		-1880.843		-1851.033	
Negative binomial	7.279	(0.4365)	6.455	(0.3966)	6.391	(0.3945)	3.774	(0.2689)	3.410	(0.2485)

Reference categories are: Locale: 'containing locale terminology' (1); Location: 'California'; Hit dummy: 'no hit' (0); Nature: 'instrumental' (1)

Standard errors are reported between brackets

N=1836; ***p≤0.001, **p≤0.01, *p≤0.05, ^p≤0.1 (all two-tailed)

effect of the hit dummy, compared to the other control variables of success can be explained by the fact that his measure is the most direct control variable for the success of the actual tracks (the units of analysis). Besides that those songs that are concurrently consecrated (through the hit charts) are of course more likely to be remembered over the course of time.

Model 5 includes both the independent variables and all the control variables, to test whether the variables of location and locale still have significant effects when more general predictors of retrospective consecration are added. Compared to the control variable model, this last model again shows a significant improvement (chi-square = 59.62, df = 2, p < 0.01). As can be seen in table 2, the control variables of the hit dummy, the label size and the nature of the track still have significant results. The effect of the hit dummy remains very strong and positive, meaning that scoring in the hit charts during the 60's increases the number of compilation album inclusions between 1980 and 2010 substantially (with 2799.14%). Subsequently, label size still shows a significant positive effect of 3.05% per one-unit increase in X, meaning that the bigger the label the tracks were signed with the better they are retrospectively consecrated. Besides that, model 5 shows that tracks that are vocal in nature will have a decreased likeliness of 60.54% to be retrospectively consecrated compared to track that are instrumental³. Yet, when turning to the independent variables, model 5 shows that the locale references do not longer have a significant effect. When controlled for various forms of concurrent success, the references to locale in the title of the tracks and names of the artists aren't of significant importance⁴. However, the location variables still shows significant negative effects, meaning that compared to California, the categories of coastal states, non-coastal states and international all score lower on the retrospective compilation album inclusion (respectively 66.04%, 48.78% and 60.35%).

³ This last model was controlled on an interaction effect between locale and nature of the track, because it can be expected that locale references are of greater importance for vocal songs since in providing their tracks with a 'surf feeling' these rely more on textual signifiers. However, none of the interaction effects between these two variables showed relevant results.

⁴ This last model was controlled on an interaction effect between locale and location, following the idea that tracks from location with no coasts or beaches might have increased benefit from the locale references to provide the 'correct' sense of place for surf music. However, none of the interaction effects showed any interesting results.

6. Discussion and conclusion

This paper started from the premise that in understanding retrospective cultural consecration, different dimensions of place can play an explanatory role, additional to more general predictors. The aim of this paper was to see how different dimensions of place, as distinguished by John Agnew (1987), have their independent influence on how we remember music genres and it's musicians. In order to analyse these dimensions' effect on long-term subcultural canon-formation, I used an extensive database of surf music. Firstly, this paper confirms the importance of concurrent success on different levels, as theorized by prior research on retrospective cultural consecration (Allen & Lincoln, 2004; Braden, 2009; Lang & Lang, 1988; Schmutz, 2005). The success of individual tracks in the music charts showed to be most important, but as expected the size of the label proved to be a good predictor too. Furthermore, this paper confirms authenticity claims made by surf music aficionados that instrumental surf tracks represent the 'real surf music' (Blair, 2015; Crowley, 2011).

However, the results of the study also suggest an additional effect of surf music's place-based aesthetics. It shows that tracks that originated in California during the 1960's were significantly more often included on compilation albums twenty to fifty years later. This supports the idea that the dimension of location has important implications for surf music and that the narrative of California as birth place of surf music has a certain symbolic power. By controlling for the presence of important music labels and other forms of concurrent success, this importance of 'location' cannot only be credited to the vibrant music scene, which has its locational advantages in its concentration of the music industry and commercial enterprises (Florida, et al., 2010), but should also be ascribed to a certain 'sense of location'. The current research suggests a certain 'California-aesthetic' that is independent from any practical or productional features of California as a location. This confirms the narratives about surf music that are strongly associated to the beach communities of Southern California (Blair, 2015). This California-aesthetic seems so strong that music originated elsewhere doesn't even benefit from giving the illusion of the 'correct' locale. For those locations that lack the proximity of oceans or beaches, references to surf locales seem irrelevant for their remembrance on the long run. This paper thereby shows that what I have called 'sense of location' is stronger embedded

in the narratives on surf music than the ‘sense of locale’. US coastal states (other than California) showed no significant difference with the landlocked states. Additionally, the locale references did not turn out to be of importance, thereby emphasizing the influence of the California-aesthetic. Thereby this paper confirms prior theories on how credibility of genres arises from their origins (Connell & Gibson, 2003).

The analysis presented here of course has its limitations. One limitation is the focus on the ‘production-based’ associations between California and surf-music. I used the artists’ location as a proxy for the origins of the tracks, thereby disregarding the consumption diffusion of surf music over the United States or even the rest of the world (Blair, 2015; Carney, 1999). The paper thereby doesn’t address to what extent the consumption patterns in surf music really ever left California and to what extent this state played a central role on this consumption side. Additional research could indicate to what extent ‘place-based’ consumption patterns played a role in creating a sense of place in surf music. Besides that, by picking a case with a explicit and specific place of origin as the genre of surf music, the paper was able to demonstrate the working of place-based aesthetics, but it is only the question to what extent these findings are transferable to other music genres. For future research, it might therefore be interesting to test this place-based aesthetics for other American roots music (e.g. bluegrass, country western, Cajun or gospel) or on the other hand to music styles that contain more implicit place connotations. Furthermore, it might be necessary to study this place-based aesthetics longitudinally to see in what stages of genre development this association between place and music arises (for example by following the genre stages as differentiated by Jennifer Lena (2012)). Especially because California is often taken as the birthplace of surf music and therefore the ‘California-aesthetic’ found in this paper can be expected to exist from the genesis of the genre onwards.

At last, it is important to understand that the current paper focused on the ‘symbolic’ impact of location and locale. By finding an insignificant result for ‘locale’, I do not conclude that locale doesn’t matter in the field of surf music, but rather that it doesn’t have the symbolic influence I hypothesized on (what I have called ‘sense of locale’). However, the hypothesized symbolic importance of California was found and surf tracks that meet the expectations of this ‘California-aesthetic’ are remembered over time.

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