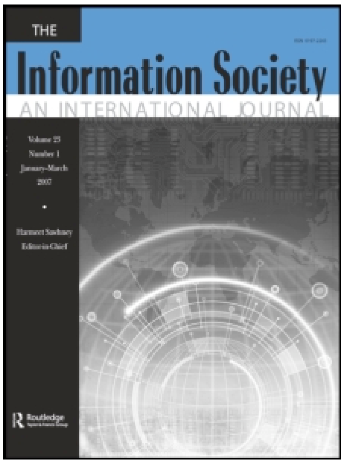

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Developing a Creative Cluster in a Postindustrial City: CIDS and Manchester

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This article takes the establishment and demise of Manchester's Creative Industries Development Service (CIDS) as an exemplary case study for the ways in which creative industry policy has intersected with urban economic policy over the last decade. The authors argue that the creative industries required specific kinds of economic development agencies that would be able to act as "intermediaries" between the distinct languages of policymakers and "creatives." They discuss the tensions inherent in such an approach and how CIDS attempted to manage them and suggest that the main reason for the demise of the CIDS was the domination of the "economic" over the "cultural" logic, both of which are present within the creative industries policy discourse.

Keywords creative entrepreneurs, creative industries, cultural policy, urban cultures, urban regeneration

In the last twenty years the image of Manchester has gone from that of a declining industrial to a re-invented "postindustrial" city. Central to this new image have been both the subsidized arts—with major investment in infrastructure and events—and more commercial popular culture, most notably popular music (Haslam 1999). This narrative in which arts and popular culture become emblematic of a transformative "spirit of place" is now well established within "celebratory" texts on the city (Manchester City Council 2002, 2004; King 2006) and more critical and academic literature (Peck and Emmerick 1992; O'Connor and Wynne 1996; Taylor et al. 1996; Wynne and O'Connor 1998; O'Connor 1998; Brown et al. 2000; Ward 2000, 2003; Peck and Ward 2002; Haslam 2005; Hetherington 2007). Since 1998, when the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) launched a new definition and set of policy directions (DCMS 1998), this culture-led regeneration narrative has also used the term "creative industries" alongside "arts and culture."

Manchester has the largest creative industry sector in England outside of London, and its creative industries sector continues to grow as those of other cities stutter (NWDA 2008). Indeed, the BBC recently chose the city as the site for a large-scale relocation of production facilities from London to a new "MediaCity" in Salford Quays (http://www.mediacityuk.co.uk). This article looks at an earlier initiative, the Creative Industries Development Service (CIDS), a small not-for-profit agency set up in 2000 by Manchester City Council in partnership with a range of other local public agencies. Its goal was to promote the economic development of the creative industries by helping frame and providing a coordinated response to the needs and aspirations of the sector. Our account of CIDS highlights some of the tensions within local creative industry development policy in the last twenty years. Central to these tensions was a persistent ambiguity between "culture" and "economics" that still marks the wider academic debate (Hesmondhalgh 2007; O'Connor 2007; Banks and O'Connor 2009).

We suggest that the "creative industries," though often defined in the placeless language of the "knowledge economy," "creativity," and "innovation," are rooted in and held to exemplify complex local histories and cultures. We also suggest that the shift to "creative industries" has positioned the "economic" as the master signifier in these local policy discourses, in a way that frequently misunderstands the actual practices of the creative industries and cuts across their cultural identification with, and investment in, the city. We start by looking at the trajectory of cultural and creative industries policy discourse in a local economic context, and in particular the close connection to discourses of "culture-led urban regeneration." We then discuss this connection to place in terms of creative industries and policy in Manchester, before looking in more detail at CIDS. We focus in particular

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on CIDS attempts to encourage local creative networks, and how this brought out some of the wider tensions between culture and economics to which we refer. We end with some concluding remarks on local creative industries policy.

CULTURAL INDUSTRIES AND CULTURE-LED REGENERATION

Though the creative industries are often presented in terms of ubiquitous creativity and global communications (Howkins 2001; Hartley 2005), they are very much rooted in particular places. These complex local roots have been clearly identified by economic geographers working on clusters, embeddedness, and "cultural products industries" (e.g., Scott 2000, 2004), but this has been less recognized in terms of local policymaking. "Policy transfer" has been central to the proliferation of cultural consultancy firms since the 1980s, where the possibility of adapting successful ideas from elsewhere is the key to the innovative capacity of "creative cities" (Landry 2000). But creative industries policy discourses, even when ostensibly derived from a single source such as the DCMS strategy document, are very much local-path dependent (Kong Gibson, Khoo, and Semple 2006). Andy Pratt (2009) has usefully discussed the limits of policy transfer and the specificity of particular policy regimes at national-regional level, but this has rarely been applied to particular cities or regions.[1] If the "creative class" is supposedly highly mobile, looking to move to those cities that offer the best lifestyle infrastructure (Florida 2005), this is much less so with policymakers, whose "political capital" is very much linked particular places.[2] This is certainly so in the United Kingdom, where "creative industries" policy discourses arrived at least a decade after those of "culture-led regeneration" and "cultural industries."

The increased centrality of "arts and culture" to the "regeneration" of older industrial cities from the late 1970s onward is well-established. For critics it represents a "cultural fix" for global capital (Harvey 1989), organizing city centers around a process of gentrification and (cultural) consumption-based "landscaping" (Zukin 1982, 1991, 1995), resulting in a fantasy city (Hannigan 1998) or phantasmagorical cityscape. For others it had a more complex provenance in European urban cultural policy (Wynne 1992; Bianchini and Parkinson 1993; O'Connor 1998). Concern for "quality of place" expressed through cultural facilities and activities has certainly been a central concern of many—especially industrial—cities as part of an attempt to promote a new image to attract investment, mobile professionals, and tourists, as well as retaining existing residents. Although frequently dismissed as local "boosterism," many of these attempts were part of a much wider process of economic and sociocultural change, which relatively more permeable "urban growth coalitions" (see later discussion) attempted to set within a shared narrative of a dynamic "spirit of place" capable of facing a new round of global competitive challenges. These urban narratives were not completely imposed by city marketing agencies but could tap into widespread (though often vaguely formulated) aspirations for the city on behalf of local citizens. These narratives, although primarily economic in traditional "boosterism," also had a strong cultural component—cultural not just in the sense of local identity but also in the more restricted sense of arts and popular culture. The popularity of "arts impact" studies may have declined since the 1980s (Myerscough 1988), but there is little doubt that even after a decade of "creative industries" it is "arts and culture" events and venues that remain the keystone of local authority "regeneration" narratives—even in a city where "creative industries" have grown significantly, such as Manchester. That is, despite their close alignment with narratives of economic transformation and "regeneration," they still carry a strong "cultural" charge. These local, cultural aspirational narratives, we shall argue, are particularly attractive for the "creative industries."

The increasing importance of "cultural industries" to UK local authorities in the 1980s needs to be situated within wider processes of sociocultural and political change, rather than dismissed as a "cultural fix" at the service of "capital," or indeed, of a local state incapable of influencing anything else (Peck and Ward 2002). Neither can their growing prominence within local cultural strategies, giving rise to a range of new consultancy firms (especially Commedia), be understood simply as a response to decreased funding for the arts (Hewison 1997); it relates to more complex notions of cultural democracy and local economic development that go back to the Greater London Council (GLC) of 1981–86 (Bianchini 1987; Garnham 1983/1990). The GLC vision, mostly embryonic, tried to deal with the fact that the vast majority of cultural consumption was delivered by the market, not by the subsidized sector; any democratic policy must confront this. It also drew on European urban policy developments, especially from Italy (Bianchini 1987), but also, as we shall see, new kinds of local economic strategy. It was both an economic and a cultural strategy, where countering the domination of (often large, multinational) distribution over (often local and small-scale) production meant having to rethink the "arts welfare" model of grants to individual artists. It moved to adopt an "industry model" approach—"industry" here referring to a designated economic sector, not mass production (O'Connor 2000)—with a concern for supply chains and complex combinations of creative and noncreative skills and businesses.

It is significant, however, that the first adoption of the notion outside of London was as an area-based regeneration strategy in Sheffield—the Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ).[3] Although explicitly geared to creating the future jobs of a post–steel industry city, it was embedded in local strategy not through a citywide program but as a vehicle for regenerating a decaying city center site. To some extent it formed a part with developments in the Albert Dock, Liverpool (itself modeled on the Boston Waterfront development), Museum of Science and Industry in Castlefield, Manchester, and related heritage and niche retail projects. The area-based focus of CIQ had pragmatic policy reasons. There was little knowledge of how to promote the cultural industries at a local level, and such knowledge—or aspiration—as existed was closely linked with particular individuals who applied their energies to the limited policy base over which they had some control.[4] But there were wider political reasons, in that both local authority power and the wider rationale for local economic strategies were severely curtailed by the Thatcher government, elected in 1979.

Creative industries policies have been linked to "information society" discourses originating with Daniel Bell and Alvin Tofler in the 1970s (Granham 2005; Pratt 2009; Pratt and Jeffcut 2009). This certainly contributed to a discourse in which cities, liberated from the physical constraints of a manufacturing economy, seemed able to reinvent themselves through "creativity." But there were other policy narratives drawn from European social democracy that were very much at play, from the GLC initiative up to and beyond New Labour's redefinition. Indeed, much of early New Labour's economic thinking was concerned with a "third way" between state control and free market, and thinkers looked to the successful European regions such as the "Third Italy" and Baden-Wurttemberg. The emphasis here was on locally embedded networks of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME) operating very differently from the vertical and hierarchical integration of (mostly national) mass manufacturing and the globally mobile multinationals with little commitment to place. These ideas seemed to provide an alternative to Thatcherism among the social-democratic left in the 1980s and 1990s (Piore and Sabel 1984; Hall and Jacques 1989; Zeitlin and Hirst 1989; Hutton 1995; Redhead 2004). However, the space in which such alternative local economic strategies could develop was limited by Thatcher's breaking up of the large metropolitan authorities (reducing Manchester City, for example, from a population of 2.5 million to just over 500,000) and by a series of legislative measures designed to restrict their powers of taxation, spending, intervention, and regulation. "De-industrialisation" was used to drive through a program of economic, social, and cultural reconstruction in a way unique in Europe. As a result, UK local authorities remain bereft of the industry intelligence and range of policy tools and powers deployed by their counterparts in other areas of Western Europe.

From the perspective of cultural and creative industries policies, what mainly survived were the notions of "cluster" and "creative milieu." The notion of "industry cluster" emerged into the mainstream of UK local economic policymaking in the late 1990s. This notion, frequently attributed to Michael Porter (1998, 2000) and much debated (cf. Martin and Sunley 2003), has a complex provenance in the work of social and economic geographers concerned to identify those unique, often intangible, qualities of place that gave rise to competitive advantage (Granovetter 1985; Piore and Sabel 1984; Powell 1990; Markusen 1996). Alfred Marshall's (1898) notion of "atmosphere," referred to by Porter, has been interpreted as the particular social and cultural dimensions within which local economic activity is embedded. If, in the United Kingdom, "cluster" merely came to refer to a local industry sector or subsector—"digital cluster," "music cluster," "bio-tech cluster," and so on—on the other hand it directed attention to the locational dimension of these industries and the "untraded interdependencies" that helped them thrive (Storper 1995). Economic geographers working in this field sought further to distinguish creative industry clusters from other business clusters, and emphasized the sociocultural dimensions of place as key factors of "competitive advantage." In so doing they have used terms such as innovative or creative milieu, creative field, or creative, critical, or soft infrastructure (Hall 2000; Pratt 2000, 2002, 2004; Scott 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006).

There were thus clear linkages between the notion of cultural and creative industry cluster and the more established models of cultural or creative quarters, districts, precincts, and the like. These latter had also developed within the culture-led urban regeneration agenda of the 1980s, and involved a range of different models unified around the concentration of some form of cultural production or consumption (Bell and Jayne 2004; Mommaas 2004; 2009; Roodhouse 2006; Montgomery 2007). They stressed the benefits of colocation for both production and consumption; the mix of public and private actors; diverse leisure, retail, and entertainment offers; and a wider concern with their contribution to, and benefit from, the image of the city within which they were located. Although members of the cultural and creative industry cluster might focus more directly on the commercial businesses within it, they clearly benefited from the "buzz" of consumption activities, and were similarly implicated in the wider "brand" of the city. Indeed, cultural and later creative industry strategies continue to be focused on building-based developments; while arts and museums get iconic modernist buildings, creative industries are still linked with industrial-era heritage. These latter developments are also promoted as iconic for the city's contemporary creative brand.[5]

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AS SME POLICY: THE PROBLEM OF REPRESENTATION

UK cultural and creative industries policies remained very much linked to urban regeneration initiatives at least until the more recent government initiatives around the (re) launch of the creative industries in the DCMS's Creative Economy Programme in 2005.[6] Outside of regeneration policy, the main source for development policies was support programs for SMEs. Local economic development based on encouraging SMEs was derived from both the reinvented social economy ideas of the "Third Italy" and European social-democracy previously noted, and the more "neoliberal" or "New Right" ideas aimed at freeing entrepreneurship from bureaucratic obstacles. Thatcher's government in the United Kingdom was firmly committed to these as part of the "enterprise culture" and provided a whole range of legal and tax incentives for small businesses, along with an increase in training and business support. Many local governments seized on this agenda even if they had more leftish notions of local economic development. It was this general policy approach, especially the Enterprise Allowance Scheme, that provided a launch pad for many small-scale cultural activities in the late 1980s and early 1990s (McRobbie 1998; O'Connor and Wynne 1996).

Research reports from the time of the GLC on had indicated high levels of SMEs in the cultural industries sector and their concentration in metropolitan regions (Pratt 1997). As such, cultural and later creative industry strategies almost always had a strong focus on support for SMEs. But these reports also showed that standard forms of support—business advice and training, access to loans and startup grants, tax incentives, and the like—did not work for the cultural industries. Creative businesses were seen to have different ambitions, priorities, and ways of operating than 'mainstream" businesses (O'Connor and Wynne 1996; O'Connor 1998; O'Connor 2000; Banks Lovatt, O'Connor, and Raffo 2000; Raffo, Banks, Lovatt, and O'Connor 2000). Generally speaking, traditional business support agencies saw these cultural SMEs as "risky" businesses, and the cultural businesses themselves saw these mainstream agencies as having no real understanding of what they did. Cultural businesses operate in a speculative, risky and volatile environment, one not managed using formal market analysis or risk assessment but often by informal, "intuitive," aesthetic and ethical procedures. To many in mainstream business support, these sector-specific practices were failures because of lack of business training and could be remedied by generic "startup" programs. To some extent the specific problems faced by these businesses were compounded by very basic generic errors—not understanding tax regulations or simple accounting, intellectual property and contract law issues, employment regulations, and so on. But even these problems had specific inflections in the cultural industries, and the solutions provided by mainstream support were often rejected by cultural businesses. The fundamental divide between cultural businesses and other businesses was often (though simplistically) encapsulated by the notion of "T-shirt and Suits" (Parrish 2005).

Despite this, from the mid-1990s there was a growing demand for some form of business advice and support among local cultural industries. A number of small specialized agencies started by giving different levels of business advice and training to sole traders and small cultural businesses. These were often subcontracted out by mainstream training and economic development agencies. Some local universities and colleges also began to provide bespoke training for prospective cultural entrepreneurs. Parallel to these, the Regional Arts Boards (the main channel of state subsidy to arts and cultural activities) also began to run business-oriented seminars and short training courses. After 1998 the DCMS also called for skills training and business support initiatives from its national "art form" agencies, and encouraged schools and further/higher education institutions to participate in creative industry focused training and skills programs. These were usually focused around promoting "creativity" and entrepreneurship (Redhead 2004; Bilton 2006; Schlesinger 2007; Banks and Hesmondhalgh 2009). However, at local level, business development and training for the creative sector developed on a much more ad hoc basis; this partly reflects the "motley" nature of creative industries voices and the question of policy leadership in an emergent field.

What kind of body was to "own" the creative industry agenda and how would one identify those who could be interpolated as subjects or agents for policy discourse? Large and more established industries (architecture, printing, broadcasting, film, classical music, theater, etc.) had their own industry, professional, and union bodies, often able to lobby governments directly. This was not so with the dispersed and diverse individuals and SMEs who made up the emergent creative industries "constituency." As far as this constituency did exist for national and local cultural policy agencies, it did so as part of the "art form" structure of the UK Arts Council and its regional offices. Specific art form bodies were set up to represent and channel funding for visual arts, theater, film, music, literature, craft, design, etc. The DCMS "mapping document" (1998) did add other subsectors (e.g., leisure software design) to the list of creative industries—but the problem was more than a simple extension of subsector agencies but one of the legitimacy and purpose of "representation." The "music officer" of the Regional Arts Board could not really speak for the local popular music scene, given the overwhelming focus on subsidies for "classical" music and its explicit disavowal of any involvement in commercial music activities. Computer games, on the other hand, represented a completely new field in which arts boards would have little or no expertise—nor would they want to acquire this.

Questions around commerciality and technical competences were part of a wider issue of who should lead on creative industries policy—existing cultural agencies (however suitably revamped) or local economic development agencies? A related question concerned whether creative industries should be seen as a series of subsectors to be led by specific agencies, or be constructed as a unified sector to be dealt with as a whole. Many of those in the creative industries did not, or refused to, see themselves as "creative industries"; indeed, one task of policymakers had been to create this sense of belonging and thus simplify and coordinate the policy delivery channels. They wanted the sector to "speak with one voice."

How were existing agencies to deal with this new object called the "creative industries?" As a first step, agencies had to identify appropriate individuals, organizations, and businesses with whom they could work and elaborate new strategic directions. This involved finding a representative "voice" from the sector and subsectors and identifying or creating an agency that could then work with this "voice" to deliver policy initiatives in a convincing way.

There were three problems here. First, existing policy agencies were not clear among themselves of exactly what the "creative industries" consisted; statistical and definitional questions were the relatively easy end of a complex conceptual issue, still not resolved (O'Connor 2007). Second, as it involved a new policy object, existing cultural organizations and economic development agencies had to work with "intermediaries" who were relatively unknown and untested. Popular music, having no local industry representatives, was notorious in this context—where musicians (the successful and the less so) were often turned to for complex policy advice (with varying degrees of success). Third, because of the strong "cultural" dimension to the creative industries, many businesses within this sector considered themselves to be something other than "industries" subject to economic development policy; those who had fewer reservations about this aspect often saw their form of creativity to be operating in direct opposition to "policy," "bureaucracy," and "institutionalization." The image of "Cool Britannia," mixing politicians and rock stars, was persistently invoked precisely as an image of "uncool."

However, there was a strong feeling among many creative businesses, certainly in Manchester but reflected in other UK cities, that they were being "misunderstood" or ignored by the local authority. Creative businesses were usually not reflected in the strategic or promotional literature of economic development agencies until the late 1990s. Many in the creative industries felt a lack of "representation," but this was less in terms of business support (about which many were skeptical, or oblivious) than in terms of their own contribution to, and stake in, the transformation of the city.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND URBAN REGENERATION IN MANCHESTER

Part of the story of cultural and creative industries in UK cities (and elsewhere) is their impact on the urban landscape. As we have noted, it was the impact on the physical regeneration of the city that was the most prevalent strand of policymaking in the 1980s and 1990s. This was more than occupying and renovating old buildings; they changed the symbolic value of these buildings and the surrounding areas (Zukin 1981, 1992, 1995; O'Connor 2004). They made areas "trendy." By the late 1990s there was a wide recognition of the "gentrification" process within which the cultural industries were embroiled, as developers became increasingly aware of their value and adept at attracting them. The story is in fact more complex than "gentrification," with white cubes and espresso bars landing in the middle of deprived communities and cheap property. Areas such as Nottingham's Lace Market, Liverpool's Duke Street/Bold Street, Clerkenwell in North London, and Manchester's Northern Quarter, as well as areas such as Chicago's Wicker Park (Lloyd 2006), all had longer histories of artist and cultural business involvement in local social, environmental, and political issues. If gentrification implies a process of residential substitution of lower by higher income socioeconomic groups, then this was also about the substitution of cultural production by new kinds of up-market residential development and its lifestyle consumption accoutrements. The substitution of spaces of production by spaces of consumption, identified by Sharon Zukin (1995), cuts across creative, as well as older, manufacture-based, industries. This is exemplified by the recent adoption by many local authorities of Florida's "creative class" idea and their required cultural infrastructure; "creative industries" give way quite rapidly to creative consumption (Oakley 2009).

For example, in the late 1980s Manchester's Northern Quarter emerged as a cheap, atmospheric location for small-scale cultural businesses. The local community body, the Northern Quarter Association (NQA), was made up of local residents, shopkeepers, and an overwhelming number of "cultural" people located in the area. They got deeply involved in local community politics and the day-to-day negotiations with the city council concerning the management of the area (which also contained many "problem" social agencies, such as homelessness-, drug-, and alcohol-related services). Local creative businesses were well aware of and concerned about the impact of their presence on the qualities of place that had attracted them in the first place. There was a strong sense of historical recovery, of old buildings, dug out from years of abusive "renovation," but also of older working-class traditions in the area—pet shops, weaving, political radicalism, popular department stores, and so on. Creative businesses had a high participation rate in the local association and were generally tolerant of the different users of the area (homeless people, alcoholics and needle exchange, cheap shops and unruly pubs, etc.). The ability of the NQA to articulate the concerns and aspirations of local residents and businesses related to the tradition of community politics inherited from the 1970s and 1980s, the familiarity many cultural businesses had with bureaucratic procedures (funding applications, planning permission, etc.), and the confidence in challenging official definitions common among highly educated groups.[7] Although small-scale development has happened through the 1990s, notably through the local company Urban Splash, it was not until 2002–3 that the city mobilized developers around a concerted plan for the area. The first step in this process was the abolition of the NQA as a "redundant" organization and its replacement by informal consultation. The NQA had a legal constitution and a legal requirement to report through minutes and annual meetings; informal, nonbureaucratic consultation was invisible and had no reporting requirements. Nor did it ever do so, except through glossy newsheets.

We would argue that, certainly up to the end of the 1990s, the cultural and creative industries were not simply agents of gentrification but could be an important driver for a progressive reinvention of urbanity (Corijn 2009). "Gentrification" in UK city centers most frequently occurred when large-scale development capital, through the backing of city council regeneration plans, took control of "trendy" areas and began to substitute (relatively) low-rent production spaces for higher yield consumption, residential or "clean" or "premium" office space. The abolition of the NQA as precondition for this process merely illustrated in fairly stark terms what happened in many other locales. Nevertheless, we also need to note that the nature of this local "development capital" was very much inflected by its closer engagement with culture-led regeneration in the 1980s and 1990s.

In Manchester (as elsewhere) it was through involvement and negotiations around culture-led urban regeneration that the creative industries became involved in policy issues, rather than a concern for economic development per se. Research by Manchester Institute for Popular Culture (MIPC) in the mid to late 1990s suggested that it was with the quality of the urban realm and its wider image or brand that the creative industries were most concerned, and which they also saw as their main input into policy—if anyone would listen.[8] Indeed, it was commonly felt in this period that the most successful forms of local support were those public events ("In The City" music convention, Mardi Gras, various film, fashion, design and theater festivals, etc.) that showcased both the local cultural industries and promoted the wider image of the city at the same time. In many respects the official and unofficial cultures of the city operated in two distinct spheres (O'Connor and Wynne 1996; Haslam 1999). The IRA bombing of the city in 1996 saw a major "rapprochement" between the established urban elites, increasingly concerned to promote the city (especially through two failed but catalytic Olympic bids) and newer voices from the recent ("rave" or "madchester") music, bar, and club scenes in the city. Not only had the increasing occupation of the city center through creative workspace and nighttime usage transformed the symbolic landscape of the city, initially for participating groups; many music-industry actors and associates moved into small-scale property development. Owners of the first gay bar, Mantos, and another "café-bar" leader, Atlas; the manager of the band Simply Red; a small-scale music merchandise entrepreneur, Tom Bloxham (of Urban Splash)—all these moved into property development, some of them now operating on a national scale. Equally, many of those involved in this field, most notably Tony Wilson, director of Factory Records (and of *24 Hour Party People* fame), went on to occupy major policy positions within the city. A key moment in this shift from the margins to the center within Manchester's elite growth coalition was the formation, by some of those just listed, of a pressure group to reject the official city marketing slogan as "outdated" and inappropriate for a city of Manchester's cultural aspirations (Ward 2000). A new post-rave urban growth coalition emerged that valorized entrepreneurialism, culture,and the creative industries as key to the future of the city—this at the same time when New Labour was making similar claims at the national level (Peck and Ward 2002; Ward 2000; Hetherington 2007; O'Connor 2007b).

We would argue that rather than simply "sector development," in the United Kingdom, creative industry policy has mostly been a kind of urban policy—something implied by the "creative city" theses of Charles Landry (2000) and Richard Florida (2005), though underdeveloped (cf. Scott 2001). In terms of an emerging urban cultural and "creative industries" policy narrative there was certainly a symbiosis between the city council and local elites and the creative sector in terms of image, with the latter clearly benefiting from a locational "brand." This is even more marked among those with property interests in the city. This symbiosis resulted less in calls for specific economic development support to creative businesses, and more a "recognition" of their contribution to this local identity and image. "Recognition" here might be understood not just as acknowledgment of their contribution to the "brand" but also of their legitimate input into policy development through a range of formal and informal forums and spaces.[9]

At the same time, this symbiosis relates to the fact that these businesses are deeply embedded in, and committed to, local social, cultural, and urban contexts. It forms the contexts for their practice as individuals, businesses, and networkers (O'Connor 1998; Drake 2003; Shorthose 2004; Banks 2007). This was a much more ambiguous relationship as it could cut across the interest in development gain through property prices that drove the new city center growth coalition. Thus, the concerns of many in the creative industries could be swept aside by more powerful local developers now able to deploy the language of creative industries much more effectively than previously. In the Northern Quarter example, although in the 1990s the NQA could use the new language of culture-led regeneration in the face of old style planning regimes, in 2002–3 they were positioned as local, vested interests opposed to the requirements of a citywide creative industries strategy.

As previously discussed, who might claim to speak for, to represent, the creative industries was a key issue in this new policy field; part of this claim was also about the power to construct a new narrative for the city. In mid-to-late 1990s Manchester the consensus around the creative agenda hid many ambiguities. The activities of CIDS, consequently, tended to be as much about mobilizing this wider identification with and commitment to the city as it was about business services or marketing strategies. It thus inherited those ambiguities.

THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

Commissioned research in 1997–99[10] in Manchester suggested that some sort of agency be established to act as intermediary between the city's economic and business development infrastructure and the creative industries sector. In response, CIDS was established,[11] envisaged as having four main functions: first, to develop, commission, and deliver bespoke businesses services to the sector—based on the recognition that the delivery and content of these services required a specific expertise and a reputation (or "track record") not available to mainstream organizations; second, to provide information and strategic intelligence about the sector to the city and to provide relevant information (services, grants, other opportunities) to the sector itself; third, to build partnership and ensure coherent delivery from the many agencies that were somehow involved in supporting the creative sector; and forth—the most difficult function involved a representative role—helping the sector to identify and articulate its particular requirements and giving voice to these concerns needs within the wider policy forums in the city.

Issues of voice and representation concern positions of power and legitimacy within the economic and urban policy field. The entry of the creative industries introduced much uncertainty into this field, for the reasons indicated already. If CIDS claimed a representative function, it did so not in a formal institutional or electoral sense, but rather by claiming both to speak the language of the creative sector and also to be able to translate this into the more formal language of economic development policy. Its intermediary function was thus established not simply by statistical or analytical knowledge but by the insider knowledge and relations of trust implied by this "speaking its language." *Language* here refers not only to very different ways of understanding and doing creative business; it also refers to the wider context of these creative businesses involved in a matrix of economic, social, cultural, and ethical imperatives. Part of intermediation was therefore "translation," and it hid a certain ambition: that CIDS would present the wider social and cultural (including urbanistic) concerns of the sector within the formal language of economic development to open the field of economic development to a recognition of the legitimacy of these wider social and cultural questions. It was here that the question of "cultural" or "economic" policy was so crucial. CIDS claimed a legitimacy denied the publicly funded cultural agencies in that it was ostensibly concerned with questions of commerce and economics. Only in this way could it sit down at the economic development policy table. At the same time, it tried to introduce a wider sociocultural agenda into this field—an attempt explicit in related notions of the "creative city," for example. It was a strategy that seemed feasible in a situation where economics and culture seemed much more open to each other. However, it was a also strategy beset by the danger, not just of losing the trust of both sector and policy agents ("falling between two stools"), but also by the latter discovering alternative languages for the creative sector, more directly amenable to mainstream economic development. Both of these occurred, as we shall see.

From the beginning, charged with the energy of the new creative industry agenda, CIDS tried to develop ways of thinking and acting differently from the mainstream public policy field. The first director was very clear that it was not about mechanically putting resources together but thinking critically about local creative industries and what they want. CIDS became somewhat unconventional, not trying to impose something from the top down but rather to be responsive, working as an interface between the creative sector and the local development infrastructure.[12]

It attempted to operate through the identification and promotion of networks within the sector, seeking "representative" voices. Such informal identifications were a matter of judgment based on track record, reputation, and the ability to express their needs and concerns in a way that spoke for the (sub)sector as a whole rather than their particular business. In this, CIDS was operating very much like creative businesses themselves, working through networks of reputation and trust. It then funded these individuals, or sometimes already existing networks, to develop a more inclusive network organization that could give voice to the needs of the sector and with whom CIDS could then work deliver policy initiatives in a convincing way. These included Red Eye (photographers), PANDA (performance), Manchester Fashion Network, Manchester Music Network, and M62 (computer games), among others. CIDS itself worked within a Manchester-based network of organizations and across the Northwest with other similar creative industries agencies, most notably ACME in Liverpool and the Arts Council-funded audiovisual agency North-West Vision (NWV).

Against initial expectations it was not through its specialized services (which it tended increasingly to subcontract and signpost rather than deliver) but through its day-to-day networking activities that it developed its range of contacts and a certain degree of trust: a reputation based not (primarily) on the formal knowledge provided by consultation reports but on contacts and interpersonal relationships. CIDS managed to build up a certain credibility as an advocate for the sector, one that spoke its language; it tried to ensure its intermediary role by embedding itself in the local cultural and social "scene." CIDS was located in a prominent (bright pink) creative industries building located in the heart of the Northern Quarter. Its staff were recruited mostly from outside business support personnel and tended to be close to (if not participants in) creative production. CIDS was therefore both "physically" and "socially" part of the creative cluster.

But this "lock-in" (or "going native") was also the source of tension on a day-to-day basis. CIDS was always hampered by its short-term funding structure (and it is not alone in this), whereby it could never fully guarantee the continuation of its different services. This uncertainty could undermine trust. Equally, while talking the language of the sector, CIDS also had responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation—basic and often clumsy metrics ("box-ticking") about business activities and impacts, which caused great friction between it and creative business. It was a bureaucratic process but it also undermined the claim of CIDS to be speaking a responsive language. If CIDS acknowledged that the development of creative industry networks is a process mixing cultural, social, and economic functions in ways difficult to separate, CIDS also knew that public intervention brings with it a different language, one that demanded a set of clear, usually economic, outcomes. Despite the attempts to reduce this to a (usually painful) lip service, monitoring and evaluation inevitably brought a gradual institutionalization and an accommodation with the overarching language of the existing policy world ("economic growth," "social inclusion," etc.).

Equally, the expectations raised by the organization within the sector were almost always too high for the level of resources commanded by CIDS, leading to frequent disenchantment. The establishment of trust by CIDS staff with the local businesses was often based on an expressed "commitment" to the creative industries sector, which, despite its personal sincerity, could not always be delivered by an organization constantly at the mercy of policy shifts and new funding regimes. Indeed, speaking the dual languages of creative sector and public policy caused much disorientation within CIDS staff. Personal commitment and sharing a "language" with the creative industries in the end could hardly make up for the lack of resources.

These tensions were felt within the networks supported by CIDS. These networks, many of which had been purely informal, had to be formalized to some degree to allow CIDS to fund them, and so as to develop a more systematic analysis of their needs (member surveys, for example) for policy purposes. This often undermined the more organic aspects of these networks. Many felt that these more targeted formal social network initiatives, as compared to practitioner-led social networks, focus less on personal issues and more on instrumental functions such as funding or organizing trade events. There were real worries about "being institutionalized" and anxieties as to the extent to which such formalization of communication is useful in forging meaningful interaction among creative businesses. And despite the ambition to be part of the sector, there was always an inevitable gap between (relatively secure) publicly funded agency and precarious business. In this context it was very easy for the relationship to move from one of trust to one of exploitation and cynicism.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AS URBAN POLICY

Although there are certain structural tensions between CIDS's necessarily more formal network initiatives and the informal or "organic" business initiated networks, there seemed real value in the development of networking infrastructures in local creative industries as part of the functioning of an intermediary organization. These reasons do not just concern the efficiency and customized nature of the business support that they facilitated. Creative industry clusters and networks have social and cultural as well as economic dimensions; they are embedded in the fabric of the city. The manner of this embedding does not simply mean the economic gains of "untraded interdependencies," skills pools, and business networking but is also about a reflective engagement with the cultural and social and environmental context of these localities. As such, CIDS's remit inevitably extended beyond business support to policy debates across a wide front—from city marketing to business support, to skills development and knowledge transfer; from protecting "independent business" in the city to reporting on development tensions in the Northern Quarter; from commenting on DCMS policy documents to co-coordinating responses to anxieties about the BBC's planned relocation to MediaCity. As such, CIDS attempted to move beyond sector-specific business support to a more general policy agenda intended to reflect the creative industries' identification with and support for the brand of the city—something the city mostly welcomed—and their engagement with the social, cultural, and urban contexts of their day-to-day activities—something that was much more contentious.

As we previously noted, the creative industries agenda has been set in a local economic development context, but one predicated on wider notions of culture and creativity. The diverse group of businesses and freelancers and public and private agents covered in the term "creative industries" very much bought into this. The creative industries certainly shared a narrative of "urban regeneration" in Manchester, one that was particularly inflected by the distinct Manchester brand of popular music and culture (O'Connor 2004). This was a relationship formally cemented by the appointment of Peter Saville, of Factory Records fame,[13] as "creative director" for the city (O'Connor 2007b). But this shared narrative was subject to ongoing negotiation and could easily be abused—as in the well-established model where property developers emerge as the real winners in "culture-led regeneration." What CIDS attempted to do was try to create a "shared narrative" between a public agency and the creative industries. Only in this way, it was felt, could long-term trust be built and the intermediary function of channeling "constituency needs" into public policy be performed. We have seen some clear limits to this, in terms of what more formal public policy language and process might allow, and what difficulties it imposes on such trust building. If the dual-facing intermediary function placed strains on the CIDS claim to speak the language of the sector, it did so also within the policy field. Though its brand value as a trusted agency was recognized,[14] its unorthodox approach and (relatively) disruptive language positioned it as somewhat of a maverick organization.

Therefore, a more telling limit was reached as the language of economic development, increasingly prevalent within the creative industries discourse, allowed a displacement of these wider sociocultural and urbanistic concerns. In a manner parallel to the trajectory of the NQA, as the field of creative industries policy became more established and its language better known, the specific value of CIDS as intermediary could more easily be marginalized. That the discourse of "creative industries" introduced an increasingly economic rationale into debates around culture-led regeneration and the creative city, as well as within cultural policy as a whole, is little disputed as such—merely the legitimacy of such a shift (cf. Cunningham 2004; 2008; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005; Banks and O'Connor 2009). Summarizing a more complex argument, we suggest that though the notion of creative industries does not have to be interpreted in this way (and see Cunningham 2009 for a global survey), in the UK context as least, it has allowed a de-complexification of policy, dropping those considerations external to purely economic outputs (see O'Connor 2009). However, these economic outputs are now much more easily couched in the language of "creativity," and hence linked to the culture-led narrative of the city.

This process can be seen in the developments around MediaCity in Salford Quays. The announcement of a relocation of BBC production facilities from London to Manchester raised the profile of the creative industries sector overnight. Not only was this a prestigious image coup for the city, underlining the success of its rebranding, but it would also represent new jobs and a substantial property investment. That it eventually located in Salford, a separate adjacent local authority, is not something we can discuss here. However, the raised profile of, and stakes involved in, leading the creative sector meant that CIDS was marginalized within a short period of time. That it made some fatal mistakes in the game of political maneuvers is a commonly held view, as we discovered in recent interviews. But that the game suddenly involved more powerful and adept players is not in dispute either. The North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) strongly supported the relocation and used it as the centerpiece of its Digital and Creative Industries Sector Development Plan (NWDA 2008)—which was to inform all its funding for creative industries development in the near future. Key to the strategy was MediaCity as the attractor for major foreign direct investment and the creation of Europe's "second largest media and digital cluster" (after London).

Although in the relatively open situation of the late 1990s local and regional bodies were willing to see CIDS as a legitimate voice for an unknown and ill-defined sector, the growing visibility of creative-sector leadership were such that it could not be left to a maverick agency such as CIDS. Or rather, it responded to the shift in language, from a cultural to an economic policy emphasis, too late. Echoing the DCMS's inflation of statistics by the inclusion of software development (Garnham 2005), the NWDA plan has the thirteen original DCMS sectors and also information and communications technology (ICT)—which includes a huge number of companies involved in cable and telecommunications. It is little wonder that, according to NWDA, only thirty companies in the Northwest sector employ more than 250 people and these are "mostly digital" (i.e., ICT). Equally, the inclusive "creative industries" has been decomposed into "media," "digital," and "the rest," with the first pair being seen as the key economic drivers. The language of the plan gives no quarter to any cultural policy concerns, and no consideration of the urbanistic context of the creative industries. In addition, rather than delivering policy through a complex network of subregional organizations that could respond to local contexts, the head of creative industries at NWDA decided—in a field defined by its complex constituencies and policy spheres—to "simplify" delivery through one regional organization. In this context an agency that had been dedicated to supporting television and film across the region, even though it lacked all knowledge of the complex on the ground delivery associated with CIDS and other local agencies, was well-placed to succeed. North West Vision now leads all creative industry support across the region. At this point, the CIDS director "threw in the towel" and the organization effectively ceased at the end of 2008.

The consultation process in response to the plan, which was led by CIDS, had been a rough ride. The various local authorities objected that all resources were going into one central node; the network of local agencies objected to subcontracting to one, inexperienced regional agency (though this was left as ambiguous for some time); and they also objected to the exclusive focus on "digital" when sectors such as music had long been associated with the region. Those in the creative sector objected that this strategy ignored the complex urban ecology out of which Manchester's creative industries had emerged in the first place. That is, as with the process of "gentrification," the revived image of the city would be used to build a high-rent media park aimed at large-scale international business at the expense, it was claimed, of the local creative sector. However, the global financial crisis has since undermined the extravagant claims for the attraction of major international media and digital firms—especially in a city with no direct flights to the U.S. West Coast or the Far East. Recent interviews suggest that in the downturn, small-scale creative companies are thriving, with the UK government recently launching a scheme to bring them back into city centers to occupy empty property (Booth 2009).

CONCLUSION

In this article, we have tried to argue that creative industries policy should be conceived as a kind of urban policy. Creative industries benefit from and contribute to the image of the city, but they are also embedded in its social and cultural life. Creative industries tended to actively share narratives of urban regeneration, local identity and the "creative city." These were valued more than initiatives around training, business support and advice, and so on, of which they were and are skeptical. CIDS emerged in this context to enhance support for the sector by giving it a coherent channel through which to voice its needs. It was able to identify and translate this voice into formal policy due to a trust built around a shared commitment or identification. This shared identification inevitably brought social and cultural concerns into the field of local economic policy. CIDS attempted to manage and voice these concerns within the relatively open space of the creative industries agenda, extending its remit across a wide range of local policy issues.

We could say that CIDS had a hidden cultural political agenda: that it would represent the needs of the sector at policy level not just to reengineer its business services accordingly but to represent the social and cultural aspirations of the creative industries sector at the wider city level. "Support for creative businesses" then becomes not just a matter of bespoke business services, or their delivery in the appropriate language and context, but also about recognizing their needs and contributions beyond economics; it's a recognition that often cuts against a wider economic logic to include claims to cultural integrity and social justice.

The attempt was not to oppose some "economic logic" but to act on the implications of the creative industries agenda as expressed in the terminology of local clusters, creative ecology, soft infrastructure, creative field, and so on. All these implied an expanded economic logic, and one that necessarily involved social and cultural considerations. This was the promise of the cultural and creative agenda to many of its proponents. But in reality such complex policy vision and the subtle knowledge that this might demand were always lacking in local authorities. The splits between economic policy, urban planning, and cultural policy—perhaps mirrored at UK national level by the imperatives of the Treasury as the framework against which policy impact must be measured—were too deep to be traversed by this agenda.

Thus, supporting clusters of creative industries in areas that do not seem to promise immediate economic benefits makes little sense to economic development agencies; the logic suggests that they pursue global media companies instead. In such circumstances, the difficult balance between the language of public policy and that of industry, and between economic and sociocultural value, can disappear under the purely economic language of "creative economy," "innovation," and related discourses that see the language of "culture" as a remnant of cultural policies past (Cunningham 2004).

CIDS has been caught up in the success of the creative industry argument; as it has moved ever more center stage in local policymaking in Manchester (and elsewhere), the power to decide on policy and to "speak" on behalf of the sector has shifted further and further away. "Media" and "digital" industries, now economic priorities for the Manchester region, have long been allocated to other agencies. It is these who now sit at the policy table speaking for those creative industry sectors that really matter. The generic creative industry sector, which CIDS attempted to represent, is now seen as more peripheral, and the social and cultural concerns with which it arrived in the 1990s are downplayed as "lifestyle" rather than serious businesses. The recession may have changed this.

NOTES

1. An interesting attempt was that of Taylor, Evans, and Frasier (1996), bringing Williams's national-level "structure of feeling" down to local city-region level—in this case, contrasting Sheffield and Manchester.

2. This is obviously linked to different political systems and their structuring of local and national—for example, unlike the United Kingdom, local power bases in France can launch national careers.

3. See Oakley (2009) for a retrospective discussion.

4. The emergence of new cultural policies, cultural industries policies, and creative city policies in places such as Sheffield, Birmingham, Greater Manchester, Bristol, and Huddersfield related very much to specific individuals—and often dissipated with their departure.

5. The list is extensive: Birmingham's custard factory; Helsinki's cable factory; Marseilles's cigarette factory; Factory 798 in Beijing; Amsterdam's Westergasfabriek and Witte Dame, Eindhoven; London's Truman Brewery and Berlin's Bruerei; Moscow's winery; and so on.

6. http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/creative_industries/3275.aspx

7. In particular, the history of Manchester's Hulme area, associated with the punk and postpunk era of the city, had seen high levels of oppositional engagement with the political, legal, and bureaucratic processes of urban regeneration (see Haslam 1999; 2005; Dickinson 1997).

8. MIPC was established in 1993 at Manchester Metropolitan University (Redhead, 2004). Justin O'Connor was director 1995–2006, and then it was closed. Its work on local urban cultures included a conference on the "night-time economy" in 1994; a consultancy on the Northern Quarter for Manchester City Council 1995–96; three UK Economic and Social Research Council Projects (cf. Wynne and O'Connor 1998; O'Connor 1998; Brown, Cohen, and O'Connor 2000; Banks, O'Connor, and C. Raffo 2000; Banks 2007); and a large-scale study, "Cultural Production in Manchester," which provided the research basis for CIDS. This document became publicly unavailable after the closure of MIPC.

9. We might say it echoes the way contemporary games companies involve users in brand development, and are required to acknowledge this through respecting the rules of engagement of this user input (Banks and Humphreys 2008).

10. See note 8.

11. Funded mainly via European Structural Fund money through Manchester City Council, then via funds from the North West Regional Development Agency.

12. This section on CIDS is based on interviews conducted by the authors. O'Connor was co-chair of CIDS between 2000 and 2006. Xin Gu conducted extensive interviews as part of her PhD thesis: "Social Networks in Cultural Industries: Fashion, New Media and Network Development Policy in Manchester," Manchester Metropolitan University, 2008.

13. Saville created the distinctive image of Factory Records and its club, The Hacienda (see Haslam 1999).

14. For example, CIDS became a "must-see" organization whenever cultural and creative industries delegations came to visit the city.

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