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From Performance Mafeking to Performance Mahikeng: Charting the Changing Local Cultural Economy

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Abstract

Cultural and creative industries (CCIs) are attracting a growing international scholarship, including a burst of research in sub-Saharan Africa. Research on CCIs increasingly is moving beyond the confines of large urban areas and instead to explore non-metropolitan spaces, including small towns and rural areas. The novel contribution of this paper is to document in a case study of a non-metropolitan space of South Africa, the details and historical changes which have occurred in one of the six UNESCO identified 'cultural domains', namely that of 'performance and celebration'. Specifically, this research is centred on the cultural economy of the non-metropolitan space of Mahikeng which is located in South Africa's North West province. The findings draw upon evidence from a data base on the cultural economy which was built from analysing the content of 50 years of the *Mafeking Mail* newspaper.

Keywords: Cultural and creative industries; cultural economy; historical analysis; Mafeking; Bophuthatswana

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Introduction

One problem that has plagued 'cultural studies' is that of definitions. Currently there exists no universally accepted meaning of the terms 'culture' or 'creativity'. Correspondingly, this means that the scope of what constitutes a 'cultural industry', 'creative industry' or 'cultural economy' can vary widely (Scott, 2010). According to Salvadore & Pappalepore (2025) whilst the term 'cultural industries' enjoys a long history going back as far as 1947, the first scholarly studies undertaken of its contribution to economic development only surfaced in the 1990s. Lazzeretti et al. (2018) point out that following the burst of interest in the 1990s around the concepts of the 'creative class' and of 'creative cities' there is observable a progressive shift in focus and nomenclature away from discussing 'cultural industries' and towards the growing use of the lexicon of 'cultural and creative industries' (CCIs). The actual origins of the terminology CCIs are multiple with several claimants. Holy et al. (2025: 1) point out that the concept of creative industries emerged in the 1990s and blended 'creative arts' with the 'cultural industry'. For some observers its birth is attributed to Australia and the country's introduction of its policy for 'a creative nation' (Moore, 2014). Many others look to the United Kingdom and the coming to power in 1997 of New Labour and the Blair government. It is argued that the concept was first brought into the public domain by the Blair government's Creative Industries Mapping Documents and the associated 'Cool Britannia' policy (Flew & Cunningham, 2010). Florida's (2002) pathbreaking work on the creative class encouraged investigations of the ways in which cities (primarily those in the Global North) could potentially rebrand themselves and establish urban regeneration initiatives based on the promotion of the cultural economy. Overall, the influential work of Florida (2002) elevated global awareness of the potential contribution of CCIs to the amelioration of regional and urban economic decay. Zhao & Kim (2025: 1) record that following its popularization in the UK during the 1990s "the concept of CCIs spread rapidly around the world". In many cases culture-led development was associated with tourism, such that 'creative tourism' became an important phenomenon in its own right (Richards, 2011). Some scholars view the rapid rise of interest in CCIs as a reflection of wider international currents such as marketisation and neoliberalism (Purewal et al., 2025). Colombo (2025: xviii) considers, however, that CCIs now "occupy a pivotal role in contemporary society, serving not only as drivers of innovation but also as profound reflectors and shapers of societal values". Nevertheless, as is stressed by several observers, the concept of CCIs still lacks an internationally agreed definition. Gurel (2025) highlights that different countries adopt different definitions. According to UNESCO (2013: 2) the cultural and creative industries are "those sectors of organized activity that have as their main objective the production or reproduction, the promotion, distribution or commercialization of goods, services and activities of content derived from cultural, artistic or heritage origin". In a parallel definition, following the European Parliament, CCIs are designated by Domenech et al. (2021: 1177) as "those industries that are based on cultural values, cultural diversity, individual and/or collective creativity, skills and talent with the potential to generate innovation, wealth and jobs through the creation of social and economic value, in particular from intellectual property".

In 2009 UNESCO published the Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS) in which culture is defined as "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (UNESCO, 2009: 9). The FCS identifies six 'domains' which give a picture of the structure and breadth of CCIs. The UNESCO domains are as follows (1) Cultural Heritage, (2) Performance and Celebration, (3) Visual Arts and Crafts, (4) Books and Press, (5) Audio-visual and Interactive Media, and, (6), Design and Creative Services. These domains are based on the grouping together and consolidation

of existing international classification systems such as the International Standard Classification of Occupations for cultural employment (UNESCO, 2009). The international spread and burgeoning global interest on CCIs is evidenced by the appearance of an array of investigations concerning their geographies, impact, and development potential for a broad range of different countries and across continents (Boos et al., 2025; Dellisanti, 2023; Duester, 2025; Feng & Yang, 2024; Haugsevje, 2024; Hoai et al., 2021; Kalfas et al., 2024; Lazzerotti, 2013; Simjanovska, 2026). Although the literature and policy concern around CCIs originally focused upon Europe, the issues around CCIs as vital drivers for economic development experienced an international spread also to the Global South, including Africa. Researchers across the Global South launched research investigations on the CCIs spurred by the adoption of a cultural and creative economy development agenda (Cunningham & Swift, 2019). A recent report from the influential Brookings Institute (based in Washington DC, USA) pinpointed 'the outsized potential' of such enterprises for African futures (Signé, 2025). Not surprisingly, therefore, over recent years a surge in academic and policy interest around CCIs has occurred in several parts of sub-Saharan Africa (England & Sendra, 2026; Obiaya et al., 2026; Rodygina & Sinilova, 2025). Of significance is that in the new wave of scholarship on creative economies and CCIs in Africa a geographical shift in research focus can be observed. The scholarly gaze increasingly is moving beyond the confines of large urban areas and instead to explore non-metropolitan spaces, including small towns and rural areas (F. Drummond, 2026; England & Sendra, 2026). Against this backdrop, the novel contribution of this paper is to document in a case study of a non-metropolitan space of South Africa, the details and changes which have occurred in one of the six UNESCO identified 'cultural domains', namely that of performance and celebration. More specifically, this research discloses a critical aspect of the cultural economy in the non-metropolitan space of Mahikeng (and surrounds) which is located in South Africa's North West province. The next section of the paper situates the study as a contribution within the existing South African literature and debates around CCIs. Attention then turns to a brief discussion on methods and the context of the case study location. The section on results provides detailed evidence concerning the different facets of the 'performance and celebration' domain within the changing cultural economy of Mahikeng. The shifting complexion of the cultural domain of performance and celebration is tracked through an analysis of evidence obtained through examining the archive of the local *Mafikeng Mail* newspaper over a fifty-year period.

Literature context

Within extant African scholarship on CCIs the largest body of current literature concerns the South African experience. The rise of South African scholarship pertaining to the cultural and creative economy has generated a considerable body of applied research uncovering the nature and extent of the economic contribution which the sector makes to the nation. A much referenced (and controversial) statistic suggests that the cultural and creative economy offers more jobs than the mining sector (Hadisi & Snowball, 2017; South African Cultural Observatory, 2022). As a result of its perceived development potential CCIs have attracted considerable policy interest from national government in South Africa. In post-apartheid South Africa the national government identified the CCIs as the economy's "new gold" based on their perceived potential to galvanize economic growth and to create job opportunities (Mzansi Golden Economy Guidelines, 2016: 5). Arguably, in an otherwise moribund national economy with high levels of unemployment and poverty and laggard performance in terms of economic growth, the CCIs are particularly important to South Africa as a potential growth and development catalyst. In 2014 the Department of Arts and Culture (2014) conducted the first national audit of South Africa's CCIs. Over the following decade several mapping studies were undertaken by the South African Cultural Observatory (SACO). According to the mapping study conducted in 2020 by SACO, the CCIs accounted for 2.97% of South Africa's GDP. Using the creative trident method to calculate employment, the CCIs were estimated to account for 6 percent of employed South Africans (1 million jobs) in 2019 (SACO, 2022). In terms of the spatial aspects of CCI activity, the most prominent provinces are the Western Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng (Hadisi & Snowball, 2017). This geographical distribution is due largely to the tendency of cultural and creative organizations and workers to group or cluster in large cities, such as Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. As is shown on Figure 1 the largest UNESCO domains were those of design and creative services followed by audio visual and interactive media.

Despite their potential to spur economic growth and development, the CCIs in South Africa were particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 on the different types of CCI activity was uneven. The category of Performance and Celebration was particularly vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic due to its mainly face-to-face mode of production and consumption (Snowball & Gouws, 2023). In addition, Cultural Heritage and Visual Arts and Crafts were also vulnerable as these activities were highly dependent on tourist markets (Snowball & Gouws, 2023). With the easing of lockdown measures and the rollout of vaccines, from 2021 the CCI economy in South Africa entered a phase of recovery (Drummond et al., 2025). For South Africa, the general direction of policy and research efforts initially took its cue from trends set in the Global North. Unquestionably, the early directions of research undertaken on CCI clusters in South Africa were influenced by scholarship in the Global North. Accordingly, much of the initial research initiatives in South Africa on CCIs exhibited a strong urban focus (Drummond & Snowball, 2021). The focus was mainly on understanding CCI clusters operating in large urban centres with relatively high levels of economic development and growth which might attract talented creative individuals. Policy debates and analysis initially concentrated on the cultural and creative economy in the urban setting and use of CCIs as policy tools to regenerate run-down spaces of the country's inner-cities. Gregory (2016) investigated the role of CCIs in the regeneration of inner-city Johannesburg, specifically of the Maboneng precinct.

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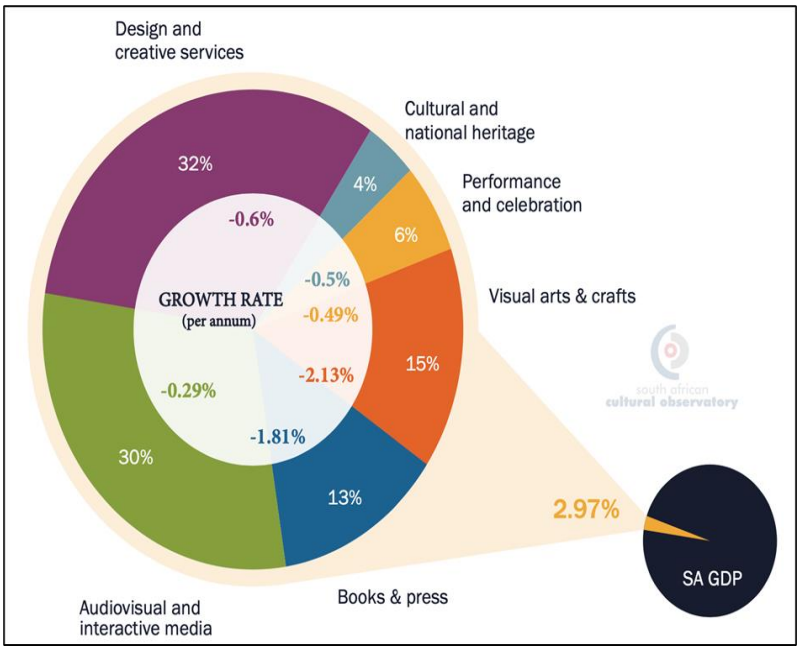

Figure 1: South Africa - Gross Value Add (GVA) contribution per UNESCO domain (at current 2020 prices)
Source: SACO (2022: 12)

Place specific work in the contribution of CCIs in urban South Africa was undertaken by Gregory & Rogerson (2018). This research explored locational aspects of CCIs in a Johannesburg analysis of creativity (Gregory & Rogerson, 2018). These authors demonstrated that CCIs were located not just in inner city creative hubs but also in suburban areas of Johannesburg. However, it is not just suburbs within large cities that are capable of hosting CCI clusters. Research by Donaldson (2018) highlighted cultural tourism as a major economic driver for many South African small towns. In addition, works by Drummond (2021) and by Drummond & Snowball (2021) document the formation of CCI clusters in rural, small-town spaces of the Eastern Cape province. The findings of these authors echo those of Chapain & Comunian (2010). They suggest that the potential for rural CCIs clustering is based on the characteristics of small towns such as having *inter alia*, larger proportions of the creative class and consumer bases for CCI goods and services; tourism industries based on local histories, cultures and landscapes; greater socio-economic development levels; more diverse local economies; and, better infrastructure (Drummond & Snowball, 2021). Arguably, the international research conducted by Chapain & Comunian (2010) has influenced the appearance of new directions in South African CCI scholarship as it catalysed parallel studies to be undertaken in rural South Africa. Progressively, the spatial gaze of scholars turned to an analysis of some of the country's peripheral and 'left behind spaces' (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2025a). Indeed, the research turn was to interrogate CCIs in the country's small towns and rural areas and including spaces in the former historical Bantustans. The possibility of rural clustering and the potential of CCIs in South African small towns has been investigated by Fiona Drummond (2021) and by Drummond & Snowball (2021) and emphasizes the significant role of tourism. The value and importance of using geographical information systems for mapping rural clusters of CCI is well-demonstrated in South African research (Drummond, 2021; Drummond & Snowball, 2021).

Recent preliminary work on the nature of CCIs in rural South Africa has been promoted by the South African Cultural Observatory. For example, Drummond and Snowball (2019) completed a mapping study to determine the nature of clustering of CCIs in the predominantly rural Sarah Baartman district of the Eastern Cape province. It has been disclosed that mixed-use CCI clusters are the most common in South Africa, especially in small towns which include a range of CCI activities suited to non-metropolitan spaces (Drummond & Snowball, 2021). Further, work on the importance of festivals in rural towns is reported by Drummond et al. (2018) relating to the effects of the Mahika Mahikeng festival in the North West province. Building upon such a foundational literature on CCIs, this study presents a deep analysis of the cultural economy of Mahikeng in South Africa.

Methods

It is evident that the case study location has long been something other than an ordinary South African town (Parnell, 1986). Historically, its main claim to international renown is the siege of Mafeking during the Anglo-Boer War. This event was documented in the account of Sol Plaatje, a court interpreter, journalist and leader of the early African National Congress (Mokae & Willan, 2023) Arguably, the city of Mahikeng records a distinctive and compelling history (Drummond & Nel, 2021; Drummond et al., 2021; Drummond et al., 2022). On three occasions it has served in the role of capital; first, as Mafeking in the Bechuanaland Protectorate (1894-1965), second, when adjoined to Mmabatho as capital of the 'independent' apartheid Bantustan of Bophuthatswana (1977-1994) and, most recently in post-apartheid South Africa (1994 to present) functioning as the provincial capital of North West province (Chavez-Norgaard, 2024; Drummond, 2024; Drummond & Nel, 2021; Nel & Drummond, 2019). The rise and fall of the Bophuthatswana Bantustan and its reintegration in South Africa are discussed by Drummond (1991a, 1991b) and Drummond et al. (2022). This research on Mahikeng's cultural economy uses an historical approach with primary documentary source materials drawn from archives. Unquestionably, the practice of archival research

is a valued research method in geography and most especially in respect of research in historical geography. Arguably, archives represent a base for historical geographers to rearticulate the production of geographical knowledge in novel ways (Craggs, 2016). The merits of utilising archival methods in uncovering various issues in the historical geographical research on tourism, hospitality and leisure in South Africa are exemplified by a stream of recent investigations (J.M. Rogerson, 2017; C.M. Rogerson, 2020; Drummond et al., 2021; Drummond et al., 2022; C.M. Rogerson, 2024, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021a, 2021b, 2023, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d, 2024e, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d). Using newspaper sources the archival approach provides information and facilitates development of a data base on the cultural economy and CCIs in Mahikeng over a 50 year period spanning from 1974 to 2023. An analysis is given of evidence obtained through mining the archive of the local *Mafikeng Mail* newspaper for that fifty-year period. No other research method could provide longitudinal data for a sustained time period. By adopting this historical approach, the evolution of the cultural economy can be interrogated and linked to shifts in the political economy. It must be appreciated that each of the UNESCO domains is disaggregated into various sub-categories. As noted earlier, these sub-categories are based on the UNESCO guidelines as well as the specific domain activities which were identified through the archival research. Attention turns now to the findings about the one specific UNESCO domain which is under scrutiny in this paper. The focus is upon the UNESCO domain of 'Performance and Celebration' which is disaggregated into a number of sub-categories. The details of these are discussed below as making up the cultural domain in its entirety, part of the overall changing historical cultural economy of Mahikeng.

Results

The findings are organised in the following four sub-sections. An overall picture is given of the relative importance of the performance and celebration domain within the Mahikeng cultural economy. Following this analysis, the focus turns to unpack the performance and celebration domain in terms of the three sub-categories of music, theatre and beauty contests. In turn, the larger categories of music and theatre are themselves further disaggregated for the discussion.

The state of performance and celebration in the Mahikeng cultural economy

Drummond (2024) presents the macro-picture of the cultural economy of Mahikeng as disaggregated by the six UNESCO domains. The overall picture is given for the entire 50 year study period 1974-2023. It is evident that the Performance and Celebration domain dominates the cultural economy of Mahikeng over the 50-year period. In total there are recorded 2062 events for this domain over the period. This total accounts for 72 percent of all cultural activity recorded in Mahikeng across the study period (Drummond, 2024). Figure 2 shows the overall picture of the Performance and Celebration domain by disaggregating the domain into its own major categories and sub-categories. It is evident from Figure 2 that various forms of music are the leading component in Mahikeng's Performance and Celebration domain. Music accounts for 64 percent of events in the Performance and Celebration domain. Modern Music is the largest musical genre, representing 25 percent of total domain activity. Following music is the role of theatre in respect of plays and drama productions. Of the three major sub-categories beauty contests emerge as the smallest group.

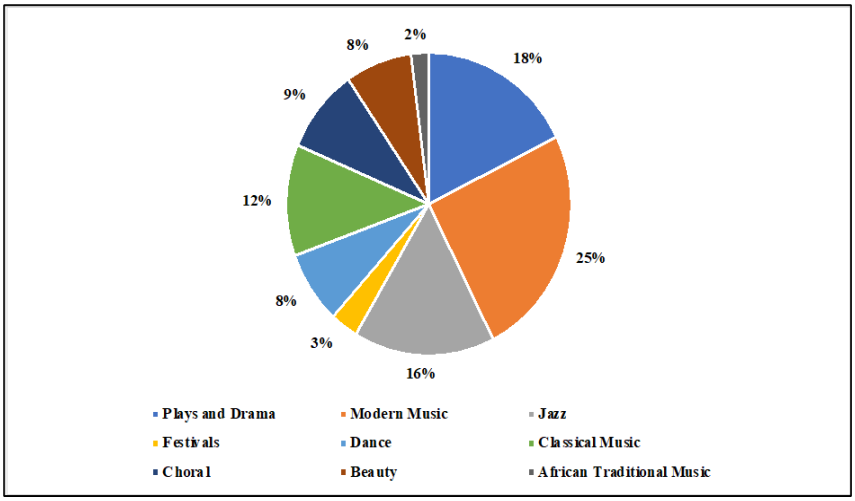

Figure 2: Mahikeng: Categories of Performance and Celebration 1974-2023
Note: Proportion of total events over the 50-year period. (Source: Drummond, 2024).

Table 1 reveals fluctuations that are recorded over time for the domain of Performance and Celebration. The period prior to Bophuthatswana's independence was of limited cultural activity. An upturn is marked during the 1980s with state support and funding for cultural activities. The peak years overall are 1991-1993 and followed by a downturn which is linked to a withdrawal of funding support in the era of democratic transition and post-apartheid change (Drummond, 2024). Table 1 gives details for nine sub-categories of Performance and Celebration activity in Mahikeng over the 50-year period from 1974-2023.

Table 1: Performance and celebration categories, 1974-2023

Year	Plays & Drama	Modern Music	Jazz	Festival	Dance	Classical Music	Choral	Beauty	African Trad Music	Total
1974	2	2	0	0	3	1	0	2	0	10
1975	3	0	0	0	3	3	4	1	0	14
1976	6	5	0	0	1	2	4	1	0	19
1977	1	3	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	7
1978	5	32	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	41
1979	2	5	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	11
1980	3	9	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	15
1981	5	10	3	0	3	3	3	1	0	28
1982	6	49	0	0	1	5	6	2	0	69
1983	20	42	2	0	0	3	5	2	0	74
1984	13	20	4	0	0	4	9	2	0	52
1985	9	28	2	0	1	3	2	3	0	48
1986	11	20	5	0	3	0	6	4	1	50
1987	5	18	2	0	2	4	3	2	0	36
1988	7	21	10	0	2	4	7	2	0	53
1989	17	14	5	0	3	0	3	4	0	46
1990	15	7	7	0	6	2	4	5	1	47
1991	10	17	3	0	9	27	4	2	0	72
1992	13	26	3	1	8	15	11	4	0	81
1993	16	25	3	8	4	16	7	6	2	87
1994	8	6	1	0	10	33	8	5	2	73
1995	12	10	8	0	12	15	5	2	1	65
1996	10	6	7	0	3	21	7	4	1	59
1997	9	9	1	0	8	19	6	2	0	54
1998	3	6	2	0	6	25	6	3	1	52
1999	7	6	3	0	5	20	3	4	2	50
2000	3	1	5	1	2	9	8	10	4	43
2001	5	7	7	2	6	3	2	6	7	45
2002	6	5	8	0	6	0	5	4	0	34
2003	11	7	7	2	5	2	4	5	4	47
2004	4	7	8	1	5	2	5	3	0	35
2005	5	9	4	0	4	2	3	2	2	31
2006	4	1	4	0	3	0	3	2	1	18
2007	4	4	10	0	2	0	0	1	1	22
2008	9	2	12	0	4	1	2	4	3	37
2009	5	2	17	1	1	0	1	4	0	31
2010	15	5	11	1	0	0	5	3	1	41
2011	3	3	10	1	5	1	3	3	1	30
2012	11	16	9	8	4	0	2	3	2	55
2013	16	7	2	4	2	0	3	7	2	43
2014	10	6	11	3	5	1	2	2	1	41
2015	5	5	16	6	4	0	3	6	0	45
2016	6	4	21	6	1	2	1	3	0	44
2017	7	2	21	6	3	0	2	2	0	43
2018	7	6	30	3	1	0	2	2	0	51
2019	4	2	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	12
2020	1	2	5	0	1	0	1	4	0	14
2021	2	2	11	0	0	0	1	6	0	22
2022	2	8	16	1	0	0	2	3	1	33
2023	1	2	9	9	0	0	4	4	0	29
Total	364	511	326	64	163	249	185	156	41	2059

Source: Drummond (2024)

Performance and celebration: Music

Modern Music

In the era prior to the 'independence' of Bophuthatswana, Mafeking was a small town with only a limited cultural offering. The total number of events recorded during the period 1974-1977 was on average less than 20 per year (Drummond, 2024). These events consisted of several visits by a circus (*Mafeking Mail*, 23 August 1974, 20 June 1975, 11 June 1976, 15 October 1976, 13 May 1977) and various cultural evenings or concerts. These cultural events were organised either at local churches, schools and other halls (*Mafeking Mail*, 9 August 1974, 2 May 1975) or at local hotels and restaurants. In addition, there were occasional touring performances from the Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB) as at that time Mafeking was part of the Cape Province (*Mafeking Mail*, 15 April 1976, 21 May 1976). Further, in the 1974-1977 period there were certain visiting musical performers of national prominence, notably Sonja Herholdt (*Mafeking Mail*, 25 June 1976) and by the group Four Jacks and a Jill (*Mafeking Mail*, 12 November 1976). In addition, African musical groups also visited Mafeking for performances, including the internationally-famous Ladysmith Black Mambazo (*Mafeking Mail*, 27 May 1977). With the advent of Bophuthatswana 'independence' and the opening of the Mmabatho Sun Hotel the tempo of hosting music events in the town was greatly accelerated. From 1978 onwards a range of different musical artists and performers came to the Mmabatho hotel almost on a weekly basis. These included several famous national singers who gave cabaret type performances. Names included Des and Dawn Lindberg, Diane Chandler, Abigail Kubekha, Noel Glover, Richard Loring and Alvon Collison. Occasional visits occurred from comedians and magicians. During the late 1970s an international cultural boycott on apartheid South Africa was mandated. Nevertheless, it was not strongly enforced; international artists such as Mitch Mitchell (*Mafeking Mail*, 13 January 1978) and Matt Munro, the English crooner, performed at the hotel (*Mafeking Mail*, 27 June 1980). Following the building of the Mmabatho Civic Centre in 1980 musical performances were held there regularly including by well-known South African artists such as Harari (*Mafikeng Mail*, 30 January 1981) and Rina Hugo (*Mafikeng Mail*, 3 March 1981).

During the 1980s Mmabatho was a boomtown with rapid development and major building projects, which included cultural buildings offering new venues for the growing number of local events. After the Mmabatho Civic Centre was built in 1980 other significant cultural constructions were the Mmabana (1986), Convention Centre (1992), and Arts Complex (1994). This proliferation of venues facilitated the rapid growth in the number of music events hosted in the 1980s and early 1990s.

This serves to illustrate the investment made into the cultural economy through venues as well as the calibre of performers that a relatively small urban centre was able to attract at the time. In addition to the state-sponsored facilities the Sun International hotels in Mmabatho also acted as further important venues for performances. Local businesses and education facilities such as the university and local schools were further commonly utilised venues for smaller events. The tempo of these musical events, however, reduced after 1995 with the dis-establishment of Bophuthatswana and its reintegration into democratic South Africa. The trend was towards smaller-scale musical events the majority of which were organised and hosted in local bars, restaurants and taverns.

Motswako: The sound of Mafikeng

In the post-Bophuthatswana era, a major development in the local cultural economy relates to the growth and flowering of a home-grown young generation of African talent. This is reflected in an upturn in such events which occurred from 2008, albeit its roots must be traced to the 1990s. Arguably, not only were modern music performers brought to Mafikeng by various promoters but the development of Hip Hop music in South Africa inspired and generated the evolution of a musical sub-genre called Motswako. Motswako put the town of Mafikeng and some of its musicians firmly in the limelight. For example, in a review of "Maftown's impact on SA Hip Hop" music, Tucker (2017) wrote as follows: "Mafikeng is home to some of South Africa's most talented and celebrated artists…while many Mafikeng inhabitants enjoyed the music that came out of Johannesburg, they didn't identify with it in a social and cultural context. Motswako …literally translated, means 'mixture' and that's exactly what the sound was; a melting pot of …raps that oscillated between Setswana and English…a hip-hop sub-genre was born…its distinguished SA hip hop from the pack with a unique identity and refreshing sound and we owe that to Mafikeng". Music journalists celebrated and publicised the crop of local talent which included Khuli Chana, Cassper Nyovest and Fifi Cooper, who were all born in Mafikeng and performed in their hometown (Tucker 2017). Scholarly analysis of this music phenomenon has shown clearly its local origins and its positive impacts on the Setswana language. As Theledi (2024: 339) argues "for a language to be developed, it needs to change with the times and Motswako lyricists help promote and develop indigenous languages". In terms of understanding the geography of Motswako it has been pointed out by Ditsele (2017) that during the mid-to-late 1990s rappers from Mafikeng, such as HHP, started rapping in Setswana. This resulted in an increased following in the city. As Ditsele (2017: 1) maintains: "It is from this set of circumstances that Motswako gained popularity and spread to other regions of the North-West, and eventually to South Africa and the southern African region at large. This popularity was unprecedented in South Africa, because Mahikeng, and not Johannesburg, had birthed a new genre of popular music". Extending this point further, Tucker (2017:1) affirmed: "Motswako also has a music festival dedicated to its existence. Proving its marketability in other geographical areas, Maftown Heights, takes place in Johannesburg and has made a case for the popularity of Motswako outside Mafikeng. As a homage to the city and the music that developed in it, it has grown to become the second biggest hip hop event in Africa with over 10,000 visitors".

For over two decades, Motswako music has been performed in the town where it was founded. A regular flow of events has been hosted for the leisure enjoyment of local audiences throughout this period. For example, Cassper Nyovest gave two concerts in Mahikeng (*Mahikeng Mail*, 17 April 2015, 8 January 2016), as well as the Fill-Up Mmabatho Stadium event (*Mahikeng Mail*, 9 December 2022). There was also an annual Motswako festival, which was held in the local village of Tsetse. As part of the activities a crew from ETV television were present to shoot scenes for inclusion in the documentary "*Motswako a way of life*" shown in early 2013. (*Mahikeng Mail*, 30 November 2012: 14). Other important performances included a Maftown Celebration Week featuring Jazz-Afro-Soul-Motswako (*Mahikeng Mail*, 5 December 2014), and a Motswako reunion hip hop festival (*Mahikeng Mail*, 27 October 2023). These events regularly featured Chana, Nyovest and Cooper, as well as Hugh Masekela, Zahara, HHP and others. Since 2010 it is evident that there has been a decline in the total number of cultural events in Mahikeng as compared to the 1980s and early 1990s (Drummond, 2024). In addition, there has been a fall in the diversity of cultural offerings with certain genres becoming more popular and prominent. The case of Motswako is illustrative of the vibrancy that young African talent possess in Mahikeng. In recent years popular artists like Cassper Nyovest have been attempting a revival of the cultural economy in the town through their music by hosting concerts and events and contributing further to the evolving nature of the local cultural economy.

Jazz

Jazz rose from a low base to exhibit a sustained and resilient presence in Mafikeng's cultural economy. Some local jazz enthusiasts wrote regular columns in *The Mail* newspaper which were educational in nature, and took the reader through the historical evolution of jazz, and outlined the careers of key artists, both internationally and in South Africa. During the apartheid period a local jazz club was formed and arranged regular performances at various venues in Mahikeng. One driver of the growth of jazz in the town was Rene McLean, an American saxophonist (from New York) of international repute, who settled in the town with his South African wife. McLean took up the position of Director of Music at Mmabana in 1986, and boosted the local jazz scene. He championed and popularized the genre with performances such as "Jazz in the Foyer", which was held at Mmabana from 1989-1992. (*Mafikeng Mail*, 3 March 1989, 24 April 1992), as well as through arranging jazz workshops. McLean energised the Jazz Club which was inaugurated in 1988 (*Mafikeng Mail*, 3 June 1988) and which accounted for an upturn in events during the years 1988-1990. This exemplifies the importance of a local champion as a driver of change in the cultural economy. As champion, McLean organised events, promoted the activity of jazz in the town and took on training responsibilities. The importance of particular individuals as champions or drivers of change is significant for understanding shifting local cultural economies.

Illustrative of the popularity of jazz music in the town, national names such as Hugh Masekela (*Mafikeng Mail*, 15 March 1991, 9 August 2002) and Dollar Brand (*Mafikeng Mail*, 24 March 1995) performed at local venues such as the International School and Mmabana. Various jazz groups (Mmabatho Jazz Diggers, Jazzing Around, Melodi, Lokaleng, Botsalano, Maiteko and Eyadini Jazz Clubs) were formed and played at local bars, restaurants and taverns and often also in the villages surrounding the town (see for example *Mahikeng Mail*, 8 June 2012, 8 July 2016, 2 November 2018, 4 December 2020, 9 September 2022, 22 September 2023, 11 August 2023). The growth of jazz events was especially marked in the period 2014-2023.

Classical music

Before 1990, there were five or fewer classical music concerts held each year in Mahikeng. The most notable classical music events which occurred included the staging of Handel's Messiah (*Mafikeng Mail*, 9 October 1981), visiting performers such as the Eva Jezkova Youth String Orchestra (*Mafikeng Mail*, 18 November 1983), and by renowned pianists Jeffrey Siegel (*Mafikeng Mail*, 2 September 1983) and Tessa Uys (*Mafikeng Mail*, 16 March 1984). In the period of late 'independence' in 1990 a plan to promote the classical arts was unveiled by President Lucas Mangope at the inaugural banquet of the Bophuthatswana Arts Council. It was stated that the Arts Council was "recruiting musicians from around the world to establish a national chamber orchestra…. Musicians will be role models for the nation's budding musicians as well as teaching their instruments to young musicians." (*Mafikeng Mail*, 30 March 1990: 1). The Bophuthatswana National Chamber Orchestra was formed and gave its inaugural concert in 1991, using the theatre of the International School as a venue (*Mafikeng Mail*, 22 February 1991). Additionally, the orchestra played at various other venues such as Mmabana, Mmabatho High and at the Mafikeng Museum. In 1994 the custom-built Arts Council Complex was opened, and a so-termed "hard hat performance with acoustic testing" was held (*Mafikeng Mail*, 18 November 1994). The national chamber orchestra continued to stage regular concerts until 12 May 2000, at the rate of between 15 and 30 per year. These included classics such as Beethoven and Mozart (see eg. *Mafikeng Mail*, 22 January 1993), Sunday Baroque concerts, as well as lighter popular classics. In addition, a light-hearted concert was staged at the time of the 1995 Rugby World Cup (*Mafikeng Mail*, 15 June 1995). Well-known conductors from Gauteng conducted many of these concerts (*Mafikeng Mail*, 17 October 1997). With the demise of Bophuthatswana in 1994, the Bophuthatswana National Chamber Orchestra was rebranded as the South African National Chamber Orchestra, the only national chamber orchestra in the country at the time. It adopted the motto "One orchestra, one nation, one mission" (*Mafikeng Mail*, 15 June 1995). This said, it suffered a Eurocentric critique from local artists and politicians and failed to survive. Leaders of the orchestra attempted to ameliorate the criticism of elitism variously by offering music cadetships to young black South Africans. Further, they regularly took music education classes to rural schools, and with all orchestra players offering sessions of teaching their instruments in Mafikeng. The orchestra embarked on regular tours throughout the North West province, and performed in the nearby towns of Klerksdorp, Vryburg, Potchefstroom and Rustenburg. A link was forged with the School of Music and Conservatory at the Potchefstroom Campus of North-West University.

In 2000 the chamber orchestra gave its final performance with a Conservation Concert at the Botsalano Game Reserve on 27 May 2000 (*Mafikeng Mail*, 12 May 2000). It was reported that this concert "ended with a rousing rendition of traditional music, arranged especially for the orchestra. Gently at first and then with increasing volume, the strains of the Last Post floated over the late afternoon haze of the African bush. The lone trumpeter paid silent tribute to his friends and colleagues, many of whom would be leaving the North West the next day for pastures new" (*Mafikeng Mail*, 2 June 2000). Further, the event was described as follows: "The audience recognised it for what it was and an eerie silence fell over the watchers - almost as if they were paying their last respects at the funeral of a friend…. The National Chamber Orchestra, which for so many years had given so much enjoyment to thousands of music-lovers, had fallen victim to government cutbacks. …Like the bush-clearing of non-indigenous plants at Botsalano,... so too the government has embarked on a clearing out process. … The turn out at Botsalano gave the lie to recent claims that the orchestra and its members were elitist" (*Mafikeng Mail*, 2 June 2000). Across the two decades 2001-2023 only 14 more references to classical music events are recorded in the *Mafikeng Mail*. The majority were concerts staged by staff and students at the International School. Classical music in Mafikeng was thus overwhelmingly driven by the Chamber Orchestra. Of 249 events recorded in the database, only 35 occurred in the years 1974-1990, 14 in the years 2001-2023, and 200 occurred in the period 1991-2000.

Choral music

There has been sustained support for choral music in the locality. This has mainly come from the African traditional and gospel choirs. There were local performances from visiting international choirs in the Bophuthatswana era. The famous Vienna Boys Choir from Austria sang in 1981 (*Mafikeng Mail*, 11 September 1981). The Jones Male Voice Choir from Wales gave shows in 1983 and 1984 (*Mafikeng Mail*, 11 February 1983, 19 October 1984). The well-known South African Drakensberg Boys Choir came several times from 1975 - 1992 (*Mafikeng Mail*, 18 May 1984, 1 May 1992). Occasional choral concerts were also supported by the National Chamber Orchestra. The genre of choral music was further sustained with the hosting of a number of Eisteddfods which were held regularly from 1976 to 2005. The choir of the Mahikeng campus of North West University had a significant local performance presence. Over the whole study period there were frequent school and adult choir competitions. Choir festivals were regularly held, at which Bophuthatswana choirs performed well (*Mafikeng Mail*, 10 April 1992, 29 October 1999, 10 February 2015). In total, gospel music festivals amounted to over 40 events.

Traditional music

Traditional music accounted for only a small percentage of cultural events. African traditional music included marimba bands (*Mafikeng Mail*, 29 June 1990), traditional music and dance evenings, often hosted by Mmabana (*Mafikeng Mail*, 23 June 2000), and traditional poets (*Mafikeng Mail*, 27 May 1994). Other traditions that were celebrated included Afrikaans (*Mahikeng Mail*, 1 November 2013) and Indian music, also featuring international artists (*Mafikeng Mail*, 22 July 2005, 13 July 2007).

Performance and celebration: Theatre

Plays and drama

For a former Bantustan capital and now provincial secondary city, Mahikeng has had a significant depth of drama productions, which can only be rivalled by Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown) which is the home of South Africa's National Arts Festival. Visiting shows from CAPAB (*Mafeking Mail*, 21 May 1976), the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (PACT) and Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State (PACOFS) were brought to the town in the 1970s and 1980s (*Mafikeng Mail*, 5 March 1982, 11 May 1984). A co-operative relationship was formed with the Johannesburg Market Theatre in Newtown as well as the Windybrow Theatre in Johannesburg. Both were known to facilitate the production of 'struggle theatre' and many plays which were critical of apartheid were performed at venues such as Mmabana and the Civic Centre. Among the most well-known stage productions mounted included Percy Mtwa's "*Bopha*" (*Mafikeng Mail*, 29 September 1989), "*Sizwe Banzi is dead*" (written collaboratively by Athol Fugard, with two renowned actors, John Kani and Winston Ntshona) (*Mafikeng Mail*, 6 April 1984, 2 March 2007), and "*We shall Sing for the Fatherland*" (Zakes Mda) (*Mafikeng Mail*, 5 October 1990). Mmabana also staged its own productions and local dramatist Walter Chakela rose to prominence *(Mafikeng Mail*, 13 June 1986, 30 August 1991, 1 December 1995). Local productions were occasionally taken to Johannesburg and the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown (*Mafikeng Mail*, 5 December 1991, 1 October 1999, 9 August 2013, 21 August 2015). During the 1980s, the local Mafikeng-Mmabatho amateur dramatic society (MMADS) (*Mafikeng Mail*, 13 July 1984, 3 May 1985, 12 June 1989) and various high schools also produced plays and musicals with students and staff putting on shows in well-equipped theatres (see *Mafikeng Mail* 22 May 1992, 6 May 2005, 5 July 2013, 26 May 2023). With the demise of Bophuthatswana, Mmabana's drama programme experienced disinvestment and a lack of support as touring productions ceased to include Mafikeng on their schedule and the staging of local productions became less frequent. The exclusion of Mafikeng from touring productions is illustrative of its cultural downgrade as the town had effectively fallen off the cultural map of South Africa. Mmabana's performers and teachers left the town, further contributing to the exodus of creative talent.

Dance

It is shown by Drummond (2024) that the number of performances of dance events increased rapidly from 1988 and peaked from 1990-1995. Unlike classical music, there was no catastrophic decrease, and dance performances continued sporadically. Over the years, dance classes have been offered in Mafikeng by private companies (Sylvia Franklin Academy of Dance, *Mafeking Mail*, 24 January 1972, Dance by Erin, *Mahikeng Mail* 16 December 2016) and also by the Bophuthatswana and North West Arts Councils. These have included ballet and ballroom dancing, as well as modern and Spanish dancing (*Mafikeng Mail*, 15 September 1989). Mmabana in conjunction with the Bophuthatswana Arts Council created a flourishing ballroom and Latin American dance programme. According to Lillian Dooley, director of Bophuthatswana ballroom dancing, *"*in the twelve different regions of Bophuthatswana, there [were] about five or six clubs in each region*"* which was all co-ordinated from Mmabatho (Old Dancing Videos, 2020: 16, 39). Dancers took part in the national ballroom and Latin American Dancesport competitions, such as the Leopard Challenge, which took place annually from 1992-2008 (*Mafikeng Mail*, 17 December 1999, 18 August 2006). Of note is that two of the professional dancers in the South African version of the 'Strictly Come Dancing' show were from Mahikeng (*Mahikeng Mail*, 28 June 2013, 19 July 2015). From 1988-1992 productions of the University of Cape Town Ballet School were staged annually. These included of The Two Pigeons, La Sylphide, Soul of Africa and Afrika: Tears and Laughter (*Mafikeng Mail*, 29 July 1988, 28 July 1989, 13 July 1990, 19 July 1991). The National Dance Company of Bophuthatswana was founded in 1991 and performed Exagorazo, His and Hers and Mantis in that year. The ballet Mantis was based on the artwork of that name by Walter Battiss, and explored Khoisan spirituality (*Mafikeng Mail*, 5 December 1991). The music included work by Amampondo. The ballet was part of a group of three in South Africa which according to Meewes (2019: 96) showed that "ballet in South Africa still had an interest in engaging with Afrocentric themes, even before the removal of the apartheid regime*"*. This said, there occurred a rise of local criticism towards ballet as Eurocentric and elitist. In common with other elements of the local cultural economy, the ballet programme entered a gradual decline and stopped being taught completely in 2006 due to a lack of support from Mmabana management and associated budgetary cuts.

The Indlovu Link Dance Company, started by the former director of the North West Dance Company (Piek, 2008), gave performances at Mmabana in 2002, and also performed internationally (*Mafikeng Mail*, 23 July 1999). Regarding the Dance Company, Piek wrote *"*Ek is in die hemel - omring deur uiters gedissiplineerde en professionele dansers wat met die beste in die wêreld kan vergelyk." (I am in heaven - surrounded by extremely disciplined and professional dancers who can compare with the best in the world) (Piek, 2008: 95). She was reported as saying *"*This dance programme is geared towards exploiting South African modes of expression through dance, not only to promote tradition, custom, arts and culture but also to find unity within diversity in our society. … We have performed in Botswana, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Egypt, France, and Greece. We have developed into a most beautiful and powerful dance company*"* (*Mafikeng Mail*, 1 March 2002: 19). The Dance Company performed also some animal-based dances. Another dimension was occasionally added by Eastern Dance Groups

such as Katpaham from India who gave regular workshops and performances during the period 2003-2011 (*Mafikeng Mail*, 24 June 2011).

Performance and celebration: Beauty contests

The final sub-category of cultural performance that was represented in Mafeking was that of beauty pageants. Arguably, beauty contests have long been an historical part of popular culture in South Africa. Alegi (2008: 31) observes that the "national passion for beauty contests traces its roots back to the 1920s and 1930s and transcends race, class and cultural divisions". Using a content analysis of material published in the *The Bantu World* newspaper, the arbiter of taste for urban Africans during the 1930s, Thomas (2006) traces the advent and rise in popularity of beauty contests. This interest continued in momentum through the apartheid period (Ribane, 2006). During this time American capitalism influenced definitions of beauty through mass advertising for sales of skin-lightening products (Thomas, 2019). This said, at the time of the dawn of democratic change the *New York Times* ran an article on 16 September 1993 which observed that "few countries take beauty contests quite as seriously as South Africa". The data presented on Figure 3 indicates that a significant number of beauty contests were reported in the *Mahikeng Mail*, often with pictures of the contestants and winners. The performance of beauty contests therefore merits brief consideration as an element of the local cultural economy. In the 50 year analysis, 156 beauty contests were recorded which accounted for 8 percent of the total for the domain of Performance and Celebration. This figure excludes some beauty events that were very small, particularly those that involved young children. A peak of ten beauty pageants was recorded for 2000. The town hosted some quite large events, such as Miss Bophuthatswana (*Mafikeng Mail*, 19 August 1983, 16 March 1984, 27 March 1986, 11 September 1992), Miss South Africa (*Mafikeng Mail*, 2 June 1995) and Miss South Africa North West (*Mafikeng Mail*, 22 July 1994, 19 April 1996). Other beauty events were specifically for Mafikeng residents such as Queen of Mafikeng, Miss Mafikeng, Mr Mafikeng, and Face of Mafikeng. Further local contests were organised by companies such as the pageants of 'Miss Ellerines' and 'Miss Geen and Richards'. The university and local schools were additional facilitators of small beauty pageants.

Conclusion

It has been argued that 'change' is a constant feature of tourism, that destinations are dynamic as they evolve and change over time, and that understanding the processes of change in destinations is a critical research issue for scholars (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2021). A similar observation can be directed at cultural economies and of the importance of analysing the evolution of cultural economies and CCIs in specific geographic spaces. Lazzeretti et al. (2018: 13) contend research on CCIs is of "growing importance" in scholarship on the creative economy. This study analyses creative economies in non-metropolitan spaces through the lens of the cultural economy in Mahikeng, South Africa. It concentrates on the domain of Performance and Celebration as the leading segment of the local cultural economy of the town before (1974-1977), during (1978-1994) and after (1994-2023) the Bophuthatswana era of 'independence' with the post-1994 democratic change in South Africa. The research offers a novel contribution by addressing a knowledge gap in the international and local literature by its focus on CCIs in non-metropolitan spaces in a Global South context. The use of an historical approach allows for the construction of a narrative which uncovers the rise and fall of components of a local cultural economy deeply impacted by the political, social and economic changes which accompanied the Bophuthatswana 'independence' period as well as the territory's subsequent re-incorporation into South Africa.

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