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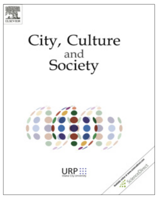

Creatives in the city: Urban contradictions of the creative city

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ABSTRACT

The main interpretation of the creative city mantra acknowledges the role of a "creative class" in local economic development and its need for an unconventional urban environment. Its aim is to turn the city into an appealing urban environment for those contributing to the local economic development. The purpose of this paper is not to discuss the value, benefits or limitations of this interpretation. Rather, it focuses on another aspect of the creative city mantra: the promotion of a "creative economy" and its corollary, and that of creative industries as future major economic contributors. This paper exposes and discusses the inherent contradictions of such creative city policies. A creative economy and its associated industries are celebrated as a panacea for urban revalorization and economic development; however, the reality of working and producing in these sectors, is marked by precariousness and uncertainty, which reveals the weaknesses of such planning policies. The very features of work in the creative industries produces constraints of location that contradict the effects of such urban strategies. Real estate valorization, as much as new government regulations, are gradually driving creative workers from the city: thus the needs of creative industries and professionals are in conflict with the effect of urban planning strategies. This contribution to the creative city debate proposes a different approach to the research and political agendas, and in turn questions the sustainability of the creative city in regards to the precariousness associated with creative activities. To what extent do valorization strategies hamper the development of a creative economy and its activities? To what extent can the creative city agenda offer the opportunity to reappraise contemporary urban paradigms?

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Introduction

Globalization, the post-industrial crisis and the rise of a neo-liberal ideology in urban policies have all led many cities to define and implement entrepreneurial development strategies (Harvey, 1989). Cities, redefining their strategic objectives in a competitive market, have become entrepreneurs of their own development. Their aim is to attract capital and investors to develop large-scale urban projects, while knowingly facing the financial liabilities of such uncertain ventures. As Andy Pratt shows, the elusive notion of a creative city is nothing more than a new construct of old-style neo-liberal urban strategies (Pratt, 2011). One step above the culture-led regeneration development strategies, the "creative city" mantra acknowledges the role of a "creative class" in local economic development, and its need for a "cool and funky" urban environment (Florida, 2002, 2003). Looking at consumption-based gentrification theories, the vision of the "creative city" brand is one that embodies "city-living" style, with a distinct cosmopolitan and arts appeal, in both real estate development and urban regeneration. The purpose of this paper is not to discuss the value, the benefits, nor the limitations of this vision, as researchers have used persuasive arguments for and against it and provided results (to name a few: Atkinson & Easthope, 2009; Keil & Boudreau, 2010; Martin-Brelot, Grossetti, Eckert, Gritsai, & Kovacs, 2010; Peck, 2005; Tremblay & Tremblay, 2010). In this paper, we propose to focus on another aspect of the "creative city" mantra: that of a "creative economy" and the promotion of creative industries as future major economic contributors. We will discuss the "creative city" policies of a creative economy as a panacea for urban revitalization and economic development. An analysis of the reality of working in an economic sector that is characterized by precariousness, uncertainty and entrepreneurship, will reveal inherent contradictions in such policies.

To what extent do strategies of urban revitalization hamper the development of a creative economy? Following A. Pratt, who explores the cultural contradictions of the creative city, here we look at the urban contradictions of the

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creative city. Our discussion is based on a review of the existing research ascertaining to current trends and practices in the Paris Region. Our contribution to the creative city debate questions the sustainability of a creative city agenda, where creative work is precarious, and proposes alternative approaches to research and political policies. How far can the creative city agenda be applied to reappraise contemporary urban paradigms? An alternative understanding of this model is to view the creative city as a city *for* the creatives. We must then consider a new precariat class, framed by uncertainty, scarcity and entrepreneurial ethos, and look at this group's place and rights within a city.

The rise of the creative economy concept

The concepts, 'creative economy' and 'creative industries' derive from political agendas and strategies in economic development. The term "creative industries" was first introduced and then popularized in *Creative Industries Mapping Documents*, published by the United Kingdom's *Department for Culture, Media and Sport* in 1998 and 2001. Since then, this definition of creative industries and its parameters have become widely accepted. Creative industries are "*those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property*" (Department for Culture Media & Sport, 2001: 3). They include activities traditionally related to cultural industries (architecture, film, music industry, publishing), or at the core of the artistic production (performing art, visual art) fused with other kinds of industries, and those sometimes unrecognizably linked to creativity, such as advertising, video gaming, software development and computer services. A variety of mapping documents have revealed the contributing extent these creative industries have on economic development, especially in regards to the rising software industry. The political production of this statistical category provides the means to develop new economic strategies in sectors of a rising economy. In the early 2000's, the UK was the first country to develop an economy for creative industries. As it was the first and only country to use this vernacular, it brought legitimacy to the *Cool Britania* discourse.

These concepts have since been adopted by other government agencies and international institutions. The European Union Green Paper, "*Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries*", presents creativity as a key element for innovation and the growth engine of the post-industrial economy (European Commission, 2010).[1] This document defines cultural and creative industries as major factors in economic growth and well-being. Thus, official and political discourse attests that contemporary capitalism has staged a successful ideological turn in drawing economic value from the symbolic production of arts and culture. Creating a new economic category has achieved several goals: it meets the need of the companies that demand changes to property rights legislation and, includes industries such as software companies amongst the creative industries, thereby adding the prestige of Art and Creation, rooted in the social representation of the 19th century artists to these new economic sectors (Tremblay, 2008). Obliterating the image of the 1980's geeks, creative industries have effectively glamorized the New Economy.

At the local level, this new dogma concurs with an economic geographical analysis of 'clustering dynamics', based on studies of organizational change to the production process for cultural industries such as the cinema (Storper & Christopherson, 1987) or the software and computer industries (Saxenian, 1994). Metropolitan areas offer some answers or solutions to the organizational issues of lowering production costs and improving competitiveness and efficiencies. Facilitating contact between the parties involved helps reduce transaction costs, as complex problem-solving requires face-to-face interaction and negotiation.

Metropolitan areas are melting pots for a varied, highly specialized, skilled and available workforce. A metropolitan area, with its large network of suppliers, clients, partners, sub-contractors and laborers, promotes better business exchange. It facilitates information sharing and the implementation, organization and management of project-based activities; a workers' flow and the sharing of skills between companies is made possible. Research into successful innovative clusters (particularly in the Silicon Valley) has spurred the development of similar economic initiatives, as many local and national government bodies have developed economic and urban policies to secure these types of creative activities. In France, for instance, a national economic strategic plan has been developed to build strong relationships between research centers and private companies (*Pôle de Compétivité*) and to support networking amongst organizations in a locally-based production area (*Systèmes Productifs Locaux*). Other policies rooted in industrial planning have also been developed, such as the rezoning of entire city districts for cultural consumption developments (for example the Bercy district in Paris) or creative production (such as the "*cluster de la création*" under construction in the Paris Northern suburb).

Despite what may appear like a panacea, strategies for the economic development of these sectors are jeopardized by industrial logics. Although highly idiosyncratic, many creative productions are threatened by delocalization. For instance, many governments offer tax incentives to curb runaway productions to preserve the local audio-visual industry. Our intention is to point out that the creative industry's project-based management of production and job creation conflicts with the constraints placed on location and the desire for proximity in the context of the rising valorization of urban land.

The conditions of creative work

A 'creative economy' and its accompanying 'creative industries' in principle bring together researchers who may be working in different fields. An analysis of these concepts reveals and confirms rising trends, particularly in regards to production and working conditions. According to Menger, the art industry can be seen as a 'flexibility' testing ground, from which casualization, individualization and uncertainty are spreading throughout the work world.

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[1] In France, 6% of the Paris Region's workforce are employed in creative industries, mainly the software industry (Camors & Soulard, 2010; Camors, Soulard, & Omont, 2011).

Employees in the future must emulate the artist at work: be flexible, mobile, motivated, creative, competitive, and expect a variable income and uncertain career (Menger, 2002). The new management discourse based on values associated with artists: imagination, uniqueness, self-commitment, vocation or passion, promotes these kinds of changes. Thus, this development trend becomes legitimized and valorized by the prestige of the Arts (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999). Behind the glamorous image of the creative workers, which is perpetuated by the media and inspired by prestigious social representation of the artist-creators (Heinich, 2005), and beside "cool" after-work parties and casual dress code, the real everyday life of workers in the creative industries is more ambiguous.

As each product is unique, project-based artistic productions are both risk-taking and uncertain of success. Professionals join a production, bringing their unique skills to the various steps of the project throughout the process. A project-based organization can be developed internally (Paris, 2010), requiring new management tools to promote creativity within a pre-existing company framework. In order to lower overall project costs, and labor costs in particular, management is generally externalized through subcontracting or hiring on a needs basis throughout the project. Many sectors and activities have adopted this concept of flexible organization evident in creative production management. Large companies such as public TV broadcasting agencies in the UK and France, now manage their permanent production based on outsourcing and subcontracting schemes. For the employees, this type of organization promotes individualization of work habits, casualization and a depoliticizing of the work environment.

The greatest impact for the worker is evident in how this casualization affects various aspects of their professional life; the requirement of temporary commitment to a unique project or even task and the need for specific skill sets. A review of existing research shows that casualization takes on many forms: self-employment, free-lancing, temporary employment (for example the specific French scheme "*intermittents du spectacle*") or royalty payments (Bureau, Perrenoud, & Shapiro, 2009; Gill & Pratt, 2008; Lacroix, 2009; Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999; McRobbie, 2002; Menger, 2002; Moulier Boutang, 2007; Neff, Wissinger, & Zukin, 2005; Prichard, 2002; Ross, 2008; Storey, Salaman, & Platman, 2005). According to a recent survey, creative industry workers in the Paris Region stand less chance of acquiring a permanent contract (60% to the 80% regional average) (Camors et al., 2011). These workers face uncertainty on all levels: job availability and quality, schedule and income. They must adapt to this situation with compulsory networking, skill upgrading and contract seeking.

Despite the fact that creative workers have internalized the Artist myth of 'bohemia', a virtue of necessity, there is no evidence that creativity needs to concur with precariousness (Ross, 2008). In many sectors, project-based organization and outsourcing linked to precariousness have not always been the norm. For instance, the dismantling of movie studios both in France and the USA was the result of economic, technical and legislative constraints as much as (even more so) due to the conditions for creativity. Indeed, the Paramount Decree imposed the dismantling of American studios, while in France the under-utilization of studios and the need to invest in new technologies led to the reorganization of the movie industry. Some companies have specialized in equipment rentals (cameras, lights, dressing-rooms, etc.), and others in studio management or post-production, and the workers have had to adapt to a more precarious employment scheme (Verdalle, Rot, & Sauguet, 2008). The aesthetic revolution of *La Nouvelle Vague* that promoted shots on location, may have coincided with the French movie industry's reorganization, but cannot be considered its main agent of change. Were the productions in early years of cinema not creative? Current trends in the movie industry must be viewed in a different context. Seemingly caused by the disintegration of the audiovisual sector, they are instead the result of financial decisions. Adapting industry to new technologies such as digitalization forced the re-concentration or re-integration of capital among a handful of large companies (Verdalle et al., 2008). The publishing world has undergone similar changes where recent merges have led to redundancy in its work force and to outsourcing. Laid-off employees later become subcontractors for their former employers (Rambach & Rambach, 2009). In all these cases, project-based management has been implemented to reduce labor costs, not to foster the creative process. The market needs were prioritized over the need for creativeness.

Some researchers express doubts about the value of precariousness in creative industries. Is creativity impeded by stability and organization? Does one necessarily need uncertainty in order to succeed? The creative workers' involvement in the creative process is changing as they are forced to seek employment or subcontract instead of initiating their own projects. Due to lack of time, or an uncertain appreciation by the client or the public, they may tend to reproduce existing schemes and forms, or curb their own creativity and independence to conform to the clients' standards and expectations. They acquire new skills and multi-task in order to broaden their market rather than develop and improve their own creative projects. Multi-tasking, as a means for success, is a valued sign of entrepreneurship, but rapidly moving from one thing to another may also erode the time, emulation and knowledge needed for creative ideas to mature (McRobbie, 2002). Similarly, in academia, when projects are based on funding decisions, people in charge are not permanent and have to change positions, project-based research and employment has been proven to weaken the quality of the research (PECRES, 2011).

Casualization and individualization concur with the destabilization of professional status and labor regulations, and with a depoliticizing of the workplace. Unions and collective action seem non-existent, except for the strong movement of '*Les Intermittents du Spectacle*' in France in 2003. Casualization, and all issues related to uncertainty of employment and income loss, strongly impact workplace politics (Gill, 2002; McRobbie, 2002). Specific artistic practices, such as dance or the circus, have a wearing effect on the body that explains the short career path and young age of its workforce.[2] This same result can be attested to the organization of work. Uncertain income and flexible work schedules are problematic for families and particularly for single parents. This may explain why the representation of women in the creative workforce is inferior to the whole population average.[3] Similarly, as invisible rules control access to new contracts, personal networks must be created, maintained and reinforced. The social network is subtle: social skills and resources (personal network and ethos) are necessary to access unadvertised job openings or word-of-mouth offers; one may not belong to the "proper" community (such as graduates of the French *Grandes Ecoles*) and be *de facto* excluded from the job market. Outsourcing and subcontracting pushes the relationship between employers and workers away from labor regulations towards commercial relations. These workers have become entrepreneurs, forced to adapt and take responsibilities and assume risks that used to be part of the employers' duties. Labor regulations no longer determine working times and schedules, nor set a minimum wage. These self-exploited workers must adhere to new working conventions: extensive work schedules and no time limits. By accepting these conditions, they withdraw their right to complain, as this would be considered "uncool", making further employment opportunities near impossible to find. One strategy is to use the rhetoric of passionate work to minimize this self-exploitation in discourses. Similarly, minimum wage regulations no longer determine the price of work. In this competitive job market, subcontractors will attempt to lower their bid to get a foot in the door or gain access to a prestigious work order. In a star-system economy, the value of a worker is based more on the reputation of the client, rather than the skills he/she developed. In this type of economy, networking and self-staging become compulsory. Going to the pub after work or attending parties become part of one's professional duties in order to maintain and upgrade self-employability. Long working hours, combined with attendance at professional after-hour events, contribute to a melding of one's professional and personal life. Is going to a pub with colleagues after work, work or leisure? Going to the launch of a friend's book publication or to the opening of another's new exhibition is both a proof of friendship and a professional gathering that can open up new opportunities for networking. Casual management practices in the office and cool professional events provide actual stages where workers are required to perform. For a variety of workers, be they models or web-professionals, attending events offers both the means of creating their own image, career and reputation, and building the image of their (new) profession as a cool one (Gill & Pratt, 2008; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999; McRobbie, 2002; Menger, 2002; Neff et al., 2005; Prichard, 2002; Rambach & Rambach, 2009; Ross, 2008; Storey et al., 2005; Taylor & Littleton, 2008). Thus, in this type of creative economy, where the winner takes all, workers have to face precariousness and uncertainty by deploying an entrepreneurial ethos based on compulsory networking, permanent self-staging, continuous skills upgrading, multi-tasking, individual competition and inter-individual ranking and comparisons, a boundary-less career, and portfolio and reputation management.

The urban conditions of creative work

Urban agglomeration should offer various functional spaces to companies and individuals that contribute to the creative economy: spaces for production, socialization, consumption, commercialization and residence. But, the very work featured by creative industries, and shaped by casualization and individualization, creates constraints on location that contradict the effects of urban strategies on land values. Urban development strategies conflict with the requirements of creative industries and its professionals. As local actors experiment with solutions that shape the needs of creative workers, we must examine the extent to which real estate overvalorization influences, and the effect of new development regulations on the gradual exclusion of the creative workers from these urban spaces.

Production

Looking at patterns of organization for production within creative industries, a new dialectic between individualization and collectivization of production space has emerged. Indeed, while outsourcing generates the spread of small-scale businesses, and even sole proprietorships, workplaces have had to adapt to project-based production to suit variable production teams, as well as offer spaces for professional socialization. For instance, many freelancers are working from home and may experience a blurring between the two spheres; for many of them, access to a workplace is seen both as a sign of success (earning enough to pay extra rent) and the means to structure and separate working life from personal time (Gill, 2002). At the same time, while pursuing one's career is an individual process, the rise of working collectives within the arts and other creative sectors (such as design and architecture) shows the importance of peer-group networking. Within the collective, peers share information, skills and knowledge, implement personal projects and build their individual reputation together with that of the collective's (Liot, 2009).

Various agents are designing new kinds of workplaces in an attempt to meet these contradictory needs. The Art Squat movement has led the way to new configurations of workplaces: multidisciplinary, open to amateurs or newcomers, open to the public and collective studios. Following the French Minister of Culture efforts to understand and support alternative cultural places (Lextrait, 2001) and inspired by squats and other alternative spaces, the City of Paris developed several projects allocated for cultural production space (Vivant, 2009, 2010). For instance, *l'Atelier Commun*, designed with former artist squatters and supported by the City Council, offers a variety of workplaces (performing art studios, open workshops for visual artists, offices) to professionals and amateurs for less than 5 € per half-day. Many other co-working spaces have been developed, in Paris and elsewhere. The aim is to offer adaptable workplaces for temporary use at a low price, as well as support socialization of individual workers. A handful of real estate professionals are now interested in creating new kinds of workplaces for creative activities. For instance, *C Development* (a commercial real estate developer) is offering several co-working places in the Paris area. In some ways, creative industries, with their specific requirements for production space, have become a niche market for innovative real estate development.

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[2] In the Paris Region, creative workers are younger than the average: 41.4% are less than 35 years old to 36.7% in the regional workforce (Camors et al., 2011).

[3] In the Paris Region, women count for 44.3% of the creative work force, compared to the 47.9% regional average (Camors et al., 2011).

Consumption and socialization

In a creative economy, production requiring creativity and innovation draws its inspiration from others, from a compulsory involvement in cultural life to personal cultural consumption. As R. Lloyd describes in Chicago, spaces of cultural production and consumption are often embedded in creative quarters where the neo-bohemia can interplay (Lloyd, 2002). In these sectors, portfolios and reputation prevail on the job-seeking scene; resulting in compulsory networking and permanent self-staging during professional events. Thus, access to cultural places, events and goods can be seen as a professional requirement.

Artists and creative workers fashion spaces to fit their needs: the *off* scene of Berlin exemplifies the myth of a neo-bohemian space in a city full of empty spaces that can be turned into creative places. Temporary use of space by creative professionals has even become a planning tool (*Zwischennutzung*) to manage vacancy and to capitalize on the *off* scene as paragon of the creative city (Colomb, 2012; Till, 2011). But even in Berlin, as elsewhere, those very strategies of making and staging a creative city have threatened other existing local, vibrant creative centers (Novy & Colomb, 2012). Urban development based on cultural consumption and socialization causes the disappearance of existing social, cultural places in the neighborhood.

Contemporary urban development with economic interest at its core, does not allow alternative places to thrive. For instance, Val d'Europe can be considered as a major creative space in the Paris Region. This city at the edge of the Metropolitan area was originally created and developed some 20 years ago by the French State in partnership with Disney Company specifically for the creation of the Disneyland Paris Attraction Park. Located 40 km away from Paris, the Disney parks employ 14,000 people, welcomes 15 million visitors a year and generates about 37,000 jobs locally.[4] About 9% of the local workforce works in the creative industry (Camors et al., 2011). This is both a production and a consumption space for a creative economy (Bontje & Burdack, 2005). However, strolling around this new urban paradise, one can hardly imagine they are walking through a creative hub. Indeed, Disney's aim when contracting this 2000 hectares development was to secure its investments through the control of urban and architectural development and the regulation of public space. As in other CCTV – BID environments, no unscheduled event, nor any alternative use of the space is allowed. There can be no expression of creativity in this public realm. In this new development, no place is planned for, nor available for artists and creative professionals to work or meet except in Disney('s) village.[5]

As economic interests threaten local creative communities, city night-life (as both a space of socialization for creatives and a scene for their production) is also under threat for a greater part by franchised businesses replacing local establishments (Chatterton & Hollands, 2003). Furthermore, noise complaints by residents have also led to establishments such as bars and nightclubs having to close down. In Paris, in partnership with the City council, a meeting was organized to address the conflicts arising around what urban night-life should be. This meeting revealed the various contradictions of inner city living, including the demand for animation and vibrancy in the downtown core without the various nuisances they may generate. Indeed, City council has organized *La Nuit Blanche*[6] every year for the last 11 years, while representatives of the night-time industries expressed concern for the various perceived threats on their business and thus on the night-life that is, in their opinion, a key economic factor for the city.

Commercialization

Despite the dematerialization and digitization of cultural contents and their diffusion through communication networks, cultural goods are still commercialized through traditional modes such as shops and markets. Just as traditional cultural production spaces have become threatened by real estate market forces, local commercial units, cultural and creative shops and markets, have also had to face rent increases. Indeed, the valorization of commercial leases and the implementation of shopping center management practices (like town center management) have progressively excluded independent shops from downtown areas. Local shops, once authentically characterized, have given way to standardized and branded landscapes. Global brands now dictate the tastes and habits of a globalized new middle class. City streetscapes tend to homogenize, thus weakening and reinventing the authenticity and specificity of places (Hammett, Hammet, & Cooper, 2007; Zukin, 2008, 2010). As the number of independent spaces such as indie shops and flea markets declines, independent producers have fewer opportunities to commercialize their goods. According to McRobbie, the decline of independent fashion designers in the UK during the 2000's can be related to the extinction of independent shops and markets (McRobbie, 2002). While the number of independent fashion designers once bloomed in the 1990's, it declined a decade later (despite a rise in graduates): most of the designers either quit the field or joined brand name companies. Commercial circuits are reduced by the closure of independent retailers, which in turn, causes a reduction in production. To survive in the field, they have to abandon their personal creativity and production and enter the mainstream as employees or subcontractors.

How can one maintain diversity in the shopping landscape within the current trend towards brand names?

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[4] According to a survey made by local authorities: http://www.tourisme77.fr/professionnel-tourisme/observatoire-tourisme-seine-et-marne.htm.

[5] Disney® Village is the night-time district of Val d'Europe, with a bench of restaurants, cinemas and cafés own and managed by the Disney Company.

[6] *Nuit Blanche* is a one-night contemporary art event in the public realm (every first Saturday night in October).

Cultural goods shops, such as independent bookstores and record stores are facing a double threat: the real estate market and digitization. Yet they both contribute to the uniqueness and authenticity of the urban landscape and the promotion of independent and local artists who are far from the mainstream and star-system. Some agents have organized themselves to resist this double imposition. For instance, for the last 3 years in Paris, *Disquaire Day* (adapted from the US Record Store Day) with the support of the City of Paris, has championed the value and role of independent record stores in order to promote new artists. Most independent record labels support the event, emphasizing the importance of this mode of promotion for their business. *Vital Quartier*, another development supported by the City of Paris, is unique in how it promotes diversity in the shopping landscape. It selects neighborhoods where traditional commercial activities have vanished or those with a large concentration of « mono-activity ».[7] The City then buys shops and can select the kind of activities that should locate there, often with debatable results. In Belleville's deprived neighborhoods, for example, some of the shops have been replaced with art galleries and bookstores and thus have contributed to the gentrification of the Belleville landscape.

Housing

Creative workers has often been criticized for pioneering gentrification. This issue has been widely debated (to name a few: Cole, 1987; Ley, 2003; Solnit & Schwartzenberg, 2000; Vivant & Charmes, 2008). We do not intend to review this idea, we only intend to examine the issues and constraints facing creative workers and the compromises they make when it comes to their choice of residence. As we explained above, in a project-based economy, workers have to be highly mobile to adapt to flexible schedules and changing work locations. They have to consistently search for new employment by attending socializing events and through networking. Being located at the core of one's socio-professional network becomes key to maintain these activities; and urban centrality offers access to the places and amenities where this major means of finding employment can happen (Tasset, Amossé, & Grégoire, 2012). Keeping one's professional and personal networks rooted in a neighborhood also constitutes a resource for career development (Collet, 2008; Preteceille, 2010). Interpreting or explaining the process of gentrification must then go beyond a mere examination of the concepts of production (the rent gap theory) and consumption (the city living appeal). To what extent does the professional need for centrality contribute to the valorization of urban neighborhoods?

At the same time, the precariousness of creative workers' income limits their chances to secure bank loans or lease property. In a real estate boom, uncertainty excludes them from the much needed sources of housing. Newcomers (migrants and young adults) often must show resourcefulness or even have recourse to irregular practices to find housing: sub-leasing, false documents, etc... The sustainability of the creative city model is thus challenged by difficulties in accessing housing and location. We must question the fairness of supporting the creative economy as an engine for economic development when the valorization of space excludes precarious disadvantaged creative workers and companies from the city. While in Paris, public or private agents have found answers to other spatial problems, yet housing remains the dark side of the creative Paris. Despite various micro-local experiments, such as the revival of housing cooperatives, the lack of affordable housing for precarious workers threatens the sustainability of cultural and creative urban development strategies.

Toward a new understanding of the creative city

Our study of the contradictions and difficulties that creative agents face accessing work, social, commercial and residential places in the city, has led to a significantly different political understanding of the creative city. Rather than applying a creative gloss to the neo-liberal strategy of valorization, we must instead turn our attention to creativeness as an alternative means to face the issue of precariousness. Indeed, casualization affects creative workers as well as a growing part of the workforce. Until recently, casualization had mainly impacted the less skilled and the most vulnerable part of the workforce. Casualization and flexibility being introduced to the highly skilled creative workforce, thereby contributes to the rise of a precariat society, if not a precariat as a social class. As A. Ross noted, despite the similar precarious working conditions, creative members of this precariat have the resources, skills and capital to take ownership or negotiate where other members of the precariat do not (Ross, 2008). Organizations of creative professionals can join urban movements in an effort to oppose objectionable neo-liberal urban policies (Novy & Colomb, 2012).

A democratic understanding of the "creative city" implies that creativity-based economic development must incorporate social inclusion: creativeness allows everyone to express themselves, to share their own vision, understanding and feelings. Then, as creative professionals, and many other workers, have to face precarious conditions of work and life, urban planning and policies must answer to the needs and constraints of those precarious workers. In the context of uncertainty and unstable employment, as much as the unions aim to protect career security, how can planners, urban developers and researchers contribute in order to secure places of residence for precarious workers? To what extent can the "creative city" agenda open opportunities to reappraise contemporary urban paradigms? Strategic planning of a sustainable creative city should override economic motivations to answer the problems related to work precariousness; how can vulnerable workers live and enjoy in the city? In other words, assessing the conditions of the "creative city", we are compelled to consider the role of urban planning in a precariat society.

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[7] The term mono-activity refers in this context to the disproportionate number of fashion wholesalers or, at the other end of the fashion industry, of luxury boutiques, in some shopping districts. Without incorporating the local communities, these alienate the local residents as they threaten the existing commercial diversity and especially the corner shops.

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