

**Creating Hegemony: Montreal's cultural development policies and the rise of  
cultural actors as entrepreneurial political elites.**

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## **Abstract**

Creating Hegemony: Montreal's cultural development policies and the rise of cultural actors as entrepreneurial political elites.

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Culture-led regeneration and creativity policies appear to have achieved broad societal acceptance in many cities in North America and Europe. This research explores how a discursive articulation of culture with entrepreneurial notions of “creativity” has contributed to a new set of policies, forms of policy coordination, sectoral partnerships and growth coalitions. This is illustrated by the case of Montréal, Canada, a city that places culture and creativity at the heart of its local accumulation strategy, and has secured a soft hegemonic presence. This research largely draws on geographical political economy literature that views urban neoliberalism as a contingent process that requires consent from disparate constituencies, and not as something predetermined by changes in the economy. The first line of inquiry traces key events and policy documents i.e. “key moments of conjuncture” that have helped to repackage culture as a competitive asset. Supplemented with analysis derived from speeches, media, official documents and online sources, the case demonstrates how the creative cities discourse has fuelled a new policy network that allows for the rapprochement of cultural actors with traditional urban elites. Using the creation of the *Quartier des Spectacles* as a case study, the second line of inquiry examines how the intertwining of culture, creativity and economic development have come to shape urban planning. Finally, in line with neo-Gramscian perspectives on urban politics, this research concludes by exploring instances of counter hegemony, particularly within the local artistic community.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

Whenever there is widespread agreement or consensus that a certain policy, or set of related policies, should be pursued and enacted, it becomes necessary to step back and ask, why? This is because once widespread agreement occurs, the theoretical premises that underlay the policies become lost—assumed away as the policy goals become self-evidently “good”.

-James DeFillipis and Jim Fraser, 2010, p. 125

«Notre Quartier des spectacles est de fait l’incarnation d’une véritable symbiose entre le foisonnement culturel de notre ville, sa révalorisation urbaine et son développement immobiliers.» (Leblanc, 2009, p.3). Thus Michel Leblanc, President of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, introducing a special issue on real estate opportunities in the newly revitalized *Quartier des Spectacles* area of downtown Montreal. «Les édifices et les aménagements qui s’y trouvent ou ceux qui seront érigés doivent exulter de cette créativité et de cette vitalité culturelle» (Leblanc, 2009, p.3). There are few quotes that so clearly display how culture, as it relates to the city, has been articulated with entrepreneurial concepts of creativity. It is not like elites have never been interested in the economic value of culture in Montreal. There are certainly many examples. Since the 1970s, different municipal and provincial governments have fostered the growth of cultural industries, invested in tourism-oriented events like festivals and used the city’s unique culture as a place marketing tool (Gattinger & Saint-Pierre, 2010; Germain & Rose, 2000; Levine 2003; Paul, 2004). However, it is only until recently that it has been identified as the key to our urban fortunes.

An interest in culture as a lever for economic development and neighbourhood revitalization is not unrelated to the ascendancy of neoliberalism and its manifestations at the urban scale. Neoliberalism, as an intellectual framework, refers to the belief that self-regulating markets represent the optimal way to organize society. Originating in the 1940s, neoliberalism only gained currency with academics and governments in the 1970s as a response to economic and political crises (Harvey, 2005; Peck, 2010a). Since then, market principles have gradually been extended to all spheres and political scales. Municipal governments, once characterized by their provision of services and welfare provisions, are now characterized by entrepreneurial forms of governance that prioritize competition for firms, consumers, labour and investment and public-private partnerships (Harvey, 1989; Hubbard & Hall, 1998). Art and culture have been instrumentalized in the process of inter-urban competition. Together, they represent one of the cornerstones of urban neoliberal policy. They insure the city's competitiveness by anchoring new spaces of consumption, promoting culture-led regeneration, facilitating gentrification and helping to retain and attract desirable firms and workers (Cochrane, 2007; Ross, 2009; Zukin, 1982).

The debate on the new role of culture in urban economic development is a hotly contested terrain in the social sciences. Reminiscent of the ongoing gentrification debate, it has attracted a lot attention from critical theorists, often for the same reasons. There appears to be no shortage of research on the topic, however, some important questions remain unanswered, particularly with regards to urban governance.

Researchers concerned with earlier waves of culture-led regeneration have already shown that it presents new opportunities for strategic alliances or “growth coalitions” (Hall & Hubbard, 96; Logan & Molotch, 1987; Whitt, 1987). Creativity policies inspired by the works of Richard Florida and Charles Landry have been deployed for almost a decade, yet only recently have researchers begun to address the role of actors, coalitions and new forms of governance that privilege cultural actors (Grodach, 2011; Klein & Tremblay, 2009; Peck, 2011a; Ponzini & Rossi, 2010). Grodach (2011), for instance, has explored the emergence of a “creative coalition” and its ensuing tension in Austin, Texas – one of the most celebrated of creative cities.

The dominant frameworks on urban power structures, growth machine and its conceptual cousin urban regime theory, have undoubtedly offered important insights on the new partnerships that characterize urban neoliberalism. Departing from overly volunteerist and structuralist interpretations, their virtues stem from their exploration of *civil society* - the spaces, actors and institutions that lie between the state and the market. For the most part, however, they simplify the actual coming about of neoliberal policies and coalitions, often taking local context and previous forms of governance for granted (Peck, 2011a). They both underestimate the possibility for path-dependency and “actually existing neoliberalism” (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Peck et al., 2009), and need to do a better job at showing how neoliberalism is learned (Painter, 1998). In addition, they have been targets of criticism, because they have overlooked the possibility for disunity and factions within coalitions.

There is no theory that can fully account for all urban phenomena, but what are the appropriate concepts, methodologies and analytical tools that can help us understand how certain policies, such as creativity cities, achieve broad societal acceptance? How do groups with different political and economic interests, that sometimes have little tradition in working together, converge to support a pro-growth agenda? These questions and themes are the prime motivations of this research.

My approach is influenced by neo-Gramscian attempts at understanding these questions (Hart, 2007; Jessop & Tickell, 1999; Jessop, 1997; Lauria, 1997). The neo-Gramscian perspective tries to understand how coalitions and dominant policy strategies are produced and learned. In the process, it gives more weight to extra-political and extra-economical factors such as discourse. This perspective is appropriate for the moment, when disparate groups, including many progressives have accommodated themselves with the soft hegemony of the creative city. This approach is also sensitive to the fact that hegemonic projects supported by hegemonic blocs, however, can be unstable, vulnerable to material, ideological and political contradictions.

Two factors make Montreal an appealing case study in which to examine such themes. First, Montreal has a strong reputation for fostering a vibrant arts community. Unlike many Canadian cities, Montreal's cultural sector benefitted from the strong Provincial intervention linked to rise of Québec nationalism. As a means of protecting national identity and democratizing culture, Québec adopted cultural interventions similar to France (i.e. *grands projets*). Shaped by the advent of neoliberalism, however, cultural intervention in Québec since the 1980s has come to include more policies directed

towards the cultural industries (Gattinger & Saint-Pierre, 2010). Similarly, Montreal's civic leaders have recognized culture as important to the post-industrial economy, hosting mega-events like Expo 67 and the 1976 Summer Olympics. The city also made more recent commitments to tourism-oriented festivals and supporting cultural industries, like the *Cirque du Soleil* (Broudehous, 2006; Levine, 2003; Paul, 2004). According to a recent Hill Strategies (2005) study, Montreal is home to some of the country's most creative neighbourhoods. Out of the top 10 neighbourhoods in Canada, Montreal is home to five with the highest concentration of artists. There is perhaps no other large city in Canada, and perhaps no city west of Barcelona, that has taken such a dramatic "cultural turn". Since 2002, a *culture cum creativity* discourse, has been absorbed in several policies and has been invoked in planning initiatives (Rantisi & Leslie, 2006). In the frenzy, two important examples stand out: the city's cultural policy "*Montréal, Cultural Metropolis*" and a new downtown cultural hub district called "*Quartier des Spectacles*".

Second, Montreal is interesting because of its inclusive governing culture. Extra-political actors such as the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, trade unions, and community organizations are only some of the groups that are embedded into the local state and help to shape policy (Hamel & Jouve, 2008; Klein & Tremblay, 2010). Indeed, as exemplified by the rise of the lobby group Culture Montreal, cultural actors have played a distinctive role shaping policies through their involvement in important summits, policy documents and the press. Culture Montreal has emerged as a key stakeholder, and have been influential in getting the public and leaders to reconsider the role of culture (Klein & Tremblay, 2009).

This thesis addresses these themes in several steps. The first step is a review of the pertinent literature on urban neoliberalism, culture-led regeneration and creative cities. This is followed with a review of three leading critical frameworks on urban power structures: growth machine, urban regime and neo-Gramscian approaches. Next, I discuss my methodological choices. The subsequent section provides the interpretative context (Lees, 2004) for the case study. From there, I turn to key policy documents and events i.e. “moments of conjuncture” that have transmitted new discourses about culture, creativity and partnerships to various urban actors. These discourses have helped to elevate cultural actors as a force in their own right, triggering their rapprochement with traditional urban elites and leading to the formation of a hegemonic bloc. The final section examines how these discourses and alliances have come to transform urban space with the construction of *Quartier des Spectacles*. While this form of culture-led regeneration was widely praised, exemplifying a hegemonic project, I examine its various contradictions and explore instances of discursive counterclaims. I conclude by suggesting areas for future research.





## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter is divided into two parts: Part 1) The Neoliberal city and Culture-led urban regeneration; and Part 2) Urban governance and urban coalitions. In order to understand the rise of culture-led regeneration, we must address the political, economic and ideological changes that have underpinned the rise of the neoliberal city. Therefore, in Part 1, I highlight some of the principle features of neoliberal urban regeneration and economic development. Against this backdrop, I also examine the transformation of urban cultural policy, and the popularity of the creative city discourse. Since one of the most important characteristics of urban entrepreneurialism has been the increased cooperation between public, private and civil society actors, Part 2 reviews several of the principal conceptual frameworks dealing with urban governance. In order to better understand how disparate groups form coalitions, I review the urban growth machine and urban regime theory literature. The final section explores the possibility of using neo-Gramscian concepts like hegemony (and counterhegemony) to help elucidate the neoliberal city and its associated new patterns of socio-political alliances. While some of these themes are considered under theorized, they have all received attention in the social sciences, including human geography and urban studies. When possible, I present contrasting perspectives and criticisms in relation to certain themes.

#### **2.1 The Neoliberal City and Culture-Led Regeneration**

Many studies situate the rise of culture-led regeneration within the economic and political crises that swept most of the West during the 1970s and 1980s (Harvey, 1989; Harvey, 1990; Miles, 2005). For this reason it is important to begin by looking at how the collapse of North Atlantic Fordism and the rise of the urban neoliberalism have triggered an important reorientation for the local state. In what follows, I will consider the context in which neoliberalism as a form of governance comes into ascendance.

Neoliberalism is considered an important theme in the social sciences, and researchers from human geography and urban studies have been influential in its theorization. While there is a spirited debate on the origins, causes and nature of urban neoliberalism, there appears to be a consensus that it entails an abandonment of Keynesian strategies in favour of more pro-active market-driven policies. There also seems to be agreement that the shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism on the part of local governments is rooted in wider transformations associated with the decline of Fordism (Harvey, 1989). However, a growing strand in the literature, warns against limited analyses that describe this transition as a neat progression from welfare to neoliberal city, or simply as a system imposed from above (see, e.g. Peck, Theodore & Brenner, 2009; McCann, 2011; M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, 2005; Painter, 1998; Peck, 2010; Walks, 2009; Wilson, 2004). While there might be patterns across cities, neoliberalism is inherently geographically uneven, often fusing with and latching on to previous systems i.e. social democracy, authoritarianism (Peck et al., 2009). These perspectives emphasize urban neoliberalism's mobilities, hybridity, embeddedness to the local context, variegation and contingency. Peck et al. (2009) insist that neoliberalism is an "open-ended process, rather than a phase or end state" (p. 56) and call for studies of "actually existing neoliberalism".

Viewed in this manner, they recommend conceptualizing neoliberalism as two distinct moments: destructive and creative. The former refers to moments where existing political systems are destroyed by market-oriented reforms, whereas the latter is associated with new political architectures that sustain market-oriented growth. Table II.1 condenses some of these moments, and describes some of the most salient characteristics of urban neoliberalism.

Despite theoretical differences, these approaches agree that macroeconomic changes have coerced cities, into a zero-sum game of inter-urban competition to lure investment (Harvey, 1989). This coercion comes partly from increasingly mobile capital as well as budgetary constraints imposed by upper-level governments and financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and bond-rating agencies (Hackworth, 2007). As summarized by Merrifield (2002): “Cities, like industries, like people everywhere -- have to become much more competitive and entrepreneurial, if only to survive. There is apparently, no alternative” (p. 12). Progressive institutions like public housing, for example, are substituted with “professionalized quasi-public agencies empowered and responsible for promoting economic development, privatizing urban services, and catalyzing competition among public agencies” (Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto & Maringanti, 2007, p. 4).

Table II.1

*Condensed Version of Peck, Theodore & Brenner's (2009) "Destructive and creative moments of neoliberal urbanization"*

Realms	Moment of 'destruction'	Moment of 'creation'
Economic Restructuring and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Imposition of fiscal austerity measures upon municipal governments</li> <li>- Elimination of public monopolies of municipal services</li> <li>- Local relays of national welfare service provision are retrenched; assault on managerial-welfarist local state apparatuses</li> <li>- Dismantling of autocentric national models of capitalist growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of new revenue collection districts and increased reliance on local revenues, user fees, and other instruments of private finance</li> <li>- Privatization and outsourcing of municipal services</li> <li>- Expansion of community-based sectors and private approaches to social service provision</li> <li>- Creation of free trade zones, enterprise zones and other 'deregulated' spaces within major urban regions</li> </ul>
Administration, policies and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local relays of national welfare service provision are retrenched; assault on managerial-welfarist local state apparatuses</li> <li>- Erosion of contextually sensitive approaches to local policymaking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'Rollin forward' of new networked forms of local governance based upon public-private partnerships, 'quangos' and the 'new public management'</li> <li>- Incorporation of elite business interests in local policy and development</li> <li>- Diffusion of generic, prototypical approaches to 'modernizing' reform among policymakers in search of 'quick fixes' for local social problems (e.g. workfare programs, zero-tolerance crime policies)</li> </ul>
Built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Destruction of working class neighbourhoods to make way for speculative development</li> <li>- Retreat from community-oriented planning initiatives</li> <li>- Razing public housing and other forms of low-rent accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of privatized spaces of elite/consumption</li> <li>- Construction of mega-projects to attract corporate investment and reconfigure local land-use patterns</li> <li>- 'Rolling forward' of the gentrification frontier and the intensification of sociospatial polarization</li> <li>- Creation of new opportunities for speculative investment in central-city real estate markets</li> </ul>

Source: Peck, Theodore & Brenner, 2009, p. 59-62

Note: "Quango" refers to quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations.

In this context, a new set of policies have been mobilized as market principles have been extended to local governance. From place marketing to enterprise zones, and from public-private partnerships to new forms of boosterism, the city has been reinvented as a space for market-oriented growth and elite consumption (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). Inspired by tales of urban revitalization (Peck and Tickell, 2002), entrepreneurial cities draw from a narrow repertoire of neoliberal strategies that includes, privatization and deregulation measures, public-private partnerships, mega-events i.e. Olympic Games, World Cup, tax abatements and enterprise zones, all the while cutting public amenities and social services. These policies have become deeply embedded into our political culture, and have appealed to both right and left municipal governments. For the right, these policies are attractive because they increase the influence of the private sector, whereas, for the left, these policies can promote cooperation and local pride (Hubbard & Hall, 1998).

These changes help to explain why downtowns and inner cities have been transformed into sites of consumption and spectacle (Hannigan, 1998; Jayne, 2006). The physical up-grading of the urban environment with consumer attractions and entertainment amenities are considered as some of the pillars of the neoliberal turn (Harvey, 1990). Writing on this trend, Jayne (2006) describes the entrepreneurial city as “visibly more spectacular” with its “revitalized city centres and agglomerated business and financial districts featuring gleaming high-rise blocks, waterfront developments, flagship buildings such as concert halls and museums and ‘urban villages’” (p. 58).

Through city-branding, design competitions, cultural clusters and special events such as festivals, the local state markets itself as a site of cultural innovation (Harvey, 1990; Zukin, 1995). In addition to updating, improving and branding the city's image, other benefits of culture-led regeneration can include: increasing tourism, generating spending and jobs, diversifying the economic base and attracting highly-skilled knowledge and creative workers (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007). Harvey (2002) and Tretter (2009) note that neoliberal cities use cultural infrastructure and heritage as tools to distinguish from themselves other cities. Using a Marxist framework, they argue that urban elites favour cultural investment because it allows them to capture higher-than average rents or monopoly rent. The economic benefits, real or perceived, help to explain why culture-led urban regeneration strategies are now widespread and span the globe. From earlier North Atlantic examples such as Baltimore (Hall, 2002; Harvey, 1990) or Glasgow (Tretter, 2009) to slow-learning neoliberal cities elsewhere in the World, Miles and Paddison (2005) agree that these strategies have "come to occupy a pivotal position in the new urban entrepreneurialism" (p. 833).

While much of the anglophone literature draws mainly on the American and British experiences, there are some important Canadian particularities that must be addressed. For instance, Canadian municipalities are in a weaker position in terms of fiscal capacity when compared to their American and British counterparts. The absence of substantial public funding and commitment from Provincial and Federal governments, leaves Canadian municipalities with financial burdens they are unable to fulfill (Allahwala, Boudreau & Keil, 2010; Walks, 2009). In the view of Allahwala et al.

(2010), this lack of interest has made Canadian cities “the places where the ‘dirty work’ of globalization and neo-liberalization [gets] done” (p. 221). For example, under neoliberal Premier Mike Harris, the province of Ontario downloaded social welfare and transit expenses to the city of Toronto, restricting its ability to raise revenues (Boudreau, 2009; Boudreau, 2010; Keil, 2000; Keil, 2002; Kipfer & Keil, 2002). There is also tendency to view Canadian urban neoliberalism as more subtle than its American counterpart. This distinction is partially based on the important role played by civil society and the social economy (Allahwala et al., 2010; Jouve, 2007), reminiscent of Western European-style social democracy.

### **2.1.1 Evolution of Cultural Policy**

Cultural policy has not been untouched by the extension of market principles. For today’s planners and policy makers, culture is often linked to creativity and innovation, and is therefore seen as a tool for economic and urban regeneration (Edensor et al, 2010). Because it is a part of the dominant way of thinking about economic restructuring and urban regeneration, culture and cultural policy have been accorded considerable attention within human geography and urban studies. However, before looking in more detail at how culture is being presented as the panacea for the post-Fordist city in more detail, it is important to understand the evolution of cultural policy.

From the 19<sup>th</sup> Century until the 1960s, local governments adopted a very narrow interpretation of culture. The so-called “high arts” showcased in theatres and galleries contrasted with the mass entertainment of the working class. Art was seen as a way to develop class consciousness as taste helped the bourgeoisie distance itself from the

working class. As cities grew, urban elites pressured local government to provide art infrastructure for the high-arts (Bassett 1993). This general attitude changed in the 1980s, as policy makers began to view culture more as a tool for community building (Kong 2000). It is during this period that cities experience the relative democratization of culture - a breaking down of the so-called high-art/low-art divide. In Kong's (2000) words, "the goal [was] to enable greater access to cultural facilities and activities for all citizens, promote individual and group self-expression, encourage face-to-face interaction and promote community rebuilding" (p. 387). As a means of dealing with structural employment, community arts practices were encouraged, and neighbourhood-based initiatives like arts centres and community radio flourished (Evans, 2010).

Using the Greater London Council (GLC) as an example, Peck (2011b) describes a concrete attempt at implementing a progressive urban cultural policy. Contrasting it with the contemporary creative city model (discussed further in the following section), Peck (2011b) argues that the GLC cultural policy

went far beyond the trivial observation that cultural employment represented a significant slice of the London labor market, to embrace the character of cultural commodities and production chains, the consequences of monopolization of both public and private) distribution channels, the structure of risk, the degree of integration in cultural job markets and the impact of new technologies (p. 46).

Working against both the ascendancy of Thatcherism and existing elitist cultural policy, the GLCs cultural policy focused on independent producers, small enterprises and underrepresented "communities of interest" (i.e. ethnic minorities, disabled and youth among others). With economic restructuring and the pervasiveness of entrepreneurial



urbanism, such anti-neoliberal strategies have been erased from the urban policy agenda. Culture, while still important in terms of community building, began to be viewed as a tool for economic and urban revitalization, integrated into broader neoliberal policy. In the last 20 years, urban cultural policy has increasingly been geared towards economic gain. Indeed, as demonstrated in the literature, cultural policy is less about social cohesion or “art for arts sake”, but increasingly oriented to generating jobs, creative outputs and commodified landscapes (Edensor et al., 2010).

While much of the research on cultural policy focuses on Western Europe (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007), researchers have also observed similar trends in the United States and Canada (Eisinger 2000; Goff & Jenkins, 2006; Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007; Jenkins, 2005; Strom, 2003). For instance, in a revealing survey of American municipal Departments of Cultural Affairs, Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris (2007) observe that entrepreneurial imperatives seem to guide urban cultural policy, often at the expense of progressive strategies. While maintaining social and educational objectives, the interviewees preferred cultural activities that stimulated economic growth such as special events like festivals and flagship projects.

The research on Canadian urban cultural policy is relatively underdeveloped but there is enough research to suggest that Canadian municipalities are headed in the same direction. Goff & Jenkins (2006) review and problematize three key Canadian cultural policy trends: traditional, cultural participation and creative city. Traditional cultural policy relates to policies promoted by the Department of Canadian Heritage. Examples include grants and awards via the Canada Council, tax incentives for cultural industries

and content regulation. These policies are top-down, national in scale, tend to be organized into sectors (i.e. radio and television broadcasting, visual and performing arts) and focus on artistic production. This orientation tends to protect smaller and marginalized groups against the pressures of the market. For this reason, traditional policies representing a barrier for the neoliberal agenda have come under attack. The cultural participation model differs as it is more inclusive. Closely related to the goals associated with cultural diversity and social cohesion, these policies encourage the participation of groups that do not always have access to cultural amenities, including youth and ethnic communities. Similar to the traditional approach, cultural participation focuses on production, but differs in that it is more suited to the local scale. In comparison to both traditional and cultural participation approaches, creative city policies are spatial in character, focus on consumption and view art in terms of economic growth. The following section elaborates on the popularity of creative city policies and its impact on urban politics.

### **2.1.2 The Creative City**

In reality, the rise of the Creative Economy is drawing the spheres of innovation (technological creativity), business (economic creativity) and culture (artistic and cultural creativity) into one another, in more intimate and more powerful combinations than ever.

- Richard Florida, 2002a, p. 201

In recent years, several thinkers have emphasized the value of culture as a tool in inter-urban competition (see, e.g., Florida, 2002a; Landry, 2000). The ideas advanced by Richard Florida, in particular those advanced in the widely read *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002a) have shaped policies in countless cities across the world. Florida's theories

are important to this study because his economic development strategies favour a wider understanding of culture and quality of life in order to attract and retain the so-called creative class (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007; McCann, 2007; McCann, 2008). Despite its popularity, Florida's methodology and ideas have also attracted a fair share of criticism (for a review, see, Peck, 2005; Peck, 2010). In this section, Florida's thesis will be explained and some of the main criticisms will be reviewed and synthesized.

Florida's argument centers on the epochal shift from an industrial to a knowledge-based economy. For Florida, this new system is characterized by the importance of creativity. "Creativity ...", writes Florida (2002a) "is now the *decisive* source of competitive advantage" (p. 5). People that "engage in complex problem solving that involves a great deal of independent judgement and requires high levels of education or human capital" (Florida, 2002a, p.8) are identified as the creative class. This new class consists of two broad categories: core creative workers and creative professionals. Core creative workers are the section of the workforce that is paid to create ideas and technology. Alongside traditional sectors like art and entertainment, core creative workers can also be working in design, engineering and science. Core creative workers are supported by creative professionals from fields such as finance, business and health care. Despite their varying functions and status, Florida (2002a) argues that both categories of workers "share a common ethos that values creativity, individuality, difference and merit" (p. 8).

According to Florida (2002a), "regional economic theory," is no longer driven by location choices of firms, but "is driven by the location choices of creative people – the

holders of creative capital – who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant and open to new ideas” (p. 223). By emphasizing the importance of human capital<sup>1</sup>, specifically the creative class, Florida inverts traditional economic models (Cochrane, 2007). Florida argues that if cities are to adapt and succeed in the new economy, they must attract core creative people such as engineers, designers and artists or face a fate similar to that of his hometown of Pittsburgh – slow or no growth, a declining urban environment and a brain-drain. A business friendly climate is no longer enough; today, city leaders must recognize the power of place and foster a “people friendly climate” in order to attract the fickle, yet valuable creative class.

Florida (2002a) contends that “instead of subsidizing companies, stadiums and retail centres, communities need to be open to diversity and invest in the kinds of lifestyle options and amenities people really want” (p. 283). Cities must therefore transform and adapt their economic development strategies to the “creative age”. Tax abatements for firms and flagship developments like sports stadiums are not as effective as tolerance and investing in attractive amenities for the creative class. Cities must foster an environment amenable to gays, bohemians, young people and immigrants (emphasized in Florida, 2005). This model also entails a change in cultural policy. Creative strategies seek to strengthen smaller-scale cultural initiatives like the independent music scenes in Austin, Texas (Florida, 2002a) and Wicker Park, Chicago (Lloyd, 2006).

While the creative city is often associated with Western Europe and the United States, this approach has also gained currency in Canada (Goff & Jenkins, 2006; Leslie,

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<sup>1</sup> Human capital refers to workers skills and education levels.

2005; Boudreau, Keil & Young, 2009; Keil & Boudreau, 2010). As with the cases of Montreal and Toronto, Leslie (2005) argues that Florida has been successful at convincing policy makers to rethink culture. As Leslie (2005) sees it: “Florida’s contribution to academic and policy debates is to unsettle conventional notions of culture as frivolous and derivative, as something nice to have, but not important to nuts and bolts economic development” (p. 403). In Montreal, for example, the city has stressed the link between culture, the built environment and economic gain with its “Design Montreal” strategy. By sponsoring events like interior design competitions or by promoting high quality architecture and urban design, Montreal uses culture to compete with other cities for the creative class and private investment (Leslie 2005; Rantisi & Leslie 2006). Similarly, in Toronto, policy makers have also welcomed creativity policies. With its “Culture Plan for the Creative City” and flagship cultural projects like the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto’s leaders are attempting to stimulate a cultural renaissance (Boudreau, Keil & Young, 2009; Keil & Boudreau, 2010; Jenkins, 2005; Leslie 2005).

Notwithstanding Florida’s immense popularity in academia and policy circles, his research is increasingly scrutinized. One common set of criticisms is directed at the concept of the “creative class” itself. For example, Markusen (2006) argues that Florida’s definition is too broad, and homogenizes too many professions into one group. Markusen calls for disaggregation, insisting that professionals like engineers must be distinguished from artists. Approaching the same problem from a different perspective, Wilson & Keil (2008) subvert the concept and argue that the poor represent “the real creative class” of the post-industrial city. Criticized for being undervalued in Florida’s work, they argue that low-income worker’s resourcefulness, sacrifice and contribution to the post-

industrial urban economy merit the term. The term creative class also poses questions about “non-creativity”. “Creativity in this context”, write Edensor et al. (2010) “becomes a discursive weapon to further problematise non-middle-class values and peoples” (p. 7). Many have noted that this approach risks privileging this class at the expense of “non-creatives” (Marcuse, 2005; Peck, 2005; Shearmur, 2006-07).

Many thinkers have also challenged the creative city approach by arguing that it promotes a very narrow and commodified vision of culture (Edensor et al, 2005; Marcuse, 2007; Peck, 2005; Peck, 2011b; Szeman, 2010). Marcuse (2007), for instance, concedes that this approach might bring some benefits to artists, yet warns that instrumentalizing art for economic development can result in “amoral technical creativity [being] valorized far above its real value, or cultural creativity is tainted and devalued in its competition with its rival” (p. 22). It displaces the intrinsic, social and political significances of art, and redefines it as an economic asset (Szeman, 2010). In the process the artist is reimagined as a creative entrepreneur, as an ideal type of precarious labour for new knowledge economy (Ross, 2009; Szeman, 2010). This approach to cultural policy risks privileging “easily commodifiable” cultural forms and marginalizes alternative and everyday community spaces. As shown in Toronto by McClean (2010), this contradiction puts spaces that foster art that is from oppositional, controversial and marginalized communities at a disadvantage.

While the creative city discourse is often interpreted as a forward-thinking alternative to business-as-usual politics, Peck (2009b; 2011a) considers it to be a form of

“soft” neoliberalism, a low-cost complement to growth-oriented and gentrification-friendly policies.

Reworking the *Memphis Manifesto*<sup>2</sup>, Peck (2009) shows how the creative city discourse “combines cultural libertarianism and contemporary urban design motifs with neoliberal economic imperatives” (p. 160), instead of addressing problems related to structural inequality and exclusion. Table II.2 below captures the neoliberal underpinnings that inform today’s urban cultural policy agenda. It illustrates how culture has become intertwined with economic development, often at the expense of the other dimensions.

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<sup>2</sup> Released in 2003, The *Memphis Manifesto* is a document with ten principles intended to guide policy coordination regarding retaining and attracting the creative class.

Table II.2

*The creativity credo ... and its neoliberal translations*

Creativity principles ...	... and their neoliberal translations
Cultivate and reward creativity; everyone is part of the value chain of creativity ...	...put creatives first; support creative growth as a universal strategy; back winner
Invest in the creative ecosystem, including arts and culture, nightlife, the music scene, restaurants, artists and designers, innovators, entrepreneurs ...	... subsidize yuppie culture
Embrace diversity; it gives birth to creativity, innovation and positive economic impact ...	... get cozy with libertarian individualism; value cultural liberalism as an economic asset
Nurture the creatives ...	... genuflect to and pamper the creative overclass
Value risk-taking; convert “no” climate into a “yes” climate	... entrepreneurialize and devolve risk; ignore dissenters and naysayers; boost your place
Be authentic; identify the value you add and focus on those assets where you can be unique; every community can be the right community ...	... valorize culture as a competitive asset; rest assured, every place can win
Invest in and build on quality of place, making communities more competitive than ever ...	... gentrify, subsidize, and hawk your artsy neighbourhoods (no need to be concerned with the “uncompetitive” parts of town
Remove barriers to creativity, such as mediocrity, intolerance ...	... liberalize and deregulate markets for creativity; spurn big government solutions
Take personal responsibility; improvise; make things happen; development is a “do it yourself” enterprise	... pull on those creative bootstraps; creative failures have no-one, and nowhere, to blame but themselves
Honor the creativity in every person; extend the right to creativity	... use universalist rhetoric

Source: Peck, 2009, p. 167

While the number of detractors appears to be growing, many warn against attributing too much power to Richard Florida and creativity policies. Grodach (2011), for instance, offers a more nuanced take on one of the most celebrated cases. In Austin,



Texas, Florida's creative class discourse did act an "economic imaginary" that helped shape to culture policies but Grodach (2011) also considers the importance of "institutional inheritance" or prior policy agendas. This perspective is echoed by Ponzini & Rossi (2010) on Baltimore and Peck (2011a) on Amsterdam. The prior institutional and economic context casts a shadow on the adoption of creativity policies. Viewed in this light, critical analyses must avoid the temptation of portraying the creative city as a clear break from the past. This is especially true when considering cities with long histories of cultural policies like Austin, Baltimore, Amsterdam and Montreal.

The literature suggests the creative city discourse adds another dimension to the entrepreneurial city by elevating new actors and shaping a new political configuration. As I expand later in Part 2, the popularity of the creative class discourse has transformed the role of urban cultural actors, drawing them closer to elite interests.

## **2.2 Urban Actors and Growth Coalitions**

Within a metropolitan region as a whole, we have to look to the formation of coalition politics, to class alliance formation as the basis for any kind of urban entrepreneurialism at all.

-David Harvey, 1989, p. 6

The relation between culture and economy, between art and capitalism, has always been problematic, as the whole tortured history of modernism (and now post-modernism) shows. The artist has long occupied an ambiguous and enigmatic position in the configuration of class forces that make up capitalism.

-David Harvey, 1989a, p. X

Comment fonctionne cette manœuvre par laquelle les ambitions d'un groupe de producteurs et consommateurs d'une petite portion de l'économie urbaine devienne le programme général du progrès politique dans la ville?

- Roger Keil and Julie-Anne Boudreau, 2010

As discussed in Part 1, the ascendancy of urban neoliberalism has also signalled an important institutional realignment (Brenner, 2004; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Hackworth, 2007; Hubbard & Hall, 1998). Neoliberalism's destructive moment of deregulation and privatization has been accompanied with a creative moment of market-oriented statecraft (Peck, 2010). Within this new institutional alignment, networks, partnerships and cooperation are preferred and contrasted with top-down statist models characteristic of the Fordist city (Jessop, 2002). Here, not only are actors from the private sector drawn in (Peck, 2005), but so are actors from civil-society such as non-governmental organizations as well religious and community groups. While some perceive this transformation as a move towards a more democratic city, many critical social theorists (Brenner & Theodore 2002; Davies, 2010; Jessop 2002; Harvey 1989b; Peck, 2005; Quilley, 1999; Smith 2002) warn against further empowering the private sector in municipal matters. In order to better understand these new institutional realignments, we must review the prevailing frameworks for theorizing urban governance<sup>3</sup>. In the first section, growth machine and urban regime theories are summarized. Although cultural actors are underappreciated in the literature, I try to highlight cases where their role of cultural actors in urban governance is considered. In the final section, I examine neo-Gramscian perspectives on governance, which will anchor my approach to the situation in Montreal.

### **2.2.1 The City as a Growth Machine**

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<sup>3</sup> The literature on urban governance is too vast to fully summarize here. For useful overviews of these debates see Jonas & Wilson, 1999; Judge, Stoker & Wolman, 1995; Lauria, 1997.

The city as a growth machine thesis, first introduced by Molotch (1976) and then reformulated by Logan and Molotch (1987) has proven to be one of the most influential theories of urban governance (Jonas & Wilson, 1999). The growth machine perspective takes a broader look at urban development (Harding, 1995), departing from previous models that focused too narrowly on the inner workings of local government. In contrast, the growth machine approach examines the role played by individuals and interest groups in shaping urban space (Harding, 1995). Whereas earlier models did not account for the day-to-day activities of urban elites, Logan & Molotch (1987) emphasize the role of entrepreneurial activism (Harding, 1995; Jonas & Wilson, 1999, Ward, 2000). Logan and Molotch's (1987) most important contribution to the study of governance lays in its understanding of coalitions. In their pioneering study, they argue that a coalition formed by actors from various sectors comes together in the hopes of promoting economic growth. According to Logan and Molotch (1987), "the desire for growth creates consensus among wide range of elite groups, no matter how split they might be on other issues" (p. 50-51). The motivation is that, through a trickle down process, all groups within the coalition can benefit. These coalitions pressure the city to adopt pro-growth policies, in order to maximize the exchange values associated with place.

In a useful review Harding (1995) categorizes the growth coalition into four interrelated groups. At the heart of the coalition rest the rentiers. Rentiers are land-based capitalists that have the most to gain from growth. They are land and property owners, and are primarily concerned with maximizing the exchange value of their holdings. Unable to accomplish this on their own, rentiers align themselves with developers, financiers, constructions firms and other interests that benefit directly from property

development. Also benefitting from growth are the local media and utility companies. These groups profit indirectly from urban growth in the form of sales revenue. The growth coalition is not complete without auxiliary members such as small retailers, Universities, theatres and festivals, professional sports teams and organized labour. All these actors, while they might disagree on other political issues, coalesce around the issue of growth. For example, a labour union and a corporation might have a dispute over working conditions, but will work together to attract more industry into the city. “For those who count,” write Logan and Molotch (1987), “the city is a growth machine, one that can increase aggregate rents and trap related wealth for those in the right position to benefit” (p. 50).

Already in the early 1980s, Logan and Molotch (1987) observed how artistic institutions like theatres and museums have been used as tools for economic development. Other cultural actors that manage ephemeral events like festivals or parades also join the coalition in order to pursue growth.

Some participate because their own organizational goals depends on local growth, others because they find it diplomatic to support the local rentier patrons, others because their own properties become a valuable resource, and still others because their boards of directors are closely tied to local elites. Whatever the reasons, the growth machine cuts a wide institutional swath (Logan & Molotch 1987, p. 79).

While Logan and Molotch (1987) recognize the importance of cultural actors within the growth coalition, such actors remain on the periphery of urban redevelopment politics. With some exceptions, few studies have examined the activities of cultural elites.

Drawing on Logan and Molotch (1987), there exists literature that reflects on the re-positioning of culture in the city and the roles of cultural actors in growth coalitions

(Whitt, 1987; Whitt & Lammers, 1991; Strom, 2002). Whitt (1987) describes how civic leaders, business and cultural actors have come together to form downtown development alliances that holds the arts as a centerpiece. Mixed-used development typical of urban revitalization, for instance, “helps cement the interest of the development partners by providing synergistic development effects in downtowns, tax breaks for developers, and new homes for arts groups” (p. 30). Such coalitions are facilitated by public-private partnerships as well as special tax and legal arrangements. The composition of board-memberships also strengthens the links between cultural institutions and traditional urban elites (Strom, 2002; Whitt & Lammers, 1991). Whitt and Lammers have observed an “increasing mutual dependency between corporations and cultural institutions” (p. 388). Cultural institutions are not just manipulated from above, but they have been active boosters in their own right. Changes in financing have compelled cultural institutions to be more competitive for tourists, volunteers and investment, making them favourable regeneration projects (Strom, 2002).

It is important to recognize that the growth machine literature has been criticized from a wide range of perspectives. Feminists, for example, argue that the growth machine overlooks the role of class, race and gender (Gilbert, 1999). Paul (2004) questions growth machine’s simplistic class analysis that focuses on local business and residents. Other critics worry about its application outside the United States (Harding, 1991; Jessop, Peck & Tickell, 1999), particularly in countries where the public sector plays a larger role in the economy. Most of the critics agree that the growth machine literature is too crude an approach. It overemphasizes municipal politics at the expense of other scales, giving too much agency to local actors. In their study of the Manchester Olympic bid, for example,

Jessop et al. (1999) hold that the growth coalition was limited by national and international rules, not to mention broader economic and political structures. Furthermore, growth machine analyses overemphasize cohesion and consensus, but as Valler (1995) notes:

the internal operations of machines are cast in terms of stability, efficiency and the absence of internal conflict, though it is clear that growth machines differ significantly in terms of organisational capacity, the mechanisms for internal control and degrees of unity and cohesion. (p. 36)

Despite its valuable insights, growth machine theory holds many limitations. Not only is the approach too simplistic, the growth imperative is insufficient in explaining how different actors coalesce around an accumulation strategy. These weaknesses have encouraged different approaches such as urban regime theory and the neo-Gramscian perspective.

### **2.2.2 Urban Regime Theory**

Developed at roughly the same time, urban regime theory addresses some of the questions left unanswered in the growth machine literature. Urban regime theory has been identified as the leading conceptual framework for analyzing local politics, particularly in the United States (Davies, 2002; Lauria, 1997b; Mossberger & Stoker, 2001). Unlike the growth machine approach, urban regime theory offers more flexibility and appears more transferable to different countries, scales and contexts (Mossberger & Stoker, 2001; Ward, 1996). While it holds important insights for understanding urban coalitions in the entrepreneurial city, it is weakened by its overemphasis on local actors and institutions, and minimizes the role of discourse in shaping alliances (Lauria, 1999; Lauria, 2007; M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, 2004).

In his classic and frequently cited study of Atlanta, Stone understands a regime as a formal relationship and “the informal arrangements by which bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions” (Quoted in Ward, 1996, p. 428). Urban regimes are characterized by stable, long-term cooperation between public, institutional and private actors. However, unlike the cruder approach taken by the growth machine literature, cooperation and consensus are not automatic, but must be realized through “social production”. As opposed to the social power of elections or capital imposing its will on public officials, social production is achieved through small incentives and opportunities (Mossberger & Stoker, 2001; Ward, 1996). Stoker (1995) summarizes this key insight as follows

Politics is not restricted to acts of domination by the elite and consent or resistance from the ruled. Social control or command power because of the cost of obtaining compliance is likely to be restricted to limited domains of action. In a complex society the crucial act of power is the capacity to provide leadership and a mode of operation that enables significant to be done. (p. 69)

Indeed, regime theorists recognize urban politics as diverse, fragmented and heterogeneous and seek to understand the interdependence between the local state, business interests and other actors. Accordingly, like classical liberal or Marxist interpretations which privilege broader economic structures, regime theory offers more room for considering the effects of class, race and gender (Fainstein, 1994).

While it holds important insights for understanding urban coalitions in the neoliberal city, it is weakened by its overemphasis on local actors and institutions, and overlooks the role of discourse and political socialisation in shaping alliances (Lauria, 1999; Lauria, 2007; M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, 2004; Painter, 1998). Regime theorists have been accused

of applying the “urban regime” concept too loosely, straying from the core criteria (Mossberger & Stoker, 2001). Because it is grounded in the American experience, some have questioned its transferability to other contexts (Davies, 2003; Ward, 1996). Others like Lauria (1999) and M<sup>c</sup>Guirk (2004) argue that regime theory is far too concerned with individuals and local actors, ignoring higher level abstractions. For instance, regime theory neglects the wider economic context as well as national and supranational institutions. In addition, regime theory ignores the role of political socialisation and discourse in the construction of coalitions and accumulation strategies. Warning against urban regime’s determinism, Painter (1998) emphasizes the multiple rationalities for participating in an urban regime. New policy forms and alliances are not a given due to actor’s positions in the economy, but must be learned through mechanisms such as policy documents, management gurus, the trade press and so on. Viewed in this light, discourse must be given attention. “Discourse”, writes Lauria, “is important in this construction, in development disputes and in the politics of coalition formation, intracoalition maneuvers, and urban governance” (p. 129). Discourse and hegemony will be dealt with at length in the following section.

In the final section of the literature review, I attempt to overcome some of the limits with the growth machine and urban regime theories, by drawing on neo-Gramscian approaches to local politics.



### 2.2.3 Neo-Gramscian Urban Political Theory

Several thinkers from geography and urban studies have proposed alternative frameworks on local politics (e.g., for example, Davies, 2010; Keil, 2002; Kipfer & Keil, 2002; Jessop, 1997; Jessop et. Al, 1999; Lauria, 1997; Lauria, 1999; MacLeod, 1999; M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, 2004; Painter, 1998; Pickvance, 1995). These writers all draw from Marxism and regulation theory in order to criticize and refine the growth machine and urban regime theories. For my purposes here, I am particularly interested in Jessop's (1997) "alternative research agenda" and the applicability of neo-Gramscian perspectives to the study of urban politics and coalition formation. My interest in Gramsci is rooted in his exploration of "how political, intellectual and moral leadership was mediated through a complex ensemble of institutions, organizations, and forces operating within, oriented toward, or located at a distance from the juridico-political state apparatus" (Jessop, 1997, p. 52). In trying to understand political power in its integrity through exploring the fluid links between state and non-state actors, neo-Gramscian urban political theory provides an interesting critical approach to neoliberal governance and urban growth coalitions (Kipfer & Keil, 2002).

While his work was certainly focused on the national scale, Gramsci does offer some potentially fruitful concepts for understanding local politics. Because Gramsci's writing tends to be obtuse and wide ranging, I will focus on approaches that informed by his thinking and begin by clarifying some key concepts that are borrowed from or indebted to Gramsci. For these reasons, I am indebted to selected writing collections (Forgacs, 2000) and several secondary readings (Fiori, 1973; Forgacs, 1988; Jessop,

1982; Jessop, 1990; Jones, 2006; Martin, 1988; Peet, 2002; Santucci, 2010). Starting with Gramsci's concept of "hegemony", as it is arguably his most important and original contribution, I proceed by looking at some complimentary concepts developed by Jessop (1982; 1990; 1997), Hart (2007) and M<sup>c</sup>Guirk (2004), all of whom have help deepened Gramscian analysis.

As a central figure in the Italian communist movement, Gramsci was deeply immersed in the important philosophical and political debates of his era. Unsatisfied with the mechanistic and dogmatic interpretations of political transformation prevalent in the movement, Gramsci advanced Marxist theory by examining the "cultural and ideological forms in which social antagonisms are fought out or regulated and dissipated" (Forgacs, 2000, p. 189). These cultural and ideological processes are indirect forms of social control, and compliment more direct forms of domination by the state (i.e.. police). For Gramsci, social control or "hegemony" is achieved through a balance of coercion and consent, "domination plus intellectual and moral direction" (Fiori, 1973, p. 243). Coercion is associated with state repression or economic discipline, whereas consent is linked to civil society (Martin, 1998). Civil society refers to all "private" activities and organizations that are not directly connected to the state. In addition to institutions like the church, media and schools, civil society can also refer to individual norms and behaviour (Jones, 2006). With the evolution of industrial capitalism into Fordism, previously independent groups like trade unions were integrated into the state. This new interdependence, between the state, capital and civil society, was key to his understanding of how the ruling class was able to control allied and subordinate classes. Intellectuals are also active in organising hegemony through popularizing and

legitimizing certain attitudes, beliefs and values (Jessop, 1982). Hegemony, however, does not refer to indoctrination, but “active consent” from the subordinate classes. It is uneven and unstable, and its survival involves all sorts of compromises. “These concepts” writes Jessop (1997) “bring out the importance of values, norms, vision, discourses, linguistic forms, popular beliefs, and so on, in shaping the realization of specific productive forces and relations of production” (p. 56).

Several contemporary thinkers have explicitly used Gramscian concepts to understand coalitions and alliance formation (Hart, 2007; Jessop, 1997; Jessop et al., 1999; Lauria, 1999). Two scholars in particular deserve attention: Bob Jessop and Gillian Hart. I have already made reference to Jessop’s ideas, but his particular understanding of hegemony is worthy of further elaboration. Hart’s neo-Gramscian concept of “articulation” will also be introduced and explained.

Jessop (1990) understands hegemony involving an “interpellation and organization of different ‘class-relevant’ (but not necessarily class-conscious) forces under the ‘political, intellectual and moral leadership’ of a particular class (or class fraction) or, more precisely, its political, intellectual and moral spokesmen” (p. 207-208). In brief, inherent differences and conflicts between classes can be resolved with hegemonic leadership practices. In contrast to other thinkers, Jessop (1990) speaks of “accumulation strategies” and “hegemonic projects”. An accumulation strategy refers to a model of economic growth and a plan for its realization, whereas, a hegemonic project means broad support and mobilization for a particular political program.

Since hegemony can be fragile and unstable, its success entails advancing the goals of the dominant class while privileging the interests of other subordinate classes. In the capitalist context, this would mean material benefits for the groups involved. The hegemonic project is also achieved by delegitimizing the interests of opposing and incompatible groups. The danger of conflict is dealt with through the creation of a certain “policy paradigm”, where conflicted views are debated, but the possibilities are restrained so that the alternatives cannot threaten the hegemonic project as a whole.

Geographer Gillian Hart (2007) draws heavily on neo-Gramscians like Stuart Hall<sup>4</sup>, and applies the concept of “articulation” to work by examining the fragile relationship between the African National Congress (ANC) and its alliance partners in post-Apartheid South Africa. In accordance with Hall, Hart views articulation in terms of joining different and often contradictory elements together. Understood in this way, she explores how nationalism has been articulated to the ANC's neoliberal hegemonic project.

Many writers have proposed using neo-Gramscian concepts for the analysis local politics and urban regimes (Kipfer & Keil, 2002; Jessop, 1997; Jessop et al. 1999; Lauria, 1999; M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, 2004). As explained by Jessop (1997), the neo-Gramscian approach is potentially insightful because it

emphasizes the interdependence of ethico-political and economic-corporate forces (political + civil society), allows more weight in the exercise of political power to non-state forms (government + governance), popular

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<sup>4</sup> Hall's (1986) theory of articulation refers to the contingent link between two elements (e.g two social groups, social forces and ideology etc...) In a useful metaphor, Hall likens articulation to a truck: “But we also speak of an ‘articulated’ lorry (truck): a lorry where the front (cab) and back (trailer) can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another...An articulation is thus the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time” (p. 53)

beliefs and so on in shaping local accumulation strategies and their related modes of growth (Jessop et al., 1999, p. 148)

Rather than privileging agency over economic structure, or vice versa, a neo-Gramscian approach moves away from economic reductionism, and establishes the link between local agency and voluntarism within the wider constraints of inter-urban competition and capitalist accumulation. The move to urban entrepreneurialism, is not simply a result of economic changes, for example, but depends on “activating specific conjunctures of social, economic, and political forces in a contingent articulation” (M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, 2004, p. 1022) or hegemonic project.

Although many thinkers invoke neo-Gramscian terms, there exist few urban case studies. M<sup>c</sup>Guirk’s (2004) study of Sydney, Australia, however, stands out as an excellent example of how a neo-Gramscian perspective can help us elucidate urban neoliberalism. The study reflects on Sydney in the 1990s, as neoliberal policies were being implemented under the rubric of competitiveness. This period was also marked by “collaborative state form” (M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, 2004, p. 1028) that privileged business interests in the decision making process. For M<sup>c</sup>Guirk (2004), this hegemonic project is “discursively constructed” (M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, 2004, p. 1025). M<sup>c</sup>Guirk traces this construction with an analyses of interviews with key figures as well as textual sources such annual reports and policy documents. In the end, discourse is shown to connect different groups and shows how it can “promote an provisional consensual, if continually contested, adherence to the project” (M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, 2004, p. 1039). M<sup>c</sup>Guirk (2004) also emphasizes that “articulation is

an ongoing process” (M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, p. 1034) and is potentially subjected to “counterhegemonic claims”.

While no conceptual framework is capable of understanding all urban phenomena, the neo-Gramscian approach appears to provide an interesting window into the politics of the entrepreneurial city, providing us “analytical entrypoint” (M<sup>c</sup>Guirk, 2004, p. 1020). This is especially true since the local state is actually limited in terms of coercion, and civil society is increasingly incorporated into institutional power (Jessop, 1997).

### **2.3 Conclusion**

Since the 1970s, neoliberalism has taken hold at all scales in most Western countries, including the city level. In order to deal with the anxieties and crisis related to these changes, cities increasingly turn to entrepreneurial strategies in an effort to attract business, the creative class and (limited) public funding. In some cases, this process has led to the instrumentalization of culture, linking it to urban and economic growth. This trend has been epitomized in the creative city. While some people and institutions have clearly benefited from these trends, the creative city can have negative implications, encouraging social polarization, gentrification and the further commodification of culture.

Although these changes are closely related to wider economic restructuring, entrepreneurial policies are not a given, and need the support and consent of various actors. This is facilitated by new institutional realignments, characterized by cooperation

between public, private and civil society actors. In this context, disparate actors come together and form growth coalitions. However, these coalitions are often contradictory and unstable, and their maintenance requires ideological hegemony.

Far from being exhaustive, this chapter began with a review of the literature on urban entrepreneurialism and culture-led regeneration. Mostly focused on American and Western European experiences, the research on Canadian and Québécois trends is relatively limited but suggests that parallel experiences exist. From there, the chapter transitioned into a review of dominant conceptual frameworks of urban governance. Urban growth machine and urban regime theory, while still valuable, are also criticized for important weaknesses. Critics describe these approaches as being too crude and criticize them for ignoring the role of discourse in creating consensus. In contrast, neo-Gramscian approaches deepen our understanding by emphasizing discourse as key to hegemonic projects.

These themes act as backdrop, and inform this study of Montreal, a city that has fully embraced culture-led regeneration and where civil society is deeply embedded into institutional power. Inspired by neo-Gramscian approaches to urban politics, this study seeks to understand Montreal's emphasis on culture with regards to urban and economic policy.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This chapter outlines the method and the structure of this study. I list the principal sources of information and justify my methodology. Beforehand, however, I reflect on the use of discourse in geography and urban studies.

While traditional policy research has merit and is widely used, many find approaches that focus on decision-making are too narrow to deal with power and ideological conflicts (Jacobs, 2006). In the literature review, I highlighted several studies that use discourse analysis to narrate stories about how disparate groups come together in neoliberal settings. As Lees (2004) explains, for critical theorists, “discourse is a tool for uncovering certain hegemonic ways of thinking and talking about how things should be done that serve certain vested interests.” (p. 102). Despite its growing popularity, however, Lees (2004) warns, that researchers commonly overlook the “theoretical roots and methodological suppositions of their claims about discourse” (p. 101), often conflating Marxian/Gramscian and Foucauldian strands. In a useful review of discourse analysis for human geography, Lees (2004) also notes that studies that clearly outline their methodology are scarce. This is even true of the fledgling neo-Gramscian strand. Notwithstanding, M<sup>c</sup>Guirk’s (2004) explicit use of neo-Gramscian terminology, for example, it is often unclear what, why and how sources are analyzed. These drawbacks pose some interesting questions and challenges for researchers. In order to avoid some of the common pitfalls, this section outlines my methods.



Research based on discourse analysis generally holds two important parts: the interpretative context and the textual analysis (Lees, 2004). The former refers to the social context of the analyzed discourse, whereas, the latter looks at the “rhetorical organization of the discourse” (Lees, 2004, p. 104). Both empirical chapters simultaneously provide interpretative context and have a textual analysis. In Chapter IV, I examine several key events and policy documents that signal a shift in the role of culture. As “moments of conjuncture”, they allow me to trace how culture has been articulated with entrepreneurial notions of “creativity”. These sources tend to be rich in context, and involve a wide range of contributors, from organized labour to government official to business elites. By consequence, they also demonstrate how new discourses about culture and creativity have brought together disparate groups towards a hegemonic project. Analysis derived from the related policy documents, drafts, press releases, speeches, public consultation presentations are supplemented with newspapers articles and online sources. A neo-Gramscian framework allows me to give meaning to the discourses about cultural policy, cross-sectoral partnerships and culture-led regeneration in Montreal. Furthermore, it establishes how a rapprochement of non-state and state actors have converged and shaped key cultural development policies.

Chapter V is a finer look at how new strategic alliances have come to influence neighbourhood revitalization and urban development. I rely on similar sources, to examine how these discourses and alliances have come to transform urban space with the construction of the *Quartier des Spectacles*. Not only is the *Quartier des Spectacles* cultural hub the symbol of Montreal’s cultural development policy, it is a clear example of how non-state actors such as the Board of Trade of Metropolitan, cultural

organizations and elites are enrolled into the local hegemonic projects and the place of culture and creativity in new discourses on urban development. The chapter begins with a historical analysis of the site. Secondary sources are used to explain the site's importance in the city's history and recall prior attempts at revitalizing the neighbourhood. Public consultation presentations, policy documents, speeches, online sources and newspaper articles are used to describe the lead-up to the project, its justification and evolution since its inception in 2001. Finally, this case shows the fragility of hegemony projects, and demonstrates the opportunities for counter-hegemony and disarticulation. This section is prompted and informed in part by several interviews with independent artists. **Between May 2010 to August 2011, I conducted 7 semi-structured interview<sup>5</sup> with people involved in the independent arts scene Montreal, whether as artists, festival and venue operators. I chose people who expressed scepticism about the *Quartier des Spectacles* in the local press. Using a flexible interview guide, I asked the interviewees about their work, their opinions on the *Quartier des Spectacles* and the creative city.**

The dominant literature on urban governance assumes that people's interests emerge straightforwardly from their position in the economy, or that they always know what their interests are, or that they consistently follow their interests. Focusing on Montreal, I utilize the alternative approach of neo-Gramscian analysis to answer how different groups come to form alliances and see their interests as common. Largely inspired by Jessop (1997) and Hart (2007), I am concerned with the "key role" that "can be played by hegemonic projects that help secure the relative unity of diverse social

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<sup>5</sup> I originally intended to interview more people, however, this method was abandoned when the thesis shifted focus. Instead, I rely more on analyzing discourse through various policy documents

forces” (Jessop, 1997, p. 62). By turning to neo-Gramscian analysis, I seek to understand how new a *culture-cum-creativity* discourse alters the composition of urban growth coalitions by activating and legitimating a new hegemonic bloc.

## Chapter IV

### The Rise of Cultural Actors as Entrepreneurial Political Elites

Political-economic transformations, institutional realignments and the emergence of new discourses related to urban neoliberalism all figure centrally in shaping Montreal's governance regime and for understanding the role that cultural actors have come to play within this regime. Since the 1980s Montreal's local accumulation strategy has been characterized by a transition away from the secondary sector towards the tertiary and quaternary sectors. And as a part of this transition cultural industries have been identified as a critical sector for sustaining economic growth. With the ascendancy of Florida's creative city discourse, however, culture is not only valued in terms of its direct economic potential but also in terms of its potential for distinguishing locales in the context of inter-urban competition. Thus, at a time when governments are seeking out new partnerships in pursuit of urban development it is not surprising that cultural actors are assuming a seat at the policy table. Drawing on neo-Gramscian insights on urban politics, this chapter examines the rise of culture and cultural actors and how they have attained legitimacy and voice among traditional growth coalition elites (government officials, business, media and community organizations) to become part of the city's hegemonic bloc<sup>6</sup>. By analyzing a series of key events and policy documents i.e. "moments of conjuncture" (see Table IV.1), this chapter also traces how culture has been articulated with entrepreneurial notions of "creativity" providing a platform upon which cultural actors have been able to exert influence.

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<sup>6</sup> Jessop (2007) defines a hegemonic bloc as "a durable alliance of class forces organized by a class (or class fraction) that has proved itself capable of exercising political, intellectual, and moral leadership over the dominant classes and the popular masses alike" (p. 56-57).

Table IV.1

*Timeline of key moments of conjuncture: events and policy documents signalling a shift in the role of culture*

Name	Year	Type	Relevance
Ministerial Committee on Development of the Montreal Region (Picard Report)	1985-1986	Policy Report	Report recommends more partnership, including the need for cultural sector to organize
Culture Montreal and the Culture Montreal Summit	2002	New Organization	Traditional ways of organizing the cultural sector are disrupted
Symposium 2017: A 375 year-old cité of the World	2002	Conference	Richard Florida's first speech in Montreal
Summit of Montreal	2002		Brings cultural actors together with traditional urban elites
Release of "Montreal's capacity for creative convergence: Outlook and opportunities" (Study by Florida's consulting firm Catalytix)	2005	Research/ Conference/ Report	Florida's second visit to Montreal; legitimize creativity as driver of economic growth
Montréal, Cultural Metropolis: A cultural development policy Ville de Montréal 2005-2015	2005	Public Consultation/ Policy	Positions culture as a site of public sector concern and intervention
Rendez-Vous Novembre –Montréal, cultural metropolis	2007	Conference/Policy	Marks a move from visioning to implementing the

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Source: Author's compilation (2011)

#### **4.1 The Picard Report**

In 1985, as a response to a deep economic crisis and the decline of Montreal in the Canadian urban hierarchy, the Conservative Federal Government initiated the Ministerial Committee on Development of the Montreal Region to conduct an analysis of the city's economy. Released in 1986, their final report, known as the Picard Report<sup>7</sup>, identified the city's economic strengths and weaknesses, and outlined future development priorities and important policy recommendations. It marks a pivotal step in Montreal's economic history, signalling the transition towards the knowledge economy (Hamel & Jouve, 2008). The report also "formed the basis for a coalition of growth" (Hamel & Jouve, 2008, p. 26) which privileges real-estate, construction and knowledge sectors at the center.

Despite the recession, declining population and other structural disadvantages, the Picard Report's authors argue that Montreal's is well positioned to become an "International City". Benefitting from a favourable geographic location, a high concentration of industrial research and educational institutions and high-quality of life, the Picard Report recommends focusing on seven economic sectors: 1) International

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<sup>7</sup> The document is known as the Picard Report because it was chaired by Laurent Picard. At the time he was the Dean of the Faculty of Management at McGill University in Montreal. According to Jouve (2007), it was the first time the City of Montreal worked with a private consultant in this manner.

activities<sup>8</sup>; 2) High technology; 3) Finance and international trade; 4) Design; 5) Cultural industries; 6) Tourism; and 7) Transportation. In addition to their support for tertiary and quaternary economic sectors, the Picard Report advises the Provincial Government to remove obstacles for future development including reducing personal taxes, modifying the labour code and encouraging immigration of qualified labour in high growth sectors.

The consultative committee was made up 16 members and 253 contributors. Despite the presence of organized labour, including the Union des Artistes and the Quebec Federation of Labour, the committee’s composition reflected an elitist bias (As shown in Table IV.2).

Table IV.2

*Consultative Committee on the Development of the Montreal Region*

Chairman	Laurent Picard Dean - Faculty of Management - McGill University
Vice-Chairman	Jim Burns - President - Power Corporation of Canada
Members	Lise Bissonnette – Editorialist – Le Devoir  Ronald Corey – Canadien Hockey Club  Thomas D’Errico – President – Beaver Asphalt  Marie-Josée Drouin – Director General – Hudson Institute of Canada  Raphael Esposito – Notary  Louis Laberge – President – Quebec Federation of Labour  Jean Lapointe – Union des Artistes

<sup>8</sup> In this context, international activities refers to both integrating local industries into world markets and attracting the headquarters for major international non-governmental organizations.

Claire Léger – Vice-President, Executive  
Committee – Les Rôtisseries St-Hubert Ltée

John Lynch-Staunton – President – Montreal  
Board of Trade

David McAusland – Lawyer – Byers Casgrain

Yvon Marcoux – President – Chamber of  
Commerce – District of Montreal

Zarin Mehta – Director General – Montreal  
Symphonic Orchestra

André Saumier – President – Montreal Stock  
Exchange

Dino Vondjidis – Director – Grand Hotel

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Source: Report of the consultative committee to the ministerial committee on the development of the Montreal Region, 1986, p. VII.

The report clearly privileged potential high-growth sectors (e.g. knowledge economy), and overlooked sectors and social groups associated with the crisis (Hamel & Jouve, 2008; Jouve, 2007). For example, questions related to worker training, poverty and the integration of immigrants were left to other groups such as the Community Economic Development Corporations.

The Picard Report makes some interesting recommendations with regards to leadership. In the foreword, Laurent Picard identifies a lack of coordination amongst the city's urban actors as a key problem, and likens it to the Afghan Civil War.

That brings me to the problem of structure. All strategies are based on a structure of some kind. However, Montreal, in 1986, looks more like a battle field in an Afghan “guerre en dentelle”, than efficiently structured region; and how well we know the “guerre en dentelle”. In the early years in Afghanistan, the various partisan groups, as we all know, spent the majority of their energy fighting each other for the leadership rather than fighting the common enemy. All things considered, the past ten years in Montreal have not been much different; the federal, provincial and municipal governments, business, and so on seem to have invested more energy in competing over who should have



the most credit than in making a concerted attack on their common enemies – unemployment, poverty, structural weakness in industry, ageing cultural facilities etc. – and even less in developing axes that held potential for the future. (Picard Report, 1986, p. XVII-XIX)

In this context, the committee considers “that the absence of community of action is one of the major weaknesses that affected Montreal over the past decades” (Picard Report, 1986, p. 223) and recommends “that the private sector become deeply involved in the realization of Montreal’s development plan by assuming the leadership in its revitalization and pressuring governments to coordinate their priorities and efforts” (Picard Report, 1986, p. 223).

While it is difficult to establish the Picard Report’s direct impact on policy, previous studies suggest that its significance rests in how it shaped a new growth coalition in Montreal (Boudreau et al., 2006; Hamel & Jouve; 2008; Jouve, 2007). Jouve (2007) suggests that “the Picard Report structured a growth coalition encompassing different levels of government and multiple private actors, among which private property developers and the construction industry occupied key positions” (p. 386). The document also mobilized traditional urban elites and privileged new actors such as the Chamber of Commerce (Plasse, 2001). The report is also significant because it legitimized certain post-industrial strategies. The recommendations signalled an abandonment of Keynesian crisis resolution, in favour of neoliberal policies. Furthermore, the Picard Report institutes an “ideological framework” (Boudreau et al., 2006, p. 21) that was not only supported by the province’s largest blue collar union, but went largely unchallenged by the city’s social movements.

While a number of studies have associated the 1986 Picard Report with Montreal's shift towards a knowledge-base economy and neoliberalism (Boudreau, Hamel, Jouve & Keil, 2006; Hamel & Jouve, 2008; Jouve, 2007; Germain & Rose, 2000), few have discussed the document's recommendations for the cultural industries or its role in mobilizing cultural actors. Who, for example, from the cultural industries participated in the report? How does the Picard Report view the role of cultural industries in post-industrial Montreal?

As previously mentioned the composition of the consultative committee's reflected an elite bias. This is also noticeable in the longer list of contributors. The composition also tells us something about how elites perceived cultural industries and the role of cultural actors in developing policy. Only two persons representing cultural interests were on the committee: Jean Lapointe from the Union des Artistes and Zarin Mehta from the Montreal Symphonic Orchestra. The larger list of contributors is more varied and includes other groups representing cultural interests such as Spectra Scène Inc and Heritage Montreal. The Picard Report depicts the cultural sector as fragmented, underdeveloped and largely small-scale, yet it acknowledges its economic potential. For example, cultural industries are not only seen as beneficial for local tourism, but "cultural excellence and vitality ... are also decisive factors in the decision to locate a head office, research center or international operation in a particular city" (Picard Report, 1986, p. 148). Art is also viewed in economic terms, as an activity that symbolizes, "the research and development arm of the cultural industries and constitutes the essential component of the tripartite cultural industrial process (creation, production and distribution)" (Picard Report, 1986, p. 147).

The Picard Report foregrounds the lack of support from both the public and private sectors for cultural industries. It is argued that by overtaxing entertainment, under-financing the arts and neglecting the need for new cultural infrastructure, the city fails to recognize the “importance of the cultural industries in the city’s economic life” (p. 152). The private sector also needs to be more supportive of the cultural industries. In 1985, for example, Ontario’s cultural industries received three times more funding from private actors than their Quebecois counterparts. Another weakness relates to the lack of organizational maturity within the cultural industries sector. Except for the leadership of more established companies like Spectra-Scène, the “the sector is completely fragmented” (Picard Report, 1986, p. 149) and “management is still quite unsophisticated and many of those involved in the sector continue to direct their products solely to the local market, ignoring Canadian and international markets” (p. 149).

For these reasons, the Picard Report calls for the creation of a single organization that assembles key public and private actors. This new organization would encourage the private sectors to fund the arts, promote cooperation between private and public sector actors and promote synergy with high-tech, design and tourism industries. In addition, the Picard Report proposes strengthening two cultural poles. Close to the Radio-Canada facilities, the authors suggest locating a “Cité du Cinema”; whereas, the Place-des-Arts should continue to attract cultural facilities and the new concert hall for the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

#### **4.2 Culture Montreal and the Culture Montreal Summit**

The organization that the Picard Report is calling for begins to appear in embryonic form in the 1990s. In his account of the development of Culture Montreal in *No Culture, No Future* (2010), Simon Brault traces the beginning to informal discussion by Gaétan Morency (Vice-Président des Affaires Publique et Sociales at Cirque du Soleil) and Robert Fortin (Directeur regional du ministère de la Culture). They organized small thematic events, and discussed culture-led regeneration in other cities such as Glasgow and Bilbao, and the role of culture in regional economic development. Successfully attracting key figures from the local cultural milieu, these informal meetings evolved into the Groupe Montréal Culture (GMC). For Brault and the GMC participants, it was important to move away from contestation, and show a willingness to cooperate with government in economic development. The two quotes below capture this reasoning:

From the start, we had a wish that became our central thesis: the cultural sector should seek to contribute to society instead of making demands of it. By demonstrating our will and ability to participate in the economic, social, and cultural development of the city, our sector would be recognized, its need considered, and its request supported to others. The city appeared to us as an ideal place to adopt this new strategy because it gave us proximity and daily collaboration with other stakeholders. (Simon Brault, in *No Culture, No Future*, 2010, p. 109)

How could Montreal halt its decline and revive its status as a metropolis? How could the cultural scene ally itself with the social, economic, and community-based forces also seeking to rebuild its future? How could we affirm that the Montreal cultural sector had to go from making a lot of demands to making contributions without alienating several Montreal leaders at the heads of unions and associations, who were first and foremost interested in the conditions in which artists work? (Simon Brault, in *No Culture, No Future*, 2010, p. 111)

The GMC attempted to move away from traditional organizing models like the Union des Artistes and the Conseil des Arts de Montréal by creating a network that connected different sectors and types of cultural actors. In contrast to hierarchical or elected organizations, Brault says the GMC was inspired by the new social movements<sup>9</sup>, and preferred a rotating leadership. They looked for cultural actors that took a wider perspective on challenges facing the cultural sector. Over time, however, they realized that debate and research did not always translate into action, so the group took a step forward by intervening in a series of government consultations. By 2000, members start questioning the usefulness of the GMC, and consider establishing a municipal party. Eventually, GMC seeks help from the Collège des Arts and the Conseil Regional de Développement de l'Île de Montréal (CRDIM). With newly acquired funding, and another year of debates and consultations, the members vote for holding a Culture Montreal Summit 2001.

Under the slogan “Culture is everyone’s business!”, the Summit is successful with 400 people in attendance. The event attracts a diverse crowd: GMC members, politicians (including the Mayoral candidates Pierre Bourque and Gerald Tremblay), and business people, cultural professionals and underground artists. The participants vote in favor of creating Culture Montreal.

The establishment of Culture Montreal marks an important turning point for two reasons. First, Culture Montreal’s organizing model is distinctive and contrasts with the existing cultural organizations. The group is not restricted to artists and cultural

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<sup>9</sup> Brault mentions the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre and the anti-globalization movements.

professionals. Its membership includes politicians, bureaucrats and people from the business community. Thus, membership is based more on geography than affiliation with a specific cultural sector. Unlike the union model, Culture Montreal is classless, regrouping artists who earn humble wages with art curators, politicians, philanthropists and so on. Furthermore, in contrast to traditional organizations, Culture Montreal acts beyond lobbying governments for public funding. It adopts a wider perspective and explicitly intervenes in urban affairs. It does so by organizing events and publishing research, but also through its various working committees<sup>10</sup> and by diffusing their discourse about culture in schools, the press and other organizations. The Comité grands projets et aménagement du territoire, for example, is explicitly concerned with urban development, and makes recommendations on projects ranging neighbourhood revitalization to highway reconstruction. These working groups are a distinctive and integral part of Culture Montreal, and allow members to network, reflect, document and debate key themes (Payette, 2011).

Second, Culture Montreal is important because it becomes the principal representative for cultural actors in the eyes of government and the business elite. As I will show in the following sections, members of Culture Montreal's leadership are often asked to speak on behalf of artists and the cultural industries at events. Furthermore, Culture Montreal is asked to represent these interests when helping to shape specific policies. Over the last decade, Culture Montreal has become an important player in local

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<sup>10</sup> Since the creation of Culture Montreal, there have been some changes to the committees. As of 2011 there are seven active committees: Diversity; workshop; political; culture and education; major projects and urban planning; emerging artists and practices; and Committee to promote the French language.

politics, helping to educate, mobilize and galvanize Montrealers around issues related to culture and economic development.

### **4.3 Symposium 2017: A 375 year-old cité of the world**

After the establishment of Culture Montreal, a number of events contributed to a greater recognition of culture and creativity in the city. One such event is the *Symposium 2017: A 375 year-old cite of the world* (henceforth referred to as *Montréal 2017*). Organized by the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal (BTMM) in 2002, this large symposium was an opportunity to present a vision of Montreal in 2017, but also to consolidate various issues and sectors, and move forward with establishing the leadership and the focus on collaboration suggested in the Picard Report. *Montreal 2017* featured several experts on Montreal economic and urban development as well as prominent policy entrepreneurs from across the globe, including Laurent Picard and Richard Florida. A familiar list of model cities were cited by speakers, many known for their experiences with culture-led regeneration: Barcelona, Dublin, Glasgow, Seattle, Vancouver and Austin. Similar to the Picard Report, *Montréal 2017* signifies an important moment of conjuncture, bringing together actors from diverse sectors. It also represents a prelude for the Summit of Montreal later in the summer (discussed further in following section). The event is also noteworthy because it marks Richard Florida's first appearance in Montreal as an expert on economic development and, by extension, the introduction of his ideas about creative cites, albeit it a generic manner, into Montreal's public discourse.

Laurent Picard was the first to speak, and remembered Montreal in the 1980s as a “decapitated city”, in crisis because of the decline of heavy manufacturing and slow economic growth. Once again Picard uses strong language to depict the city’s leadership in a negative light:

...Montréal à ce moment-là, c’est-à-dire un leadership disséminé, compétitive, contradictoire, conflictuel qui donnait plus l’impression d’une société féodale que d’une démocratie moderne, agressive et efficace. (Laurent Picard, 2002, Speech at Montréal 2017)

Montréal demande un leadership fort et la collaboration de tous les intervenants – gouvernement fédéral, provincial, hommes d’affaires, syndicats, etc. Tant que le leadership restera conflictuel comme nous l’avons vu dans les 20 ou 25 dernières années, il est impossible de rêver à une relève vigoureuse de Montréal. (Laurent Picard, 2002, Speech at Montréal 2017)

Although Richard Florida was already known in policy circles, 2002 marks the publication of *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Accordingly, his speech focuses on the book’s main points and his three principal indices: gay, bohemian and diversity. He emphasizes the importance of creativity and the creative class as drivers of economic development. Florida argues that since firms basically have the same access to infrastructure, technology and management tools, it is creativity that sets them apart. Citing companies like General Electric and Hewlett-Packard, Florida argues that the determining factor for these sort of knowledge-based firms is the concentration of creative people. The creative class are attracted to cities that have thick labour markets, creative environments, natural and lifestyle amenities, authenticity and diversity (Florida, 2002b).



Montreal policy makers are encouraged to rethink development strategies, and reconsider how they try to attract and retain talent. Culture features prominently in the rethinking process. In reference to the importance of creative environments, Florida says

We want to be in a creative environment. We want to be around other creative and talented people. We want to be around great artistic and cultural activity, but not just of the sort that you can find in a museum, a symphony hall or a ballet. Increasingly, creative people, from the baby boom to Generation X, we want to be around a thriving, street level cultural scene. We want to be in places where there's art galleries, abundant art galleries as well as art museums, where there's a fusion of what we used to think of high and low culture, where the great restaurants and the cafés and the boutiques and the galleries come together with the high art institutions. (Richard Florida, 2002b, Speech at Montréal 2017)

Florida, however, is not entirely opposed to traditional strategies.

When somebody comes along for the plan, for the next great stadium of the next great mall or the next great physical or the next great highway, say that's good. But at the margin, let's take as much of that money and invest it where it's going to have truly high social return. (Richard Florida, 2002b, Speech at Montréal 2017)

Here, Florida evokes an anti-elitist vision of culture, a vision where small, experimental and independent artists would be valorized and could flourish. On the other side of the coin, however, Florida intertwines culture with an entrepreneurial concept of creativity. In his narrative, the creativity of street level art is conflated with the creativity of technological innovation and entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial discourse about creativity, that is advanced by Florida, provides a rallying point around which disparate actors to begin to converge, and a new, common vocabulary for discussing urban visions.

It appeals to traditional elites like David McAusland (Vice-President of Alcan Inc.) who is concerned with reducing the tax burden and claims that the media does not give enough credit to financial success and entrepreneurship, but is also equally concerned about retaining qualified labour (McAusland, 2002). The discourse also appeals to cultural actors like Simon Brault (President of Culture Montreal) who highlights the importance of civil society, tolerance, social solidarity, and evokes a radical conceptualization of culture: «Nous pouvons imaginer Montréal 2017 comme une république culturelle, comme un Porto Alegre de la culture» (Brault, 2002, Speech at Montréal 2017).

This articulation often results in partnership. The *Montréal 2017* symposium ended with a joint-declaration on “Seven areas of action for the Montreal region”. These seven areas include: 1) mobilization and metropolitan leadership, 2) inclusion and equal opportunity, 3) succession and education, 4) creative potential, 5) quality projects, 6) connected to the world, and 7) Competitiveness. Many of the actors present at *Montréal 2017* reconvene later in the summer at the Summit of Montreal. At the Summit, the theme of culture and the discourse of Montreal as a creative city continue to be reinforced.

#### **4.4 Culture at the Summit of Montreal**

What, after all is a “summit”, if not a gathering of elite decision makers, focused on the search for a practical solution to an extant crisis?

-Jamie Peck, 2011b, p. 64

In 2002, former Provincial Liberal MNA and businessman Gérald Tremblay was elected Mayor of Montreal. Democratizing the city was one of the central themes of his campaign and Tremblay promised to hold a major public forum on the future of the newly amalgamated city. According to Mayor Tremblay it was the «acte fondateur de la nouvelle de Montréal» (Sommet de Montréal, 2002). The Summit of Montreal was widely applauded as it required an unparalleled mobilization of civil society<sup>11</sup>. Held in June 2002, approximately 3000 people were associated with the conference, including 927 who were directly involved in the working groups. In attendance were local politicians, researchers, activists and prominent businesspeople. Federal and Provincial politicians also participated, including Bernard Landry, Pauline Marois, André Boisclair and Claude Drouin.<sup>12</sup> Divided into 19 workshops, the Summit was organized around five principal themes: 1) Montreal, city of knowledge and creativity, open to the world; 2) Montreal, sustainable city; 3) Montreal, a great place to live, in solidarity and inclusive; 4) Montreal, democratic, equitable and transparent city; 5) Montreal, highly-capable administration, at the service of its citizens. By mobilizing and assembling different urban actors together, from different sectors and boroughs, the Summit was framed as a step forward for democracy in the city. The Summit of Montreal is relevant because it represents a key moment of conjuncture for the city's growth coalition and "served as an

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<sup>11</sup> Although the Summit of Montreal is often referred to as a success in terms of inclusivity, several anti-poverty groups protested the 2002 event (See Taylor, 2002). One participant criticized the event because it was by invitation only (See Gyulai, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> At the time Bernard Landry was Premier of Québec; Pauline Marois was Vice-Premier of Québec and Finance Minister; André Boisclair was Minister of Municipal Affairs and Greater Montréal; Claude Drouin was Secretary of State for the Economic Development Agency of Canada

incubator for the cultural policy” (Rantisi & Blackman, 2005, p. 40) – an important policy that articulates culture and economic growth.

The Summit’s summary (Ville de Montréal, 2002a) reveals that culture was one of the themes that ran through the sessions and panels. Helen Fotopoulos, then executive committee member in charge of culture and heritage for the city, was quoted as saying that “culture was 80 per cent of the talk” (Quoted in Rodriguez, 2003). Consensus was reached on several issues relating to culture including increasing funding for the Conseil des Arts and the public library network, the creation of the Cité des arts du Cirque and the Quartier des Spectacles<sup>13</sup>. While there is a lot to learn from the Summit, it is useful to take a step back, and look at the history and composition of the cultural delegation. This allows us to understand why certain projects and initiatives were prioritized.

Simon Brault –then administrative director of L’École Nationale de Théâtre and President of the newly formed lobby group Culture Montreal – chaired the steering committee delegation at the Mayor’s request (see Table IV. 3). In *No Culture, No Future*, Brault (2010) writes that the Summit was significant in terms of coalition building:

The dynamic of persuasion and coalition that prevailed during the three days of the summit allowed the arts community to establish a lasting foundation for alliances with delegations from the world of business, community development, etc. (Simon Brault, in *No Culture, No Future*, 2010, p. 124)

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<sup>13</sup> The Summit’s points to a consensus about the Quartier des Spectacles, however, evidence suggests that the cultural delegation was split on the entertainment, fearing displacement (See Baillarger, 2002).

The formation of these alliances set the stage for future, more formalized collaborations, such as the commissioning of a study by Florida, attaining government support for an official cultural policy and mobilizing support for a post-Cultural policy Action Plan. These collaborations are examined in turn.

Table IV.3

*Steering Committee: Montreal, cultural metropolis – Rendez-vous November 2007*

Name	Title (in 2007)
Gérald Tremblay (Chair of Rendez-Vous November 2007)	Mayor of Montreal (Municipal Politician)
Raymond Bachand	Minister of economic development, innovation and export trade; Minister of Tourism; Minister responsible for the Montreal region (Provincial politician)
Simon Brault (Chairman of Steering Committee)	President Culture Montreal;
Michel M. Fortier	Minister of Public Works and Governments Services Canada; Minister responsible for the Montreal region (Federal politician)

Isabelle Hudon	President and CEO of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal
Christine St-Pierre	Minister of Culture, Communications and Feminine Condition (Provincial politician)
Josée Verner	Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages (Federal politician)

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Source: Ville de Montréal, 2002b, Annexe 2

#### **4.5 Release of “Montreal’s capacity for creative convergence: Outlook and opportunities” (Study by Florida’s consulting firm Catalytix)**

In 2005, Florida returns to Montreal to speak at a highly mediated luncheon organized by the BTMM where he releases the findings of a study of Montreal. He was invited by Culture Montreal and eight other partners<sup>14</sup> from both public and private sectors: BTMM; le Ministère des Affaires Municipales, du Sport et du Loisir du Québec; le ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec; Développement Économique Canada; le Ministère du Patrimoine canadien; and la Ville de Montréal; la Communauté Métropolitaine de Montréal. Informed by his consulting firm’s research, Florida told the audience that Montreal was well-placed for the creative age. Unlike his more generic speech in 2002, Florida spoke specifically about Montreal this time, praising the city’s quality of place. Although the speech and report both received mixed-reviews (Dansereau, 2005; Côté, 2005; Elkouri, 2005; Robitaille, 2005a; Robitaille,

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<sup>14</sup> The eight partners included Culture Montreal; Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal; Le Ministère des Affaires Municipales, du Sport et du Loisir du Québec; le ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec; Développement Économique Canada; le Ministère du Patrimoine canadien; la Ville de Montréal; la Communauté Métropolitaine de Montréal

2005b), the event provided a platform for actors trying to legitimize cultural investment. Furthermore, it provided legitimacy for the entrepreneurial interpretation of creativity, and solidified the link between culture, creativity and economic development in Montreal.

The focus of the speech was on the key findings of the study that was conducted by Florida's consulting firm, Catalytic. With a \$200 000 price tag, including \$50 000 from the City of Montreal (Moore, 2005; Robitaille, 2005b), Catalytic produced two articles (Stolarick, Florida & Musante, 2005; Florida & Stolarick, 2006), complete with several rankings and indexes related to the city's position in terms of tolerance, technology and talent. Conducted in 2004, the study was based on focus groups and interviews from "individuals from the business, education, arts, and government sectors of the Montréal region" (Florida & Stolarick, 2006) conducted in 2004. The team examined the economic spillovers (knowledge transfer within an industry) and spillacrosses (knowledge transfer across industries) of Montreal's creative economy.

The research shows that Montreal is well positioned for the creative age, ranking 5<sup>th</sup> worldwide in terms of the creative sector. According to the study, Montreal benefits from several assets including its proximity to the United States and Europe, the presence of top post-secondary institutions, bilingualism, authenticity and the strong synergy between the creative industries and high-tech firms. The research paper specifically encourages firms to recognize the importance of Montreal's "underground" in retaining and attracting the creative class. Montreal's vibrant underground arts scene is beneficial for firms because they can draw from a large pool of flexible yet qualified labour.

While the audience is meant to feel optimistic with Montreal's economic prospects, the city still has some important obstacles to overcome. For example, Quebec's language and Canada's immigration regulations are considered too strict, and hinder the city's ability to compete for the creative class (Stolarick & Florida, 2006). Furthermore, the author's cite the lack of venture capital and low encouragement for female-owned businesses as examples of Montreal's "dampen[ed] entrepreneurial environment" (Stolarick & Florida, 2006, p. 1813).

Journalists criticized Florida's methodology (Côté, 2005; Elkouri, 2005; Robitaille, 2005a; Robitaille, 2005b), the cost, his lack of familiarity with Montreal and the narrowness of the research. While some people expressed concern with Florida's study, Brault acknowledged its value both in terms of capturing the nuances of the cultural sector and as a tool for reaching the private sector. For example, Brault appreciates Florida's indices, arguing that traditional economic indicators would ignore creatives who never graduated from university, like Cirque du Soleil founder Guy A. Laliberté (Dansereau, 2005). In addition, Brault recognizes that bringing in a figure like Florida can help persuade policy makers and business elites to see culture in a different light. Brault explains this reasoning in a speech delivered to l'Association des économistes québécois:

Le tourbillon médiatique nord-américain provoqué par Florida aura le réel avantage d'attirer tout particulièrement l'attention de nombreux politiciens de tous les niveaux de gouvernements, et, pour la première fois d'une façon aussi répandue sur ce continent, celle des maires et des politiciens municipaux en plus, bien sûr, de frapper l'imagination des milieu d'affaires. (Simon Brault, speech given at the 30<sup>th</sup> annual congress for l'Association des économistes québécois 2005)



Indeed, Brault hoped the event would encourage the private sector to work closer with cultural actors. This is exemplified in the strategic partnership that subsequently emerges between the Culture Montreal and the BTMM.

*Rapprochement of Culture Montreal and the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal*

The visit by Florida generated a momentum that led to a greater embrace of creativity and culture on behalf of the BTMM as well as a rapprochement with Culture Montreal. The BTMM's interest in creativity and culture is due in part to the BTMM President's sensitivity to culture-led regeneration, and Brault's search for strategic partners.

In *No Culture, No Future*, Brault describes how he sought help from BTMM President Isabelle Hudon. She is described as action-oriented, politically connected and forward-thinking with regards to cultural investment. Together they played key roles in getting the private sector to rethink their involvement in culture, and vice versa. From early on, Hudon expressed a willingness to work with Culture Montreal, and provided important strategic support. Brault explains

I wanted to ensure Isabelle Hudon's strategic support, and her personal participation in the process. She agreed straightaway. And she did not do things halfway. She insisted on the importance of de-culturalizing (her

own expression) the issue of developing the cultural metropolis. She argued that support for the arts and culture should not be reduced to its sectoral or special interest focus, but be understood as a sine qua non condition of fulfilling Montreal's full economic and social potential. (Simon Brault, from *No Culture, No Future*, 2010, p. 134)

“De-culturalizing” cultural advocacy can be interpreted as emphasizing the direct and indirect economic benefits of supporting culture. Indeed, in recent years the BTMM has advocated for more and different forms of private participation in cultural life. For example, in a 2005 report entitled *Le Financement privé de la culture* (2005a), Hudon attempts to persuade the private sector to reconsider culture by arguing that it possesses more than intrinsic value, and represents an important contribution to economic growth. In order to prioritize culture as a recipient of private sector patronage, the report makes a series of recommendations to BTMM members. The recommendations range from integrating culture within the internal business culture (i.e. holding workshops by artists in order to stimulate innovation) to initiatives facilitating patronage (i.e. standardized forms, workshops on cultural sector volunteering for administrators). Beyond direct sponsorship, benefits for cultural groups include learning business skills such as accountancy and marketing. All of this is deemed important in a city like Montreal where private patronage of culture is relatively low.

In an editorial in a BTMM publication, then President Hudon advises other members of the business community to expand their notion of creativity by looking beyond innovation and considering the important economic role of art and artists:

For the Board of Trade, this is the most important lesson to remember if we hope to boost Montreal's competitiveness. Richard Florida is right on the mark when he says that what people look for in a city is tolerance, a

quality location, openness and diversity and that these elements foster the emergence of bold new ideas. And we as Montrealers should be proud because our city has them all. Still, being “cool” is not enough to have the power to create. Know-how — something the cultural industry has in spades — is also a key ingredient to our creativity. (Isabelle Hudon, President of BTMM, 2005b, in Training: *Nurturing Montreal’s creativity*)

While the influential role of Hudon and lobbying on the part of Brault and other Culture Montreal leaders proves instrumental to the rapprochement of the BTMM and Culture Montreal, as implied in the quotes above, Florida’s speech provides an opening. Several observers point to Florida’s 2005 visit as a key moment for prioritizing culture as a motor of economic development in Montreal (Ebbels, 2010). His discourse about competitiveness, the synergy between artists and high-tech firms, and underground art, among other things, contributes to the articulation of cultural, political and business interests around the need to build a creative city. Since then Florida’s ideas, particularly his Montreal research, have been repeatedly cited in speeches, proposals, position papers and policy documents<sup>15</sup>. Indeed, within months after Florida’s speech, the city approves a draft of its first Cultural Development Policy, pointing as well the growing rapprochement between Culture Montreal and the City.

*Montréal, Cultural Metropolis: A cultural development policy for Ville de Montréal  
2005-2015*

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<sup>15</sup> In addition to the Cultural Policy, Florida’s ideas about creativity, urbanity and economic development are frequently referenced in Montreal’s policy circles. *Montreal 2025*, a strategy developed to promote large urban developments, uses the Catalytix study in their “Why chose Montreal?” section of their website.

During the same time that Florida's team initiated its study, the City of Montreal began their public consultation for *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis: A cultural development policy for Ville de Montréal 2005-2015* (henceforth referred to as *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis*). The decision to implement a cultural policy is rooted in key moments of conjuncture – the events and policy documents - that have been discussed thus far. The leadership of Culture Montreal, the ascendancy of the BTMM as an advocate for cultural interests, the moral leadership of intellectuals like Richard Florida and Simon Brault have all contributed to solidifying culture as a key component of the local accumulation strategy. *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis* expresses the institutionalization of cultural interests, and formally positions culture as a site of public sector concern and intervention.

The consultations provided a forum for debating the 2004 draft, and the interventions from the BTMM and Culture Montreal are revealing. The BTMM clearly understood the cultural policy as a tool to increase the city's competitiveness. They recommended that the policy recognize the importance of private sector in terms of funding and expertise. Culture Montreal highlighted the economic importance of implementing a cultural policy as well, but also emphasized the intrinsic value of arts and its relevance to social cohesion. Both recommended that the city increase its funding for cultural institutions and infrastructure, and take a leadership role but still work in partnership with the concerned stakeholders (BTMM, 2005b; Culture Montreal, 2005). They both agreed that the *Quartier des Spectacles* was a strategic priority, but Culture

Montreal expressed concern about the displacement of local artists. Finally, together they agreed that the Cultural Policy should include more concrete goals and insure implementation.

Many of the recommendations from the BTMM, Culture Montreal and other interveners were incorporated into *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis*. The policy identifies Montreal's strengths and weaknesses with regards to cultural development, and addresses three major concerns: 1) the accessibility to arts and culture; 2) support of arts and culture; and 3) culture's impact on the living environment of Montrealers. It is beyond the scope of this study to go into detail about each orientation, so I chose to highlight some of the more salient elements.

Whereas Montreal already possess a strong cultural sector, retaining and attracting creators, artists and cultural entrepreneurs, some of its weaknesses include high-poverty rates that limit access to culture, problems with integrating ethnocultural communities and precarious funding for cultural institutions. This is a problem because *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis* considers access to culture as a universal right. Various policies are intended to improve accessibility to arts and culture including reinvesting in the public library network and encouraging cultural mediation. Because cultural institutions, ranging from amateur arts to cultural industries, often depend on instable sources funding and are vulnerable to intensified competition due to globalization, *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis* addresses the issue of financial support. The policy promises more funding for festivals and the Conseil des Arts, and that the city will actively promote the establishment of key cultural industries. Due to the City's limited

capacity to collect revenues (i.e. primarily dependent on property taxes), the policy calls for more funding from the Provincial and Federal Government. It also encourages the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM)<sup>16</sup> to pay its fair share, since one-third of cultural consumption comes from outside the island of Montréal.

In addition, the policy also recognizes the importance of private sector funding. Unlike previous models of urban cultural policy, *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis* also identifies the living environment as key to cultural development.

Even though the cultural sector is first and foremost concerned with content, it is essential that creators, artists and artisans be able to work in environments that help their talent develop and encourage citizens to participate in the celebration of creativity. Hence the city's financial contribution, in addition to its planning and cultural responsibility. (Ville de Montréal, 2005)

Expensive cultural amenities like museums, *Quartier des Festivals*, Grande Bibliothèque and the new Planétarium are cited as important examples. Less costly measures include promoting public art.

Two main points distinguish *Montréal, Cultural metropolis* from previous models of urban cultural policy. First and perhaps most important, the policy recognizes culture not only as a key to social cohesion, but as a motor of economic development. It encourages the public sector and the business community not to view culture as charity but as an investment that will bring back a return. Second, while the policy continues to think of the culture in terms of sectors (e.g. visual arts, film, publishing etc.), it also has a special element. Cultural poles are seen as tools of neighbourhood revitalization, and

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<sup>16</sup> Regional body that serves 82 municipalities including Montreal.

improving the living environment as a means to retrain, attract and inspire the creative class is considered as essential.

Indeed, the policy is extensive and covers issues ranging from investing in public libraries to attracting cultural industries. The policy clearly reflects Florida's creative city discourse, linking inter-urban competition and the city's future growth to the vitality of the cultural sector. The policy, however, is translated to the local context, making gestures to social inclusion, solidarity and advancement of Québec unique culture. The policy's vagueness, however, led concerned parties to advocate for a more concrete action plan. The next section outlines the detail of that plan.

#### **4.6 Rendez-vous Novembre 2007 – Montréal, cultural metropolis**

Were we condemned to be a cultural metropolis on recycled paper only?  
- Simon Brault, in *No Culture, No Future*, 2010, p. 130

While some people praised the city for finally adopting the cultural policy in 2005, many others expressed concern that it would not be supported with the necessary public investment. Journalists, for instance, questioned the policy's lack of details and timetables (Carroll, 2005). Cultural elites like Gilbert Rozon<sup>17</sup> (2007) argued that Montreal risked being uncompetitive and falling behind other cities like Toronto. In this context, the hegemonic bloc that had been crystallizing since 2002 decided it was urgent

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<sup>17</sup> Gilbert Rozon is a producer and founder of the Festival *Juste pour Rire*.

to move from visioning the creative city to agreeing (and implementing) on a specific course of action. In contrast to *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis*' vague pledges, the 2007-2017 Action Plan (henceforth referred to as 07-17 AP) is more specific, with concrete policies and timelines.

Convened by five partners (Government of Canada, Government of Québec, City of Montreal, BTMM and Culture Montreal), the 07-17 AP acts as a 10 year roadmap for the city's cultural development. The mixture of pledges, recommendations and commitments are organized into five strategic approaches: 1) Enhance access to culture; 2) Invest in the arts and culture; 3) Improve the cultural quality of the living environment; 4) Enhance Montréal's status in Canada and Internationally; 5) Secure for Montréal the means of a cultural metropolis. The recommendations are diverse, ranging from promoting *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis* to international organizations like UNESCO to consolidating the vision of the new Quartier des Spectacles<sup>18</sup>. Like *Montréal, Culture Metropolis*, 07-17 AP touches on both the consumption and production of culture, as well as cultural industries and street level art. In terms of urban space, 07-17 AP includes reinforcing the city's commitment to supporting cultural poles, revalorizing certain historic districts and high quality urban design.

07-17 AP was presented, discussed and formalized at a two day conference called Rendez-vous Novembre 2007 – Montréal, Cultural Metropolis (henceforth referred to as RVN07)<sup>19</sup>. This conference included 1300 participants and representatives from 80

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<sup>18</sup> Quartier des Spectacles will be addressed in detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>19</sup> RVN07s sponsors were: Government of Canada; Government of Québec; City of Montreal; Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal; Culture Montreal



organizations. RVN07 was also used as an occasion to announce funding (see Table IV.4). Spending commitments include 120 million dollars for Quartier des Spectacles, shared equally between the three levels of government.

Both 07-17 AP and RVNO7 resulted from close to two years of mobilizing among cultural, political and business actors. Brault was one of the key leaders, helping to rally a large coalition of policy makers, business people and culture. This was no easy task; one journalist even described coalition as a “tour de babel flottante” (Cloutier, 2007). It is plausible that articulating culture with entrepreneurialism gave RVN07 credibility with high-ranking government officials and the business community. These groups coalesced and achieved a consensus in the steering committee (See Table IV.5).

Table IV.4

*2007-2017 Action Plan Spending*

Amount	Area
51 721 000 \$	Mise en Valeur du Patrimoine
30 900 000 \$	Cultural Equipment
8 878 500 \$	Access to culture and diffusion
18 000 000 \$	Arrondissement historique et naturel du Mont-Royal
30 000 000 \$	Library network

Source : Ville de Montréal, 2007.

07-17 AP and RNV07 are symbolic in that they brought together a constellation of actors (Government of Québec, Government of Canada and the City of Montreal, Culture Montreal and BTMM), not just to discuss urban visions as in past events, but to formally collaborate in the development and implementation of policy. These five

partners are required to form a policy committee and meet at least a year to make sure the Action Plan is followed and implemented (Action Plan, 2007-2017). In the case of Culture Montreal and BTMM, their participation is problematic because it formalizes the inclusion of two non-elected groups as key actors in urban development. While there is certainly conflicting objectives among these five partners, they all adhere to a broader “creative city as the pathway to growth” discourse. Both the Action Plan and the conference reflect a transformation in how both urban and cultural development is governed.

Table IV.5

*Steering Committee: Montreal, cultural metropolis – Rendez-vous November 2007*

Name	Title (in 2007)
Gérald Tremblay (Chair of Rendez-Vous November 2007)	Mayor of Montreal (Municipal Politician)
Raymond Bachand	Minister of economic development, innovation and export trade; Minister of Tourism; Minister responsible for the Montreal region (Provincial politician)
Simon Brault (Chairman of Steering Committee)	President Culture Montreal;
Michel M. Fortier	Minister of Public Works and Governments Services Canada; Minister responsible for the Montreal region (Federal politician)
Isabelle Hudon	President and CEO of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal
Christine St-Pierre	Minister of Culture, Communications and Feminine Condition (Provincial politician)
Josée Verner	Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages (Federal politician)

Source: Action Plan 2007-2017 website  
[http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?\\_pageid=5297,22081563&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=5297,22081563&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL).

## 4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue that tracing a series of key events and policy documents offers an interesting analytical window on our understanding of contemporary urban neoliberalism in Montreal. I have shown how the political-economic transformations, institutional realignments and discourses related to creativity have shaped the local hegemonic project and bloc. The global economic restructuring of the post-war period challenged policy makers to rethink the local economy and policy coordination. Certain sectors like manufacturing were deemphasized, whereas, local political-economic leaders privileged service and knowledge sectors, including the cultural industries. In terms of policy coordination, not only are new actors accorded greater influence but the system itself has undergone significant reforms. Sectoral partnerships have been institutionalized and are favored over top-down statist models or confrontation, blurring the distinctions between state and non-state actors.

I have shown that beginning in the mid-1980s with policy documents like the Picard Report, there has been a movement towards considering culture as key element of the local accumulation strategy. The discursive articulation of culture with neoliberal economic development gets reactivated at events like the Symposium 2017, the Summit of Montreal and Richard Florida's second visit to the city. Exemplified in the 2005 Cultural Policy and the 2007-2017 Action Plan, Florida's entrepreneurial vision of creativity has been treated as common-sense and absorbed into the policy agenda. This discourse also acts to articulate cultural actors with traditional urban elites into a

hegemonic bloc. This bloc has helped shape cultural and economic development policy. Examples include low-cost initiatives like promoting Montreal to international organizations like UNESCO to building expensive flagship projects like the *Quartier des Spectacles*.

Not only has culture been translated into a competitive asset but this process has also led to the redefinition of the cultural actor itself. Cultural actors are now seen as stakeholders in urban and economic development. While they might continue to call for public funding, cultural democratization (and sometimes even social justice), they are expected to be more entrepreneurial. Today, cultural actors look beyond defending their narrow interests, and see themselves as key to Montreal's future. Cultural actors are also operating in cross-sectoral partnerships, working with and adopting some of the characteristics of the private sector. Alongside the rise of business elites organized under the BTMM, cultural groups like Culture Montreal have also emerged as key "societal organizers" (MacLeod, 1999). Repeating (and adapting) Florida's discourse, Culture Montreal works to get local leaders and the general population to recognize the importance of culture for economic development.

Up to this point I have focused on how political-economic transformations, institutional realignments and new discourses have articulated cultural interests into a hegemonic bloc. That includes political, business and community organizations. The following chapter is a more refined examination of how this discursively constituted hegemonic bloc is shaping policy with regards to the development of the *Quartier des Spectacles*.



## Chapter V

### Quartier des Spectacles

The strategic manipulation of image and culture clearly provides a strong base for coalition building... Tim Hall & Phil Hubbard, 2006, p. 162

The problem for capital is to find ways to co-opt, subsume, commodify and monetize such cultural differences just enough to be able to appropriate monopoly rents there from.

In so doing, capital often produces widespread alienation and resentment among the cultural producers who experience first-hand the appropriation and exploitation of their creativity for the economic benefit of others, in much the same way that whole populations can resent having their histories and cultures exploited through commodification.

-David Harvey, 2002

The absorption of the creative city discourse into Montreal's policy agenda has been accompanied by a new cross-sectoral partnership that has blurred the distinction between state and non-state actors. I have suggested that one of its most salient manifestations has been the rise of cultural actors as an important force in urban and economic development. In Chapter IV, I described the rapprochement between Culture Montreal, the BTMM and the three levels of government as they converged to shape the *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis* and the 2007-2017 Action Plan. Up to this point, I have only alluded to how this strategic partnership has influenced neighbourhood revitalization and urban development more broadly with the construction of the new cultural pole - *Quartier des Spectacles*. As a form of culture-led regeneration and urban neoliberalism, the *Quartier des Spectacles* is noteworthy because it provides a clear manifestation of the intertwining of culture, creativity and economic development. It illustrates how the *culture cum creativity* discourse enrolls the participation of cultural actors, particularly

Culture Montreal and other traditional urban elites into a hegemonic bloc. This example, however, reveals that such a hegemony is never fully realized, but rather precarious and always in formation. While many cultural actors have welcomed the cultural policy and subsequent investments, others have expressed concerns about commodification, displacement and exclusion. These tensions jeopardize the hegemonic bloc, as certain cultural actors resent the blatant commodification of culture and gentrification.

Chapter V is divided into three sections. I begin by contextualizing the site, examining its significance in Montreal's cultural history and prior attempts at revitalizing its surrounding neighbourhoods. Next, I describe the *Quartier des Spectacles* project, its justifications and its evolution from an idea in 2001 to a reality seven years later. This chapter also examines discursive counterclaims stemming from the contradiction of culture-led regeneration and from the diverse constituents (and needs) that constitute the seemingly uniform and newly empowered "cultural sector".

## **5.1 The Importance of the Lower Main in Montreal History**

Over the years, political changes and economic constraints have modified the scale and form of the *Quartier des Spectacle* project, however, the general location was never in doubt. This area, located on the eastern edge of downtown, has long plagued various municipal administrations, long perceived as a site of vice and criminality. This site was slated for redevelopment because it is already home to a cluster of cultural activities and events and offered potential for real-estate development but also because

the area has had a long history of being on the edge of cultural innovation, bohemianism and cultural diversity. Understanding the area's significance is one of the keys to understanding why certain groups oppose the branding of the neighbourhood.

While the *Quartier des Spectacles* encompasses a large area that is bounded by Rue Sherbrooke St. West to the North, Berri St. to the East, René-Levesque Blvd. to the South and finally City Councillors St. to the West (seen Figures V.I and V.II), many identify the project with Saint-Laurent Blvd. This street, commonly known as “The Main”, has been associated with culture, immigration, and subaltern sexualities. It plays a major role in the city's geographic imaginary, dividing the city into the Anglo-Protestant dominated west and French Catholic east. According to Podmore (1999), “The Main” has become a sort of “Third City”, where certain groups and behaviours not conforming to the Western and Eastern halves of Montreal would be located. It is perhaps not a coincidence then that many art forms from early cinema and radio, to circuses and street parades, to avant-guard art and erotica all seem to have an important presence in this area (Bourassa & Larrue, 1993; Broudehoux, 2006).





Figure V.1 Location of Quartier des Spectacles in Montreal.  
Source: Jeff Hignett & Yuseph Katiya, 2009



Figure V.2 Quartier des Spectacles Map  
 Source: Jeff Hignett & Yuseph Katiya, 2009

These cultural institutions were not limited to anglophone and francophone groups as the Lower Main hosted spaces for the growing immigrant groups from the late 19 century onwards. «Il n'est donc pas surprenant», write Bourassa & Larrue (1993) «que ce soit dans cette zone de contact interethnique que multiplèrent des salles de spectacle où la musique, la mimique et la gestuelle avaient plus d'importance que les dialogues» (p. 15). With its countless cabarets, nightclubs and other cultural venues, the area is also known as the red-light district. For these reasons authorities have associated the area with vice, deviance and criminality. This reputation was reinforced during Prohibition, as

Americans travelled en masse to Montreal. In the 1920s, a visiting detective from Chicago even described Montreal as «la plus ouverte au vice que nous ayons jamais vue» (quoted in Proulx, 1997, p. 19). But as Podmore points out (1999), the area has not escaped social control as police and various municipal administrations have promised to crack down on real (and perceived) criminality.

While people commonly associate the Lower Main with the Red Light district, bohemianism and immigration, its history as a site of production, retail and working class struggles is often overlooked. Dry goods stores and businesses affiliated with the strong garment industry once had a strong presence on the Lower Main. The multiethnic labour force lived nearby, sometimes doing piecework from their homes. The area was at the center of the burgeoning labour movement, home to various meeting halls and radical bookstores. Workers would often use the The Main for their demonstrations and May Day parades (Podmore, 1999).

Identified as a “slum” by the government, this area underwent radical transformation in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Much of the area was demolished for a modernist public housing project called Les Habitations Jeanne-Mance. This contradicted Mayor Jean Drapeau’s vision for the area. He did not see downtown as a place for families, and even planned to build a “cité-famille” on the city’s periphery. For The Main, he favoured the construction of “cité des ondes” that would be home to Radio-Canada, a planetarium and a natural science museum (Choko, 1995; Germain, 1991). The cité des ondes never materialized; however, Drapeau did build the *Place-des-Arts*, a large performing arts centre reminiscent of the Lincoln Center. At its inauguration in 1963, the

site became a violent battleground for nationalists and socialists, who criticized the center's elitism (Illien, 1999),

Once considered negative and a source of decline, the area's association with vice and bohemianism are invoked in the city's new plan to turn it into a cultural hub. Its history with the spectacle is emphasized (and sometimes overstated), whereas, its history as a site of working class struggle and manufacturing have been mostly forgotten. In the words of a prominent local politician: "I know the citizens of Montreal are attached to the lower Main, but they're also interested in urban renewal, as long as its cultural" (Quoted in Peritz, 2007).

## **5.2 *Quartier des Spectacles*: Cultural pole, Catalyst for property development, or both?**

Right now, it's Beirut, but it will become Montreal's Times Square. - Alain Simard, 2002, (Quoted in Lamey & Block, 2002)

Les promoteurs immobiliers trouveront dans le QDS des occasions d'affaires comme ils en ont rarement vues. - Mayor Gérald Tremblay, (Quoted in Immobilier Commercial, 2009)

The concept of the *Quartier des Spectacles* first received media attention in 2001. The Association Québécoise de l'industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo (ADISQ), led by Jacques K. Primeau, is credited with the first proposal. Primeau argued that an entertainment district like New York's Times Square would become the «élément-clé de la promotion de Montréal à l'étranger» (Quoted in Bérubé, 2001). The proposal

came at a good time. In the same year, Montrealers were debating the merits of municipal mergers and went to the polls. Leaders felt an urgency to seize the moment, and change the course of Montreal politics. Since it was associated with the dynamic cultural industries, the *Quartier des Spectacles* represented a forward-looking vision of the city.

Following the election, at the Summit of Montreal, the *Quartier des Spectacles* was identified as a priority. Important politicians and major players from the cultural industries like Alain Simard of Équipe Spectra expressed strong public support for the project (Simard, 2002). The following year marked the creation of the *Quartier des Spectacles Partnership*, a 23 person non-profit organization responsible for overseeing the site (See appendix).

While several recommendations relating to the urban landscape are included in *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis* such as public art and better integration of design in urban development, none of the interventions are as direct and expensive as the *Quartier des Spectacles*. The *Quartier des Spectacles* fits within the city's dual policy of supporting existing and developing new cultural poles. *Quartier des Spectacles* was identified as the most important cultural pole, and worth developing for four reasons:

- a collective project that is first and foremost cultural, based on congeniality, and sure to transform the neighborhood into a major public venue to all Montrealers;
- the development of an attractive and harmonious neighborhood that respects the soul of that place, reconciles the needs of the cultural community with those of other interested parties, and, through appropriate measures, permits real-estate development, so threatening these days, without driving away the artists and cultural organizations located there;
- the creation of an international cultural destination;
- taking the partnership experiment further still by entrusting a non-profit organization – the Partenariat du Quartier des spectacles – with the mandate to

deliver a shared development vision and a global proposition for its implementation (Montréal, Cultural Metropolis, 2005, p. 64)

The commitment to the *Quartier des Spectacles* was reaffirmed two years later at RVN07. The three governments were represented at the event, and used the opportunity to announced 120\$ million dollars in public investment.

In 2008, the city council adopted the Special Planning Program for the *Quartier des Spectacles* – Place-des-Art Sector. Public debate and controversy accelerated when two sub-projects, 2-22 rue Sainte-Catherine and Quadrilatère Saint-Laurent<sup>20</sup>, went to public consultation in 2009. Supporters argued that the new cultural pole would have the benefit of strengthening the city’s cultural production and its new brand as a cultural metropolis as well as revitalizing the area by acting as a catalyst for nearby real-estate and commercial development. Early on, detractors worried about expropriation, displacement, cost overruns, the commodification and homogenization of culture and bias towards the larger cultural institutions like Équipe Spectra.

Covering one square kilometre area, the *Quartier des Spectacles* area can be understood as encompassing two different elements. Falling under the *Programme Particulier d’Urbanisme – Quartier des Spectacles*, the first element consist of four new public spaces: 1) Place des Festivals; 2) Promenades des and le Parterre; 3) Sainte-Catherine St.; 4) Esplanade Clark (See Table V.1). These are well designed public spaces that possess a uniformed identity and visual signature that reference the red-light district

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<sup>20</sup> The 2-22 rue Sainte-Catherine and the Quadrilatère Saint-Laurent were two important sub-projects. The latter project was recently abandoned, while the former is in operation. For the 2-22 rue Sainte-Catherine, the buildings principal tenants are CIBL Radio-Montréal and *La Vitrine Culturelle*(a centralized ticket office). Before it was taken off the table, the Quadrilatère Saint-Laurent was envisioned as a twelve-storey office building for Hydro-Québec. The promoter is the Société de développement Angus.

and symbolize the *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis* ethos. This is illustrated in the new facades, lighting structures and luminous pathway, street textures and street furniture. These spaces serve as anchors for outdoor cultural activities such as festivals, events, public art and so on. The second element includes several sub-projects and adjacent property developments (See Table V.2). These range from high-end condominiums to office buildings designated for cultural functions.

Table V.1

*Quartier des Spectacles public spaces and features*

Phases	Description	Features
Place des Festivals (Phase 1)	6, 141 m <sup>2</sup> public space	Open year long; includes two living showcases; special lighting superstructure designed for festivals and events
Promenade des artistes and le parterre (Phase 2)	3, 455 m <sup>2</sup> grassy public space and 3, 190m <sup>2</sup> walkway/public square	Special lighting superstructure; event showcases
Ste-Catherine St. (Phase 3)	Reconfiguration of city's most famous commercial thoroughfare, including upgrading street-front properties; acts as pedestrian pathway during festival season	Sidewalk and street are calibrated to encourage pedestrianization
Esplanade Clark (Phase 4) <sup>21</sup>	Multipurpose plateau for activities	Lighting superstructures; new park

Source : Quartier des Spectacles Partnership website, 2011.

<sup>21</sup>As of 2011 the Esplanade Clark was not completed.

Table V.2

*Property Development: Completed and In progress*

Property Name	Vocation	Status	Investors/ Promoters
Condominium Louis-Bohème	Luxury Condominiums	Completed	Private
Maison du Festival Rio Tinto Alcan	Music venue, bistro, gallery, Festival International de Jazz office	Completed	Government of Québec ; Government of Canada; Rio Tinto Alcan; Astral Media and the Festival International de Jazz
Lofts des Arts	Loft-style condos	Completed	Private
Lofts Sainte-Alexandre	Loft-style condos	Completed	Private
The Society for Arts and Technology	Office space and artistic hub	Completed	The Society for Arts and Technology; Government of Québec; Government of Canada; City of Montreal; other private partners
Adresse Symphonique	Concert Hall	Completed	Public-Private Partnership (Québec Government and the Groupe Immobilier Ovation)
Maison du développement durable	Office Building	Completed	Équiterre and seven other organizations; Government of Québec; other private partners
2-22 Sainte-Catherine	Office Building	In progress	Société de développement Angus (with support from the City of Montréal)

Source: Compiled from Quartier des Spectacles Partnership “A destination under construction”, n.d.

The *Quartier des Spectacles Partnership* oversees the development of the area. The *Quartier des Spectacles Partnership* is funded by the City of Montreal, and Mayor Tremblay appointed the President of Tourism Montreal Charles Lapointe as the President



(Lapointe, 2009). It was initially composed of 21 members from the cultural sector, real-estate, local businesses and government (See appendix for list). The *Quartier des Spectacles Partnership* has conducted several studies of the area, and is responsible for marketing and valorizing the area's cultural assets, managing its public spaces and acting as a liaison between the various stakeholders. Their development vision is summarized in *Vivre, Créer et se Divertir au Centre-Ville*, a short document outlining the simultaneous goals of attracting tourists, stimulating property development, incubating cultural industries and retaining the creative class (Quartier des Spectacles Partnership, 2004).

The Partnership estimated that the area has the potential for 4 800 new housing units (approximately 7000 residents). They projected that the land would be worth 148 million, and the potential value of the project could reach 1.9 billion (20% public / 80 % private) by 2025. They predict direct and indirect jobs could reach 27 000, including 1050 jobs in tourism. In turn, real estate activities could generate 70 million in property and school taxes for the City. Considering taxes related to workers' incomes and services and goods related to the construction, the Government of Québec could receive 400 million and the Government of Canada 200 million (Immobilier Commercial, 2009; Quartier des Spectacles Partnership, 2004; Quartier des Spectacles Partnership, 2007).

As Michel Leblanc from the BTMM sees it "Notre Quartier des Spectacles est de fait l'incarnation d'une véritable symbiose entre le foisonnement culturel de notre ville, sa revalorisation urbaine et son développement immobilier" (Leblanc, 2009). Indeed, property development is central to Quartier des Spectacles, and is a key to getting the traditional urban elites excited about cultural investment. As of 2009, the area had 30

non-built lots totalling 4 million square feet (Immobilier Commercial, 2009). If massive investments in public spaces are not enough to attract developers, the City uses two planning tools to encourage investment: PR@M Commerce and PR@M Industrie. Since the City considers *Quartier des Spectacles* a priority for development, PR@M Commerce and PR@M Industrie are used to support building upgrades with subsidies and tax breaks. While the *Quartier des Spectacles Partnership* seeks projects that include cultural amenities, many luxury condominiums have been constructed in the vicinity.

The Partnership, BTMM and just about all the major players involved with the project have expressed contradictory messages about real-estate development. As previously mentioned, the Partnership justifies its creation in part on the basis of the property taxes that it will bring the city, yet they have expressed some concerns about displacement. Below are three quotes from Partnership members that illustrate the concern about gentrification:

We must be careful about gentrification. We must not destroy the Montreal that people came here for. We've managed to integrate festivals into our daily lives, not stick them out at some racetrack. (Alain Simard, President of Équipe Spectra, quoted in Rodriguez, 2003)

Too much of that area has been abandoned, or is being used for purposes that aren't necessarily healthy for society...If New York can clean up Times Square and England can clean up Piccadilly Circus, why can't we do the same? (Phil O'Brien, executive committee member for the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership, quoted in Lamey, 2005)

Condos are being built at a tremendous pace. The galleries and small theatres are being pushed to the side. We don't want our campaign to turn into Save the Quartier des spectacles. (Jacques K. Primeau, Vice-President of Quartier des Spectacles Partnership, quoted in Lamey, 2005)

### 5.3 Culture Montreal and Quartier des Spectacles

In the rush to adopting creativity policies, strategic non-state actors have been instrumental in incorporating culture and creativity into the city's policy agenda. The broad societal acceptance of Montreal as a creative city - across class and political lines – and cross-sectoral partnerships, is related to the lobbying, networking and advocacy of Culture Montreal and the rest of the hegemonic bloc. Helping to advance and popularize a *culture cum creativity* discourse, Culture Montreal plays an important role in articulating cultural actors with traditional urban elites, creating a tentative unity among sectors that have not always seen eye to eye with regards to urban and economic development.

As one of the main groups spearheading the adoption of cultural development policies, Culture Montreal has prioritized the development of *Quartier des Spectacles*. While Culture Montreal is not officially represented in the *Quartier des Spectacles Partnership*, two Partnership members currently sit on Culture Montreal's Board of Directors. Culture Montreal has affirmed its support for the project in various statements and at various public gatherings such as the public consultations, including the Summit of Montreal and the RVN07. As mentioned above, the *Quartier des Spectacles* is one of the cornerstones of the city's Cultural Policy, a policy that key members of Culture Montreal helped to draft. Simon Brault was even present at the inauguration ceremony for *La place des Quartier des Spectacles* and was invited to speak. In his speech, Brault praised politicians for acting on their promises to make Montreal a cultural metropolis and reminded the audience that *Quartier des Spectacles* was the result of years of

collaboration between various sectors. As the City faced criticism for not moving forward with many of its mega-projects, Brault spoke of the force of culture as a catalyst for action:

Que la culture ait permis cette analyse n'est pas un accident. C'est un signe des temps! C'est aussi un fil lumineux qui nous relie à plein d'autres métropoles dans le monde qui émergent de situations encore plus noires que la nôtre, en misant sur les artistes, leurs institutions et industries culturelles et en mettant à l'avant-scène l'originalité et l'authenticité de leur vie culturelle. (Brault, 2007)

As previously cited, most of the major urban actors recognize *Quartier des Spectacles* as a step forward for the neighbourhood and the city more broadly. For the neighbourhood, the project will anchor its revitalization with a new spectacular landscape, build amenities designed to strengthen the festival economy, and act as catalyst for cultural production and economic growth. Supposed non-productive land uses will be removed and redeveloped. For the city, the project brings desperately needed tax revenue in the form of property taxes and tourist dollars, and helps to promote the city's new brand as an internationally renowned cultural metropolis. In addition, it helps to retain and attract the targeted creative class.

In the frenzy to brand Montreal as a cultural metropolis, cultural actors have reinforced a discourse that puts them at the center of change. It is therefore not surprising that most of the concern has been about artists and cultural venues (of a certain kind), overlooking the displacement of land uses, behaviours and people that do not fit in nicely with the creative city.

## 5.4 The Potential for Counter-Hegemony

As McGuirk (2004), Jessop (1997) and many others have noted, hegemonic projects and their supporting hegemonic blocs range in strength, and can still be tenuous and contested. While the creativity policies have been widely accepted in Montreal, some conflicts have already surfaced. If other cases of repackaging culture as a tool for inter-urban competition are an indication, these conflicts may grow and jeopardize the presence of the hegemonic bloc.

There are two strands of counter-hegemony that have emerged as a result of the *Quartier des Spectacles*. The re-branding of the neighbourhood as a cultural hub has led to conflicts with peoples, behaviour and land-uses that obstruct opportunities for accumulation, such as the controversy about the future place for sex workers, squatters and homeless people in the area. Second, the articulation of culture with entrepreneurial concepts of creativity has sometimes pitted established and profitable art forms against independent artists or art deemed controversial. In both these conflicts, detractors appropriate some of the elements of the creative city discourse to strengthen their claim to the city. The final section discusses these conflicts and discusses the potential counterhegemonic claims to the city, particularly within the cultural sector. This is preceded with brief review of the literature on why artists might resist projects that are pursued in their names.

Paraphrasing Harvey (2002) and Tretter's (2009) work on the political economy of culture, I have identified three contradictions with the culture-led regeneration strategy. These contradictions are important because they explain the opportunities for

counterhegemonic claims. First, the culture-led regeneration path largely depends on a city being able to distinguish itself via its heritage and cultural amenities. This is problematic because as every city chooses to build its own cultural pole, the ability for a city to cultivate distinctiveness declines. Second, as cultural amenities get recast as competitive assets and absorbed into the neoliberal logic, tensions arise between ownership and use. For example, ticket prices to a cultural amenity might rise, posing questions about democracy and exclusion. Finally, as urban elites justify culture-led regeneration, they simultaneously emphasize the economic and non-economic value of culture and creativity. As people embrace the importance and distinctiveness of their local culture, they resist crude attempts at instrumentalization and commodification. The latter contradiction became apparent with the two sub-projects for the Lower Main.

The redefinition of this area as the *Quartier des Spectacles* has provided cultural enterprises, artists and the creative class with literal and symbolic ownership over the area. As a result, the *Quartier des Spectacles* has created an informal user hierarchy whereby creative people (of a certain kind) are privileged over non-creatives. Take, for example, Charles Lapointe's justification for taking over buildings used by squatters: "We're asking the government to turn the buildings over to us so that they can be returned to their original use – affordable space for cultural creators and exhibitors" (quoted in Lamey, 2005).

Issues related to gentrification, displacement and criminalization became even more apparent during the public consultations for 2-22 rue Sainte-Catherine and the Quadrilatère Saint-Laurent. *Habiter Ville-Marie*, an umbrella group representing

downtown community and housing groups, criticized the project for displacing low-income residents and evacuating the area's rooming houses. They emphasized that it was also artists that risked displacement (Habiter Ville-Marie, 2009). Stella, an organization that advocates for the rights of sex workers, expressed concern that the project would lead to increase policing, displacement and the loss of job opportunities. Among their recommendations, they asked the city and developer to include a space in 2-22 rue Sainte-Catherine for an organization dedicated to sex workers and that a museum that honours the red-light district be built. Stella, like Habiter Ville-Marie, did not oppose the project in its entirety, but demanded more inclusion and spaces for different voices.

While the *Quartier des Spectacles* clearly benefits some actors in the cultural sector such as the large festivals and many of the area's existing cultural institutions, it clearly frustrates and threatens many others. Early on, many independent artists based outside the area recognized that they were at a disadvantage.

I understand that [the downtown festivals] good for the economy. It's a strange idea. They're saying most of the shows in the entire city have to take place have to take place in this tiny eight-bloc area, and anything outside it doesn't get much. (Mario Pezzente, Venue owner and artist, Quoted in Rodriguez 2005)

The most famous case of dissent related to the expropriation of Café Cléopâtre for the Quadrilatère Saint-Laurent. The expropriation Café Cléopâtre drew complaints from counter-culture artists, sex workers and the LGBT community, and captured most of the media's attention. More than just a strip club, Café Cléopâtre is an iconic venue for vaudeville theatre, neo-burlesque, erotic and other forms of alternative art.

Rallying around, the “Save the Main” coalition, local business owners, artists and activists mounted a campaign against Société de développement Angus and its plans to expropriate the venue. They invoked the lower Main’s history as center of counter culture, and demanded they be included in the development process. Several performers have questioned the development’s narrow vision of spectacle.

We are in the Quartier des spectacles...We have to include the *spectacles du quartier*. (Éric Paradis, performer and founder of Club Sin<sup>22</sup>, Quoted in Ebbels, 2009)

To propose a project that involves closing buildings which are about spectacle is rather ironic, especially within the new Quartier des Spectacles (Viviane Namaste, performer and professor, Quoted in Hewingsa, 2009a)

In his presentation at the public consultation, Café Cléopâtre’s owner said that he was disappointed that the City did not approach him in their efforts to revitalize the area, a area his venue played a critical role in valorizing. He noted that while the festivals brought tourists into the area, it was only for apart the summer, wheareas, local businesses like his own attracted people all year round. His presentation ended with the following words

Le Quartier des spectacles : j’en fais partie depuis 33 ans. Avant moi, cet établissement existait et il a participé à l’histoire du quartier, à l’histoire du Red Light District, à l’histoire de Montréal. On ne doit pas déménager un quartier historique de Montréal. L’Histoire, ça ne se déménage pas. (John Zoumboulakis, Owner of Café Cléopâtre, 2009)

Illustrated by the three quotes below, *Quartier des Spectacles* has fuelled distrust amongst many commentators, independent artists and smaller festival operators.

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<sup>22</sup> Club Sin is a fetish-arts festival that uses Café Cléopâtre.



Basically, the Montreal festival scene, and my interpretation of it is: Its made up a few elephants and a lot of mice. The problem is more when the elephants roll over the mice get squashed, but the mice themselves don't really compete, and actually live a completely separate existence (Anonymous, artist venue manager and independent festival operator, personal interview, 2010)

The Jazz Festival brings in a lot of tourist money, and people attend. It does support the economy ... but we do too. The First Arcade Fire shows were at Casa del Popolo. Culture doesn't just happen in five-thousand person venues and outdoor shows, there are many different kinds of culture. (Mario Pezzente, venue owner and artist, quoted in Hewings, 2009b)

As far as the city is concerned the only festivals of value are Just for Laughs, Cirque du Soleil and the Jazz Fest. Patricia Boushel, producer at Pop Montreal music festival, quoted in Ebbels 2010)

In M<sup>c</sup>Guirk's (2004) study of neoliberalizing Sydney, she asks if discursive counterclaims produce a counterhegemonic movement or if they get absorbed into the hegemonic practices. As of now, it appears that neither strand can feed into a counterhegemonic movement that opposes the creative city logic; however, the former strand seems to have more potential. While the first strand tried to appropriate the creative class rubric to justify their presence and inclusion in the cultural metropolis, they were clearer about issues relating to equality and justice. Despite getting most of the media attention, the second strand seems less likely to bring about counterhegemony. Their discourse is more compatible with the creative city discourse and sectoral partnerships. Both strands of discursive counterclaims will shape the Quartier des Spectacles and evolution of creativity policies, but they appear unlikely to fundamentally challenge the hegemonic project.

## Chapter VI

### Discussion and Conclusion

I began this thesis with a quote from a prominent businessman that encapsulated my argument that culture has been articulated with entrepreneurial concepts of creativity. In the preceding pages, I have shown that the creative city discourse has achieved widespread acceptance in Montreal. The acceptance of this hegemonic project was not automatic, but was learned and constructed over the last 25 years. Key moments of conjuncture, from events to policy documents, have helped to spread and legitimize creativity policies as a cornerstone of the local accumulation strategy. These moments have also served to link cultural actors with traditional urban elites into a hegemonic bloc. This marks a departure from earlier governance models which did not value culture and cultural actors as keys to economic and urban development. In the process, cultural actors have become important political actors, pro-actively forming strategic alliances with governments and business interests. Like business interests from the tertiary and quaternary sectors, the local state has accorded cultural actors, especially Culture Montreal, with systemic privileges in policy formation. The case of *Quartier des Spectacles* demonstrates how this new alliance repackages culture as a tool for inter-urban competition and neighbourhood revitalization.

Considering that the City of Montreal's new economic development strategy for 2011-2017 identifies culture as a cornerstone (Ville de Montréal, 2011a) and envisions additional cultural poles (Ville de Montréal, 2011b), it appears that these themes will continue to attract attention from researchers. This thesis represents a modest attempt at

grappling with some of the issues related to urban neoliberalism and creativity policies through a neo-Gramscian lens, as applied to Montreal. My hope is that this work will strengthen research on the role of cultural actors in urban growth coalitions.

However, there are many questions left unanswered. While I draw from neo-Gramscian concepts, I focused on the local scale, ignoring the role of higher political abstractions. Future research must address the role played by the Federal and Provincial governments in redefining culture in neoliberal terms. As I write, the *Quartier des Spectacles* is slated for an expansion eastward into the Latin Quarter. It is yet unclear what the potential ramifications of this expansion will be, but one can predict similar conflicts between creatives and supposed non-creatives to resurface. Place Émile-Gamelin, a site (in)famous for its confrontations between street youth, the police and gentrifiers (Siciliano, 2004), continues to be used by small festivals and events associated with the *Quartier des Spectacles*. When I began this research it was too early to evaluate the economic impact of the *Quartier des Spectacles*. Since official projections and statistics from boosters are notoriously optimistic (Levine, 2003) and given it has been a few years since construction, it might be a good time to consider the opportunity cost of supporting infrastructure geared towards tourists (Eisinger, 2000).

Another area of future research could be exploring the Montreal case with a framework that considers the importance of vehicular ideas (Peck, 2011a) and urban policy mobilities (McCann, 2011). To borrow a term from Peck (2011a), Montreal has become an “emulative site” in the Canadian context. Urban actors from other Canadian cities are coming to Montreal looking for “best practices”, and Montreal urban actors

spread the word about the success of *Quartier des Spectacles* and the city's cultural development policies. This area of research could address unanswered question about about how urban actors act globally (McCann, 2011). Simon Brault of Culture Montreal, for example, has taken up a role similar to Richard Florida, as someone who raises the profile culture in policy circles and the press. Brault's book was recently translated into English, and has been invited to speak at several Canadian cities, as they adapt or consider creativity policies. In a recent interview in the National Post, Brault explains his role as a cultural crusader:

That has been my career: being a connector between the Francophones, the Anglophones, the arts and the business world. And I realized, when I went to Winnipeg – or when I go to Calgary, I'm sure it will be that same - it brings all these people in the [same] room, and instead of whining, complaining, protesting, criticizing each other, I try to come with a vision that's [for] the common good. (Simon Brault, interview in National Post, 2011)

Exploring how Montreal's cultural policies are emulated and translated to other Canadian cities appears to be a promising and uncharted avenue for research.

Creativity policies in Montreal have been slowly gaining ground for the last ten years. They have evolved from an idea to reality with *Montreal, Cultural Metropolis*, AP 07-17 and the *Quartier des Spectacles*. Until now, the *Quartier des Spectacles* and creativity policies have been relatively unchallenged by progressive forces. Housing and anti-poverty groups will inevitably confront real-estate speculation and gentrification inherent in the neoliberal city. However, as creativity policies get further absorbed into local policy, it will be interesting to see if cultural actors will continue to support the project. "The artist", Harvey (1989a) reminds us has "an enigmatic position in the

configuration of class forces that make up capitalism” (p. X). Despite the attention from governments, business interests and planning gurus like Richard Florida, many artists live precarious lifestyles. It remains to be seen if Montreal artists will align themselves with similar class interests, or will continue to side with traditional urban elites.

## Appendix

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### Appendix I Quartier des Spectacles Partnership Board of Directors

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Charles Lapointe (President) Tourisme Montréal	Table de concertation du Faubourg Saint-Laurent
Jacques Primeau (Vice-President) Les Productions Jacques K. Primeau	L'Équipe Spectra
Monique Goyette (Treasurer) UQAM	André Picard Festival juste pour rire
Guy Berthiaume Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec	Lorraine Pintal Société de développement commercial du Quartier Latin
Joanne Chevrier Hydro-Québec	Claude Rainville Théâtre du Nouveau Monde
Jean-Robert Choquet Ville de Montréal	Michel Sabourin Monique Savoie
Rosario Demers André Ménard	Société des arts technologiques Monument-National
Michel Gagnon Place-des-Arts	Club Soda Félix Martel

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