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# Countercultural Space Does Not Persist: Christiania, and the Role of Music

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

This text was originally published in *Countercultures & Popular Music* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2014).

- 1 WITHIN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY the study of countercultural space is well established, and the term 'counterculture' is used to describe the values and norms of behaviour of a social group that functions in opposition to the social mainstream of the day.<sup>1</sup> The term was first used in 1969 by Theodore Roszak (1970) and subsequently assigned more generally to 1960s political, social and cultural activities. Music is important in most writing about countercultural space. Regardless of whether the writer is a historian, journalist or sociologist, the significance of music within the culture is often highlighted. There may be two reasons for this. On the one hand, music has been seen as a mediating tool of the counterculture, because the message of the counterculture was communicated through music. It was by no means the only communicative tool, but it was an effective one. On the other hand, music from the time when countercultural space flourished in the 1960s has lived on and can now arguably be seen as its most potent legacy. It seems strange, therefore, that the subject has not been popular among music scholars.
- 2 The counterculture movements of the 1960s began in the US and have often been interpreted as the rejection of social norms of the 1950s by young people. Hippies were the most recognised and largest subgroup within this demographic. They upheld alternative ways of living and among their main issues were sexual liberation (including gay rights), free and new spirituality, relaxation of prohibition against recreational drugs and an end to the war in Vietnam. The hippie counterculture can be traced back to the Beats of the East Village in New York, who had 'removed themselves from the mainstays of dominant ideology' (Gair 2007: 57). Another important group of the 1960s counterculture, named the 'New Left', was regarded as a political movement and it focused mainly on social activism. There was some tension between the two groups, even though they both grew out of social restlessness deriving from cultural discontent (Breines 2004: 36).
- 3 It is generally agreed that the counterculture, as defined above, was driven by a genre of new psychedelic rock and artists such as the Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix and Jefferson Airplane. At first sight music seemed to have purely entertainment value. However, Sheila Whiteley sees music as central to the counterculture and states that it was a common belief that rock music could communicate countercultural concerns, values and attitudes, thus 'providing a particular location for self-identity' (2000: 23). Waksman found that the countercultural community was defined through rock music (1998: 56–7) and he quotes Robert Duncan, a rock critic and editor, who observed that 'it is around the music that the [countercultural] community has grown and it is the music which holds the community together' (ibid.: 55). In addition, music was a way to fuel the economy of countercultural practices (Hale 2002: 143).
- 4 The counterculture movement spread to Europe, where London, Amsterdam, Paris and Berlin became centres of countercultural space. The student uprising in Paris in May 1968 and the 'Prague Spring' in the same year are manifestations of this dissemination of countercultural activity (Junker and Gassert 2004: 424). Another and less familiar



counter-cultural space was 'Christiania' in Copenhagen, Denmark. Christiania was founded in 1971 and is still very much alive today. Its society, culture and alternative ways of living clearly derive from the counter-culture of the 1960s and it remains an important centre for cultural resistance even today. Christiania thus offers an interesting case study in the broader topic of music and place, which has recently emerged in musicology. The hybridisation of musicology and cultural geography with urban space provides tools that enable the scrutiny of place and space through musical performance practice. Via this interdisciplinary methodology it is possible to shed light on the complex cultural and social formation of Christiania as a city within a city and to re-examine whether Christiania can today be considered a counter-cultural space opposed to 'normal' Danish culture.

## Theoretical Background

- 5 The theoretical framework of this chapter is drawn mainly from the works of two scholars, Adam Krims and Sara Cohen. Both focus on music in urban space, and their approach provides a helpful starting point for the analysis. For both Krims and Cohen, music in the city operates within a 'post-industrial' context; however, Christiania does not easily fit such a profile or even a city at all. Hence, many of their ideas do not apply neatly here. Indeed, the study of music in Christiania seems to problematise many of the conclusions reached by Krims and Cohen.
- 6 Many of Krims's ideas are relevant to the study of Christiania, such as how music 'spatializes' (2007: xv) and the importance of music for place and the people who socialise there, how music 'can come to characterize space', how people can become an important factor in characterising space and its music, and how different socio-economic classes play a role in this characterisation (ibid.: xxxi). Krims sees contemporary cities as simultaneously both open and closed but, in many senses, Christiania seems to resist the binary models of openness/closure outlined by Krims, and it therefore offers an interesting case study in the analysis of music and urban space. Cohen discusses the interesting, but problematic idea of a 'local city sound' in Liverpool (ibid.: 68).
- 7 This chapter investigates the idea of a local sound in Christiania and the 'authenticity' of the music. It also asks whether music in Christiania sounds different compared to music in other places in Denmark and explores the role of tourism in this. Christiania can arguably be seen as a place containing different cultures. The chapter explores which musical culture, if any, is seen by Christianites as the most 'authentic' and true to their values, whether it is possible to trace a hierarchical structure through Christiania's cultural practices, and how people act within the community.

## Christiania as a Counter-cultural Space

- 8 Christiania has clearly defined borders in a geographical sense, as a village in the heart of Copenhagen. However, as a social and cultural construction, it is ambiguous, as it remains central to the Danish discourse on democracy and freedom. Christiania has been described as an 'outdoor museum for the culture of the 1960's and 70's, which, because of a fence, has survived in a world that would otherwise have destroyed it years ago' (Kvorning 2004: 85). It goes without saying that things have changed in

Christiania over the last 37 years, but because of its walls and the community created within them, Christiania has been able to maintain a certain uniqueness. It has been allowed to develop through the years as a 'social experiment' but in the light of recent political changes there are dangers that this experiment and the countercultural community might be coming to an end.

- 9 The army barracks, which now form Christiania, were built at the beginning of the twentieth century. The military moved out of the barracks in 1969 and, as the authorities had not made future plans, 'Slumstormere'<sup>2</sup> ['Slum Stormers'] broke into the barracks in May 1971 (Christianias Baggrundsgruppe 2006: 34). The only member of the media that reported on this development was the alternative newspaper *Hovedbladet*, which encouraged people to move into the area (Ludvigsen 1971:10–11). The relative silence about Christiania at the beginning meant that when the public, media and politicians finally became conscious of the existence of Christiania at the beginning of 1972, between 400 and 500 people were already living in the area (Baldvig 1982: 11). Folketinget [The Danish Parliament] officially recognised Christiania as a 'social experiment' in 1973 (Davis 1979: 794). Its existence has caused political controversies over the years and it has always been on the verge of closing. But due to extensive protests among the general public, the experiment has been allowed to continue to the present day. Baldvig describes the original settlement pattern in Christiania as follows:

The interesting thing is that it became an area which was populated both by representatives of the student revolt and by the weaker members of society, who, individually, had inter alia tried to improve their lot with the help of crime. Christiania's immediate function for these two groups was, of course, crucially different. The students, the activists, regarded Christiania as a challenge, an opportunity to realize some of the ideals they had with respect to an alternative society. For the dropouts, the weak, and the criminals, Christiania was, in the short-term, a refuge, an opportunity to escape from the problems which they had experienced in the metropolis. The activists thus went to Christiania, while the down-and-outs fled from Copenhagen. (Baldvig 1982: 11)

- 10 These two groups can perhaps be paralleled with the two different poles of the counterculture: the New Left and the hippies, or in other words, political and cultural rebellion. However, the Christianite Laurie Grundt describes the inhabitants of Christiania in the following way:

Christiania er opdelt i tre dele ... En tredjedel af christianitterne (omkring 300) er 'de entusiastiske', det vil sige akademikerne og de intellektuelle. En tredjedel er medløbere, den "organiske del". Resten udgør den 'sovende del'.

[Christiania is divided into three parts ... One third of Christianites (around 300) are 'the enthusiastic', i.e. the academics and the intellectuals. One third are the followers, the 'organic part'. The remainder are the 'sleeping part'.] (Hansen and Gonzalez 2004: 23)

Part of the enthusiastic section was a guerrilla theatre group called Solvognen [The Sun Wagon], which existed from 1969 until 1983 and who 'used their theatre activities both to criticize the rest of Danish society and to suggest new social, historic, and economic relationships' (MacPhee and Reuland 2007: 136).

- 11 In the first year, some of the more 'active' occupants summarised their vision of Christiania as a space for an independent society, economically self-sufficient where individuals are free, subordinate only to the community. Christianites should constantly strive to eliminate the negative influence of modern society; capitalism and stress (Christianias lokalhistoriske arkiv). Today, it is possible for inhabitants to live

exclusively in Christiania – technically speaking. The residents can buy food, personal goods and materials to renovate their homes locally and there is a variety of restaurants and pubs for entertainment. However, the community does not provide social services, such as education and health care, and the residents therefore also rely on ‘the outside world’.

- 12 The form of government or administration in Christiania has been called consensus-democracy and is built on the basic idea that all inhabitants are equal and have equal power. From the beginning the organisation of Christiania was also seen in a negative light where it’s inhabitants were already falling into different groups:

But the class system in Christiania – it would perhaps be better described as a caste system – is, if anything, more rigid than that in the outside society. By and large, the junkies are at the bottom of the pile ... This puts them at a special disadvantage, and has caused grave problems to the more idealistic social leaders in Christiania. The junkies, by virtue of their unwillingness and inability to contribute to the community effort of Christiania, have come to be regarded as ‘leeches’ on the community! (Davis 1979: 806)

- 13 In this light, Davis argues that Christiania’s ideology is not an answer to the problems of modern Danish society. He also points out the ‘failure of the economic ideal of Christiania. Far from rejecting capitalist values, the community has developed not only a petit bourgeoisie of restaurateurs and shop-owners, but also a definite upper-class leadership’ (ibid.: 808). Despite the negative outlook on junkies in Christiania, drugs were a defining part of its life, just as they were in countercultures elsewhere. Today, even though drug use is prohibited in Denmark, ‘pushers’, who live partly outside the community, sell cannabis openly in Christiania. According to my informants, there have been problems with the ‘pushers’ as they were not willing to fulfil their social duties within the community and were therefore regarded as problematic. The only prerequisite for selling cannabis is to have lived in Christiania for two years and many of the ‘pushers’ employ outsiders as ‘runners’ who have no ties with the community.

## Musical Spaces in Christiania

- 14 Over the main entrance into Christiania a large sign reads ‘Christiania’ (Figure 1), while on the other side it reads ‘You are now entering the EU’. This indicates that Christianites perceive Christiania as both a physical area and an ideological one, which distinguishes itself politically and socially from the rest of Denmark.

Figure 1: The entrance into Christiania



PHOTO: THORBJÖRG DAPHNE HALL

- 15 The area offers a physical contrast to Copenhagen's busy asphalt streets and traffic as most of Christiania is green, and the roads are nothing more than paths or gravel roads, as the whole area is free of cars.<sup>3</sup> The urban area in Christiania or 'byen', with its paved streets and ubiquitous graffiti, greets visitors who come through the main entrance on foot or bicycle. Soon a cosmopolitan market square appears in front of Pusher Street. This is the main street in *byen*, where vessels, filled with glowing coals, burning 24 hours a day all year around, are a prominent landmark. Here the pushers sell their cannabis, and tourists<sup>4</sup> are frequently offered hash whilst walking around.
- 16 Since its inception Christiania has had many musical venues. Den Grå Hal [The Grey Hall] has hosted many of the biggest festivals, concerts and meetings throughout Christiania's history, including various *Støttefest* [support festivals]. *Månefiskeren* [The Moon Fish] is one of Christiania's oldest musical venues and a home to *Månekabareten* [Moon Cabaret], 'authentic hippy music', reggae and hip-hop (Vesterberg 2007: 15). Another music venue, *Operaen* [The Opera], was originally called *Det Gule Værtshus* [The Yellow Pub], but received its present name in 1976 when the opera *Jensen på Sporet* was performed in the building (Martinussen 2007). Since then, it has been popular for performances of all kinds of music and cabaret (Madsen n.d.). *Musik Loppen* [The Musical Flea] opened in 1973 as The Viking Jazz Club (Lauritsen 2002: 62) but the name quickly changed to *Jazzhus Loppen*. Rock music arrived on the scene two years later when a rock band managed to sneak on stage. In 2002 the State Music Council declared it 'a regional music venue' for showing new and experimental music (ibid.: 62). *Woodstock* and *Nemoland* (Figure 2) are pubs that frequently offer concerts during the summer on an outdoor stage.



- 17 In the summer of 2008 Nemoland was part of the Copenhagen Jazz Festival and was advertised as such in the jazz festival's brochure. Interestingly though, the venue had created its own poster, which didn't mention the Copenhagen Jazz Festival, thus separating itself from the mainstream events. Bars and cafés use different genres of music to characterise their space; Woodstock plays rock and Café Nemoland reggae. However, by looking at these two bars from the perspective of Krims' idea that people bring their own cultural preferences with them (2007: xxviii), it is possible to argue that the people who attend the different bars affect the music. The customers in Woodstock are mainly old men, and the music is often as old as Christiania, or in a similar spirit, thus suiting the customers.

Figure 2: The stage by Nemoland



PHOTO: THORBJÖRG DAPHNE HALL

- 18 Café Nemoland is mainly occupied by younger people, many sporting dreadlocks, which have often been associated with the 'Rastafari movement' and therefore with Jamaica, Bob Marley and reggae music.
- One example of how venues change according to the surroundings and do not necessarily adhere to their own pattern became clear during a visit to Woodstock. As it represents the local culture, Woodstock was described by inhabitants as an old rock venue that would certainly not play commercial popular music. However, I soon discovered that it happily played this kind of music, showing that nothing is set in stone, and that the expectations the inhabitants have for a certain venue reflect only how they feel it should operate.
- 19 It is clear that for a community of only around 1,000 inhabitants, Christiania is musically a very active place, and the number of music venues is uncommonly high. It can be argued, therefore, that music plays a large role in the way Christiania is



experienced. In addition to performances at the traditional music venues, buskers can be found playing at the main entrance, in Maskinhallen [The Machine Hall] workers play music on a stereo system from dawn till dusk, Genbrugsstationen [The Recycling Centre] has hosted outdoor concert series – such as Dancing at the Trasher – and the market square, Carl Madsens Plads, can also be seen as a musical hot spot and is a point of cultural rendezvous with many of the booths or tables playing their own music: African drum music, hip-hop, reggae and rock, all mixed together, creating an exotic atmosphere. Just across the street a ghetto blaster plays gangster rap 24 hours a day – I experienced this as the music of the pushers, who work around the clock.

- 20 Clearly, contrasting musical ‘hot spots’ exist within the fairly small area of ‘downtown’ Christiania. Each of them creates a certain uniqueness for the space surrounding it. This can be compared to Krims’ idea of ‘music as interior design’ (2007: 157). The different spaces offer their own perception of Christiania and can therefore attract or ‘service’ diverse consumers. Some spaces are obviously designed for tourists, such as the market, where the music can arguably be seen as a commercial phenomenon; other spaces are not considered ‘tourist areas’, and in these areas the music has a different function. However, for all of them, the music plays a role in characterising the space.
- 21 Sometimes music can be used to delimit a certain sphere within a larger space. Here, the role of the music is to create the ‘right’ atmosphere for the venue, thus creating invisible borders. For example, each booth in the market square had its own music to emphasise the products on offer, drawing the consumers into its ‘exotic world’ in order to make the product more appealing. Another ‘world’ is represented by the music of the pushers, and the music marks out the invisible borders of the pushers’ territory – to me, it seems that the music created an atmosphere of danger and forced behaviour and accented illegal activities that require caution. This is largely due to the musical genre, especially gangsta rap, which often depicts such a situation. In Christiania, music consequently plays a major role in creating an atmosphere for different spaces. It can be used as a commercial ploy or purely for entertainment, but in either case, music generates a character for each space and affects how people experience it.

## The Openness and Closure of Christiania

- 22 In a geographical sense, Christiania is a closed community, as it is contained within the walls surrounding former military barracks. A few years ago it was possible to take a bus labelled ‘Christiania’, but the service is now called ‘Refshalevej’, and the stop for the main entrance is ‘Prinsessegade’. The route still exists, but for unknown reasons the name has been changed. Furthermore, while Christiania is one of the biggest tourist attractions in the city, and city authorities normally pave the way for tourists to main attractions, on several occasions, whilst walking in Christianshavn, I was asked directions to Christiania, suggesting Christiania is fairly difficult to find. Similarly, brochures, posters and information on concerts, events, shops and all imaginable things to do in Copenhagen often lack information on Christiania. Perhaps a conscious political decision has been taken by the city authorities to rebrand the city by excluding Christiania, especially since it is such a popular tourist destination. Christiania may not fit the image that the authorities are constructing for Copenhagen because it represents for them what is ‘wrong’ and ‘problematic’ with Danish society, for example alcoholism, drug addiction, unemployment and homelessness, and perhaps

what is arguably worse: an area that the authorities struggle to control. Ironically, though, by excluding the village from the cultural map, the authorities might only be intensifying its countercultural status.

- 23 Musical activities can be one of the ways in which communities open their doors to the general public. Many people come to Christiania with the sole purpose of attending a concert, and others use the music as an excuse to come into the area and smoke a joint while a band plays on stage. People can enjoy a good concert despite their differences. By studying the programme at Loppen, Christiania's most famous and active music venue (Figure 3),<sup>5</sup> it is obvious that it does not clearly reflect Christiania, as most of the bands playing are foreign and the price for admission is much higher than many Christianites are willing to pay, according to my informants. This implies that part of the musical practice is intended for tourists rather than for local residents.

Figure 3: Outside Loppen



PHOTO: THORBJÖRG DAPHNE HALL

- 24 The general lack of information in the Copenhagen area on events in Christiania, as mentioned above, raises the question of how Christianites attract their audience. Loppen and Café Nemoland are the only venues that maintain an active webpage where concerts are advertised and hence where the venues actively try to attract people from outside the community. Venues in Christiania, therefore, appear to advertise their programmes selectively, in an effort to maintain control over their visitors and to preserve their space from invasion by the outside world. However, the relatively restricted way of advertising can also be read as a commercial ploy being made by the organisers in order to attract those who associate themselves with the countercultural image. The underground appearance of the venues thus intensifies the selectiveness of

this demographic group. The venues obviously gain some significance from the location, but are otherwise musically no different from venues elsewhere.

- 25 Too much interest from tourists can also appear to ‘spoil’ events for Christianites. In July 2008 a concert was organised to entertain Christianites but also to attract tourists to Christiania in the hope of gaining their support for the community. The event was large, and boasted many popular mainstream Danish singers. It was advertised around Copenhagen, many people came, and it was a big success. At least that was how I experienced it. Later when one of my informants and I were walking around Copenhagen, she saw one of the posters for the event and became very irritated, explaining that she thought too many visitors had come to the concert, taking space away from the Christianites. Rather than being happy that so many people had attended, and that the concert had been a success, her feeling was that the concert had been a failure because it did not serve Christianites in the way she had envisaged. To my informant, the balance was not right, and the tourists took too much space away from the locals
- 26 All of these observations indicate a ‘struggle of identity’. Christiania thrives on tourists coming into the area, using the facilities by shopping, eating and drinking. Moreover, Christianites serve tourists by publishing a guide book and offering guided tours around the area (Figure 4). Indeed, without tourists Christiania would cease to exist, at least in its current form, because financially, the largest percentage of the community’s income comes from tourism. It has also been demonstrated over the years that Christiania would have closed down had it not been for the support of the broader public in Denmark. Indeed, in difficult times, Christianites have opened up their homes and venues to outsiders in order to seek support from the public. However, by advertising selectively and not actively inviting people to the area – apart from when they really need the support – there seems to be a troubled relationship between the Christianites and the outside population, based on need and dislike. Comparing this with Krims’ idea of the ‘desirables’ – that is, those who fuel the economy – in Christiania, the converse is true as the drivers of the economy are the tourists or the ‘undesirables’, while the ‘desirables’ are the Christianites themselves. Obviously this situation has created a strain or uneasy feeling among the ‘desirables’.

Figure 4: The tourist information hut where guided tours are offered



PHOTO: THORBJÖRG DAPHNE HALL

- 27 Christiania is at the same time both open and closed and therefore, in some sense, it fits Krims' binary model of openness and closure. On the other hand, Krims' idea of desirables versus undesirables are reversed in Christiania. Consequently, because Christiania still relies on tourists/'undesirables' to fuel the economy, a strange love-hate relationship has emerged. Furthermore, within the society another layer of tension exists between the different groups of residents, as the society does not accept everyone equally. Christiania does not, therefore, altogether follow the same binary model of openness and closure as outlined by Krims.

## The Expression of Locality

- 28 Cohen has 'critiqued the notion of a local, city sound for promoting an essentialist view of music, and for suggesting that cities can have a "natural", "authentic" sound that can be directly mirrored or expressed in music'. She states that 'the relationship between a city and a musical sound is not deterministic, organic or homological and it is difficult, if not impossible to identify within rock music sounds that are purely local'. However, similar to Cohen's experience, which found people who happily 'promoted familiar media stereotypes of Liverpool' (Cohen 2007: 68), people in Christiania were happy to point out to me 'typical' Christiania bands or music, and, in turn, denigrated the importance of other music that seemed equally, or perhaps even more 'typical' of Christiania. This raises the question of what qualities determine whether music is 'typical' or not. Perhaps it is not necessarily the sound of the music, but rather the local or historical connotation expressed that is important. From my discussions with Christianites, it is clearly important that a band or musicians 'are friends with

Christiania'. Arguably, 'being friends with' must mean openly supporting the ideology behind Christiania. The music-making of the locals is also important, and Christiania promotes its 'own' musicians in their own events such as at 'Christiania – hvad nu?' and Christiania's annual birthday celebration. However, specific genres or people in particular seemed to be promoted. Here the idea emerges that some of Christiania's music is more 'real', 'true' or 'typical' than other types.

- 29 The idea of the construction of 'real' Christiania music seems to lie very much in the past. Thus, one way to gain an understanding of 'real' Christianian musical practice is to explore the early years of Christiania. '*Fællessange*' [Communal singing] is a deep-rooted Danish custom practised when people gather together, sometimes incorporating new lyrics written to a well-known melody to fit a special occasion. Christiania also embraces this Danish practice and *fællessange* have been written since the community's beginning. It has been stated that Christiania had even had a national song written in 1971 (Ludvigsen 2003: 183). This was set to 'Kongesangen' ['The King's Song'], a well-known Danish song, demonstrating that the lyrics mattered most for these *fællessange*, and that Christiania thus followed the Danish trend of writing new lyrics set to old melodies.

## Tage Morten and *Fællessange*

- 30 Tage Morten was one of the more active *fællessange* composers. In a song book incorporating his songs, published in 1985, he is described as the city musician of Christiania, where he created a place for acoustic music, where all music-loving people and those active in acoustic music could find a musical sanctuary (Nielsen 1985, repr. 2004). 'Vore Drømme' ['Our Dreams'] was written in 1974 and was one of the first *fællessange* written in Christiania. In the song, Christiania is depicted as a part of Copenhagen, '*Vi er en del af byens miljø*' ['We are part of the town's surroundings'] (ibid.), where the residents live in close contact with others in the city, many of whom come for a visit. However, the final line expresses the view of the poet that some are bad, probably pointing to those who do not agree with the society and who therefore threaten it. Perhaps it is possible here, calling on Krims' binary model, to identify a group of 'undesirables'. The society is open to all, except those who do not agree with its ideology. The chorus then expresses a fairly typical hippie request, calling for peace and love: '*Vi vil ha' fred, så livet kan gro, omkring voldgravens høje*' ['We want peace, so the life can grow, around the high walls of the moat'] (ibid.). The song calls for peace around the high walls rather than within them, which means outside Christiania or throughout the whole Copenhagen area, demonstrating that Morten is concerned with society at large.
- 31 Morten not only wrote songs about Christiania, he also took a political stand and wrote songs about the housing in Christianshavn. The district's renovation caused problems for the poor who lived there, and in 'Christianshavn's Saneringshymne' ['Christianshavn's Renovation Hymn'], from 1975, Morten worries about the consequences of this renovation work for the people in the area. Morten also wrote about '*fællesskab*' [joint ownership], which had extended far beyond the limits of Christiania at the time (in 1976). He believes that this is a future arrangement that will be adapted by more and more people throughout the country. Again, here the voices of those who opposed these ideas appear, but as they are 'undesirable' their thoughts are



not important: '*Kun de onde protesterer, deres tanker løber ud i sandet*' ['Only the evil ones protest / Their thoughts fizzle out'] (ibid.). In another song, '*Varme vibrationer*' ['Warm Vibrations'], similar ideas appear, and Morten says that with belief, hope, smiles and encouragement, it is possible to live together and create '*nærdemokrati*' [participatory democracy]. Morten was clearly a political writer who addressed the problems of the society and offered solutions such as joint ownership, which were familiar to life in Christiania.

## 'Slagsange' and Support Records

- 32 From its inception, Christiania had to fight for its existence. Musicians took an active part in this battle and many '*slagsange*' [protest songs] were written for this purpose. One of the most popular is '*I Kan Ikke Slå os Ihjel*' ['You Cannot Kill Us']. Written by Tom Lunden – leader of the rock band Bifrost – in 1976, it explains that Christiania cannot be destroyed. 'They', the government or the rest of Denmark, can use all available means to get rid of the Christianites, '*I kan sætte os i fængsel og fjerne os fra verden*' ['You can put us in prison and remove us from the world'], but it is not possible to kill the idea of Christiania, because it is a part of the larger society, '*I ka' ikke slå os ihjel, vi er en del af jer selv*' ['You cannot kill us, we are part of you'] (Various 1976). Moreover, since Christiania is part of the society at large, the song wonders what is causing the spite aimed at Christianites: '*Er os eller er det jer selv I er bange for at møde*' ['Is it us or is it yourselves you are afraid to meet?'] (ibid.). Here the same idea appears as in Morten's song '*Vore Drømmer*'; Christiania is a part of the city but at the same time it is a focal point for something different: a different community, different freedom, different democracy, separating it from the rest of the country. In spite of this, Christiania is not that far from the Danish mainstream as the song claims '*vi er en del af jer selv*' ['we are a part of you']. The song was originally recorded by Bifrost, Povl Dissing, Anisette and Sebastian with a choir called Det Internationale Sigøjnerkompagni [The International Gypsy Company], but subsequently many other versions have been made. Today the song is sung in demonstrations and 'where all good people gather', and features in the mainstream *Højskolesangbogen* [The High School Song Book] (Vesterberg 2007: 14).
- 33 This song appeared on the first Christiania record, made in 1976 when the community was in danger of having to close down. Apart from '*I Kan Ikke Slå os Ihjel*' the record included songs written for it by many of Denmark's most popular rock musicians, including Gnags, Kim Larsen, C.V. Jørgensen and Røde Mor. Over the years, Christiania has appeared in popular songs, and musicians have written '*slagsange*' for the village. In the years after 2000, the government applied more pressure in their attempts to normalise the area. Pusher Street was cleared and relations with the police degenerated following prolonged debate with the authorities on the 'normalising' process for the area. During this period, three new support records were made, *Nye Christiania Sange* [New Christiania Songs], *Bevar Christiania* [Preserve Christiania] and *Christiania Forever*, offering many new songs on Christiania. Interestingly, though, big names in Danish music were not involved as they had been in the 1970s.
- 34 These support records are sold in a booth in the market square, which also sells the tourist guide, clothes and other products marked 'Bevar Christiania'. Inhabitants emphasised to me the triviality of these records and implied that they were only made



for tourists and do not represent the ‘real’ music of Christiania. Perhaps, these records serve more as a commercial artefact for Christiania than a cultural one. This attitude is much the same as Cohen describes in her discussion on the music tourism centred on the Beatles in Liverpool (2007: 178).

- 35 Vesterberg, in his article ‘Sangene Kan de Ikke Slå Ihjel’, found many of the songs on these new records ‘more strange than good’ (2007: 15). He concluded that they mainly described the atmosphere and events in Christiania but the feeling of ‘*vi er en del af jer selv*’ [‘we are a part of you’] had disappeared (ibid.: 15). He took examples of songs from *Christiania Forever* that were produced by people from Christiania and released in 2004 by an old hippie, Tømrer Claus, and his company Karma Music. He claims that the song ‘Christiania Mit Hjerte’ [‘Christiania My Heart’] by Zofia Hedvard<sup>6</sup> represents a self-centred statement offered to the rest of the Danish population that Christiania is a strong community that makes its inhabitants strong and that those who are on the outside look, perhaps longingly, to them. The void between the two societies and the tendency to simply depict atmosphere can be found in more songs from the record (Hedvard n.d.). The song ‘De Skæve Drømme’ [‘Skewed Dreams’] by the band Ache similarly praises life in Christiania as being close to paradise. However, the song by Tømrer Claus (the man who released the record), ‘Christiania Sangen’, has a very similar message to ‘I Kan Ikke Slå os Ihjel’. The key line is ‘*Vi er en del af dem selv, og det kan de ikke holde ud*’ [‘We are a part of them, and this they can’t stand’]. Despite this particular song, it is fairly clear that the focus of the songs on the newer support records has shifted from the social awareness and political subject matter expressed in the old *fællessange* and songs on the first support records, to a more localised and atmospheric depiction of Christiania.
- 36 Perhaps this shift can simply be explained by the fact that the genre of the music on the new support records is more varied than on the early records for which the rock musicians themselves wrote the songs. On the newer records, in addition to the old ‘hippie’ rock like the music of Tømrer Claus, rap, metal, ‘indie’ rock and a combination of all these different styles appears. A look through Christiania’s music history reveals how different types of music genres reflected contrasting views of the village. The old hippie musicians used Christiania to portray people who lived outside normal society and who were preoccupied with political activism, while the punks did not mention anything as mundane as a hippie enclave (Vesterberg 2007: 15). While the first generation of rappers were made very welcome in Christiania, they used the place mainly for consumption. When Christiania appears in a rap song, most references focus on it as a nice place to visit for a smoke rather than the political tensions discussed in the older songs.<sup>7</sup>
- 37 To summarise, the new records show a shift of emphasis away from political activism or an improvement of society<sup>8</sup> towards the consumption of Christiania and are therefore more aimed at tourists rather than Christianites. The records represent the local culture as it is seen from the outside, depicting either an idyllic place to smoke and relax or a place of violence and struggle with the outside world. The sense of unity or will to improve the world using the ideas of Christiania, as found on the early records, has been left by the wayside. The newer records are therefore arguably more commercial.

## Locality

- 38 The varied approach to Christiania displayed in the music highlighted above can arguably be seen as representing groups of Christianites who have different opinions on how the area should develop. The musician Helga Nova and the band Fri Galaxe base their music on the old 'hippie' music and the countercultural values of the 1970s. They often play at events organised in support of Christiania, and they represent the people in charge or the group of Christianites who in the introduction to this chapter were labelled 'the intellectuals' or 'the upper class leadership'. It was clear to me that they base their values and ideas on the old counterculture and, judging from their music, strongly emphasise society at large and how Christiania can be beneficial to Denmark. The new support records similarly represent a different group of people, such as those who live in Christiania for reasons other than political or idealistic beliefs. It is likely that a large number of the inhabitants of Christiania do not share the political interests of the 'intellectual' elite and live there only because it is convenient: the relaxed attitude towards cannabis and the very cheap housing.
- 39 Cohen lines up Liverpool against London as opposites in terms of independent practice versus commercialism, and localism versus metropolitanism, with Liverpool being seen as local, alternative and authentic. These ideas can be employed to explore Christiania's relationship with Copenhagen. However, I believe that a similar tension can also be found within Christiania itself, as it is a fragmented and complex community, and that this in itself is a more interesting subject matter in the present context. Comparing the artists behind the new support records with Helga Nova and Fri Galaxe, it becomes clear that both groups represent Christiania, and that their music is considered important in the locality. In one respect, the new support records rely more on the idea of locality, as they emphasise the idyllic nature of the place and rarely expand beyond that. They seem to be made mainly for tourists and can therefore be considered a commercial endeavour. The way they are presented and sold seems much more commercialised than is the case for the records by Helga Nova and Fri Galaxe. Their records are made independently by the artists themselves and rather than being sold in the tourist booth in the market square, they are found for sale only in the local shops.
- 40 All this creates an ambiguous construction of locality and the idea of independence versus commercialism. My informants steered me away from the support records, because they felt that they did not represent the 'true' Christiania. Perhaps the new support records can be seen as selling the Christiania atmosphere to tourists but not hoping to change society at large. Thus they can be seen as working against the counterculture of the place and, without meaning to, fuelling the normalising process. Rather than trying to 'recruit' people to the cause of Christiania, they represent its society as untouchable and separate from the mainstream and thus impossible for the general public to join in with. The play with alterity can therefore be seen as more harmful for this society than helpful, as it perhaps goes against what Christiania originally stood for.
- 41 This tension between the 'independent' and the 'commercial' evokes Cohen's discussion of Beatles tourism in Liverpool. Musical practice, both in Christiania and Liverpool, has generated debates about 'authenticity' and what represents the 'real' music of the place. This, in Cohen's view, typifies cultural tourism in general (2007: 178–9). Nevertheless, the relationship between commercialism and independence is perhaps

more complex in Christiania. Cohen describes how government officials, including Liverpool City Council, some music entrepreneurs, musicians, bankers and individuals employed in higher education, joined in the policy-making of the Merseyside area in order to revitalise it as a thriving musical venue (ibid.: 133–8). The city of Copenhagen, on the other hand, as discussed above, has not taken part in promoting Christiania as a tourist destination. Without the interference of an official body, the appearance of tourism in the village seems disorganised. Certain tourist services are offered, such as the guided tour, the guide book and information offices, but they do not seem to work together to create a holistic experience for the tourists. The venues seem to be unsure of their purpose and embarrassed by their existence. Arguably, the reason for this is the complex relationship between the countercultural ideology of the village, which opposes commodification and commercialism, and its financial need for the tourists, who, in turn, are attracted to Christiania because of its image as a countercultural space.

- 42 Furthermore it is possible to see a hierarchical structure in the music practices that parallels the class division of the society discussed above. Both Davies in 1979 and Grundt in 2004 mention three class layers; the upper class/intellectuals, petite bourgeoisie/followers and junkies/sleepers. This can be matched with hippie rock at the top representing the old activists who created and now rule Christiania, the support records of the non-political inhabitants and the cover band culture of the dropouts.

## Conclusion

- 43 Music is important to the way Christiania can be experienced and within the community various musical ‘hot spots’ create a certain atmosphere that is suitable for each space. The music is used both commercially, to attract people to the space in order to construct a fitting environment, and also as a way to pass time. Different kinds of music appeal to different groups of people, and different music genres play both a historical and a contemporary role in Christiania. The result is that some music is regarded as more ‘authentic’ than other. In the lyrics of the music created in and about Christiania, two different lines of approach can be perceived: one can be traced back to the early days of Christiania, and the other represents something new, perhaps a shift in outlook towards the original purpose of the village. The more politically active musicians write music containing ideas comparable to those in the old music. This obviously fulfils the expectations of the active part of the society for music representing the ‘true’ Christiania. These musicians also emphasise the localised aspect of their production, as the records are only sold in local shops, not in those intended specifically for tourists.
- 44 An analysis of openness and closure reveals that, on the one hand, Christianites are united against Denmark but at the same time rely on the outside world both for practical things and political support in order to exist. On the other hand such analysis also points to a difficult relationship between contrasting groups within the society. Music is a key to opening Christiania up to tourists, but sometimes the tourists can interrupt or ‘spoil’ events for the locals.
- 45 In its early days, Christiania was very much a countercultural space, similar to other enclaves. However, it soon developed away from the original vision. The musical

practice shows that the old values are still important to many, but at the same time there is a struggle within this society to determine which direction should be taken for the future of Christiania. By assembling the evidence of how the society functions, my overall conclusion is that Christiania is no longer a countercultural space but bases its existence on a longing for the past. It is interesting that authorities continue to try to normalise the area, perhaps rather for financial reasons than to uproot countercultural practices. In many respects it is difficult to determine whether it would be possible to maintain a countercultural space at all, because the ideology behind it seems to challenge the fundamentals of every society.

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## NOTES

1. This chapter is based on my MA dissertation from the University of Nottingham, which was written under the supervision of Dr Daniel Grimley. I spent the summer of 2008 in Christiania doing field research. I would like to thank Helga ‘Nova’ Højgaard Jørgensen for all her help and insight into the community. Dr Gudni Elisson made helpful comments on the manuscript. All translations are mine and the translations of lyrics aim to be as direct as possible.
2. ‘*Slumstormere*’ were a mixture of homeless people from Christianshavn and political activists that protested against the renovation that was taking place in the area and the lack of housing.
3. This does not mean that Christianites do not own cars, but they keep them in neighbouring streets.
4. The term tourist is used throughout the chapter as a collective term for all people who do not live in Christiania, including inhabitants of Copenhagen, Denmark and foreign guests, according to how the term was used by my informants.
5. A programme can be found at Loppen’s home page: <http://www.loppen.dk/>.
6. The song can be found on Hedvard’s homepage (<http://www.zofiart.dk/>) under the link: <http://www.zofiart.dk/musik/solo/07-Track-07.mp3>.
7. For example see ‘28 Grader i Skyggen’ [‘28 Degrees in the Shade’] by MC Einar from 1989.
8. Bear in mind that the politically and sociologically active people in Christiania are also those that organise events and concerts and see themselves as ‘true’ and ‘typical’ Christianites and therefore represent the group of people who have an opinion on what is ‘true’ or ‘typical’ Christiania music.

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## ABSTRACTS

This paper investigates the idea of a local sound in Christiania and explores the role of tourism in the area. Christiania can arguably be seen as a place containing different cultures, and the paper will explore which musical culture, if any, is seen as the most 'authentic', whether it is possible to trace a hierarchical structure through Christiania's cultural practices, and how people act within the community. In its early days, Christiania was very much a countercultural space, similar to other enclaves. However, it soon developed away from the original ideology. The musical practice shows that the old values are still important to many, but at the same time there is a struggle within this society to determine which direction should be taken for the future of Christiania. By assembling the evidence of how this society functions, my overall conclusion is that Christiania is no longer a countercultural space but bases its existence on a longing for the past.

Cet article s'intéresse au paysage sonore de Christiania et explore le rôle du tourisme dans ce quartier. Christiania contient différentes cultures, et nous explorons quelles sont les cultures musicales – s'il en est – qui sont perçues comme étant les plus « authentiques », s'il est possible d'établir une structure hiérarchique au sein de ses pratiques culturelles, et comment les gens agissent au sein de la communauté. À ses origines, Christiania était un espace contre-culturel, à l'instar d'autres enclaves similaires. Néanmoins, il s'est rapidement écarté de son idéologie première. Les pratiques musicales démontrent que les anciennes valeurs continuent à être importantes pour nombre de personnes, mais qu'en même temps, il y a une lutte au sein de cette société pour déterminer dans quelle devrait être la future direction de Christiania. En récoltant des éléments sur le fonctionnement de cette société, je conclus que ce quartier n'est plus un espace contre-culturel, dont l'imaginaire repose au contraire aujourd'hui sur une nostalgie du passé.

## INDEX

**nomsmotscles** Morten (Tage), Lunden (Tom), Claus (Tømrer), Helga Nova, Fri Galaxe

**Geographical index:** Denmark, Copenhagen

**Subjects:** rock music, rap / hip-hop

**Chronological index:** 1970-1979, 2000-2009

**Keywords:** scenes, memory / nostalgia / retro, cities / suburbs / urban cultures, authenticity, tourism, spatiality / space / place

**Mots-clés:** scènes, mémoire / nostalgie / rétro, spatialité / espace / lieu, ville / banlieue / cultures urbaines, tourisme, authenticité

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