Globalising the creative industries concept: travelling policy and transnational policy communities

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Abstract

The emergence of the creative industries as a policy concept has been recent and rapid. Despite divergent cultures, politics, languages and histories a wide variety of countries have adopted the strategy of recognising, celebrating and (sometimes) supporting the development of those industries considered to garner their value from the creativity of those that work in them. Rather than interpreting this emergence as a result of the creative industries being at the frontline of the rising global knowledge economy, or as the latest manifestation of a long history of cultural commodification attractive to neoliberalised governance regimes, this paper argues that the creative industries have globalised through complex processes of engagement in political and technical spheres as various policy actors and networks have sought to enrol the concept in their own political projects. This is explored by considering how the creative industries concept has been technically rendered as a global form capable of travelling to quite different places while still maintaining a degree of coherence. Three examples are given: the engagement of the policy concept by policy actors in the UK located at the local and regional level; the transfer of the policy concept to New Zealand where it was deployed first as a cultural policy solution and then as an economic policy solution; and the emergence of a transnational policy community of creative industries policy experts networked across globally distributed sites of knowledge production and exchange. It is concluded that globally there is much diversity in the development of creative industries policy programmes, but, somewhat counter-intuitively, that it is the common reference point of the original formulation that has allowed this diversity to flourish.

Introduction

Recent years have seen an explosion in policy for the creative industries worldwide (Cunningham 2007). They have emerged in policy programmes in a variety of countries and cities, including the UK, Switzerland, Australia, New York, Columbia, Brazil, Hong Kong, China, South Africa and Tanzania. Despite different languages, cultures and institutional histories, these places have found common cause embracing and developing a set of otherwise disparate industries connected by their supposed commercial and industrial realisation of that most enigmatic of human qualities: creativity. This rapid diffusion is all the more surprising when we consider the term was only first coined and defined just over a decade ago in the 1998 British policy document entitled the *Creative Industries Mapping Document* (CIMD) (DCMS 1998). Indeed, the significance of this document is such that its definition of the creative industries, and the practice of 'mapping' the sector through the use of statistics to delineate the industries and measure their contribution to GDP, employment and exports, were routinely reproduced in the creative industries policy documents produced by other administrations around the world.

The explanation for this rapid diffusion implicit in the policy and its surrounding governmental discourses is that regional and national economies are shifting from a manufacturing base to one of knowledge, innovation and creativity – resources understood as residing in the heads and bodies of the working population and therefore less prone to the capital flight that occurs when natural resources dwindle or labour costs become too high. In addition, the creative industries are seen as ideal sites for overcoming the scourge of 'social exclusion' through their accessibility for a range of communities as well as their essentially communicative character. As such their diffusion reflects the growing recognition by various administrations of the need to diversify their economic base in ways that draw on the creative resources of their citizenry and maximise the benefits for a greater proportion of them.

On the other hand, more critical accounts argue that the creative industries represent the latest step in the ongoing commodification of culture, here being performed by a neoliberalising state apparatus intent on creating markets that can govern culture through their particular incentives and constraints while opening new territories for capitalist exploitation. In these kinds of accounts the rapid diffusion of the creative industries policy concept can be put down to their possibilities for forming and exploiting intellectual property, their role in the revaluation of especially urban spaces, and the relatively low cost of implementing the policy in relation to their potential gain. Within the *longue durée* of capitalist expansion, the diffusion of creative industries policy matches the shift to the consumption of images and spectacles that marks the exhaustion of the present accumulation regime as a productive force (Ross 2007).

This paper offers a different, and arguably more mundane, explanation: the rapid diffusion of creative industries policy is the result of so many policy-makers, activists,

council and government officers, cultural entrepreneurs, researchers and academics from so many places being able to incorporate the concept into their political, cultural, economic and social projects. Rather than interpreting the inherent adaptability of the creative industries concept that this explanation implies as symptomatic of the kinds of broad underlying 'truths' just referred to – the shift to a knowledge economy and/or a neoliberalised global state system – I argue that the concept itself, and what it purports to represent, is indicative of the tensions and possibilities of globalising policy regimes. This is because individual creative industries policy projects are both connected, through the way they draw on other creative industries policy projects, *and* specific, due to their own conditions of existence in a particular place.

Understanding them in terms of this kind of geography can tell us about two things. The first concerns the kinds of policy-making structures emerging in a globalising policy world (Stone 2008). As the travelling of the creative industries shows, these structures facilitate the rapid transfer of policy into a diversity of places, many of which would have been largely sealed off from each other previously (e.g. the UK and China), and the positive and negative implications this might have for democracy. The second set of factors suggests how the creative industries concept has been able to align different and often divergent political projects and motivations, both in the specific circumstances of an individual project, and through the institution of a common term of reference between different projects. It is suggested that the experience of the creative industries policy concept is indicative of new possibilities for political intervention in a globalising world (Gibson-Graham 2006).

These themes are explored in this paper through two linked case studies. The first examines how the creative industries concept has been engaged with in the UK since it emerged in 1998. It focuses on the activities of one group of actors in particular, known as FOCI or the Forum on Creative Industries, who have sought to establish themselves as experts on the creative industries and, as a result, shape and reshape policy for them. The second case considers a country where the creative industries policy concept has travelled to: New Zealand. This case shows how, despite close emulation of the British policy example, the resulting policy solution took a distinctive shape in New Zealand as the creative industries concept was articulated with a variety of policy projects, resulting in a novel policy formation achieved during the three successive terms of Helen Clark's Labour-led government.

A wider perspective is then adopted to consider the emergence of a variegated policy community of creative industries experts at a transnational level (Coleman and Perl 1999; Richardson 2000; Stone 2008). This community is supported by an emerging infrastructure of conferences, publications and organisations that are engaged with the creative industries concept and continue to develop and apply it. These analyses show that, rather than reading the diffusion of the creative industries policy concept as symptomatic of underlying structural changes, it is possible to read it as providing an opportunity for engagement, invention, and conversation across divides. It suggests that

emergent modes of making policy mean new possibilities for political intervention. But before considering these cases in depth, however, it is necessary to situate the creative industries policy concept through a closer exploration of its nature.

The creative industries as global form

When the term 'creative industries' was first coined, it was given a definition:

> Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property (DCMS 2001, 5).

It was given substance as a set of specific industries:

> Advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio (DCMS 2001, 5).

And, significantly, the creative industries were, in the parlance of the first Creative Industries Mapping Document, 'mapped'. This meant they were measured in terms of their contribution to GDP, the number of people they employ, the export dollars they earn and so on. Some of the calculations are shown on Table 1. The creative industries were shown to exist through this statistical profile.

Table 1: Statistical representations of the creative industries in the Creative Industries Mapping Document, 1998

	Gross Revenue/Turnover	Exports	Number Employed
Advertising	6bn	565m	96,000
Arts and Antiques	2.2bn	1.3bn	39,800
Architecture	1.5bn	51m	30,000
Crafts	400m	40m	25,000
Design	12bn	350m	3,000
Fashion	600m	350m	1,500
Film	920m	522m	33,000
Leisure Software	1.2bn	417m	27,000
Music	3.6bn	1.1bn	160,000
Performing Arts	883m	90m	60,000
Publishing	13.3bn	1.6bn	455,000
Software	19.8bn	*No Data*	272,000
TV and Radio	6.4bn	234m	63,500
Total	**68.803bn**	**6.619bn**	**1,265,800**

Source: Adapted from DCMS, 1998

These measurements have not been uncontroversial. Indeed the first mapping document was produced in a short space of time by a private consultancy and widely regarded as a poor piece of work. Later mapping exercises were considered to be of better quality but were still subject to similar concerns. Of more consequence for the argument of this paper, however, is the way this act of measurement effectively *constituted* the creative industries (Christophers 2007). Although academics and others may point out the ideological nature of the construction (Garnham 2005), disputes have tended not to have been over whether the creative industries exist *per se*, as whether they have been measured accurately or appropriately, or whether the term 'creative industries' is really the best way to think about this particular set of industries (Galloway and Dunlop 2007). It is assumed that the mapping documents were measuring *something* relatively coherent, however poorly or partially. With an economy generally understood in calculative terms, a calculative representation of the creative industries may not be authoritative in itself, but it does suggest it approximates something in the 'real economy' (Mitchell 2002).

I am not suggesting here that the creative industries are some kind of false consciousness, that the kind of activity and industry performed by architects, artists and so on is not really creative, or that the creative industries concept distracts from some other 'really real' situation. While these kinds of social constructivist critiques provide for often powerful critical and political interventions, they remain wedded to the notion that it is possible to produce faithful representations that do not change what they claim to represent. Instead, I am arguing that these representations *order* the world by making links between disparate activities and practices, severing other links, and crafting a lens through which the world can be viewed and understood (Gibson-Graham 1996; Latour 1993; MacKenzie 2006; Mitchell 2002). For example, the representational distinction between economy and culture is one such lens, dividing the world into economic and cultural activities, with consequences for individual identities, funding structures, and everything in between. By describing 'the creative industries' links are made between otherwise quite different activities, such as theatre and advertising, through the idea they are both the product of human creativity. By linking this to another meta-process, as the mapping documents do when they suggest these industries are collectively growing at twice the rate of any other economic sector in the UK and are therefore the future of the British economy, these disparate activities are ordered together as a single sector defined by human creativity and available for government intervention, academic study and media discussion (Christophers, 2007).

But this is not the only reason the calculative approach of the mapping documents was significant. The creative industries have emerged as what the anthropologists Collier and Ong (2005) describe as a *global form*. This is not a description of the globalised nature of particular creative industry enterprises, such as specific film and music companies, as one might find in conventional economic and geographical accounts. Instead, it describes the way the *concept* of the creative industries has become global. This is reflected in its presence in so many policy programmes around the world, and in

their adoption by supra-national agencies like the World Intellectual Property Organisation or the OECD. But 'global' here is not simply spatial. For Collier and Ong, a global form is a form whose *validity* rests on *technical* principles rather than on the subjective context of their production or consumption: they have pretensions to being universal. Thus, it 'is not that global forms are everywhere but that they have the distinctive capacity for decontextualisation and recontextualisation, abstractability and movement, across diverse social and cultural situations' (Collier 2006, 400). The calculative rendering of the creative industries when they were first conceived lent the concept this capacity.

The lack of a specific geographical or contextual attribution in the definition and industrial constitution of the creative industries – in principle the creative industries exist anywhere these industries exist – has assisted in making the creative industries into a global form. The reproduction of this definition alongside similar sets of industries in creative industries policy projects all around the world testifies to this contribution. But it was the marrying of this conceptualisation to a calculative rendering of their presence in the economy that made the concept easily transferrable. Any economy understood in a similarly calculative manner would likewise be able to recognise the contribution of these industries to its overall constitution. As a result, unlike other 'New Labour' concepts (notably the 'third way') the creative industries concept has not only survived for over a decade, it has travelled all around the world.

The power of the global form is the way it is able to travel so quickly and successfully, making the particular perspective it presents akin to orthodoxy. The calculative regime typified in such measures as gross domestic product, the unemployment rate, the balance of payments, the rate of inflation and so on, through which so many policy-makers know their economies, meant that a technically rendered new sector, like the creative industries, could be absorbed. The particular perspective on the economy they induced – the rate of growth in the sector in comparison to other sectors – in turn induces policy responses, generally intended to further develop the industries. As this has occurred, the result has been a particularly rapid process of policy diffusion (Dobbin, Simmons, and Garrett 2007; Kong et al. 2006; Meseguer and Gilardi 2009) as different policy administrations and jurisdictions adopt the creative industries concept and it enters policy and mainstream discourses as a distinctive economic sector.

However, just because the creative industries concept has been able to travel rapidly, this is not to say they have been able to travel freely. Just calculatively constituting the creative industries is not enough: it takes political will to make policy. The constitution of the concept of the creative industries requires the conscious, and sometimes unconscious, actions of a variety of actors. Thus the creative industries have travelled not through a passive process of policy diffusion, but through an active process of policy *transfer* (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996; Stone 2000, 2004). It has needed the work of a variety of individuals, groups, communities and networks in all the places it has emerged to perform the measurements, produce the reports, define the issues, make the

policy and act on the initiatives (Coleman and Perl 1999; Haas 1992; Howlett and Ramesh 1998; Richardson 2000; Rochefort and Cobb 1993); all of which make the creative industries 'real' for those places.

This shows how a global form relies on an *assemblage* of people, networks, discourses, practices and materials in which it can be grasped (Collier and Ong 2005). As I have indicated, the calculative economic regime that pertains in most places is a key element in this particular assemblage, but constituting the creative industries still requires actors who will advocate for them, who will take the necessary measurements, who will illustrate how they usefully order part of a particular economy, and who will make claims for their efficacy over other global forms. It is in this process, where it is 'recontextualised', that the global form can change and evolve, ready to circulate again in a new form. It is also here that openings emerge in which different actors are able to insert themselves into the policy process, to intervene in the conceptualisation of policy objects and programmes, and to influence the changing assemblage and changing global form.

In the sections that follow I will explore some of the moments where the creative industries have been contextualised by particular actors, emphasising how this presented an opportunity for them to intervene in the policy process. It shows how the global uptake of the creative industries concept has been far from smooth and has not followed any implicit logic or guiding strategy. Rather, engagement with the creative industries concept in different places has often been disjunctive and contingent, but also frequently innovative and inventive. The result is a differentiated geography of creative industries projects around the world, but a geography that is connected together by the concept of the creative industries which continues to offer a conceptual meeting point for these different projects to cross-fertilise. This suggests that rather than viewing the creative industries concept as indicative of a way of seeing the world that can be judged positively or negatively, we might consider what it can tell us about how economic knowledge evolves in a globalising world.

Engaging the creative industries

Given the circumstances of their conceptualisation in the UK, and subsequent transfer to a variety of other countries, it is tempting to view the creative industries as a vehicle of some form of neo-colonialism. It might be argued that after the breakdown of the colonial system that had enabled the economic, political and cultural domination of other countries, the UK now exerted a new form of control through 'softer' forms of power; cultural and academic leadership, central roles in ostensibly democratic international organisations, prominence in emergent international political networks, and ownership of international media outlets. Through these channels particular political governance concepts that reflect British interests and/or values are pushed onto other systems, creating a degree of homogeneity friendly to an ongoing post-imperial British hegemony in many parts of the world. The creative industries,

conceived in a manner entirely unthreatening to the capitalist system that Great Britain has played a major role in extending and perpetuating, is an example of the kind of policy thinking that ensures this situation continues.

On the surface there appears to be evidence for this. As pointed out above, the creative industries were conceptualised in the UK and the three-legged stool of definition, industrial constitution and mapping practice that the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) produced has generally been reproduced faithfully, and sometimes slavishly, elsewhere. But dig a little deeper and it soon becomes apparent that this is only part of the story. Indeed, in the UK itself contestation over what the creative industries are, and what creative industries policy is for, has been rampant in the decade or so since their invention (Cunningham 2009; Ross 2007; Schlesinger 2009). It is necessary to consider not just how the creative industries have travelled, but how they have been *engaged* as they have travelled, or, more accurately, how they have travelled *through* their engagement in other places.

Staying in the UK for the time being, consideration of the career of creative industries policy here suggests that there is a more complex geography to this policy concept than the neo-colonial model would indicate. At the national level the creative industries were first deployed by a newly elected 'New Labour' government seeking to differentiate itself from both the previous eighteen years of Conservative government and from the socialist instincts of 'old' Labour. Leader Tony Blair argued that the country had undergone an important shift in the Thatcher years towards more liberal values that could not be realised in the Labour model of social ownership and collective responsibility, but at the same time the Conservatives particular brand of authoritarian populism was creating an unfair society and suffocating its potential (Blair 1998). New political concepts like the 'third way', the knowledge-driven economy, new regionalism, the creative industries and 'Cool Britannia' were used to diagnose the UK's condition and offer a way forward (Rochefort and Cobb 1993). 'Cool Britannia' and the creative industries were used by the new DCMS to celebrate the potential of the country's culture and suggest 'creativity' would be the key to the UK's future economic success (Smith 1998). The clamour surrounding the release of the mapping documents in 1998 and 2001 died down, however, following the sacking of Minister for Culture, Media and Sport, and political champion of the creative industries, Chris Smith, in 2002. They remained off the agenda until 2005 when the Government decided to reignite the creative industries programme after pressure from the music industry to act on illegal digital music downloads. The government appointed a Minister for the Creative Industries and began the Creative Economy Programme, intended to solidify intellectual property law and further develop the creative industries.

Meanwhile, these mutations in the esteem and nature of the creative industries at the national level were matched, but not mirrored, at the local level. At these lower echelons of government the creative industries were embraced with varying degrees of enthusiasm (Jayne 2005; Oakley 2004). The Labour Government's devolution

imperative created a series of Regional Development Agencies, and later Regional Cultural Consortiums as well, that saw (and, through some government policy, particularly a DCMS (2000) document titled 'Creative Industries: The Regional Dimension', were compelled to see) the development of the creative industries as part of their mandate. This led to different approaches across the land, with some producing CIMD-inspired mapping studies, others going further and making cluster and creative development studies, while some regional organisations did nothing. The result was patchy policy implementation (Jayne 2005). Nevertheless, the idea of 'creativity' was catching on. City councils began using it by putting 'creative' in front of their city's names ('Creative London', 'Creative Bristol') and forming departments and jobs in creative industry development. This apparent enthusiasm, despite a lack of policy models, kept the creative industries agenda going at the local and regional level even as they dropped away in central government. The geography of creative industries policy in the UK is as dependent on the work of these local actors, work with origins going back beyond 1998, as it is on the generative moment of the CIMD.

For those working at the local and regional level the creative industries were not a diktat from central government to be followed without question. These were actors who had worked with many of these same industries for years, although they knew them by a different name, usually the cultural or copyright industries. The fact that government was now talking about something that looked a lot like what they were concerned with, albeit with a different vocabulary, was the cause of some delight, but that did not mean a complete lack of critical engagement. This was the goal of a loose network of council officers, researchers, local activists and cultural entrepreneurs, effectively a small policy community (Coleman and Perl 1999), who formalised their association as the Forum on Creative Industries, or FOCI, in response to the release of the CIMD. Their express purpose is to act as an 'expert forum' on issues associated with the creative industries, providing policy input and advising on strategy development, particularly at the local and regional level. This was no opportunistic exaggeration by FOCI's members, many of whom trace their involvement in what are now called the creative industries back to a range of projects and initiatives started in the 1980s and 1990s in several North England cities, such as Manchester and Sheffield, as well as the emblematic but unrealised municipal socialist efforts of the Greater London Council of the early 1980s. The tenor of these initiatives often ran against the grain of the dominant liberal, consumption oriented policy discourse that fathered the creative industries concept, instead emphasising cultural work, employment, 'post-Fordism' and other aspects of production (Garnham 2005). This meant there was little chance that FOCI's members would passively enrol themselves in New Labour's project. Instead, they actively sought to engage and reshape it (for an extended discussion see Prince 2009).

Many of FOCI's members, and so by proxy FOCI itself, were involved in the creative industries projects initiated at the local and regional level. According to one member:

In the early days we were able to guide policy, particularly at the regional level because there was a complete lack of knowledge. The organisations had been set up at the regional level with people who didn't really know anything about the area. So we saw ourselves as befriending these regional agencies and guiding them in a way that we wanted them to use their resources... I think FOCI members did just about every piece of research at the regional level which established policy for the RDAs (FOCI Member, interview with author, 2006).

Being friendly with the regional agencies was not the only goal here. FOCI members often express frustration at the conceptual foundations of the creative industries concept, regarding the term itself with some contempt despite bringing it into their designation. Worse, however, was the way the categories of the CIMD seemed to be colonising debate, with all this would imply:

Where the word creative came from nobody knows. The specific definition was very individualistic. It completely came from left of field for people who had been talking about cultural industries and value chains and complex ecologies of distribution systems, and suddenly it was just about creative entrepreneurs exploiting IP. It was quite a weak understanding (FOCI Member, interview with author, 2006).

It was necessary for FOCI to not only influence policy, but to influence the very way the creative industries would be thought about.

One key moment in this effort was the production of the DCMS Evidence Toolkit (DET) (DCMS 2004). Intended as a guide for the regional agencies on the collection of cultural statistics, it was authored by a number of FOCI's members and influenced by FOCI as a group, with the purpose of changing the conceptual foundations on which knowledge for policy would be produced: foundations it was felt had been shonkily laid by the approach of the CIMD. Instead of simply measuring outputs by adding up revenue streams, exports and employees in the manner of the CIMD, the DET drew on the knowledge of the FOCI policy community to utilise a production chain logic which considered all the inputs that went into cultural production, so including all that work, such as catering, costuming, education, product supply and so on, vital to producing cultural and 'creative' products but which would not be considered such a product itself. Thus they would create statistical portraits of cultural production systems with valuable benefits: 'In addition to (introducing) functions that are not presently considered by DCMS, a more rigorously applied concept of the production chain works to 'deepen' the cultural domains when compared with the present approach of DCMS' (DCMS 2004, 11). According to one author (and FOCI member):

The failing of the mapping document was its conceptual basis where it was concerned with consumption but not with the interconnectivity of cultural production. By creating this model about the circuit of production it was like

inserting a time-bomb into the whole statistical framework… they're now beginning to realise that their entire framework is based around this (production chain concept) and they've actually got statistics on this and they have to think about cultural production more generally. It's (our) way of figuring policy. (We've) inserted this policy imperative in the centre. (Jokingly) It's like a virus (DET Author, interview with author, 2006).

The point here is not that FOCI's interventions have 'improved' our understanding of the creative industries, or even that they have been particularly significant in the UK or elsewhere. Rather, what is observed here is the way a group of actors who considered their own concerns to overlap with those articulated in the creative industries agenda cast themselves as creative industries experts who could give legitimate and authoritative policy advice. In the process, they have tried to influence how the creative industries are thought about and acted on by policy-makers. This provides an insight into the nature of a global form like the creative industries: it is not simply a homogenising object, colonising the thoughts and actions of all who encounter it. Rather than a vehicle of neo-colonialism, they can be a vehicle for peripheral actors to move in from the margins. A global form will often be *engaged* by those who encounter it as they seek to reshape and redeploy it in their own projects. Such a perspective has immediate implications for how we think about the travelling of the creative industries policy concept.

The creative industries in New Zealand

Given the contestation around the creative industries concept that has occurred in the UK it is difficult to sustain the argument that the creative industries are a vehicle of British neo-colonialism, at least from the perspective that this is a coherent 'British' project. Furthermore, the idea that a global form like the creative industries will be actively engaged, rather than simply acquiesced to, by other actors suggests their travels will be full of surprising, and significant, twists and turns. This also means it is necessary to focus on the particular moments of transfer to see the actors involved, consider the politics and nature of their engagement, and discern how policy is being assembled around the travelling global form.

The transfer of the creative industries policy concept to New Zealand occurred in the early 2000s under the then newly-elected Fifth Labour Government led by Helen Clark. Clark's government came to power in circumstances comparable to those of Blair's two years earlier: at the end of a long period of conservative (in the New Zealand case, National Party) rule and neoliberal reform. This concept of neoliberalism was used explicitly by Clark in a speech made in 2002 at the London School of Economics to describe the preceding fifteen years of market-oriented reform and welfare state retrenchment (Clark 2002). Her government, she claimed, would be different. But this did not mean returning to the pre-1984 policies, a time when the New Zealand economy is often described as a basket-case (Goldfinch and Malpass 2007). Instead, they would follow the lead of other social democratic countries to find fresh, post-neoliberal policy

solutions. To this end they borrowed ideas from a number of other countries, but most prominently Blair's New Labour with the 'Third Way' (Kelsey 2002), social inclusion and the creative industries (Larner, Le Heron, and Lewis 2007), although at this time the latter featured as no more than a vague reference in a pre-election policy statement to the need to develop them further.

A significant part of Labour's agenda was to commit resources to the renewal of the New Zealand cultural sector. Soon after the election Helen Clark made herself the Minister for Arts and Culture, giving the portfolio unprecedented status at the heart of power, and committed more than NZ$80m over the next three years to New Zealand's 'cultural recovery', an amount three times greater than what had been promised pre-election. This sparked a national debate, carried out in newspapers, on television and at various staged events, on how New Zealand could develop and promote its cultural identity. A number of these interventions made reference to overseas policy examples, although not always accurately. At one event, entitled 'Cool Aotearoa', the chair, and head of the New Zealand Arts Council Creative New Zealand, Peter Biggs inaccurately described 'Cool Britannia' as a 'series of policy initiatives introduced by the Labour Government over there in 1997 to foster creativity in the United Kingdom' (cited in Creative New Zealand 2000, 3). One of his British guests corrected him on the issue, advising him that in the UK 'Cool Britannia' had come to be seen in a bad light.

Meanwhile, in March 2000 the new Government commissioned a report, to be called the 'Heart of the Nation', or HotNation, on the possible future direction of New Zealand's cultural sector. Part of its terms of reference were to develop a strategic plan that would encourage '(a) strong and vibrant creative industry sector which provides sustainable employment and economic growth within an innovative environment' (New Zealand Government, cited in HotNation 2000, Annex A ii). The resulting report drew on the British example of the CIMD, reworking the definition to fit their purposes from:

> Those industries which *have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent* and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of *intellectual property* (DCMS 2001, 5),

to:

> a range of commercially-driven businesses whose primary resources are creativity and *intellectual property* … a range of activities which *have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent* (HotNation 2000, 5).

An improvised mapping exercise was also carried out that drew on existing Statistics New Zealand data on New Zealanders' cultural activities (Statistics New Zealand 1995). This was how a British policy example was translated into the New Zealand context through its engagement by the report's authors. The report itself recommended a number of substantial reforms, including the abolition of the existing Arts Council, and

the creation of a new Ministry for Maori Arts, Culture and Heritage and an agency for the development of the creative industries.

Ostensibly, HotNation ended in failure (Volkerling 2001). Having been unable to read the political moment, it was rejected by a new government wary of large-scale restructuring and fearful of creating a cultural funding system that would be an ongoing drain on its coffers (Matthews and Clark 2000). However, the section on the creative industries piqued their interest. During 2000 the concept came to be increasingly accepted as a useful way to describe a number of New Zealand industries that seemed to be on the rise, in particular designer fashion, film (thanks largely to the making of The Lord of the Rings in New Zealand), and music. An event held in September of that year, called the 'Creative Industries Forum', lined these industries up on stage alongside the visiting Chris Smith from the UK and made clear how the government was now thinking about culture (Creative New Zealand 2000). Alternative conceptualisations of these industries, such as 'cultural capital' (e.g. Barker 2000) and the 'cultural industries' failed to gain the same traction in popular discourse. It was 'the creative industries' that would be part of New Zealand's emerging identity.

The universality of the creative industries global form to the UK and New Zealand was further entrenched through a study that reproduced the CIMD's approach in the New Zealand context, but with more fidelity than shown in the HotNation report. The Government agency Industry New Zealand, charged with developing a policy for New Zealand's creative industries, commissioned the study by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, specifying that it would be based on the British study. *Creative Industries in New Zealand: Economic Contribution* used the CIMD definition, close to the same industrial constitution (adjustments were made because of the availability of data and how it had been aggregated between sectors), and the method of 'mapping' their contribution to GDP. It found that in 2001 the creative industries made up 3.1% of the New Zealand economy, similar to those of the financial and education sectors (Walton and Duncan 2002). Industry New Zealand then went further, commissioning a number of more specific 'scoping reports' that provided detailed analyses of a number of New Zealand's 'key' creative industries, including designer fashion (Blomfield 2002), design (Haythornthwaite 2002), music (Douche 2001), film (Yeabsley and Duncan 2002)[1] and interactive gaming (O'Leary 2002). Of more importance here is that this meant a sector *comparable* to one in the UK was constituted, making the creative industries universal to both countries.

Despite following the British example, policy development for the creative industries advanced faster in New Zealand than in the UK. In 2002 the creative industries were named as one of three sectors (biotechnology and information and communication technology being the other two) that would receive extra governmental attention. The Growth and Innovation Framework claimed that a focus on these sectors was necessary

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[1] This report was commissioned by the New Zealand Film Commission but was utilised by Industry New Zealand for scoping the economic impact of *The Lord of the Rings*.

to move New Zealand's production processes up the value-chain beyond primary production and increase the proportion of commodity value kept in the country (New Zealand Government 2002). Delivering on these policy goals became the responsibility of the Ministry of Economic Development and the agency New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (formed out of the merger of Industry New Zealand and Trade New Zealand). Here they focus on those creative industries that are considered to be able to add value to New Zealand products through their contribution to design or the ubiquitous 'Brand New Zealand' strategy. Other large scale creative industry projects, such as films, are also assisted as a matter of 'strategic opportunism' because of the windfall of foreign money they bring into the country and the ability of the tourism and nascent special effects industry to attain leverage from them (Jones and Smith 2005). This is a policy programme quite distinct from that of the UK.[2]

The transfer of the creative industries policy concept from the UK to New Zealand shows that this is a process driven by engagement. This did not mean it was particularly coherent. The development of creative industries policy in New Zealand was a disjunctive and often contingently realised process involving translation, experimentation and failure. As a result, while policy for the creative industries was initially intended to be *cultural* policy, it ended up being *economic* policy. So although the global form of the creative industries allowed for the connection to the UK and the importation of the concept, the policy assemblage that formed around it had a more complex emergence (Prince 2010). If such patterns of engagement are typical, the result will be a highly differentiated geography of creative industries policy as different policy assemblages emerge in different places. Nevertheless, all these instances will be linked by the presence of the global form, and this can have implications for ongoing policy development in all of them.

Making 'global' policy

New Zealand is not the only place the creative industries global form has travelled to. A range of administrative sites in a variety of places have adopted creative industries policy programmes, often emulating the example of the CIMD in defining, measuring, and making the sector available for policy interventions. It is now possible to compare the creative industries sectors of a number of different places, increasingly endowing the creative industries with presence in the 'global' economy. But while these places have generally engaged the creative industries in a fashion analogous to New Zealand, they certainly have not followed the exact same path. The result is a differentiated

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[2] While this paper has been under review the recently elected National Government has restructured New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. While the creative industries still feature, they no longer have a division assigned to them alone. While it is no surprise a pragmatist, centre-right government might be unsympathetic to calls to develop New Zealand's creative industries further, at present no clear agenda has yet to develop which might explain their omission. This reveals how difficult it can be for policy concepts to get a foothold for a long period of time. We await with interest the outcome of the forthcoming (at time of writing) British election and its implications for their Creative Economy Programme.

creative industries policy geography, but one that remains interconnected through their acceptance of the global form. Here I would like to suggest that these interconnections are maintained, developed and transformed by an emerging international infrastructure of knowledge about the creative industries. While it is a relatively loose arrangement, this transnational policy community of creative industries policy knowledge exists in a co-constitutive relationship with creative industries policy programmes, both drawing on them for developing its own 'stock' of knowledge, and using this knowledge to provide expertise and policy advice for individual programmes.

There are three main elements in this policy community. First, there are the creative industries experts. These are actors who, like the members of FOCI, have sought to engage creative industries policy and/or knowledge, resulting, with varying degrees of success, in their being cast as experts able to provide an authoritative voice on issues relating to the sector. These experts come from a range of occupations and include academics, consultants, council officers, journalists, cultural entrepreneurs and freelance writers. Many of them have attained such success as experts that they now frequently travel to other countries attending conferences, participating in projects and advising policy-makers. For example, a number of FOCI's members have utilised their expertise outside of the UK, including in places as diverse as Queensland, Beijing, St Petersburg and Columbia.

These experts tend to be located in the second element, sites of knowledge production. These include all those research institutes, universities, consultancies, think-tanks and research networks where knowledge about the creative industries is collated, synthesised, analysed, rethought and theorised. The most ambitious of these sites, such as the Creative Industries Faculty at the Queensland University of Technology, seek to become key nodes in the policy community by gathering some of the most influential experts and producing large quantities of research outputs (see the agenda set out by Hartley 2004). Others are less explicitly concerned with the creative industries but consider them to be an important part of their work. The Burns-Owens Partnership, for example, based in London, is a consultancy specialising in urban cultural development and regeneration that often focuses on the creative industries. Many of these organisations existed before 1998 but now see the creative industries to be part of their remit, or have reorganised to make them part of their remit. Finally, many experts are housed in policy delivery agencies, such as the Creative Industries Development Service in Manchester, where a large amount of policy and research work is carried out simultaneously.

The third element of this policy community are the sites of knowledge exchange where these experts get together with each other and with policy-makers and other actors to exchange knowledge about the creative industries. This includes a variety of conferences, seminars, forums, meetings and other formal and informal events. These range from small-scale exchanges where policy delivery agencies bring in outside experts to conduct research or advise them on the development of creative industries

policy, to large scale annual conferences that bring hundreds of people and agencies from around the world together in the same venue. One of the longest-running and largest of these events is the annual Creative Clusters event held in different cities around the UK since 2002. The conference website heralds the arrival of the creative economy, citing the rise of the creative industries and drawing on the CIMD's definition and industry list to describe them. Events like this allow for the exchange of policy ideas, the opportunity for policy learning, and the development of transnational policy networks as the various delegates see each other's presentations and socialise on field trips and at organised networking events. They keep alive the interconnections between the many different creative industries policy projects.

Thus a transnational policy community of creative industries policy experts, underpinned by an infrastructure of research institutes, knowledge networks, conferences and so on, has emerged in the years since the publication of the CIMD. It is a community kept alive by movement as experts circulate between sites, combining policy knowledge in new ways and continuing the development of knowledge about the creative industries. People are not the only thing circulating; research reports, journal articles, books and other forms of codified knowledge also strengthen the links holding the community together, as well as possibly winning new audiences. Indeed, as the community expands it articulates its knowledge with other knowledge forms. Events like Creative Clusters put the creative industries concept alongside Richard Florida's popular concept of the creative class (see Florida 2002), implying parallels and suggesting policy can be developed for both. Such articulations grow the community. On the other hand, the community is far from harmonious with disputes over knowledge played out at conferences, in the pages of journals and on electronic discussion forums (e.g. Lovink 2007). If the differences prove intractable the community could fracture, even resulting eventually in the creative industries concept being consigned to the dustbin of history.

Conclusion

The short career of the creative industries global form, as it has been described here, is indicative of two seemingly opposed trends. For one, it illustrates how transnational communities of experts are emerging that are able to influence policy-making across large parts of the globe. As Stone (2008) suggests, these communities and networks organise at a global scale and have increasing influence over policy-making in a range of areas, from the economy, to property law, to the environment. Despite this influence, these expert cabals are unelected and largely unaccountable. Richard Peet (2007), speaking about the making of economic policy, argues that the formation of international policy elites has been funded and driven by powerful economic actors seeking to consolidate their dominance through the global implementation of neoliberal policy favourable to their interests. He argues that this 'geography of power' is an affront to democracy and a threat to all our futures.

Counter to this, however, creative industries policy still has a highly differentiated geography despite the emergence of this community. The contemporaneous but divergent development trajectories of creative industries policy in the UK and New Zealand is illustrative of how a global form can maintain its universality while distinctive knowledges and policy forms are assembled around it in different places. It cannot be assumed that how the creative industries are 'known' and acted on in one place will map exactly onto how they are 'known' in another place, despite the apparent parallels that exist. It has been argued that this is because the transfer of the global form has been driven by the active engagement and contextualisation of them in these other places, rather than as a result of neo-colonial processes of homogenisation and dominance. Given this differentiation and given the active engagement of actors in these other places, the argument that policy programmes are simply foisted on unsuspecting and unresisting populations begins to lose its grip.

Rather than understanding policy-making as dominated by transnational elites making decisions in exclusive spaces that exist on some global plain above our heads, we should recognise that policy evolves through connections being made by a variety of actors on the ground. In making policy, policy-makers draw on, and are shaped by, a range of influences and sources that have reached them through a variety of channels. This is not simply a process of 'policy learning' from some absolute form of 'best practice'; it is the constant co-production of policy knowledge, resulting in often new and innovative hybrid forms which re-order the way we think about and act on the world, and that might get circulated out again to inform some other policy-maker's work. The shift that has occurred in recent years, and that is demonstrated with the creative industries, is that these connections increasingly accrue across global, or at least transnational, space. Through international conferences, globally circulating experts and texts, research networks and mailing lists, all multiplied in intensity by the telecommunication technologies and transport infrastructure that seem to make the world smaller, the possibility for evolution in policy, and the unexpected innovations that can come from so many different knowledges coming together, can occur at the global level.

This is suggestive of the work that the creative industries global form, and global forms in general, can do. The creative industries provide a common reference point for what is a wide variety of projects, all with their own particular political programmes and ways of knowing. Through the creative industries concept otherwise diverging projects that may never have encountered one another are able to speak to each other across the space that separates them. This is partly a function of the success with which the creative industries concept has been able to travel thanks to its rendering as an easily transferrable global form. It is also a result of the policy community and supporting infrastructure that has been assembled around the concept. Any new and unexpected connections facilitated by this global form could herald innovative policy solutions and political projects; and the more connections, I would argue, the more likely this is to occur. However long the creative industries survive as a concept and the policy community holds together, what all this points to is that the ethic must not be to think it

is possible to find some 'final solution' that will set the creative industries free and provide rewarding livelihoods for all those that participate in them, but to recognise that it is the ongoing dialogue and connections across space that give the idea vitality.

Acknowledgements

Biography

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