

The Creative City: a matter of values

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"The men of experiment are like the ant; they only collect and use. But the bee... gathers its materials from the flowers of the garden and of the field, but transforms and digests it by a power of its own." Leonardo da Vinci

"Creativity is a positively sanctioned type of deviance." Jurgen Friedrichs

Introduction

Generations of theorists have debated the definition of creativity. Originally the act of creation, and thus the product of creativity, was relegated to the capacities only of deities. Early artists and poets did not “create”, rather artistic practitioners “arranged” objects and notions from things and ideas that already existed in the world—thanks to the exclusive “creative capacities” of the god(s). To “make anew” was a divine capacity.

We live in a different time, however, and creativity now denotes not so much the production of new worldly objects, but simply, an innovative action. Creativity describes both *process* and *product*, and as such virtually anyone (or for that matter, any “thing”) can now be “creative”. Not only can the artist, the poet, the architect be “creative”—innovate, imagine, ingenerate, or invent—but so too can inanimate objects: creative places, creative economies, creative politics and creative governance.

The foundational qualities of “creativity” have not evolved over time, but, as mentioned, the creative subjects, and thus the purposes to which creativity is put to task, have changed. Therefore, exploring the notion of “creativity”, as we are here in this chapter, involves framing first “what is creative?” (Here: cities), and then, what principles or values are guiding the mandate of creativity? (Here: the reigning values and principles surrounding any discussion of creativity in Canada). And this is what we will here explore.

This paper argues that to understand the growth of Creative Cities in Canada, we must first explore two dominant “value orientations” (historically embedded and conflicting but continually powerful) that surround any discussion of “creative ventures¹” in the Canadian context. Influenced at once by both British and American concepts of culture, arts, and creative industries, creativity, and the subsequent development of “creative cities” in Canada, meet with conflict over a divide between “arts and culture” values and “creative industries” values.

The first part of this paper, then, lays out two differing conceptual definitions of the creative city. According to what we call the *culture-centric* conception of the creative city, value is placed foremost on creative acts, which benefit the well-being and quality of life of citizens²; the economic benefit and value is placed secondary. What we have termed

¹ Creative ventures in our discussion include arts, culture, media and broadcasting, and more recently, new media, design, and innovative industries.

the econo-centric orientation, on the other hand, sees local economic development and growth as primarily important and artistic values are placed secondary. The primary difference between these two orientations is a difference in understandings of the value of “creativity”: is it primarily an intangible value of the imagination or is it primarily the economic exchange value of creativity?

A note should also be made that since the creative city model is one adopted primarily at the policy level, our background and case study focus on the urban policy level of both theory and practice.

And so, in this first section, perhaps more important than this conceptual framework, is a brief explanatory narrative that situates the origins of these two value orientations within the unique context of Canada.

With this clarified conception of the term “creative city” in Canada, the next section of the paper compiles the various “creative city formulae,” suggested by Canadian urban policy theorists and analysts, as well as practicing “creative” Canadian cities². These formulae—methods by which it is suggested the creative Canadian city may be fostered—can be categorized broadly into two categories: creative governance and direct support for creative ventures.

To transform theory into practice, the last section of this paper considers the case study of Vancouver, British Columbia. With the conceptual clarification of “creative city” in one hand, and the simplification of the various “creative city formulae” in the other, the purpose of the case study of Vancouver, is an attempt to demonstrate that in practice, Canadian cities continue to muddle through this conceptual divide between culture-centric principles and econo-centric principles towards creativity. The case of Vancouver illustrates that within the Canadian urban context, to foster creativity—whether for wellbeing or profit—governance, citizenry and industry need to, themselves, become creative agents of change.

Part 1 – Clarifying Creative City Discourses: *Same song, different solos...*

How is the “creative city” conceived of in the context of Canadian cities? To sift through this complexity necessitates first asking not only what is, but who is defining the creative city, because in Canadian cities, as mentioned, the manner in which the creative city is conceived is dependent not only on the author of the concept, but also on age-old connotations associated with discussions of creativity in Canada. The following tables outline: a) the two broad value orientation towards creative cities and b) the two foremost suggested means of fostering creative cities in Canada.

² In our discussion, the cities considered, which have explicitly adopted a creative city mandate include: Vancouver, London, Toronto, Ottawa, and Halifax.

Table 1: Mapping the value orientations and means to achieve the Creative City in Canada

<i>Creative City orientations</i> →	<i>Culture-centric</i>	<i>Econ-centric</i>
Creative City values	Central value = arts, culture, and community wellbeing, access and inclusion	Central value = urban economic sustainability and wellbeing through creative initiatives/industries
Definition of creative city	Place of diverse and inclusive arts and culture	Place of economic innovation, creative talent, and creative industries

Table 2: Mapping Processes: the means and methods of fostering or creating a creative city in Canada

Means to achieve the creative city	1. Creative governance	2. Direct support for creative ventures
Aspired result?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Imaginative, transparent, and democratic governance ▪ Inspiring, imaginative, inclusive, attractive, and adaptable cityscapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong and diverse local arts and culture expressions ▪ Strong creative work force, industry, networks and connections and competitiveness
Loose relation to contemporary Canadian urban discourses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborative governance, city-region and scale politics; social inclusion ▪ Place-making, quality of place/life, urban sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social inclusion, diversity, quality of life ▪ Economic clustering, creative class
Sample theorists who have proposed ideas on the processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peter Hall, Meric Gertler, Neil Bradford, Patsy Healy, Frank Fischer, Charles Landry, Leonie Sandercock, Jane Jacobs, Ilse Helbrecht 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nancy Duxbury, Leonie Sandercock, Charles Landry, Ilse Helbrecht, Richard Florida, Meric Gertler, Mario Polese and Richard Stren, Robert Palmer, Peter Hall, Michael Porter

1.1 Culture-centric Orientation

Description, History, and Means to Achieve Creative City

Description:

The culture-centric orientation sees the creative city as a place with strong flourishing arts and culture, creative and diverse expressions, and inclusivity, artistry and imagination. Creativity is conceived of as having some relation to identity, rights, beliefs, and general social wellbeing.

History:

a) Impact of High-culture Influence

The roots of the culture-centric orientation of creative city originate from a long history of cultural policy debates in Canada where arts and culture have retained a special protected status in Canadian political institutions. In attempts to replicate British arts and culture in Anglophone Canada, early Canadian policy conceived of: culture as that which

cultivates a citizen to become more civilized; and the “*arts*” as Western, classic, conservative, and traditional (e.g.: opera, ballet, painting, music, museums, etc)³. Arts and culture were protected under separate national policies as they were conceived of as serving noble and necessary social aims such as education and the upkeep of the citizenry’s general social wellbeing.⁴ Arts and culture were “high-culture” and considered to be better than or more valuable than low culture or popular culture or exchangeable, tradable or marketable cultural goods. In Canada, this general critical attitude towards market-oriented artistic goods continues to perpetuate the ideology of the culture-centric orientation towards arts and cultural policy in general and creative cities in particular.

b. Impact of Diversity and Cultural Rights

The historical impact of diversity on Canadian cultural policy has also shaped the culture-centric orientation towards creative cities by embedding a sense of government responsibility towards the preservation and protection of arts, culture and creativity. Until the 1960’s the early conservative conception of arts and culture dominated, but beginning in the 1950’s a necessary reality arrived with increased immigration to Canadian cities. Canadian metropolitan populations were increasingly ethnically diverse and the established and narrow “high-art” nature of Canadian cultural policy did not sufficiently consider the diverse values implicit in a multicultural population.⁵ The right to cultural and artistic expression became just as important as freedom of expression and belief, and this was made explicit through two key documents: the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 which clearly underscored the right of every Canadian citizen to equal expression and belief no matter gender, ethnicity, religion, or race, and the Canadian Multicultural Act passed in 1985, which deemed Canada’s population as one of multiplicity and diverse ethnic heritage. The Department of Canadian Heritage now upholds the tenets of the Multiculturalism Act and governs at the federal level over issues of “Canadian identity and values, cultural development, heritage and areas of natural or historical significance to the nation.”⁶ This historical narrative illustrates how the Canadian government has an historical responsibility towards the “protection and preservation” of Canadian culture, arts, and creative expression. Furthermore, not only does this embedded sense of government responsibility continue to weave through federal cultural policy, but it also informs creative city discourse and practice in Canadian cities. The preservationist attitude towards certain aspects of Canadian culture is illustrated through the culture plan of London, Ontario, and the city’s deep support for built heritage. “To reinforce and protect the unique heritage of London, the City strengthens its policies and commitment to protecting the heritage of our City and begins a new commitment to revitalize our public spaces, neighborhoods, main streets and communities as vital, energetic, active and attractive people-friendly places.”⁷

And so in sum, there are two key trends that permeate the culture-centric orientation towards creative city: the first relates to the conception of “creativity” and the second relates to and influences the “means by which the creative city is achieved.” According

³ Maria Tippett. *Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission*.

⁴ Jody Berland. *Marginal Notes on Cultural Studies in Canada*. University of Toronto Quarterly. Volume 64 Number 4, Fall 1995.

⁵ Carl James. “Culture Multiculturalism and the Ideology of Integration. *Seeing Ourselves: Exploring Ethnicity, Race and Culture*, 2nd Ed. Thompson Education Pub. 1999. Pp.203

⁶ Canadian Heritage. <http://www.pch.gc.ca/>

⁷ London Culture Plan.

to the culture-centric orientation, culture and the arts relate to identity, expression, culture, belief, purpose, diversity, education, social inclusion, and general social welfare and well-being. Embedded in this is also an historical conception of arts, culture and creativity as things “beyond” or “better than” the marketplace. In turn, and influenced by this conception, culture-centric proponents believe the means by which to foster the creative city is primarily through the actions of the government. According to this group, following the historical roots, it is the government’s responsibility to provide funding for, to devise policy to aid, and to use innovative processes to foster, as much as possible, the growth and development of the creative city.

1.2 Econo-centric: Economy, clusters, cultural industries and talent

Description, History, and Means to Achieve Creative City

Description

The second conception of the creative city sees the creative city as a place driven by strong innovative, creative, and competitive cultural and creative industries and economically sustainable artists and arts organizations. According to the econo-centric conception, creativity is a means to achieve a foremost goal of local economic development, and as such, creative endeavors and ventures have some quantifiable value or measure. The econo-centric orientation in Canada emerges from a slightly more contemporary set theories and events than the culture-centric orientation which include: contemporary theories about the “new economy”, the creative class, creative talent, and creative clusters.

History

a. Impact of New Economy in Canadian Cities

A major influence behind the growing relevance of the econo-centric conception of creativity is the rise of and writings about the knowledge-based “new economy,” and the importance of the city-region (Bradford 2002; Donald and Morrow 2003.)

The econo-centric orientation aims to quantify the value of creativity in economic terms, and this relates to contemporary narratives concerning the evolution of Canadian local economies from the “old economy” to the “new economy”. In Canada, the “old economy”, characterized by large companies and organizations working most often within resource industries (fishing, forestry, agriculture), comprised of businesses that located themselves based on low-cost land, cheap labor, and a cost-conscious business climate⁸. Since the 1980’s, the new economy, driven by knowledge-based industries are choosing to locate closer to each other—choosing to “cluster”—as they work at the level of human interaction and communication, rather than raw material which previously limited their geographic positioning. In Canada, the expansion of the new economy has positioned cities as the hubs of creative economy businesses. In the new economy, where knowledge, ideas, innovation and creativity are not only the processes but also the products, new economy businesses are “prospering by housing spatially concentrated, smaller scale firms cooperating with one another and with public sector institutions for innovation in knowledge-intensive production to achieve global

⁸ Betsy Donald and Doug Morrow. Competing for Talent, 2003

competitiveness”⁹. Below are two popular Canadian urban sub-discourses that inform and encourage the econo-centric conception of the creative city.

b. Canadian Innovation and Creative Clustering

The econo-centric orientation to creative city discourse also has relations to the rise of urban industrial cluster studies. Emerging from the trend in Canadian cities of clustered industries like multimedia and biotech companies in Vancouver, and the arts and media industries in Toronto, cluster studies have gained popularity both in practice—as mentioned in the cities above—and in theory.

In Canada, cluster theory gained prominence in the early 1990s, following a major study by Michael Porter, the person who originally popularized the term. Porter took the "diamond" model of clusters that he developed in his 1990 book, *The competitive advantage of nations* (Porter, 1990), and applied it - in a study for the Business Council on National Issues - to Canada. The results were published in 1991 as *Canada at the Crossroads* (Porter, 1991).

While Porter is not without his critics, especially the analysis as it was applied to Canada (see Rugman, 1991), the notion of "clusters" was highly influential in policy research on innovation and technology (Wolfe & Gertler, 2003; Wolfe & Lucas 2004). As part of a network of researchers led by Wolfe and Gertler, Smith, McCarthy, and Petrusевич looked at clusters from the perspective of the new media industry in Vancouver (Smith, 2004).¹⁰

The nature of these is pro-market, and growth and development oriented, and unlike the art-centric orientation, which places great faith in the embedded responsibility and jurisdiction of the government over arts, culture and creative affairs, these econo-centric theory argue for limited government intervention so that creative and innovative businesses may flourish in an unimpeded free Canadian market.

c. Creative Class and Talent in Canada

The theories and practical applications of “creative class” literature has been another major influence behind the strength of the econo-centric conception of creative cities. Linked to cluster studies by the common goal of economic development, creative class and talent discourse emerged in the mid-90’s to describe a new population of employees tasked with “coming up with new ideas and better ways of doing things”¹¹. Theorists including Allen Scott and Michael Storper have written about the creative class but Richard Florida is the theorist most commonly associated with the creative class theories and application in Canada. Florida and colleagues propose a set of criteria to determine the economic competitiveness of a city-region by measuring its level of “creative talent”¹². Creative class analysis positions “creative talent” (such as artists, bohemians, and creative industry employees) as the source of creativity, which in turn drives local economic development and prosperity.

⁹ Bradford, Neil. *Why Cities Matter*. P.iv

¹⁰ Another important source of insight in this area, especially as clusters are understood in the high technology industry, comes from the work of Anne Saxenian (Saxenian, 1984)

¹¹ Charles Landry. *Lineages of the Creative City*.

¹² Richard Florida. *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

Florida's econo-centric model of creative cities has gained popularity as the framework for art and culture plans in several cities across Canada. Canadian academic Meric Gertler, who works closely with Florida was influential in the development of the 2003 Toronto Arts and Culture Plan, entitled: *Culture Plan for the Creative City*. The econo-centric conception of the creativity city, which aims at urban economic development is evident throughout the plan:

“[Creative] cities, and their citizens, have an overwhelming impact on the economies of their countries and compete with one another directly for trade, for investment and, most of all, for talent. Toronto is already a Creative City: its competitors are now such major metropolises as Chicago, Milan, Barcelona, Montreal and San Francisco.

(...) And what is that? A Creative City. As our consultations and research confirmed repeatedly, Creative Cities drive the world's economy. Creative Cities are dense urban centers whose economies are dominated by ideas, and by people who bring new ideas to life. (...) These cities work with their minds.”¹³

In Sum: the potential for conflict with two value orientations

Comparing the creative class to the culture-centric ideas, we see divergent conceptions of what exactly is “creativity”. The creative class theories propose that the main driver of the creative city is creative talent and they are valuable because of the economic value they may produce in a city. Foundational of the creative class argument is support for econo-centric values: local economic development, growth and creative industries. As previously mentioned, however, the historically influenced, high-culture, culture-centric orientation towards Canadian creative cities conceives arts, culture and creativity as in a realm “outside” the marketplace. There are the creative industries and then there is arts and culture—that which is for profit, and that which is not-for-profit—and these divided notions, in practice, can become conflicted and problematic.

Part 2: Means and Methods to Foster Creative City

Through a detailed analysis of literature and policy concerning creative city plans, plans of action, and policy recommendations, this next section attempts to summarize, into two broad categories, the primary means that help in “fostering” and “achieving” a creative city. Although there are endless suggestions about how to foster a creative city, we highlight two of the most commonly raised methods: 1) creative governance, and 2) direct support to creative ventures.

Moreover, this section also illustrates how two value orientations may agree on overarching “components” of a creative city, but their mismatched value sets may lead to mutually exclusive strategies and goals to achieve a creative city. And so, in the following section, integrated with the description of the two suggested methods, we aim to illustrate the commonalities as well as incongruities between that divide strategies and goals of the two value orientations towards the creative city.

2.1 Creative Governance

¹³ Plan for a Creative City. City of Toronto. 2003.

From both the culture-centric and the econo-centric perspectives, a necessary component of a creative city are governance systems that are creative, imaginative, flexible and accommodating¹⁴. Creative governance may include: creative decision making processes, the inclusion of diverse and non-mainstream knowledges, the networking and connection among different vertical levels of government (local, provincial and federal) and horizontal ministries (planning, culture, engineering, etc), as well as public-private partnerships to support creative industries.

Creative Governance through the culture-centric lens

From the culture-centric perspective, creative governance often includes creative decision-making. Leonie Sandercock and Steven Dang argue that the role of the planner should be more equally as a facilitator and translator between government and community, as well as a “coordinator” of congenial places for a great range of unofficial and diverse plans, ideas, and expressions.¹⁵

Creative governance also may describe the inclusion of diverse, locally-informed, and non-mainstream knowledge sources. Nancy Duxbury argues that implementation of creative city “ideas and strategies in a community is an *art*, based on thick knowledge of, and sensitivity to, the complexity of a community’s cultural ecosystem, and the broader contexts in which it operates.¹⁶”

And so, two important themes emerge in the culture-centric creative governance strategies—both of which relate to our earlier discussions of the origins of the culture-centric orientation in Canada: 1) Theorists propose that the government has a responsibility to the diverse identities, values, and needs of the Canadian populace, thus emphasis on the role of the government in creativity, and 2) Theorists propose that creativity relates to identity, local knowledge, and culture rather than products of the creative industries.

Creative Governance through the econo-centric lens

Econo-centric theorists, propose that central components of creative governance are networks, partnerships, and collaborations that are sympathetic to the growth of creative industries. Neil Bradford argues that it is important for governments to “meet important local and national policy ranging from economic innovation to social citizenship and environmental sustainability.”¹⁷ This proposal reflects the embedded econo-centric values highlighted in part one of this paper wherein creative governance would involve adapting policy to facilitate creative industry growth or the attraction of creative talent.

Meric Gertler also supports the econo-centric values by praising the efforts of provincial policy in Canada, which has “played a useful role in further developing the connective tissue and social networks that produce a sense of commonality among workers in a city.” This strategy encourages government to integrate econo-centric values into their planning and visioning

¹⁴ Landry, Healy, Gertler, Porter, etc.

¹⁵ Steven Dang. A Starter Menu for Planner/Artist Collaborations. *Planning Theory and Practice*. Volume 6, Number 1 / March, 2005. P 123-126 ; Leonie Sandercock. A new spin on the creative city: Artist/planner collaborations. *Planning Theory and Practice*, Volume 6, Issue 1, 2005, Pages 101-103

¹⁶ Nancy Duxbury. *Creative Cities: Principles and Practices*. CPRN Policy Background. August 2004.

¹⁷ Neil Bradford. *Creative City Structured policy background*.

2.2 Direct Support For Creative Ventures

Many creative city theorists and much creative city policy argue, in some regard, for direct support for artists, the arts, and cultural expression. Direct support can take many forms: individual artist grants, non-profit development or operational funding, start-up funding for creative individuals and groups, grants for cultural events and expositions, and tax exemptions to creative industry growth¹⁸. Fundamentally, this component involves the direct financial support—in some shape or form—to foster creative agency and activity.

Direct support through the culture-centric lens

Culture-centric proponents propose that “creativity” is the foundational methodology of the artist and thus a creative city is one in which there are, obviously, many practicing artists. Logically, in order to sustain creativity, there should exist support for the livelihood of the Canadian artist and their exploration of artistic expression. As Neil Bradford argues, “the lifeblood of the arts is creativity, imagination, experimentation, and appreciation of difference¹⁹” and as such, direct support for artists and arts organizations is a necessary strategy.

Implicit in these strategies are historical culture-centric values, as previously mentioned, in which creativity is related to identity, arts, culture, rights to expression, and actions and productions that are oriented towards social well being and not primarily market demands.

Direct Support through the econo-centric lens

The econo-centric school supports direct funding to creativity but argues moreover for support that encourages the free-market expansion of creative industries. Strategies for this approach, therefore take the form of pro-industry policies such as: limited government action so as to restrict the impediments of industry growth, “seed money” or start-up funding for creative industry growth.

Citing initiatives used in Ireland, Meric Gertler encourages income tax breaks to foster creative industry growth. This approach has been used to notable effect in British Columbia, Canada in both the film and animation industries (Smith et. al, 2004). The electronic games and animation industries also sought, and received, preferential treatment in the area of labor laws, specifically the application of "overtime" provisions for new media workers (Smith et. al., 2004). For others on the topic of government policies for new media, see Cooke (1999).

In sum, the econo-centric orientation towards direct support argues for more libertarian strategies—strategies that restrict government intervention and encourage free market expansion of creative industries.

2.3 Summary

Although no one Canadian city has successfully coordinated a harmonized plan to address the dual-value orientations towards the creative city model, many cities have

¹⁸ Note: this is not a comprehensive list.

¹⁹ Neil Bradford: Creative Cities a structured backgrounder.

developed means—whether conscious or not—to work amidst this multiplicity of values. What is missing from any given Canadian case study is a city that not only works amidst multiple values, but also consciously acknowledges this multiplicity and goes beyond value “accommodation” towards and interconnection and coordination among interests, principles and priorities.

The following case study of Vancouver illustrates a Canadian city, which, in a sometimes piecemeal and disorganized and sometimes coordinated manner is acknowledging and addressing the value dichotomy towards the notion of “creativity” in cities: creativity as intangible value and creativity as exchange value. Through a narrative and description of the city’s arts and cultural initiatives, and local creative cluster development, the second part of this paper illustrates how methods in each of these realms have attempted to not only acknowledge values, but also to work collaboratively to foster a spectrum of value orientations towards creativity.

3. Case Study, Vancouver: Integrating values in a creative city

3.1 Setting the Stage

Geography and Location

Perched on the West Coast of Canada, Vancouver is located along the Georgia Strait and just north of the US border. The dense coastal city is often praised for natural landscape features including the Coast Mountain Range which borders the north of the city, and more than 50km of shoreline that enwraps the city’s perimeter. The city’s downtown core is a peninsula accessed from the east by land and from the north and south by four major bridges. The city is praised internationally for its beauty, friendliness and cleanliness and has been rated several times as one of the top cities in the world in which to live²⁰.

Demographics

According to the 2001 census, there are just under 2 million people living in the census metropolitan area of Vancouver, which also represents half the entire population of the province.²¹ The population density of Vancouver is 690 people per sq km, which is higher than most major cities across Canada. The city, and in particular the downtown core, is extremely dense where certain high-rise neighborhoods average more than 20,000 people per sq km²². This density makes Vancouver the third most dense city in North America behind New York and San Francisco.

Population Character: Entrepreneurial and Diverse

Vancouverites are, on average, young, educated, wealthy and entrepreneurial people. The majority of the population is between 25-44 years old with the median age of 37 years old. 87% of population aged 25-64 have a university degree, certificate or diploma, and the average full-time income is \$46,806. The city also has a generally higher percentage of self-employed people than other Canadian cities²³.

²⁰ Economist 2003; John Punter, Vancouver Achievement 2005.

²¹ 2001 Census Data, Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area

²² Yaletown and Coal Harbour fit this character.

²³ 2001 Census Data, Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area

Another important quality of Vancouver's population is diversity. Apart from youth, wealth, intelligence, and entrepreneurialism, Vancouverites also come from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds where almost half the population is foreign born (40%). The largest ethnic populations identify themselves as Canadian, Chinese and South Asian. Next to Christians (which account for less than half the population) the largest single belief group, 42.3%, identifies itself as non-religious, which is defined by Statistics Canada as "Agnostic, Atheist, Humanist, and No religion, and other responses, such as Darwinism, etc." The next largest religious group are Buddhists (6.9%), Sikhs (2.8%), Jews (1.8%) and Muslims (1.8%) and (1.1%) Hindu community.

With such a young, learned, and diverse population, what is inherent is an equal diversity of beliefs, lifestyles, visions, and values. To accommodate this urban reality, one may expect urban policy and city planning, such as a creative city mandate, to accommodate and support this complexity by supporting a culture-centric creative city model. On the other hand, the professional, entrepreneurial, and self-motivated nature of the city's population, may seem to correlate more closely with the values of the econo-centric perspective towards the creative city.

The case study of Vancouver is told as a chronological narrative through which we illustrate Vancouver's efforts to accommodate multiple value orientations towards the design and development of a creative city. The following narrative shows how Vancouver has struggled—sometimes succeeding and sometimes straining—to serve two diverse sets of values and goals by means of creativity, imagination, and innovation.

3.2 The Creative City Narrative in Vancouver

3.2.1 Early Creative City Initiatives

In the mid 1970's, creativity became not only a buzz word for discourse about arts and culture in the city of Vancouver, but also a term that soon characterized the future economic direction of the lower mainland. Suffering from a faltering economy of primarily natural resources such as forestry, mining, and fisheries, the province of BC and subsequently the city of Vancouver, sought new economic directions. While resources closed down or moved elsewhere, a number of creative industries grew in replacement. Observing in other major cities a rise in service and in particular "creative" industries, Vancouver chose to invest its local theatre scene, which fortuitously set the stage—both literally and figuratively—for the subsequent expansion of the local (and then international) film industry. Growing urban investment in policy and infrastructure to support theatre and then film began to attract creative workers, or in the Floridian model, creative talent. Later, the talent pool from theatre exhibited skills that were transferable to film, and soon to other creative and artistic ventures throughout the city. Vancouver began to turn from a city living on its muscle and brawn to "a city living on its wits"²⁴.

3.2.2 A budding expansion to Vancouver's "creative" parameters

In the 1990's a new creative niche was added to the econo-centric tally of creative industries: the new media industry. With the dot.com boom flourishing in cities across North America (and especially the West Coast) companies in Vancouver too soon began

²⁴ Interview Burke Taylor, former Director of Cultural Affairs, City of Vancouver, (June 28th, 2006)

to dabble in “new media”, characterized as “not so much an industry but a set of applications, software, skills, and techniques that are adaptable to a variety of fields, [where] the underlying theme [was] communications: digital, interactive, wireless, convergent, networked, mobile business and personal communications.”²⁵

From its beginning, however, new media suffered because of the embedded “siloeing” of industrial categories among Canadian industries. New media often comprises widely varying ventures including: e-learning, film, animation, graphics design, and on-line creative service providers. According to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), these types of jobs, which in practice are interconnected and mutually dependent, fall across a spectrum of more rigid industry categories used by Statistics Canada, among which include work in: (51) Information and Cultural Industries; (54) Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; (61) Educational Services; (71) Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; and (81) Other Services (except Public Administration)²⁶. The problem with too-defined and pre-established categories (or the lack of appropriately defined categories for new media) means that the process of developing aid for the industry becomes messy and difficult. Is new media a creative industry? Is it an economic industry? Is it art and culture?

The early and continued growth of the new media industries in Vancouver met further difficulties that reinforce the problems with the culture and economic divide among creative pursuits in Canada. Because of its undefined industrial nature, early on, new media received little to no funding from either the government realms of arts and heritage or industry. And so, growing up in the global market of the dot.com boom, and with facilitated communication methods, local Vancouver new media companies survived by establishing clients situated all over the world. In fact now, over 75% of Vancouver new media companies export products services or both²⁷. Because of the international market for and the clientele of these companies, many businesses hesitate or even outright reject being considered “cultural industries” or arts or cultural pursuits. Richard Smith interviewed a Vancouver new media employee who aptly summarized the mood with “we can’t expect a kid with a grant to produce a cultural CD-ROM product about the fur trade in Canada to turn around and launch a new media company.”²⁸

These environmental, political, and economic factors have perpetuated the conception of new media as an undefined and “exception of the rule” creative industry: it is not arts or culture because the products are quite often for foreign audiences (e.g.: the Homer Simpson video game content by Blast Radius Studio), but it is also not a creative industry—self proclaimed so to avoid being conceived of as “less” than real business.

3.2.3 Expanding the traditional culture-centric conception...

Burke Taylor joined the city in 1988 and was hired to “make change” within the realm of arts, culture and creativity in the City of Vancouver and it was his early actions that led to subsequent interconnectivity of values across creative ventures in the city. Up to this point arts and culture were relegated to a siloed department in the city and governed classic forms of urban arts and culture (theatres, galleries, ballet, opera). Taylor’s

²⁵ New Media Directory. 2001, p.3

²⁶ NAICS. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Subjects/Standard/naics/2002/naics02-index.htm>

²⁷ Smith, R., McCarthy, J., & Petrusevich, M. (2004). Cluster or Whirlwind? The New Media Industry in Vancouver.

²⁸ Smith, R., McCarthy, J., & Petrusevich, M. (2004). Cluster or Whirlwind? The New Media Industry in Vancouver.

creative ideas towards urban governance gave a new twist to “creativity” and—accommodating both culture-centric and econo-centric principles—Taylor introduced creative, innovative, and collaborative decision making, the inclusion of diverse ideas, knowledge’s and expertise’s (culture-centric principles), as well as support from vertical and horizontal areas of government (econo-centric principles).

Publishing a series of economic development studies, Taylor lobbied the city with economic arguments for the arts and culture²⁹—redefining them from frill or entertainment to profitable city industries. In these documents, however, Taylor also argued for the social and cultural benefits of arts and culture in a city. Taylor lobbied for his creative changes and city council approved his new creative approaches to arts and cultural management.

3.2.4 Creative Governance

Following this, from 1988 to 2003, Taylor worked to set up his creative vision, which he described as injecting arts and culture into every department at the city. The series of plans and initiatives promoted creativity as serving both artistic and social goals as well as economic imperatives. The city:

- a) It introduced a set of cultural goals that enshrined “creativity” as a central guiding principle and it developed a new city position—a cultural planner—to assure that culture and the arts became a lens through which every daily activity of civic governance was reflected (AKA creative governance);
- b) It established an Office of Cultural Affairs under which the planner worked
- c) It created a public art program to integrate art into Vancouver’s cityscape, it diligently enforced an amenity bonus program for new development, (AKA creative space);
- d) It developed flexible zoning (live-work/work-live) to permit “creativity” in work and living spaces, and fostered individual creativity through subsidized housing for creative workers (direct support for creativity);
- e) And most recently it has coordinated land use planning and local economic development strategies consideration of both the city’s creative industries and the city’s arts and cultural hubs (support for creative economy)

3.2.5 Traditional Econo-centric direct support...but nothing local

During this same period, policy measures evolved to fit the changing nature of clustered economy, but the nature of this change favored a more pro-market or libertarian orientation towards innovation and creativity. The federal government established new media and innovation research funding through two programs: the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) and the Scientific Research and Experimental Development tax credit system (SRED). IRAP provides small grants for technology use, and funds the employment of post-secondary students for small and medium sized Canadian enterprises and aims “to enhance your innovation capacity, so that you may turn good ideas into profitable business lines as quickly as possible³⁰”. SRED “is a federal tax incentive program to encourage Canadian businesses of all sizes and in all sectors to conduct research and development (R&D) in Canada that will lead to new, improved, or

²⁹ City of Vancouver. Office of Cultural Affairs. “Strategies for Regional Arts and Cultural Development in Greater Vancouver”; “Policy Direction on the Regional Cultural Planning Process and Specific Cultural Development Initiatives”

³⁰ IRAP. <http://irap-pari.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/>

technologically advanced products or processes³¹.” The goals of these programs is to promote industrial growth, promote research, innovation and exploration, promote industrial cluster formation, limit potential government impediments in industry growth, and to provide these opportunities equally to any business that wishes to work in the creative or innovative industries. Many early Vancouver new media firms made, and still to this day, make use of this econo-centric government initiative to foster creative industrial development.

3.2.6 A framework for a dual-perspective creative city

The first reference to the “creative city” in Vancouver is found in the draft of the city’s first cultural objectives published in 1987, and which was stated in policy in 1991: “to ensure our future as a creative city, open and accessible to artists, to the broadest range of cultural expression, and to the widest participation”. At this early point, “creativity” connoted a vision and a “hoped-for” quality with which the City of Vancouver would one day be described.

The City’s cultural Goals were to, and continue to be:

- “To promote a high level of creativity and excellence in the cultural life of Vancouver
- To promote diversity in the artistic life of the community, including both the professional and non-professional, the traditional and the innovative, the established and the aspiring
- To encourage financial and managerial efficiency in the operation of Vancouver’s cultural organizations
- To ensure the existence of adequate facilities for the creation and presentation of the arts in Vancouver
- To ensure that all Vancouver residents and visitors, including senior citizens, youth, low income people, members of ethnic minorities and other distinct groups, have opportunities to enjoy and participate in cultural activities³².”

These cultural goals also provided hints towards an accommodation of culture-centric and econo-centric values. Tenet 2 notes the importance of the cultural side of the argument with a focus on “diversity in artistic life”. Tenet 3 mentions, however, the importance of econo-centric financial and managerial efficiency.” Furthermore tenet 2 mentions the importance of “traditional”, “non-professional” creativity (culture-centric), as well as “innovative” and “professional” and so profit-making arts (econo-centric). Such inclusive definitions create room for diverse definitions and interpretations of what encompassed creativity, and therefore a diverse array of values and principles in regards to how the “creative city” should be fostered.

3.2.7 Still expanding the definition of “creativity”

Central to the enforcement of these goals was the newly created position of “cultural planner” which originally was held by Burke Taylor—as no one else had sufficient qualifications. The role of the cultural planner was to “infect every aspect of the city with “creativity” and consideration of arts and culture.³³” Taylor sat in on engineering

³¹ SRED <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/taxcredit/sred/aboutus-e.html>

³² Culture Goals, city of Vancouver. Cultural Affairs Dept.

³³ Interview Burke Taylor. June 26th, 2006.

meetings, planning meetings and economic development meetings contributing ideas and perspectives through the lens of creativity, arts and culture. Creative governance was foundational in the early evolutionary stages of the creative city of Vancouver.

Taylor's creative governance ideas bore an uncanny resemblance to a series of theories and ideas emerging in Britain and Australia—now generally accepted as the first writings about “creative cities”. Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini began penning journal articles and writing case studies on cities in Europe that were exploring “creativity” of governance—in similar ways to Burke—as ways of infusing the importance of arts and culture directly into every facet of the daily activities of city governance. The Landry philosophy of creative city making may be characterized by the following quote:

“It means overcoming some more entrenched obstacles many of which are in the mind and mindset, including thinking and operating within silos and operating hierarchically in departmental ghettos or preferring to think in reductionist ways that break opportunities and problems into fragments rather than seeing the holistic more interconnected picture. A pre-condition for good city making. The creativity of the creative city is about lateral and horizontal thinking, the capacity to see parts and the whole simultaneously as well as the woods and the trees at once.”

Burke recalls later meeting Landry and conversing over the remarkable similarity between Landry's philosophies and Burke's practice. It was with Burke's imagination and efforts that this creative base—this concern for creativity, the arts, and culture—became infused in subsequent aspects of city planning and development. In chronological order of development, these areas included a) creative urban space, and then b) artistic and creative support.

3.2.8 Finally coming together? Culture and Economic direct “creative” creativity support

Even since the renovation of the Vancouver planning department in the 1970's, creativity, livability, imaginability, have become value enshrined in the cityscape³⁴. A limitation, however, on direct funding to creativity, was created a challenge rather than a setback for city officials. They had to find a new way to provide opportunity for creativity rather than directly through funds, and so were developed innovative development regulations, and innovative zoning regulations that ended up supporting both culture centric and economic centric prerogatives.

3.2.9 The struggles for direct funding...

Vancouver has struggled to provide sustainable financial support for artists. The Vancouver Charter, which grants the city special privilege to pass by-laws without the necessary approval of provincial legislature states that the city has the right to support the work of arts and cultural “groups” but does not have the right to “grant any person and special right, franchise privilege, or exception” and so individual artists cannot be funded. On several occasions, the Office of Cultural affairs has attempted to amend the Charter restriction on individual funding to artists, but has failed each time.³⁵

³⁴ City of Vancouver. Vancouver City Plan.

³⁵ Vancouver Art Initiative (1991-1993) Update for City Creative Task Force.

Attempts at developing various means of “economic sustainability” for arts and cultural “creative” ventures are often met with setbacks and problems. Given the restrictions of the Vancouver Charter, the Office attempted to establish an endowment fund for artists that would permit a sustainable self-funding source of resources for artists and creative individuals but this too was not supported, being voted against in 2003. The city also passes a Tax Incentives Act that provided tax incentives for private donations to not-for-profit cultural activities, but the act was rescinded.

3.2.10 The creative alternatives

#1: Amenity Bonus Program

Culture-centric values are reflected in the multitude of public art, cultural and artistic venues. Currently the city has 40 works in the downtown core developed under the private development public art program. The goal of Vancouver public art is to surround urban dwellers with art that “express the spirit, values, vision, and poetry of place that collectively define Vancouver” which parallels culture-centric values of urban space for connectivity, reflection, cohesion, and inclusion. The city’s ability to fund and foster such a large amount of cultural spaces and venues is attributed directly to their innovative Amenity Bonus Program, a by-law program in which Vancouver developers must allocate 95 cents per buildable square foot to the construction or operation of social, cultural, or recreational space for every square foot of new built space. Apart from public art, the Amenity Bonus Program has also fostered the construction of, at no cost to tax payers: the Alliance for Arts and Culture (938 Howe), Art starts in Schools (488 Robson); Canadian Music Centre (837 Davie), Contemporary Art Gallery (555 Nelson), Legal Education centre (under cons: 900 Howe)); Vancouver International Film Centre (1133 Seymour); Volunteer Vancouver (1133 Melville, under const); Vancouver Symphony School (817 Seymour: in planning.)³⁶ Visible here, through the amenity bonus programs are the fostering and support for both classic culture-centric initiatives (symphony) and creative industry initiatives (film).

#2: Creative Residences

The city has also been creative in its provision of innovative zoning for creative use of live and working space. New zoning categories permit less rigid boundaries between residential, commercial, and industrial spaces, which appeal to the work and lifestyles of creative employees—both those prioritized by culture-centric theorists and econo-centric theorists.

In 1995 and 1996 the city drafted comprehensive policies and guidelines for six new zoning categories: commercial, industrial, and artist live/work and work/live spaces. These special zoning categories allow tenants to conduct anything from small business, to storefront activity, to light manufacturing or servicing—the traditional production methods of artists—in their living space³⁷. In the same year as the approved zoning, the city dedicated 22 units through the amenity bonus program and 8 more purchased unit in a building at 289 Alexander to create 30-unit artist co-op (CORE). Since 1987 approximately 1000 artist live/work studios have been built in city.

³⁶ John Punter. *The Vancouver Achievement*. UBC Press 2003.

³⁷ City of Vancouver. *Live/Work and Work/Live: Vancouver Overview*. Policy Report. March 27, 1996.

Originally these new zoning provisions were established with the priority to help foster culture-centric conceptions of creative venture, such as visual and performing artists. However, a more recent study by the city concluded that these spaces were becoming more popular with, and were actually helping sustain employees in new media creative professions. This study, which had the original mission to see whether work/live spaces worked against new media companies, in fact illustrated that “the City is not standing in the way of home-based work’s role in the new information economy,” but rather is already accommodating the predominant types of home-based business through its homecraft and artist love/work studio provisions³⁸. The value complications inherent in providing traditional forms of direct funding to artists—e.g.: someone decides what is “creative” and what should be funded—is creatively avoided through the provision of “space” as a form of direct support for creativity. The live/work zoning is a relatively value-free initiative to foster creativity—it provides a “container” for creativity but not restrictions on the content. Resultantly, creative pursuits could be inclusive of everything from culture-centric endeavors to econo-centric productions.

3.2.11 Creative Governance expands again...

In 2004, Burke Taylor stepped down from his position and Susan Harvey became the new Director of Cultural Affairs at the City. Harvey’s appointment occurred at a fortuitous time for creativity in Vancouver, and she has further encouraged creative governance methods and goals that furthermore consider and integrate both econo-centric and culture-centric principles.

2004 was the year of the Olympic bid and Vancouver, along with other Canadian cities, was busy promoting itself as creatively as possible to win over the competition to host the 2010 winter Olympics. Historically, a major winning quality for Olympic cities has been strong heritage, culture, arts, or history. Alongside this urban campaign, the federal government announced the devolution of a percentage of the federal gas tax to municipal collection. Arts and cultural lobbyists and employees in the city saw the circumstances ripe: a chance to uphold the importance of arts and culture, and undecided funds waiting to be directed in a given direction. The city won the bid and the Office of cultural affairs was successful in gaining council support for new funding to arts and culture in the city: \$1 million in 2005 and \$750,000 in 2006.

In 2005 a city-supported Creative City Taskforce set out to research the future of the Creative City of Vancouver. The city sees the taskforce as a “coordinated, strategic, and pro-active approach to the development and delivery of the City’s services to the arts, culture, celebrations, and special events.” The composition of the taskforce reflects the multi-value approach to “creativity” in Vancouver as its members represent the interest not only of arts and culture but also civic theatres, the city managers office, libraries, the park board, the school board, engineering services, and finance.³⁹

Currently the taskforce is preparing a process of public consultation, which will begin in October 2006, and this process acknowledges the multiple visions of the creative city, and proposes a process that reflects the city’s willingness to discuss both the economic and social values of creativity. Rather than openly asking people what they think is

³⁸ City of Vancouver, Policy Report: Urban Structure. March 27, 1996. Dept. File No.: PF.

³⁹ Sue Harvey, Interview June 14th, 2006

“good art or culture in the city”, Harvey, explained that the public consultations would be framed through a series of discussion “themes”, presented to the public and discussed in an open town hall-like meeting. Themes pursue various topics some of which explore quantifiable value (creative spaces, and the creative economy) and some provide intangible value (creative excellence, creative imagination).⁴⁰ Questions explore not what is “good” or “bad”, but at a more fundamental level, “what is” art, culture, and creativity. The aim of this public consultation is to provide a dialogic forum that will reveal varying values, priorities, and principles which will in turn frame the creative city vision the city will pursue.

The office of cultural affairs in Vancouver also supports intergovernmental collaboration and coordination, a creative city methodology often supported by both the culture-centric and econo-centric orientations. When the Vancouver Economic Development Corporation prepared an economic development strategy for the city core in 2006, they conferred with representatives from the Office of Cultural Affairs, the Office of Sustainability, and the Planning Department in order to have view the proposal through different “lenses”.⁴¹ Melinda Entwistle, Director of the Vancouver Economic Development Corporation said that the creative and cultural industries strong and growing industries in Vancouver but that economic development is not simply financial growth but also increased quality of life, increased diversity and increased creativity and innovation⁴².

These recent examples of creative urban governance illustrate how both culture-centric, and econo-centric principles and values are not only acknowledged but integrated within the planning and visioning of Vancouver as a creative city.

3.2.12 Creative Governance one last time...

Fairly neglected at the city level, until recently, econo-centric arguments for both creative governance and industrial support are slowly coming to be recognized and planned for.

Reflecting on our earlier framework, the econo-centric orientation argues that the means to achieve the creative city is through support for networks, collaboration, associations, and partnerships between firms. As a natural quality of the creative and cultural industries, this type of social networking and interaction is prominent among the creative and cultural industries in Vancouver and has grown predominantly because of the efforts of local creative workers and the dialogic nature of the “new economy”. Rather than direct financial support for such networking, however, the city has adopted a “spatial” approach to encourage the collaboration of creative industries; a strategy which also plans for and makes room for—in the most “hand’s off” manner possible—the creative and new media industries. The Metropolitan Core Job & Economy Land Use Plan (MCLUP) began in 2005 to develop an economic land use plan for future industrial growth in the core of Vancouver. The MCLUP process includes tracing what industries currently exist in the core, and then projecting their growth and subsequently their land-use requirements. Among the traditional and predominant industries in the core (e.g.: professional, financial, etc), a new category was established called the “creative

⁴⁰ Sue Harvey, Interview June 14th, 2006

⁴¹ Susan Harvey, Interview June 14th, 2006

⁴² Interview, Melinda Entwistle, July 2006.

activities” which is made up of: “all of the metro core jobs in the information and cultural industries sectors; all the jobs in the arts entertainment and recreation sector; and nearly half of all metro jobs in the professional scientific and technical services sector⁴³.”

The prerogatives of both culture and econo-centric proponents may also be addressed through the MCLUP which aims to place a special focus on “creative” industrial growth which includes among other concerns, “tourism, education, arts, culture and entertainment, and the new economy.” Furthermore, since the MCLUP is taking a “spatial approach” to support creative industries, any land use planning in Vancouver must also adhere to a series of “City Goals”, among which are arts and culturally supportive prerogatives.⁴⁴ And so although traditional econo-centric theorists argue that the exchange value of creativity is increased with support for networking and connectivity, the MCLUP illustrates that spatial connectivity may also ensure culture-centric priorities and values.

Summary

It must be noted that Vancouver is not a poster-child paradigm. As illustrated, the city still struggles with certain aspects of integrating the culture-centric and econo-centric visions of the creative city. The city has, however, taken creative and innovative measures to at least attempt, through policy and city initiatives to integrate these different visions. Vancouver has devised a culture plan that integrates culture and economic prerogatives. It has devised creative zoning and land use plan measures to encourage the livelihood and growth of artists, creative industries, and new media companies. They have established numerous creative information gathering and sharing processes to make space for a multitude of values, and the city continues to be flexible and adaptable to new forms of policy, governance processes, and planning strategies.

As mentioned in the beginning of the paper, the Creative City discourse is multilayered and it is this way, we suggest, because of the unique way the model is applied and adapted given different contexts. This paper explored the use of the model in the Canadian context and illustrated two historical value orientations that not only frame the discussion of creative cities, but also frame any discussion of creativity in Canada. The case study illustrated the manner in which one city in Canada is learning to work, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, amidst these multiple value sets. Other cities may take lessons from the successes and struggles of Vancouver, and Vancouver may have more to tell as it continues to uphold its general “creative” character.

⁴³ Metropolitan Core Jobs & Economy Land Use Plan. City of Vancouver Info Sheet: 1.1.8 Economy - High-tech and Creative Activities

⁴⁴ Among others, those that correlate with the arts and cultural principles include: distinctive neighborhood character, heritage conservation, new and more diverse public places, and arts and culture. City Goals: City Plan.

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