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Cultural Economy Planning in Creative Cities: Discourse and Practice

forthcoming in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*

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Abstract

While a growing body of research analyzes the functional mechanisms of the cultural or creative economy, there has been little attention devoted to understanding how local governments translate this work into policy. Moreover, research in this vein focuses predominately on Richard Florida's creative class thesis rather than considering the wider body of work that may influence policy. This paper seeks to develop a deeper understanding of how municipalities conceptualize and plan for the cultural economy through the lens of two cities held up as model "creative cities"-- Austin, Texas and Toronto, Ontario. The work pays particular attention to how the cities adopt and adapt leading theories, strategies, and discourses of the cultural economy. While policy documents indicate that the cities embrace the creative city model, in practice, agencies tend to adapt conventional economic development strategies for cultural economy activity and appropriate the language of the creative city for multiple purposes.

A growing body of literature analyzes the functional mechanisms of the cultural or creative economy (e.g. Florida, 2002; Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Scott, 2000).¹ However, despite the fact that local governments provide wide-ranging investments in cultural and creative activity (Evans, 2009; Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007), there has been less attention devoted to understanding how local governments translate this work into actual policy. The majority of existing work in this vein focuses predominately on Richard Florida's creative city discourse and asserts that his work has had a major influence on the language and direction of urban policies, often reinforcing neoliberal agendas (Gibson and Klocker, 2005; Peck, 2005). Case study research conducted in North America (Catungal et al., 2009; Catungal and Leslie, 2009; McCann, 2007; Long, 2009; Ponzini and Rossi, 2010; Zimmerman, 2008), Europe (Bayliss 2007; Romein and Trip, 2009; Vanolo, 2008), Australia (Atkinson and Easthope, 2009; Gibson and Klocker, 2005), and Asia (Kong and O'Conner, 2009; Sasaki, 2010) is overwhelmingly critical of creative city policies for exacerbating social and economic inequalities despite the adoption of language that stresses the importance of public space and cultural diversity. This work finds that cities pursue the creative city agenda primarily as a place-marketing tool that privileges the needs and desires of particular groups, including specific segments of the creative economy workforce, typically by encouraging gentrification and displacement in central city areas. While this work is valuable for identifying the problems with the creative city model in relation to urban policy, a shortcoming of the literature is that it rarely observes the application of this model in a wider cultural policy context. To fully understand the processes at work behind urban cultural economy policy-making, I argue that we need to expand the lens of analysis beyond the creative city focus and analyze other approaches that potentially influence urban development strategies. Focusing exclusively on the creative city agenda provides only a partial

understanding of urban cultural development and, in the process, may miss opportunities to address the shortcomings of the creative city approach.

This paper seeks to develop a deeper understanding of how municipalities conceptualize and plan for the cultural economy through the lens of two cities held up as model “creative cities”-- Austin, Texas and Toronto, Ontario. The purpose of this analysis is to explore how scholarly ideas in relation to the cultural economy are distilled in the translation into policy and practice. What are the key theories and discourses that frame cultural economy planning and policy in Austin and Toronto? How are these theories and discourses adopted and adapted in practice? To address these questions, the following section presents a typology of the most common approaches to the cultural economy. Drawing on this framework, I examine how key planning and policy documents reflect these models and, in turn, how the cities’ existing cultural economy programs adhere to and diverge from plan discourse. In so doing, this article improves our understanding of urban cultural policy-making and adds to the creative city debate in two ways. First, by broadening the focus beyond the creative city thesis, I examine the extent to which different models of cultural economy development influence policy-making. I find that while municipal policy documents indicate that the cities have embraced the creative city model, in practice agencies tend to adapt conventional economic development strategies for cultural economy activity alongside strategies associated with multiple models. Second, in contrast to most research that argues cities adopt the creative city language to reinforce neoliberal governance strategies, I find that agencies appropriate the language of the creative city to suit different purposes. As such, the creative city model serves as a vehicle for varying agendas rather than a tool for neoliberal development schemes exclusively.

Conceptualizing the Cultural Economy

This section identifies five approaches to cultural economy development: the conventional model, the creative city model, the cultural industries model, the cultural occupations model, and the cultural planning model (Table 1). Although these are ideal types drawn from the literature constructed to highlight different perspectives or agendas, there is some conceptual and policy overlap between models. Given space constraints, rather than provide a comprehensive overview of this literature, I highlight the key individuals, texts, concepts, and policies associated with each model as a framework for the case study analysis.

The Conventional Model

Economic development organizations have long focused on creating a good business climate to attract firms and investment from outside a locale. Tax abatements, land write-downs, development assistance, and minimal labor standards are marketed to targeted firms or industries, which may or may not include cultural industries. Frequently, the social and environmental costs and the distribution of benefits associated with this approach are ignored by economic development officials (Blakely and Green Leigh, 2010). Additionally, arts and cultural activity is employed in city marketing campaigns and redevelopment projects (Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007). Everything from ethnic districts to flagship museums is considered as a tool to attract tourists and create a distinct image to stand out in a competitive marketplace. Cities around the globe routinely engage in selling places despite criticism that this favors the private sector and tourists over local populations, discounts public participation, and stretches thin municipal budgets with little public benefit (Evans, 2003). Concurrently, a separate body-- an arts council or cultural affairs agency-- is charged with supporting the nonprofit arts sector typically through funding local arts organizations and conducting community-based arts programming (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). Consequently, different entities with different tools

and resources work with commercial cultural industries or nonprofit arts activity without recognition of their potential overlaps and common issues.

Creative City Model

The creative city model is derived foremost from Richard Florida's creative class thesis, which asserts that "creativity" is the key ingredient to economic growth and innovation (Florida, 2002, 2004; also see Howkins, 2002; Landry, 2000). Because costs of production have become less important than access to specialized skills and knowledge, cities must focus not on attracting firms and industry as in conventional economic development, but on attracting the highly educated and mobile creative class, which includes a wide spectrum of occupations ranging from software programmers to visual artists. Cities are advised to focus on producing an attractive "quality of place" by redeveloping historic, mixed use neighborhoods, investing in vibrant arts scenes and outdoor activities, and promoting their cultural diversity to appeal to the consumption preferences of the creative class. This assertion is reinforced by Clark (2004) who argues that cultural amenities attract highly skilled and educated individuals particularly in the context of a New Political Culture in which consumption issues take on enhanced significance and by Charles Landry (2000) who emphasizes the importance of creative approaches to planning and governance in tackling economic and social problems brought about by urban restructuring.

Scholars criticize Florida's concept of the creative class and the associated implications for urban development. Considered as an extension of earlier urban entrepreneurial strategies, this concept has foremost been criticized as a tool for government-endorsed gentrification and insecure labor conditions that have come to characterize neoliberal governance (Harvey, 1989; McCann, 2007; Peck, 2005). Florida (2004, 2010) himself has noted that cities with large creative economies exhibit high levels of social and economic polarization and that the income

gap between creative class and service workers must be addressed “through greater creative class leadership” rather than by strengthening traditional labor support mechanisms (Donegan and Lowe, 2008: 47). A 2009 conference, “Strength in Services” spearheaded by Florida focused on improving service work in Toronto and Ontario.

Cultural Industries Model

This model focuses on the functional characteristics of the commercial cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Pratt, 2005; Scott, 2000, 2008). In brief, the cultural industry production system is characterized by interlocking clusters of many specialized firms that rely on high levels of part-time and project-based employment in fields characterized by rapid changes in design and consumer preferences. This creates a high risk environment and an associated need for proximity to the knowledge, supplies, and social networks essential to a given sector. In contrast to the creative city model, which focuses on place largely in relation to consumption spaces for creative workers, the focus here is on enhancing aspects of the industrial milieu. Indeed, scholars associated with this approach critique the creative city model for claiming that cultural amenities and diversity attract human capital rather than the reverse as well as for not carefully considering the importance of the cultural production system characterized by agglomerations of “shifting interfirm networks and flexible labor markets” (Storper and Manville, 2006; Storper and Scott 2009; Scott, 2006: 7). As such, cultural industries policies focus on building labor markets and training opportunities, the promotion of social and institutional networking, promoting innovation and minimizing risk, developing appropriate infrastructure, and the marketing and distribution of content.

Cultural Occupations Model

Ann Markusen’s work typifies the cultural occupations model (Markusen, 2004, 2006;

Markusen and Schrock, 2006). This work concentrates specifically on the characteristics and needs of artists (musicians, writers, and performing and visual artists) and, to a lesser extent, workers in design and media-related fields. Markusen draws a distinction between her work and the cultural industries approach by distinguishing her focus on what people do rather than on the products they produce. Further, she favors an occupational approach because many cultural industries such as advertising or publishing are characterized by high numbers of workers that do not engage directly in cultural production (Markusen and Schrock, 2006). Similarly, she critiques the creative city thesis, on the grounds that this model lumps together very different occupations and treats the arts simply as consumer amenities for economic growth at the expense of other roles (Markusen, 2006). Rather, Markusen argues that cultural policy should focus on enhancing the “artistic dividend,” which artists create through their work in commercial cultural sectors, the sale of their work, the multiplier effect from high levels of inter-artist support, and by improving the quality of life and area image (Markusen and Schrock, 2006: 1662). The occupational focus draws attention to these benefits as well as the high levels of self-employment in many cultural sectors. Policy recommendations are, therefore, directed toward the characteristics and needs of artists including affordable living and work space, incubating talent and providing networking opportunities, and directing financial support to smaller arts organizations rather than flagship cultural institutions (Jackson et al., 2006; Markusen and Schrock, 2006). Similarly, Currid (2007) refers to the importance of informal social spaces including bars and galleries and advocates zoning mechanisms to encourage such spaces.

Cultural Planning Model

Cultural planning focuses on developing local arts, culture, and heritage as a springboard for neighborhood-level development (Evans, 2001; Grogan and Mercer, 1995; McNulty, 2006).

Similar to asset-based community development (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993), this approach focuses on identifying and developing community cultural resources in a structured and inclusive planning process and building community capacity and social relationships within and between communities. A key focus of the cultural planning model is on mapping and assessing the cultural assets and needs of an area to identify ways to build on and link existing strengths and address potential problems (Evans and Foord, 2008). Often, work focuses on cultivating informal and grassroots organizations, small firms, artists, and cultural workers of lower income neighborhoods (Grams and Warr, 2003). Rather than investing in planned cultural districts and flagship projects, this model calls for concentrating support in “neighborhood cultural clusters”-- existing concentrations of cultural resources including nonprofit arts organizations, neighborhood-based creative businesses, and resident artists-- because they are associated with high levels of civic engagement as well as opportunities to enhance artistic development (Stern and Seifert, 2010).

[Table 1 here]

Methodology

This paper takes a comparative case study approach to better understand how cities translate cultural economy theory in their planning and policy documents and programs. Austin and Toronto are excellent case studies for this purpose. First, multiple agencies, agency subdivisions, and committees are involved in the development and promotion of artistic and cultural activity in each city. Second, both cities envision arts and culture as economic development tools. Indicative of this, each houses their cultural affairs agency within a larger economic development office-- Toronto’s Economic Development & Culture Division and Austin’s Economic Growth & Redevelopment Services. Third, the cultural economy is central to

the image of both cities. In Toronto, public officials and agencies use the creative city concept as a means of global promotion particularly since the 1998 amalgamation of the city with five surrounding municipalities and the relocation of Richard Florida to the University of Toronto. Since the 1990's, Austin has actively promoted its image as the "Live Music Capital of the World," notably through the SXSW music festival. Both cities have engaged in numerous planning activities around arts and culture and have completed major cultural plans in the last decade. Most recently, Toronto has concentrated on mapping clusters of cultural economy activity and, while the Austin Cultural Arts Division has attempted to institute broad-based financial and technical support for "creative industries," as discussed below, much of their programming revolves around the music sector and arts amenities (e.g. public art, urban design). Further, both cities have overseen major investments in large-scale cultural facilities, community arts centers, and redevelopment projects for film and media corporations. Fourth, both possess high levels of cultural industry employment. Toronto is home to the third largest film industry in North America and possesses robust employment in multiple cultural economy occupations (City of Toronto, 2007; Gertler, 2006). Austin contains significant employment particularly in the music sector (City of Austin, 2006).

Still, the cities do present somewhat different contexts for cultural economy policy. Toronto is a large and diverse region of 5.3 million people, over 43% of which are foreign-born and 30% are members of minority groups (Gertler, 2006). By contrast, the Austin metropolitan area contains 1.25 million people, 85% of which are White and 30% Hispanic (Austin Chamber of Commerce, 2011). Additionally, cultural planning in Toronto has a longer history with the establishment of the Toronto Arts Council in the early 1960's and active arts planning from the 1970's onward (Silcox, 1974). Although Austin established an arts funding program in 1977, the

City began its cultural planning in earnest in the mid-1980's and separately initiated support for musicians in the late 1980's (City of Austin, 2002). Further, although cities in both countries rely on similar planning tools, Canadian cities tend to maintain stronger restrictions on land use and municipal financial incentives for private sector development (Reese, 2005), although this is changing. For example, while most Canadian cities can only provide incentives within defined Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPA), in 2008 Toronto designated the entire city a CIPA, thus enabling the use of incentives for new development-- including "creative-oriented businesses"-- city-wide. Finally, Canadian provinces have traditionally had greater involvement with local units than US states and, indeed, Ontario evidences much more participation in cultural economy planning through the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture and the Ontario Media Development Corporation than Texas agencies do for Austin's cultural industries.

In each case study, I reviewed and analyzed cultural economy plans and programs produced by offices of economic development, cultural affairs, the Mayor's Office, and other relevant public or public-private entities over the last ten years. Document analysis focused on identifying and comparing 1) the goals and scope of existing cultural economic development in the plans and policy documents (e.g. what industries, occupations, and/or places receive support and the type of support) and 2) the ways in which the plans and policies reflect and adapt the ideas espoused in the five cultural economic development models based on the keywords, concepts, and policies described in the prior section.²

To gain a deeper perspective into the influence of cultural economy theory on policy and planning, I conducted 26 interviews with directors and staff of municipal agencies (e.g. cultural affairs offices, economic development departments, Mayor's Offices); public, nonprofit, and quasi-public organizations involved in implementing city and state/provincially-funded programs

(e.g. Austin Chamber of Commerce, Artscape, Ontario Media Development Corporation, Texas Film Commission, Toronto Arts Council), and other participants in the cultural economy at local and provincial levels including representatives of the film and music industries, cultural policy report authors contracted by the cities, and scholars involved in cultural planning activities in the cities. The interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The primary purpose of the interviews was to determine how and why different individuals interpret, reframe, and apply the theoretical models evident in the planning and policy documents. Additionally, interviews were important to identify key events that influenced decision-making in terms of policy framing and how such events or issues affected different parties. Interviews also enabled me to confirm and clarify information in documentary sources as necessary. Upon completion of the interviews, I analyzed the transcripts and coded responses based on the same criteria as the document sources.

Cultural Economy Planning in Toronto

In Toronto's policy documents, the creative city model provides a unifying language and justification for supporting local cultural activity. However, this model does not uniformly steer the agenda of any municipal agency. Rather, agencies tend to independently adapt conventional economic development tools for the cultural economy and appropriate the language of the creative city to suit their own purposes. While in some instances this model is employed to justify public subsidies for large-scale, corporate redevelopment projects, it also serves to garner enhanced support for artists working in the city and increasing cultural participation.

Creative City Discourse

The creative city model clearly permeates each of the key documents that define Toronto's approach to cultural economic development-- the *Cultural Plan for the Creative City* (City of Toronto, 2003), the *Agenda for Prosperity* (City of Toronto, 2008a), and the *Creative*

City Planning Framework (City of Toronto, 2008b). The influence of this model on the city's approach began to emerge following amalgamation in the Culture Division with a working document for the *Cultural Plan* (City of Toronto, 2001) as well as in economic development documents (City of Toronto, 2000a, 2000b).

The *Culture Plan*, the Culture Division's 10-year strategic plan adopted in 2003, is based on the idea that

great cities of the world are all Creative Cities whose citizens work with ideas, are intensely mobile and insist on a high quality of life wherever they choose to live...Toronto's arts, culture and heritage will help to attract the educated, mobile newcomers we want, keep our best and brightest at home and make our economy among the strongest anywhere (pp. 1, 7).

According to the plan, the inspiration for this position is "the American economist Richard Florida and his colleagues" who "have found a correlation between a city's creative sphere and its economic competitiveness; they call it the Creativity Index" (p. 9; also see Gertler et al., 2002). In order to gauge the plan's success, the Culture Division produced reports in 2005 and 2008 that evaluated Toronto on Florida's Creativity Index. Moreover, although recommendations closely follow conventional arts policy issues-- funding for artists and cultural facilities, public art, and participation in arts and cultural events particularly for younger, diverse audiences-- the Culture Division's justification for supporting these priority areas is aligned with the creative city model. Rather than arguing for the arts based on their intrinsic benefits, the plan foremost emphasizes their role in economic competitiveness as quality of life amenities and, to a lesser extent, as a form of social intervention through the emphasis on cultural participation (Grundy and Boudreau, 2008).

Toronto's recent economic development plan prepared by the Mayor's Economic Competitiveness Advisory Committee, the *Agenda for Prosperity*, similarly draws on the

concept of creativity and the ideas popularized by Florida as a framing device. The plan opens with the Mayor's declaration that "we must put creativity at the heart of the city's economic development strategy" (n.p.) and stresses that Toronto must build on its "diverse, creative, talented and educated labour pool" (p. 13). The plan is organized around four "pillars" including "Creative Toronto" and the importance of creativity to economic growth is woven throughout the document. Simultaneous to highlighting the importance of a creative workforce, the Agenda combines attention to growing "strategic industry sectors" (ranging from aerospace and automotive manufacturing to design and screen-based industries) (p. 16) with a geographic or "place-based approach to creative sector development" (p. 26) because "place-- and the attributes of place-- matter more than ever in attracting increasingly mobile talent and capital" (p. 8).

The *Creative City Planning Framework*, which was produced in conjunction with the *Agenda for Prosperity*, is similarly infused with Florida's thesis that "attracting and retaining a global and mobile class of creative workers and entrepreneurs is now a critical factor in determining which cities flourish while others languish" (p. 21). However, while Florida's blueprint for competitiveness is ostensibly the document's rationale, the authors translate this through the lens of the cultural planning model. Bolstering the place-based approach advocated in the *Agenda for Prosperity*, the authors adapt the cultural planning model for the creative city agenda, first, by taking inventory of the disparate plans and initiatives produced by a variety of municipal agencies that relate to the creative economy. Second, they direct the City to move beyond its existing sector-based approach and build inter-agency collaboration and a "broader vision of the tools available to government to support cultural development" (p. 3). Third, this work recognizes that creative economy activity takes place in "creative hubs and districts"-- places where "density, diversity, authenticity and connectivity converge to generate both the raw

material and the product of creative activity” (p. 25). As such, rather than emphasizing neighborhood-based creative activity to build community capacity, the cultural planning model is adapted to identify and develop nodes of a larger creative economy.³

Influences and Adaptations of the Creative City Model

By all outward appearances, the creative city model has had a strong influence on the City’s recognition of the economic significance of arts and cultural activity (City of Toronto, 2008a, b, c). As a long time city official remarks (interview, 2009, 15 July): “ten years ago government didn’t get it at all. Their perception of culture was the rich people going to the opera... Well, I think they connected the dots [and understand that] the thread that holds a lot of the key economic sectors together is the cultural and creative sector.” However, despite the presentation of a unified vision, City agencies do not strictly adhere to this model in practice.

The creative city model exhibits the strongest influence in terms of city branding. The current marketing narrative, which extends well beyond the documents described above, stresses that the city is “on the cusp” or “verge” of competing with “the world’s greatest cities,” but will lose this opportunity if it does not act. As Florida himself states, “Toronto is at an inflection point, to strive for greatness as one of the world’s magnet creative cities or to be a really good second-tier city. All the ingredients are here” (cited in City of Toronto, 2008b: 3). Whereas in the past these ingredients might have included a good business climate, transportation access, and low crime rates, today the emphasis is on an educated and creative workforce, cultural diversity, and quality of life. So when the mayor disbanded the Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO) in 2008 to form three new entities-- the Toronto Port Lands Company, Invest Toronto, and Build Toronto-- Invest Toronto, which was established to promote the city for business investment, embraced this theme. As a leader in the new agency states:

Ten years ago it was all about safe neighborhoods-- which we still have-- and an efficient transportation and transit system...The traditional kinds of things that economic development people focused on. But they didn't focus as much on place...They didn't focus as much on vibrancy and diversity. And they probably didn't focus as much on the local bohemian, alternative lifestyles and participants in the economy that we have in Toronto. Now, that's what you're going to see (interview, 2009, 15 July).

Similarly, a respondent formerly with TEDCO and now with Build Toronto explains that,

in responding to RFPs [Request for Proposals], we now say: "you are within eight minutes of fifty different types of restaurants. You are within X minutes of the different ethnic neighborhoods in the city." Our thinking has been rejigged that way...I've seen a real shift that way in the past three or four years and this was kind of when Richard Florida was coming into vogue (interview, 2009, 15 July).

Further, Toronto Unlimited, the city's "brand identity" initiated in 2005 by Tourism Toronto and the provincial government, promote Toronto as "The City of Imagination" defined by a "level of openness unlikely in any city," "a deep and culturally rich human mosaic," and "the diversity and the quality of its talent pool" (Toronto Unlimited, 2009).

Despite the unified marketing message, the actual adoption of the creative city model varies across municipal agencies and the creative city vision is manipulated in multiple ways. First, agencies may draw on the creative city concept to achieve their own mission and attract attention to previously ignored demands. For example, a central issue identified in the *Culture Plan* is that Toronto does not sufficiently fund the arts. This claim is in-line with the traditional grant-making role of cultural affairs agencies; however, the Culture Division justifies their demand based on the creative class thesis. They argue that "competitors" like Chicago, Montreal, and San Francisco make substantially higher investments and, without a boost in spending to enable a thriving arts scene, the city will be at a disadvantage in attracting a mobile and talented workforce. While the Culture Division promotes this argument, they are foremost driven by their primary mandate to promote and increase access to arts and cultural activities. As a long-time arts official explains, "any argument that will increase funding for arts and culture is worth

pursuing. I've heard Rita [Davies, director of the Culture Division] say that a hundred times. And she's probably not wrong...I definitely see it as our role to keep pushing hard to see that the individual artists and the arts organizations are not left out" (interview, 2009, 14 July).

Second, an agency may frame a project within the creative city model though it was not purposefully initiated to support creative economic activity. For instance, CORUS entertainment, a Toronto based media and entertainment corporation approached TEDCO for assistance in consolidating its 11 sites scattered throughout the city at one location. In response, TEDCO, which until it disbanded was in charge of redeveloping Toronto's waterfront, remediated a brownfield site at the port and provided loans and financial assistance to the firm enabling construction of a new 500,000 square foot facility. The primary impetus behind dedicating a large and prominent site to CORUS was the purported threat of losing the firm and hundreds of jobs as well as the opportunity for waterfront redevelopment.⁴ Yet, the agency argued that the project met the City's creative economy initiative referring to the project as a "convergence zone," although it was never part of a concerted strategy geared toward cultural economic development or boosting media industry activity. A respondent underscores this instrumental use of culture: "One of the key mandates for TEDCO as an economic development organization in the city was business retention and expansion. So anything that creates employment, particularly with respect to waterfront revitalization...[Culture is] more of a means." (interview, 2009, 15 July). At the same time, some question this employment strategy and argue that the project has destroyed an existing "convergence center," Liberty Village, by removing as many as 1,000 CORUS employees and 140,000 square feet of film production space from this area to the waterfront site without public participation in the decision-making process (What's Wrong Toronto, 2009). This scenario better reflects the conventional mode of operation than the creative

city model.

Third, the creative city concept is used to promote strategies at odds with Florida's advice. Reinforcing the emphasis on marketing, a key program held up as furthering Toronto as a creative city is the Canada-Ontario Infrastructure Program, or "Cultural Renaissance," a \$233 million initiative funded by the federal and provincial governments to leverage money for the creation of new or expanded facilities for seven of Toronto's major cultural institutions like the Royal Ontario Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Toronto Opera (Jenkins, 2005). The investment in flagship cultural institutions, which is geared toward attracting international attention similar to the Guggenheim Bilbao, deviates from Florida's emphasis on "street-level amenities" and historic, mixed-use areas despite addressing quality of place (Florida, 2002: 259-260). Further, as promoted in the *Culture Plan* the City's primary attempt to capitalize on the Cultural Renaissance focuses on marketing and branding activities. This includes the formation of "a spectacular Cultural Corridor, an Avenue of the Arts" to link the Cultural Renaissance projects, the Year of Creativity and Live With Culture marketing campaigns timed to promote the opening of the Cultural Renaissance institutions alongside the cultural sectors more broadly, and the Live With Culture web site that promotes local arts and culture events (City of Toronto, 2003: 2).

Fourth, recent programs use the creative city model as a platform to respond to the City Council directive that municipal agencies adopt the cultural planning approach as a means to "increase economic competitiveness" (City of Toronto, 2008c: 3). In 2009, the Culture Division initiated Placing Creativity (in conjunction with Richard Florida's research partner Kevin Stolarick) to study various methods and approaches to mapping creative economy activity. This program has expanded into a project sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Culture's Creative

Community Prosperity Fund to map cultural employment and business and build a “cultural location index” not simply for economic competitiveness, but to guide planning decisions and address land use issues that potentially threaten cultural economy businesses and workers. Additionally, Artscape, a Toronto-based nonprofit focused on arts-led redevelopment, has spearheaded the Creative Convergence Project, a similar initiative funded by a grant from the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) and a host of municipal agencies to identify hubs of creative economy activity and the infrastructure and place-based networks that support them (Jones et al., 2009). Each effort blends the focus of the creative city and cultural occupations models through the lens of the cultural planning approach by analyzing the cross-industry and occupational dynamics that occur in specific places and recommending creative economy support strategies focused around creative space and entrepreneurship (rather than identifying cultural resources for grassroots neighborhood development). Although the City has yet to implement policy responding to these programs, by concentrating on both cultural production and consumption, they represent an advance over the amenities-based creative city model. However, despite the place-based focus, neither fully addresses neighborhood inequality. The Creative Convergence Project, for instance, expressly addressed gentrification in their community meetings with cultural sector participants, but only in terms of the negative effects on this segment of neighborhood residents and businesses. As such, despite the influence of the cultural planning approach, which stresses the importance of broad community participation and decision-making, by turning inward to focus exclusively on cultural sector actors, the programs inadvertently exclude others that live and work in these neighborhoods.

Concurrently, alongside the adaptations of the creative city model, much of the actual policy directed at cultural economy activity resembles the conventional and cultural industries

models. For one, the Culture Division continues to primarily focus on conventional cultural affairs activities such as arts grant-making, community arts programs, programming city-run cultural institutions, and promoting local arts and cultural activity.⁵ For their part, the Economic Development Office largely pursues a sector or cluster-based approach that incorporates an emphasis on industry advocacy and support with a reliance on conventional incentives targeted at key clusters (anon. 2009; interview, 20 August). Additionally, rather than creating programs for a cultural or creative industries cluster, the Office has singled out film, fashion, and design as individual “clusters.” In this regard, Toronto (and Ontario) has concentrated attention primarily on growing the film and television industry, through its official focus is on all “screen-based production” (Toronto Film Board, 2007). Film and TV receive specific treatment from the Toronto Film and Television Office, a Film Commissioner, and the Toronto Film Board, which provide assistance with industry-specific services (e.g. permitting, location support and security), research, and marketing, as well as City assistance with the Toronto International Film Festival. Although the City itself provides minimal financial assistance, it benefits from the availability of over \$200 million in OMDC tax credits-- the vast majority of which go to Toronto productions (anon. 2009; interview, 15 July). The City also maintains a dedicated staff person to oversee similar activities for the fashion and design industries, although their capacity is much more limited and no direct financial assistance exists. However, in the 1980’s, the City did establish the Fashion Industry Liaison Committee (FILC) comprised of city and industry representatives to address industry issues. The Committee went on to establish a fashion incubator and community college programs. The City also maintains the Design Industry Advisory Committee, which plays a similar role as the FILC. While this activity resembles recommendations under the cultural industries model, respondents state that they are working from a cluster approach similar

to that advocated by Michael Porter (anon. 2009; interview, 20 and 31 August).

In sum, the creative city model dominates the language of cultural economy planning in Toronto and is employed to justify the instrumental use of culture for upscaling central city property as documented in prior literature. However, this is not the entire story. Because the model and associated discourse are flexible, they are combined with aspects of the other models to support objectives intended to directly assist artists and other cultural workers. As we see in Austin, the City has strongly embraced the creative city language to reinforce preexisting programs and agencies draw on this language to institute more direct cultural economy support mechanisms, however, these have not been strongly supported by the City.

Cultural Economy Planning in Austin

While the city council officially branded Austin “Live Music Capital of the World” in 1991 (City of Austin, 2010a), only over the last decade has it actively recognized a wider range of artistic and cultural activity for economic development. During this time, the creative city model has dominated plan language and has had important influences on Austin’s cultural economic development program. Still, as in Toronto, not only do many policies framed in the creative city model reflect other agendas, but the City has not wholeheartedly supported the creative city rhetoric it espouses and music continues to dominate the City’s attention.

Creative City Discourse

Two key documents demonstrate how Austin frames cultural economy planning and policy: *Austin’s Economic Future: The Mayor’s Taskforce on the Economy* (City of Austin, 2003) and *CreateAustin Cultural Master Plan* (Cultural Affairs Division, 2009). The stated purpose of *The Mayor’s Taskforce*, which was created in response to falling employment during the post dot-com recession, is to identify strategies for economic growth and rising income

inequality in the city. Florida's creative city thesis is an important organizing component of the *Taskforce*. For one, 1 ½ pages of the document's 3 ½ page introduction are dedicating to describing Florida's work. Additionally, the authors tout the city's high score on his creativity index (p. 7) and rely on his definition of creative and noncreative occupations to categorize employment in the city. Above all, the document language frames cultural activity as a quality of life amenity that contributes to economic growth:

the ability to maintain creativity and innovation in the workplace requires ready access to a vibrant, renewing cultural environment...This is especially true in a place like Austin, where quality of life is such an important element of local competitive advantage-- to the extent that the City can augment the perceived quality of life, then local economic development is enhanced" (p. 8, 13).

Within this framework, the *Taskforce* identifies three subcommittees that are considered as the City's leading economic development targets-- traditional industries, small business, and cultural vitality and creative economy. While the traditional industries and small business subcommittees ignore the creative city model, the cultural vitality and creative economy subcommittee, which is by far the largest section of the report, heavily draws on the creative city discourse. This subcommittee stresses the importance of supporting arts and cultural activities as amenities to attract the creative class and as employment opportunities for creative sector workers. However, actual recommendations better reflect aspects of the cultural planning and cultural occupations models with the focus on creating an inventory of the city's "cultural asset base" and a vision for a "culturally vital Austin" that responds directly to the needs of artists and cultural providers rather than concentrating on cultural consumption and image alone (p. 41).

CreateAustin (2009) draws heavily on the language of the creative city model and, reflecting the standardization of this discourse over the last decade, rarely refers to Florida directly. The plan's focus is on supporting Austin's "culture of creativity," a phrase that captures

Florida's emphasis on arts and creative activity as quality of life amenities and elements of economic development. As the plan's authors assert:

Today's talented, well-educated knowledge workers...look for communities that will continue to stimulate their creative interests and Austin provides that stimulation. Talented people arrive and new businesses and investments follow...Austin's "culture of creativity" also contributes to its highly praised quality of life by building community spirit, social cohesion, and tolerance. It contributes to neighborhood revitalization, provides lifelong learning opportunities for adults of all ages and avocations, and offers positive experiences for youth...In order to sustain the unique qualities that make Austin special, attention is needed to support the infrastructure that can sustain Austin's culture of creativity (p. 11).

In conjunction, the plan asserts that "cities are competing to create quality of life opportunities for their residents, to attract tourism, talent, and investment. As Austin grows and seeks to prosper, it must now compare itself to cities that dream big-- San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Bilbao, Glasgow, Toronto, and others..." (p. 15). Paradoxically, while drawing on the creative city discourse to justify this entrepreneurial stance, woven throughout the plan is trepidation that this competition and an associated rising cost of living are threatening the city's "culture of creativity."

As this concern intimates, although the creative city model dominates the plan, it is not a singular influence. In fact, the planning process closely followed the cultural planning approach and recommendations reflect multiple, competing interests rather than a single model. In short, the plan identifies 34 recommendations and 10 "big ideas" that, while covering an array of activity-- ranging from the formation of a community-led "creative alliance" to enhanced support for technical services and affordable artist living and work space-- focus significantly on the need for direct and collective representation of creative workers themselves rather than simply as amenity. As such, behind the creative city rhetoric is an attempt by planners to address byproducts of this model-- namely gentrification-- and, following cultural planning practice, to craft a more progressive "creative city" policy model.

Influences and Adaptations of the Creative City Model

The *Mayor's Taskforce* and *CreateAustin* convey how Austin frames cultural economic development through the lens of the creative city model. Multiple respondents attribute Florida's references to Austin in his books, his many speaking engagements in the city, and his economic development consulting partnership with former Austin mayor Kirk Watson as familiarizing Austin politicians with the creative city language and, in turn, encouraging them to embrace the concept and expand cultural economic development activity. Nonetheless, despite the prominence of the creative city discourse and a clear influence on the structure of economic development in the city, a focused creative city policy agenda has not taken hold.

According to multiple respondents, Florida's work was a chief inspiration not simply on the language of the *Mayor's Taskforce*, but on the subsequent restructuring of economic development in the City. As a result of the Taskforce, the City charged the Cultural Affairs Division (CAD) to focus on "arts and cultural industries as an economic development strategy on behalf of the City" (City of Austin, 2010b). To this end, in 2003 the City moved CAD from the Parks Department to the newly formed Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office (EGRSO), an economic development agency modeled on the three *Taskforce* subcommittees along with the preexisting redevelopment agency. With the move to EGRSO and the new economic development agenda, CAD broadened its conventional focus on nonprofit arts activities and public art to oversee programs oriented toward a wider range of cultural industry sectors (essentially film and music) and leaving responsibility for cultural facility management to the Parks Department.

Alongside this administrative change, the City adopted the creative city language to reframe preexisting programs. In particular, as others have noted, the creative city concept is

integral to downtown redevelopment activity, which is an important component of the City's smart growth plans formulated in the 1990's to slow peripheral expansion and channel growth into the urban core (Long, 2009; McCann, 2007). The City's recognition and active pursuit of a "creative milieu" as an economic development asset for downtown appeared concretely in 2001 with the Austin Sense of Place and Cultural Identity program (renamed Civic Arts with CAD's move to EGRSO), which looked to public art and streetscape improvements as a source of "competitive advantage when people are looking to live in, work in, and visit a particular city" (City of Austin, 2004: 17). Building on this program, "Austin Alive" (City of Austin, 2007), the arts development study intended to inform downtown planning, takes a similar focus on urban design and cultural amenities to attract residential and retail development. The plan focuses on the arts because:

the arts and city attractiveness are now considered prerequisites for placement in the international successful cities club. Talent above cash is now considered a city's most valuable resource making a city's arts and cultural offerings investments in its future economic viability. The most cutting edge cities...purposefully seek to develop a creative milieu in their urban centers by encouraging street life; adding a broad range of cultural facilities and urban events; attracting bohemians, tech geeks, and internationally diverse people...(p. 10).

The attempt to attract this cast of characters downtown also helped to ensure a new home for the Austin City Limits studio in the \$260 million W Hotel/condominium project currently under construction on land sold by the City. The 2005 RFP for this major downtown project stipulated that a local cultural institution must be incorporated into the site (Austin Chronicle, 2005). As an economic development official explains (interview, 2010, 6 January), the Austin City Limits studio contributes to a wider mix of uses, something the City prioritizes in downtown as part of their smart growth agenda, which relies on music and cultural facilities to make downtown an entertainment destination. This program is reinforced by a \$31.5 million bond for the

construction and renovation of six cultural facilities located in the downtown and adjacent areas.

However, while the attempt to attract redevelopment activity with cultural amenities is in line with Florida's creative class thesis, this strategy has earlier roots in the City's promotion of cultural amenities as a component of its prior high-tech development program (Austin Chamber of Commerce, 1985, 1998; Engelking, 1996). In fact, Florida (2000, 2002) looked to Austin as a model in developing the creative class thesis prior to the publication of *Rise of the Creative Class*. In the monograph, *Competing in the Age of Talent* (2000), he cites Austin's smart growth initiatives and the Austin Chamber of Commerce's (1998) *The Next Century Economy* as evidence "that far-sighted regions are recognizing that continued success in the high technology economy will turn on the ability to deliver environmental quality, natural amenities, and the lifestyle desired by knowledge workers" (p. 28). Thus, when Florida developed the creative class discourse shortly thereafter, his work did not so much engender this activity as provide a new language and framing discourse that encouraged the City to reinforce and expand on its preexisting cultural development activities within this vein.

Still, despite the emphasis on the arts as an amenity for economic development, Civic Arts also focuses on cultural planning activities, such as conducting cultural assessment surveys and assisting the nonprofit arts sector. In fact, a CAD staff person responsible for Civic Arts describes him/herself as a "cultural planner because I feel like that's what I do...But you must understand that while I have the ability to do things or maybe create things, there isn't an awareness or consciousness above me about the value of cultural planning" (interview, 2010, 12 January). In other words, behind the creative city model is an alternative interpretation of the creative city that struggles to exist.

Indeed, while Austin has actively incorporated the creative city discourse into their

economic development agenda, those in CAD charged with administering cultural economy policies have more reluctantly embraced the concept. As a CAD staff member expresses:

I'm not a fan of Richard Florida...But I tell people, regardless of what you think of him, because a lot of the arts folks think he's flawed, he got people in economic development to think about arts and culture in a new way. So he put us at the table. Whatever else, we owe him for that. If nothing else, he got us legitimized. We don't want to lose that because we don't have any great data to show that we are [economic drivers] (interview, 2010, 11 January).

With CAD's move to EGRSO under the City's embrace of the creative city discourse, this "seat at the table" has not so much bolstered its preexisting focus on conventional arts policy (e.g. arts organization grants, public art program) as resulted in creating new or taking on existing programs to serve the film and music industries. Film services largely consist of conventional strategies (e.g. providing information on permitting, ordinances, etc.) and music-related projects such as the programming of live music at city council meetings and the airport fit the creative cities model indirectly in that they serve to reinforce Austin's image as "live music capital of the world." Other longstanding music programs, however, focus on direct support mechanisms for musicians and music industry firms including a music commission, staffed by city council-appointed representatives to advise the City on music-related issues, and the Music Loan Guarantee Program, which was created to provide City backing of loans for commercial music firms and entrepreneurs. Subsequent to the creative city focus, the latter was renamed the Creative Industries Loan Guarantee Program and restructured to support a wider range of cultural industry activity. Additionally, a new position was created-- the Creative Industries Development Manager-- to oversee the program and to serve as a liaison to the creative industries much the same way as the film industry. The recognition of a creative economy beyond music culminated in the *CreateAustin* plan, which adopted the creative city discourse to propose a comprehensive set of strategies across both commercial cultural activity and the

nonprofit arts field.

Nonetheless, despite the City's heightened interest in the creative economy, the institutionalization of the creative city discourse has made it difficult to alter this path. In interviews CAD staff and some on the *CreateAustin* Leadership Team expressed frustration that the City focuses on the creative city predominately as marketing image and that investment in those that work in cultural industries post-Florida has been limited and fractured. As one respondent stated:

[In the] wake of the Richard Florida movement, which really got Austin to move arts and culture into [EGRSO], I don't know if it's been embraced fully the way it should be to be there. I mean we're still the redheaded stepchild. We're there. Some people get it and believe it, but most people just give it lip service (interview, 2010, 11 January).

This frustration motivated CAD itself to develop *CreateAustin*, which was funded through a National Endowment for the Arts grant without financial support from the City. In part, those spearheading the plan intended it to provide a blueprint for more proactive City involvement with the cultural sectors as a whole (interview, 2010, 11 and 12 January). However, although the plan was presented to city council in June 2008, according to CAD staff, the formal presentation was stalled by EGRSO management for nearly 6 months after completion. Moreover, the City did not actually endorse the plan until July 2010 and, rather than dedicating funding toward implementation, council directed city staff to create a "City/Community Accountability Task Force" to monitor plan implementation, continue to "explore" the feasibility of a "creative enterprise" division separate from EGRSO, and requests that the City's comprehensive plan "embrace the creative enterprises" (City of Austin, 2010c).

Additionally, *CreateAustin* was intended to galvanize the cultural community itself and address the longstanding bias toward the music industry over other forms of creative activity.

The creative city discourse enabled plan authors to identify and articulate the shared issues and

needs that exist across the nonprofit and commercial sectors-- a point at the center of the cultural occupations model-- rather than simply focus on arts as amenities. However, the promotion of the creative city language to unite a wider range of creative activity has met resistance not only from a complacent city council, but also from members of the music community that do not want to cede their status as the privileged cultural sector. According to interviewees, local music representatives have argued successfully that their economic contribution outweighs that of other cultural sectors and, therefore, deserves further, distinct support from the City. In fact, the music industry has garnered the primary support since the release of *CreateAustin* through the formation of a Live Music Task Force in 2008 to address issues specific to the music community and, in 2010, with the hiring of a new Music Program Manager to coordinate music-related programs. Further, although the Creative Industries Loan Program technically serves other sectors, it still primarily serves the music industry (anon. 2010; interview, 12 January). In sum, not only does the City often fail to stand behind the creative city agenda, but those within the favored cultural sector-- music-- challenge its implementation. Despite attempts by the Cultural Arts Division to reinterpret the creative city discourse, Austin largely continues its image and amenity-based development strategy.

Conclusion

The case studies demonstrate that despite the prominence of the creative city language in key policy documents over the last decade, this model does not uniformly determine the cultural economy program of either city. Contrary to most prior research on creative city planning, these case studies qualify the notion that the creative city model dominates contemporary economic development and invariably facilitates neoliberal development schemes (e.g. Peck, 2005). Both cities do employ the creative city discourse to promote the city image and to justify the pursuit of

redevelopment projects in which cultural activity serves as a branding device and amenity. Still, a closer examination reveals that multiple interests adopt and adapt the creative city discourse to realize varying objectives and agendas. By placing the creative city agenda in the context of other cultural economy models, not only do we see that the power of this model is primarily in relation to framing plan discourse, but also that behind this discourse, other practices frequently define cultural economy policy.

While each city frames cultural economy planning and policy under the unifying language of the creative city, agencies operate under their own set of conventions and strategies that do not always reflect the creative city agenda. The creative city discourse is variously employed by agencies to attract attention to previously ignored demands, to pursue alternative programs like Placing Creativity or those identified in *CreateAustin*, or even to promote strategies at odds with the model itself. Agencies adopt the creative city discourse to validate preexisting practices, while also experimenting with programs that draw on other models. As such, cultural affairs agencies are still involved in arts grant-making and public art, but frame these roles as programs to attract the creative class. At the same time, they struggle to implement more comprehensive programs that are intended to transcend sectoral or organizational (e.g. commercial/nonprofit) divides. This is clearly the case in Austin, where the creative city model seems to have had a deeper impact, encouraging the restructuring and expansion of the economic development office and the amenity-based agenda downtown. However, the City's approach to economic development predates the creative city model and Florida himself has looked to the city to inform his ideas. On one level, because the creative city model affirms the City's prior cultural economic development program, this illustrates the limited power of the creative city model beyond planning discourse. Yet, at the same time, cultural planners have attempted to

deploy this language in service to more comprehensive support strategies, but have met resistance on multiple fronts. The creative city model then is not simply an instrument of neoliberal development but a site of contest.

The fact that representative creative cities like Austin and Toronto continue to practice more conventional approaches to cultural economic development and that there is a struggle to define the actual meaning and strategies behind the creative city model is significant. For local governments, the creative city model stands out over the other models in part due to the simple, captivating narrative-- mobile, creative people drive economic development and municipalities can make investments that attract this group and produce economic growth. Additionally, because the creative class concept and the policy associated with building a creative city is broad, vague, and flexible, it can be manipulated to fit multiple agendas and to justify now established roles of local government like marketing and central city property redevelopment. Another result of the poorly articulated creative city policy is that, while the model remains powerful at the level of discourse, it has not become fully institutionalized in policy even in these self-stylized creative cities. However, after a decade of employing the creative city language, we are beginning to see new hybrid programs emerge such as Toronto's Creative Convergence Project and Placing Creativity that, while framed under the creative city banner, draw on and reinterpret other models. These programs foreshadow new, potentially more positive directions for cultural economy planning based on longer-term, coordinated action. Still, it remains to be seen if such approaches will address the problems associated with the creative city model, namely gentrification and social exclusion, including their impact on those outside the cultural economy lens.

Notes

¹ Although there is no uniform definition of the cultural or creative economy, research in this arena typically focuses on the production and consumption of goods and services with high symbolic value and generally rely on specialized labor and intellectual property (Americans for the Arts, 2008; Markusen et al., 2008; Scott, 2000). This includes media fields (film and television, magazine and book publishing, advertising), design (architecture, fashion), and the commercial and nonprofit visual and performing arts. Definitions of the creative economy tend to focus more broadly on the sciences, engineering, and high tech fields alongside the cultural sectors (Florida, 2002). Although there is debate on what constitutes cultural or creative economies (see Markusen et al, 2008)-- and cities tend to conflate these terms and definitions-- my focus is on the sectors I identify with the cultural economy.

² For the analysis, I began with an internet search of city websites, scholarly work, and news articles to identify key documents as well as potential interview subjects. The document analysis consisted of an initial reading of the texts to determine the major content and overall structuring concepts and organization of each text based on the table of contents, headings, and dominant or recurring keywords and phrases. Next, I took multiple, more focused readings that examined how these features reflected the policy models.

³ The approach to cultural economic development described in both of the latter two documents is markedly influenced by *Imagine a Toronto . . . strategies for a creative city* (2006), a research report led by Meric Gertler and commissioned by the City of Toronto and the Ontario government.

⁴ TEDCO financed and built the 500,000 square foot Pinewood film studio (formerly Filmport) on an adjacent waterfront site for the same objectives.

⁵ Grants are financed by the Culture Division but awarded by the Toronto Arts Council, a nonprofit agency under contract with the City and within municipal government prior to amalgamation.

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Table 1. Cultural Economy Models and Policies

Model	Key Ideas/Focus	Policies	People/Texts
Conventional Economic Development	Attract outside firms/industry No distinct cultural economy policy	Cost-based incentives Minimize regulations Marketing	Export-base theory (North, 1955; Blakely and Leigh, 2010)
Creative City	Attract mobile talent	Quality of place Arts/culture as amenities	Florida, 2002, 2004; Landry, 2000
Cultural Industries	Agglomeration processes, firm specializations and linkages	Minimize transaction costs and risk Enhance information, partnerships	Hesmondhalgh, 2007 Pratt, 1997, 2005 Scott, 2000, 2004
Cultural Occupations	Characteristics and needs of artists and related occupations	Artist centers, affordable space, training Social and business networks	Markusen, 2004, 2006
Cultural Planning	Informal arts/culture Place-based community development	Asset mapping for neighborhood empowerment, capacity building	Evans, 2001; Grogan and Mercer, 1995; McNulty, 2006