

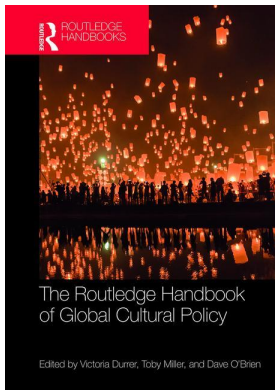
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Cultural policy and creative industries

Susan Luckman

This chapter examines the complex and often fraught scholarly relationship between cultural policy and the emergence of what has come to be identified as the creative industries. It charts the ascendancy of creative industries' agendas out of the academy and into national policy, especially via the high profile and highly influential British creative industries model championed in the early 2000s by the Blair government's Department for Media, Culture and Sport, which was itself a further development of the short-lived Australian *Creative Nation* framework. It will explore how creative industries approaches have settled down through the lens of two key sites for action and concern. First, the rise of creative place making including, following Florida, the policy fetish for urban redevelopment focused upon attracting creative workers. Second, drilling down to the employment coalface of creative industries, it draws attention to the exclusions of the contemporary creative workforce (particularly those of gender) as but one means to examine what has been lost in the shift from cultural policy to creative industries, namely, the focus on socio-cultural inclusion. It argues that the adoption within creative industries policy and scholarly approaches of the US urban policy-driven 'creative class' ideas of economist Richard Florida represents a significant de-coupling of creative industries from cultural policy. Coupled with an emphasis on the utopian expansive possibilities of digital technology, this served to consolidate the creative industries as a commercially focussed championing of entrepreneurial creativity, at the expense of arts and cultural policy as social goods with value beyond that which can be economically defined.

From 'cultural' to 'creative' industries

In keeping with the global focus of this collection, the shift from cultural policy/cultural industries to creative industries has itself been something of a highly mobile feast, albeit one heavily though not exclusively concentrated until recently within the English-speaking world. As is well documented, the transition is not a benign one with much being, and remaining, at stake. It has also never been a clean break but rather is the result of a confluence of scholarly and policy ideas around, and institutional responses to, multiple global pressures. Key among them are the economic restructurings of the 1970s onwards that saw

manufacturing shift from the Global North to cheaper labour cultures elsewhere, leading to a concurrent pressure on governments to find jobs through the development of new knowledge-intensive sectors. Within universities too, business models were changing and becoming more entrepreneurial and focussed upon making an economic case for the personal and community value of both degrees and research. However cultural policy as it initially emerged in the mid-twentieth century was largely focussed upon arts funding—what should be funded and how?—and was primarily concerned with this in relation to relatively elite art forms: opera, orchestras, theatre and the fine arts, galleries and museums, as well as the role of national broadcasting corporations as flagships of national identity. This more traditional and aesthetic gatekeeping role for cultural policy came under critique from those concerned with not only the extension of access to so-called ‘high culture’ as part of a larger social-democratic civilising agenda for the arts and culture, but also in light of wider social and academic movements in the 1960s and 1970s that challenged existing definitions of ‘acceptable’ culture. Strongly influenced by the rise of British cultural studies approaches to culture, which following the work of Raymond Williams have defined culture more broadly as a ‘whole way of life’, cultural policy then came to mean more than betterment defined in terms of access to subsidised elite art forms and free access for all to museums. Instead, more profound questions regarding diversity and whose culture counts came to the fore. Tony Bennett’s work later extended this approach, applying a Foucauldian understanding of governmentality to develop a more expansive model of cultural policy out of cultural studies (O’Brien 2014; O’Regan 1993; Turner 2015).

It is also from within this context further enabled by a post-1960s shift in political focus towards a greater emphasis on ‘do it yourself’ practices, social inclusion and alternative economies that O’Connor, drawing upon ground-breaking policy engagements by Garnham and Bianchini, locates the emergence of a progressive cultural industries agenda extending out of a concern for arts policy beyond the rarefied worlds of establishment institutions. This particular incarnation of cultural policy as cultural industries was embodied in the short-lived but influential industrial regeneration activities of the Greater London Council (GLC) between 1979 and 1986 (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005; McGuigan 2004; O’Brien 2014; O’Connor 2010, p. 27; Pratt 2005). Unafraid of the linking of ‘art’ and ‘market’, the socio-economic inclusion via micro-enterprise policies of the GLC provided a model for creativity as a driver of urban renewal and place-making and cultural employment as a valuable tool for socio-economic inclusion. Subsequently this social enterprise focus grew into a wider, more economically focussed policy agenda emphasising the development of small, local creative businesses and capacity, especially as the answer to stalled growth in areas hard hit by a decline in traditional industries, notably manufacturing (O’Connor 2010, p. 31). Moving forward into the 1990s, it was the particular confluence of the politico-economic context of post-Fordist manufacturing decline, neo-liberal policies of winding back state support and funding (and with it a shift to more individualised and entrepreneurial responses to social-cultural issues, iconically represented by political leaders such as Thatcher in the UK and Reagan in the US), the game-changing production and consumption practices of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), and what came to be identified variously as the ‘information’, ‘knowledge’ or ‘immaterial’ economy, which gave rise to the emergence of the idea of the creative industries.

The ‘New Labour’ UK government of Prime Minister Tony Blair set in the early days of their office an agenda that quickly became an international model for the championing of the economic significance of what had been previously identified as cultural industries, or simply the ‘arts sector’. The full flowering of the UK’s creative industries agenda was achieved

through the rising to greater policy power the then newly configured Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which was formerly the more conservative (literally) historically focussed Department of National Heritage. However the coupling of creativity with the affordances of digital technology and IP championed by the Blair government had a slightly earlier public policy life in the short-lived but significant Australian government policy statement *Creative Nation: Commonwealth Cultural Policy*. Released in the dying days of the Australian Labor Party government of Paul Keating, the Department of Communication and the Arts' 1994 *Creative Nation* document foreshadowed that a culture-driven economy was an ideal model for approaching 'the information revolution and the new media not with fear and loathing, but with imagination and wit. We have to see the extraordinary opportunities for enjoyment and creativity it contains' (Department of Communication and the Arts 1994). Moving beyond a traditional cultural emphasis on the arts and formal cultural institutions, in language now familiar within creative industries discourse, it firmly established this cultural policy as 'also an economic policy':

Culture creates wealth. ... Culture employs. ... Culture adds value, it makes an essential contribution to innovation, marketing and design. It is a badge of our industry. The level of our creativity substantially determines our ability to adapt to new economic imperatives. It is a valuable export in itself and an essential accompaniment to the export of other commodities. It attracts tourists and students. It is essential to our economic success.
(*Department of Communication and the Arts 1994, no page*)

The release of *Creative Nation* occurred at a time when cultural policy in Australia was also developing a strong academic presence with Tony Bennett at Griffith University forming the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies in 1987. This was to eventually provide the basis for the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy established in 1996 under the Directorship of Tony Bennett then Tom O'Regan, and influenced by Ian Hunter along with Jeffrey Minson, David Saunders and Dugald Williamson. The Key Centre brought together scholars from across Brisbane's three universities including Colin Mercer, Jennifer Craik, Stuart Cunningham, Terry Flew, Gillian Swanson, Peter Anderson, Julian Thomas, Patricia Wise, Brad Sherman, Denise Meredyth and Graeme Turner. Its members explored critical cultural policy studies in areas such as cultural citizenship and education; museum policy and cultural heritage; early attempts to engage with digital transformations, especially in relation to IP; and Indigenous media and cultural policy.

Aligning with broader trends around cultural policy, especially as informed by political economy perspectives such as those of Nicholas Garnham, Graham Murdock and James Curran, the Key Centre also had as a core focus a concern common to much mid-twentieth century cultural policy, namely, the maintenance of a diversity of voices and the protection of local and/or minority cultures in the face of globalised cultural industries, especially the dominance of American film, television and music (Cunningham 1992; O'Regan 1993). Against the broader backdrop in the 1980s and 1990s of increased market deregulation, broadcasting policy emerged as a core cultural policy focus at this time representing a commitment to providing a corrective to the commercial market and instead reflecting a faith that "demand should not just cater to existing tastes" (Oakley 2004, p. 25). Therefore just as the rise of national broadcasters such as the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) and other similar organisations in the mid-twentieth century represented the desire to guarantee access to a diversity of local voices and minority tastes including for high cultural products as part of a 'civilising' impetus, amid

the liberalisation of global media and the rise of multi-national free trade agreements in the late 1980s and beyond, the issue of media diversity and ownership emerged as a key cultural policy arena in Australia and elsewhere. But the vision of *Creative Nation* was never to be realised in its home nation with the election in Australia of the conservative Howard Liberal government in March 1996 signalling an end to the kind of approaches it advocated. However the ideas were shortly to rise phoenix-like from these ashes following the election in May 1997 of Tony Blair's Labour Party in the UK, which saw in its championing of the creative industries the realisation of the post-'subsidised arts' approach to intellectual property-driven cultural economic development outlined in *Creative Nation*.

What counts in the shift from 'culture' to 'creative'

Definitions of the *cultural* industries have long emphasised that their defining quality is the production of 'aesthetic' or 'symbolic' goods or services, and thus the basis for cultural policy around them had focussed on inclusion and contestations over the breadth of what counts as 'cultural'. The key break represented by the shift to the discourse and framing of *creative* industries is an emphasis on their being those segments of the *economy* concerned with the generation of *intellectual property* (Banks 2007; Flew and Cunningham 2010; Garnham 2005; Hartley 2004, 2005; Hesmondhalgh 2002; Pratt 2005); that is, of a shift in emphasis from aesthetic to economic goods and value. On account of the high profile of creative industries development as a key platform of the Blair government discussed above, the Department of Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) definition of the sector is illustrative and remains influential. Their listing of the fields of the creative industries comprises: advertising; architecture; the art and antiques markets; crafts; design; designer fashion; film, video and photography; software, computer games and electronic publishing; music and the visual and performing arts; publishing; television; and radio (DCMS 2006). The inclusion of high volume software and digital content industries here is particularly illustrative of this focus on intellectual property as a marker of creative industries.

With the shift to a united 'industry' identity came the strategic capacity for claims to be made as to the sector's size and significance as a contributor to GDP and hence assertions of its value can be made in the dominant economic terms of the day. Within the framing of creative industries, the arts are reinvented as a driver of innovation and economic growth, rather than sector in need of public funding. The inclusion of software here is emblematic of what is at stake in the shift from cultural policy to creative industries. While arguably the "least cultural of [creative industries] activities", the inclusion of 'software' in measurement data on the economic performance of creative industries in the UK, and elsewhere, is "single-handedly" responsible for providing the economic basis upon which claims to the value of the creative industries are based (Campbell 2014, p. 999). Such a focus on value determined primarily in economic terms has in turn led to a policy focus on developing a statistical picture of the sector's size, scale and contribution to national economies and the emergence out of academia of new tools for doing so. One of the most influential models for this once again represented a transfer of ideas from Brisbane to London. Established in 2005, the Queensland University of Technology's ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI) brought together a number of the key figures involved in the latter iteration of the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy alongside expertise from other disciplines, notably economics. The Centre for Excellence is itself the embodiment of global flows of cultural workers and creative industries' policy development

as its members have been important players in the economic mapping and understanding of creative industries globally. For example, this Australian expertise has contributed directly to policy development in the United Kingdom (Flew and Cunningham 2010; Higgs, Cunningham and Bakhshi 2008; Potts and Cunningham 2008), and to some extent in Asia, especially China where creative industries discourses have been enthusiastically adopted by city and regional governments (Keane 2009, 2013).

The shift in emphasis from cultural policy to creative industries continues to come in for criticism. Artists themselves have often been at the forefront of critiques of the shift, principally on account of the economically rationalist way it enables the measurement and qualification of the value of a creative practice in largely, if not purely, economic terms. What is at stake here—especially in terms of the shift from creative work being defined and valued no longer in terms of its cultural or aesthetic contribution but rather its economic—is exemplified by the case of the craft sector, which in 2013 in the United Kingdom experienced an attempt to distance the larger, more ‘big end of town’-friendly, contemporary and more easily scalable digital intellectual property generation and distribution (software) businesses from its own statistically messier, smaller scale, frequently individualised and often part-time (and hence dismissed as amateur or naïve) creative production. A battle over craft’s official status as a British government-recognised creative industry erupted following the release of a DCMS consultation paper that explosively floated the idea that given that craft businesses tend to be sole trader operations (88 per cent according to a 2012 United Kingdom Crafts Council-commissioned study: BOP Consulting 2012, p. 4), and are frequently thus “too small to identify in business survey data” (DCMS 2013, p. 14), data on the sector should no longer be collected (DCMS 2013). Such an action would have had all sorts of flow-on ramifications in terms of support and recognition. Difficulties with obtaining accurate data on craft employment are not unique to the UK, and certainly the sector continues to present ongoing challenges in this regard. However and despite these difficulties, in no small part as a result of strong lobbying led by the highly organised UK Crafts Council, the DCMS backed down from the mooted possibility. Thus the DCMS continues to gather figures for ‘crafts’ alongside its other recognised creative sectors.

But what is clear here is that the presence of crafts disrupted the ‘economic imaginary’ that is the creative industries according to the DCMS model; unlike the naturalised presence of software industries, which enables the central and unquestioned narrative of creativity as an increasingly important driver of contemporary economic growth without any questioning of its ‘culturally creative content’ (Campbell 2014, p. 999). All this occurred ironically at a time of huge growth for the design craft sector and renewed consumer interest in the artisanal, handmade and bespoke, with small-scale manufacturing also being championed by various governments as a potential way to stem the loss of industries to cheaper labour markets offshore (Luckman 2015a). Moreover, and while they may be statistically difficult to track, self-employment and sole trader businesses are on the rise across the creative sector and beyond; a development often encouraged in government policy yet masking considerable un- and under-employment in the creative sector. Patently the creative industries as a policy framing has been particularly attractive to, and hence influential in, governmental policy circles precisely on account of its hardwiring of creativity to innovation and economic growth within knowledge economies. Since the 1980s, a giant shift in the commercial landscape has seen creative entrepreneurial cultural production shoot to centre stage of government and corporate planning, research and development, and nowhere has this been more evident than in the uptake of creativity as a driver of place-based renewal.

From cultural policy to creative places

For several decades now as part of the larger focus on the economic potential of creativity that underlies the shift from cultural to creative industries, there has been a parallel emphasis upon creativity-led urban regeneration strategies, which have become established mainstays of governmental cultural policy around the world. As indicated above, the shift from cultural to creative industries was, in its iconic emergence in the UK at least, in many ways a national-level manifestation of the pioneering small, local economic development of the GLC, and then later work in Manchester led by scholars at the Manchester Institute of Popular Culture (MIPC). Place-based cultural policy agendas for economic development and population management have been reinvigorated by such thinking. The need to innovate, and renovate, in this way has been felt especially strongly in cities, regions and suburbs hit hard by the move of manufacturing to offshore locations in search of cheaper labour and laxer regulation.

A number of different approaches to creativity-led urban renewal have become so iconic they are deployed—with varying degrees of success—around the world. One of the earliest, which arose out of the confluence of new ideas around urban planning as well as arts, creativity and cultural policy, is the Baltimore or Boston model of waterfront/docklands redevelopment, which turns post-industrial wastelands into waterside consumption-based leisure and residential playgrounds. Often such development catalysed around an iconic cultural institution as an ‘anchor tenant’, such as the Tate in Liverpool or Guggenheim in Bilbao. In this latter case, often referred to as the ‘Guggenheim’ Model or ‘the Bilbao Effect’, increased visitor numbers drive ancillary creative and tourism industries as a springboard for economic renewal. The creative industries are a factor here for not only, inherently, are such spaces sites for architectural innovation, in many instances artists and creative start-ups have led the way, seeking out such sites on account of their affordability prior to redevelopment. After renewal, creative businesses are often invited by policy-makers to cluster in such spaces (if they can afford the now-inflated rents) to facilitate cool and distinctive creative clusters, feeding into the lifestyle goods and experiences on offer, the general feel of the place, as well as the local night-time economy. Waterfront redevelopment has now become a mainstay of the creative consultant or city council urban activation toolkit, and examples can be found around the globe: the initial Baltimore and Boston revitalizations were soon followed by similar developments in cities as widely spread as London, Melbourne, Toronto, Singapore (Clarke Quay), Sydney, Salford (with the BBC northern headquarters as its centrepiece) and Liverpool (Tate Gallery). Such approaches are grounded in attracting desirable visitors and their disposable income; this latter approach in particular is heavily dependent upon tourism and the deliberate locating of a desirable cultural institution in what is otherwise seen as a highly undesirable or under-developed visitor location. Global competition for such institutions is intense; there are only so many Tates and Guggenheims to go around, though other independent philanthropic developments can serve a similar purpose such as the privately funded MONA (Museum of Old and New Art) in Hobart, Australia, where the ‘MONA effect’ has proven successful in re-energising local tourism and attracting new and often quite wealthy visitors from around the world. There’s a strong sense across all these creativity-driven policy engagements of place-making as a subtle interacting of the social and the material; of an Actor-Network Theory sensibility or a more-than-human catalysation of place and people, that is, one that “acknowledges the profound and multiple significances of non-humans [including the agency of the affordances of the materiality of place] in social life” (Nimmo 2011, p. 109). The creative industries in this context are variously mobilised precisely because

of not only their economic but their cultural role in society. Beyond simply building locales physically, creativity is seen as the key driver that will populate them culturally, socially and economically; it will create the ‘vibe’. We can consider this variously: as an ecology in terms of Landry’s ‘soft infrastructure’ (2006); culturally in terms of Williams’ ‘structures of feeling’ (1973; also see Banks 2007, p. 148); or more sceptically, though no less accurately, in terms of “Alfred Marshall’s (1890) notion of the ‘atmosphere’ of a place giving it a competitive advantage” (O’Connor 2010, p. 43).

With US commercial cultural products already a powerful IP-driven sector of the economy with global reach, it is in this incarnation—creativity as driver of urban policy—that, as Andrew Ross has written, we can see the ‘turn to creativity’ in the US (Ross 2007, p. 27). The particular hardwiring of place and creativity championed within US-driven approaches to urban planning intersected with creative industries-style approaches in other parts of the globe, on the back of the high-profile writing and consultancy work of American economist Richard Florida. Florida’s 2003 bestseller *The Rise of the Creative Class* initiated a wave of interest globally among city officials and urban planners in attracting and keeping the knowledge workers seen as essential to economic growth in the new economy. Thus, much of the focus around creative industries in the first decade of the twenty-first century came to be concerned with the competition between cities for an idealised highly mobile global pool of creative talent. Effectively bringing together decades of leading North American scholarship on creativity and urban planning with the more British-driven focus on the creative industries—at least the profitable IP-producing parts of them—as key drivers of the contemporary knowledge economy, it established digital technology-driven entrepreneurship as the chief driver of creative economic growth. With this sector comes a workforce that he identifies as demanding the ongoing presence of *some* select aspects of the cultural industries as taken for granted lifestyle affordances. In this way, the market easily replaces cultural policy as the enabler of the small ‘c’ culture that creates ‘demand’ of their community. Florida’s influential and highly criticised definition of the creative class went even further than the DCMS’s emphasis on IP/copyright-producing industries such as software development and games. In his rather expansive inner ‘Super-Creative Core’ he includes: scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers and architects, as well as the thought leadership of modern society: nonfiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts and other opinion-makers (Florida 2003, p. 69). This group is further supported by a second group of “creative professionals” beyond this core whom he also identifies as part of his Creative Class on account of their work across a “wide range of knowledge-intensive industries such as high-tech sectors, financial services, the legal and health care professions, and business management” (Florida 2003, p. 69).

Florida’s creative-class argument has fed directly into an earlier creative-city dialogue that included the aforementioned place-based policies of renewal (Markusen 2006, p. 1937). Originally focussed on the arts and creativity as drivers of urban economies and renewal, this wave of interest, assisted by Florida, morphed into an emphasis on the provision of unique yet somehow globally accepted lifestyle affordances as a baseline attractor of desirable knowledge workers. Florida’s (presumed to be young and possibly single) creatives are stereotypically constructed as desiring café strips, openness and tolerance, diversity, a dynamic artistic and cultural environment, high-tech toys and mountain-biking trails. Consequently, in urban planning informed by these ideas there has been an emphasis on coffee shops, energised—‘activated’—street life, serendipitous face-to-face meetings, clusters and densities, to the exclusion of other attractors and experiences. Florida’s work effectively turns

urban gentrification into a governmental creativity-driven cultural policy positive. As such, it too is illustrative of what exactly is at stake in the shift from ‘cultural’ to ‘creative’ industries. No longer is cultural policy deployed to enable access to and diversity within the cultural sector, within the creative class/industries framework, governmental emphasis and funding is often put towards local development projects, and questions of access left to market forces that may very well displace local artists and other low-paid or otherwise economically precarious creative practitioners, in favour of those (digital) creative class members able to afford to live in desirable, cosmopolitan urban communities (Luckman, Gibson and Lea 2009; Oakley 2004).

As a result of this perfect policy confluence of creativity and private sector-friendly urban revitalisation, cities have remained a focus for creative industries development, at the expense of greater attention to non-urban cultural or creative policy intervention. With a few notable exceptions, mostly arising from within cultural geography, the non-urban, non-city experience also remains under-explored in scholarly studies of cultural work and creative industries. For a complex set of reasons that includes such capacities as: the long-standing place of cities as enablers of innovation and exploration, attracting people willing to explore new ideas; economies of scale, clusters, expertise and labour availability; the emphasis in European cultural policy on ‘Cities of Culture’, and elsewhere the role of local governments as drivers of innovative cultural policies around creativity, starting as we saw with the influential GLC model, cities have been and remain privileged sites for the growth of cultural and creative industries. Approaches to the analysis of how creative milieus work or what they need to flourish have followed this emphasis on the kind of clustering most possible in cities. Thus the importance of clustering, and the economies of scale and synergies associated with it, has long been recognised as a significant driver of creative innovation and the development of local industries. Consequently, most existing creative industries’ thinking and research has focused on how to facilitate creativity in macro settings such as the large city, at the expense of considering more geographically inclusive socio-economic strategies.

But as Waitt reminds us, “smallness itself would not appear to work against the creativity of people” (2006, p. 169). Indeed any quick look at recent history reveals that the emphasis in creative industries discourse especially in the 1990s and early 2000s on creativity and the city was not always the case. The western European Romantic movement, which emerged in the eighteenth century and gained strength in the face of the Industrial Revolution, is one key case in point. After them came those cultural and artistic champions of the Victorian era, Britons such as John Ruskin, William Morris and the wider Arts and Crafts Movement, who generated their own models for the realisation of ‘good’ cultural work (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011). In particular, in looking back to the medieval era for its idealised model of craft practice as a part of the fabric of a community, they favoured small workshops and enterprises, and out of this they championed quality handmade production organised on egalitarian and cooperative grounds such that “each talent might contribute to the whole” (Cullinan 1984, p. 51). Those inspired by their writings often sought out the countryside in which to realise this idealised vision of creative work (Luckman 2012). One of the most significant contributions to research into creative industries beyond the city is the work of David Bell and Mark Jayne who offer an important overview of the limited recognition creative industries’ policy writings have given to creative work beyond urban sites and the concurrent absence of dialogue between rural and cultural policy (Bell and Jayne 2010). In wanting to embrace alternative forms of economic development to augment or replace traditional industries in the post-productivist countryside (Wilson 2001; see also Halfacree 1997), Bell and Jayne lament the habit of transferring assumptions based on urban case studies to rural cultural policy practice. Countryside creative industries are thereby presumed to have,

and work with, the same kind of structures, forms and functions as “‘best practice’ examples in metropolitan centres” (Bell and Jayne 2010, p. 212). Further, in this vacuum created by the rural creative industries research deficiency and given the hegemony of ideas of rural idyll in the eyes of many decision makers, traditional rural practices such as crafts, art and antiques take precedence in rural policy, at the expense of newer (digital) creative industries. More recently, the upswing in agrarian food-based consumption practices has lent itself to the development at the local council level of tourism-based cultural policy focussing on arts trails, as well as crafts and antiques, reflecting the DCMS articulation of these and reinforcing traditional strengths, but also stereotypes, of the rural creative economy.

The exclusions of creative industries

Further important implications of the break from cultural policy with its emphasis on social inclusion are all too evident in the employment practices, and exclusions, of the creative industries. There is increasing awareness that the frequently unclear, informal and network-based work practices underpinning much employment in the creative, especially media, advertising and publishing industries, are effectively operating as a barrier to gender, ethnic, class and wider social inclusion in the creative economy resulting in profound impacts upon the content of cultural production.¹ So while social inclusion agendas may have been a focus of cultural policy, especially in communities seen as marginal or ‘at risk’ or in terms of a commitment to diversity, plurality and national broadcasting organisations, creative industries’ employment practices tend to implicitly reinforce hegemonic hiring practices. While evidence indicates women “fare better in settings in which there is both greater formality to the hiring process and greater transparency” (Conor, Gill and Taylor 2015, p. 11), the informal networks through which contracts are secured in the creative industries reinforce social preferences to associate with people like yourself, that is people who hang out at the same places, look like you, work the same hours, like the same things and operate in similar cultural milieus:

Informal recruitment practices dominate. While an up-to-date résumé is vital and film and television are increasingly graduate entry industries, a résumé and a degree are necessary but not sufficient. These are ‘reputation economies’ in which people are hired on the soft judgements of insiders about whether they are trustworthy, reliable and good to work with. Networks and contacts are the main means of gaining employment, which forms a barrier for fresh and diverse talent from under-represented groups, as many may not have access to social events and opportunities. ... The spaces for networking – particularly pubs – could also form challenging environments for women, and the requirement for ‘compulsory sociality’ (Gregg 2006) after already long working days posed problems for everyone with caring responsibilities.

(Leung, Gill and Randle 2015, pp. 56–57)

Creative labour markets are defined by such processes of ‘network sociality’ (Wittel 2001): “In such ‘reputation economies’ wherever you go, whoever you meet, represents a work opportunity. ‘Life is a pitch’, as one of Gill’s (2010) interviewees put it pithily” (Conor, Gill and Taylor 2015, p. 10). As other authors in the Conor, Gill and Taylor collection note, while reputation economies—working almost exclusively with those you know or who are vouched for by people you know—may be seen as an essential means by which to mitigate risk in a sector where returns are rarely guaranteed, this homosocial reproduction or homophily (Ibarra 1992; Leung, Gill and Randle 2015; Wreyford 2015) importantly still means that “members

of the dominant group replicate themselves” by seeing “people like themselves as the most trustworthy and competent” (Jones and Pringle 2015, p. 39). Thus perpetuating the exclusion of other social networks and groups from this important sphere of creative production.

This is significant not just at the level of workplace equity; it has profound implications for the kinds of cultural outputs produced by the creative industries sector. Such exclusionary practices are especially strong in media industries, including and notably film and television (Conor, Gill and Taylor 2015; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011), with clear implications for a lack of diversity of stories and voices even within strong state-supported broadcasting. Much of the research driving contemporary awareness of creative industries’ exclusions arises out of the United Kingdom where existing class frameworks are reinforced when family ties remain key to securing even unpaid internships in desirable creative organisations. Homophily, ‘bulimic’ work patterns, and after-hours sociality all serve to exclude even relatively privileged educated middle-class women, especially those with care-giving responsibilities, who are at the forefront of the growth of home-based self-employment, including setting up a micro-enterprise in the absence of other employment options (Adkins 2012; Banks and Milestone 2011; McRobbie 2007). Arguably even more economically precarious than working irregularly for someone else, a line can be drawn between the growth of this ‘magical solution’ to the gendered exclusions of creative work (Luckman 2015b) and the shift from an emphasis from ‘policy’ to ‘industry’ around cultural production exemplified by the creative industries. These trends have led some to suggest that the contemporary creative economy produces a retraditionalization of gender roles (Morgan and Nelligan 2015, p. 66, drawing upon Adkins, Banks and Milestone 2011; Gill 2002, 2009). Certainly, the growth of home-based creative self-employment needs to be at least partly accounted for in terms of inequalities within contemporary creative workplaces, especially when it comes to accommodating creative industries employment alongside care-giving responsibilities.

The cultural marketplace post-cultural policy: the rise of the Hipster economy and entrepreneurial arts

Cultural theorist Jim McGuigan defines ‘cool capitalism’ as “the incorporation of disaffection into capitalism itself” (2009, p. 1); through processes of diffusion and defusion, it is more than capable of not only bringing resistance under its umbrella but in so doing actually strengthening its own hegemony. This is what, he argues, occurred in response to the countercultures of the 1960s that putatively sought to challenge “the dominant culture at its very heart. Yet, in truth, he argues the counter-cultural challenge effectively – and ironically – refreshed the culture and political economy of corporate America, thereby contributing to its survival and flourishing” (McGuigan 2009, p. 6). Today he identifies the creative industries as key enablers of capitalist innovation. A similarly powerful critique is offered by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello in *The New Spirit of Capitalism*:

To maintain its powers of attraction, capitalism therefore has to draw upon resources external to it, beliefs which, at a given point in time, possess considerable powers of persuasion, striking ideologies, even when they are hostile to it, inscribed in the cultural context in which it is developing. The spirit sustaining the accumulation process at a given point in history is thus imbued with cultural products that are contemporaneous with it and which, for the most part, have been generated to quite different ends than justifying capitalism.

(2007, p. 20)

We can locate the rise of the creative industries within these larger trends. Underpinning all the interest in creative industries over the last couple of decades is a growing recognition of the place of creativity—and the ‘creative’ in place—as a key driver of economic growth in the new economy, with its associated appetite for content and lifestyle goods. This shift reflects wider trends around the aestheticisation of everyday life, the rise of recreational and lifestyle sectors of the economy, of copyright industries as drivers of global market share and an explosion in the number of people operating on a freelance, casual, contract or self-employed basis or in micro-, small- or medium-sized enterprises. This is not to mention a broader confluence of historical, cultural and economic circumstances logically enabling what we might call grassroots desires for creative entrepreneurialism motivated by progressive social agendas that also happen to elide neatly with post-Fordist capitalism’s entrepreneurial imperative. Alongside this economic mainstreaming of creativity has come the marketing of ‘cool’ individuality as a commodity to be purchased, often together with a self-realising career as a creative professional; this dream in large part is driving the explosion of the creative sector and sustaining people despite the precariousness of work in the creative industries. For these reasons too, the idea of the creative industries has appealed to both university leaders and undergraduate students increasingly focussed upon vocational outcomes from degrees in the arts and humanities.

However, while it is important to acknowledge that the creative industries framework has been widely adopted and persists as discursively powerful, it is also far from all-consuming as witnessed by the ongoing use of the acronym ‘CCIs’ (cultural and creative industries), especially in the UK. As already asserted the shift from cultural policy to creative industries is strongly critiqued and, as we saw in the case of craft in the UK, capable of challenge (though as a central part of its campaign the Crafts Council did need to gather statistics on the sector’s economic size, income and levels of educational attainment to make a case that also had strong and wide emotional support). Alternative definitional approaches to the cultural/arts/creative sector persist and are actively employed in policy, funding, organisational and/or academic contexts (see for example: KEA 2006; Throsby 2015; United Nations/UNDP/UNESCO 2013; Work Foundation 2007). Certainly, the shift continues to be the source of ongoing debate over many fundamental aspects of culture and value, including the importance of arts and cultural industries as possessing a much longer and richer history of intrinsically contributing to society in non-economic ways. Thus a key challenge in the wake of the break marked by the shift from cultural policy to creative industries is to develop new ways to strongly and affectively articulate the value of cultural and creative activities to a wider (voting) public beyond the sector, however it may be defined.

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Note

- 1 See for example Banks (2007), Banks and Milestone (2011), Conor, Gill and Taylor (2015), Eikhof and Warhurst (2013), Gill (2002, 2007, 2011), Gill and Pratt (2008), Grugulis and Stoyanova (2012), Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011), McRobbie (2002, 2004, 2007), and Milestone (2016).

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