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Book chapter title: 'Creativity as Development: discourse, ideology and practice'

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FINAL DRAFT

Introduction

Creativity is now an established policy concept for International Development. The terms “creative economy”, “creative cities”, “creative industries”, “creative hubs”, and “clusters and incubators” are all well-known and routinely used by the many UN agencies tasked with development and to the numerous INGOs who carry out much of their work. Since the Australian government’s “Creative Nation” strategy of 1994 and the UK government’s “creative industries” since 1998, there have appeared creative designations the world over—Creative Berlin, Creative Lebanon, Singapore Creative City of Design, and numerous other branded indications that “creativity” is now a widely accepted instrument of urban and economic (not just cultural or artistic) development.

Design, communications, leisure, and entertainment-based industries existed well before “creativity” policies, of course. Creativity has allowed for their integration (at least, as an act of policy imagination rather than an actual economic integration). What the policy imaginary of creativity has amounted to is, on the one hand, a profoundly disintegrated research landscape with a heavy interest in creative “industries” (Cho, Liu, & Ho, 2018) and, on the other hand, an approach to development framed by a somewhat more general and hegemonic global ideology on culture, the arts, and development (Garner, 2016; Stupples, 2014). This “ideology” is specific to an age in which the neoliberal global economy has established an unprecedented degree of certitude and political consensus across the world on how we develop a prosperous society. Creativity has become a powerful signifier around which a rhetoric of dynamic trade, growth, and opportunity has evolved. It often appears like a meta-theory of economic development—albeit a meta-theory based on a jumble of circulated observations, half-baked theories, and new political aspirations for brand recognition and wealth creation.

The global ideology of creativity can be paraphrased as follows: creativity is an essential human capacity for new ideas, solutions, and improvement, and internal to all modern spheres of life (culture, society, technology, and engineering). When concentrated in specialized arts and crafts, and subject to the processes of industrialization, extraordinary “creative industries” emerge. These industries are extraordinary essentially because the value they generate is manifold and not merely economic (commercial or profit-based): for their value is as much intrinsic to the experience and process of creative labour as it is to the product or service generated. Creative industries therefore possess the power to affect profound benefits to the labourer and so to the social context in which they work and live, and

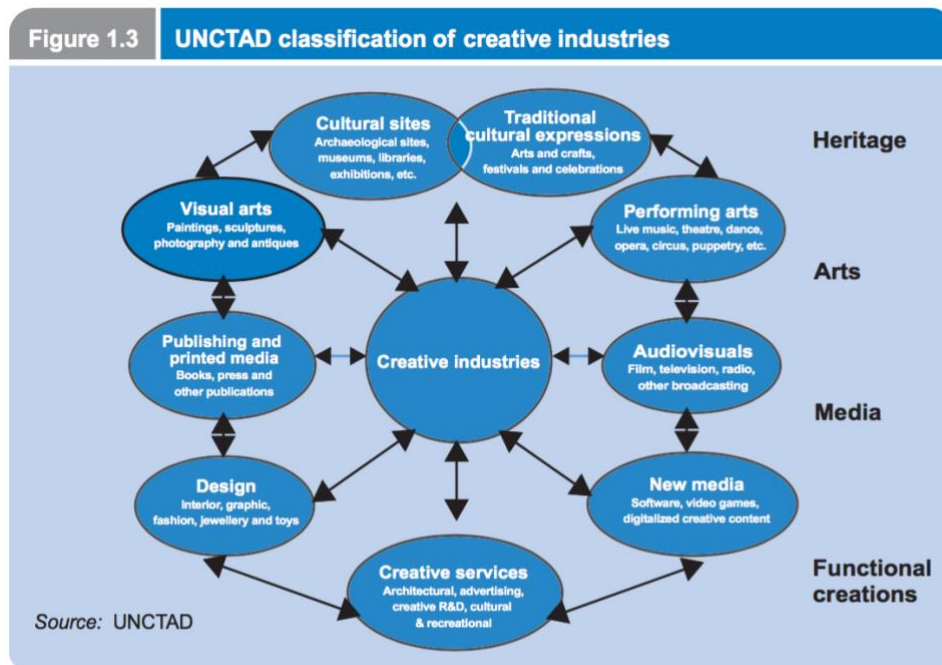
therefore to defy what are generally understood as the laws of the market or the general economy (that all value must be realized as exchange and financial transaction). For example, the creative industries require few material resources for expansion and growth and indeed can grow in adverse financial conditions. They have the power to command unusual levels of commitment and subjective investments in their labour. Indeed, creative workers labour harder for longer, in part as creative industries offer a gateway to valuable social and cultural networks. Creative activities find optimum conditions of growth in network formation, and in close proximity to each other (clustering), and large inner cities provide the most advantageous nexus of such social conditions of growth. Cities are therefore the new hubs of creativity, and the most advanced kinds of social and economic growth in the global economy. Moreover, the global economy offers the most optimum conditions of growth for all other forms of commercial, industrial, and innovation-based activity.

In many of its iterations, the ideology of creativity synthesizes a credible range of theories on new supply and value chains, brand value, retail and global economy, urban development, and the economics of agglomeration of small firms. Altogether it coheres with broader understandings on the industrial development of the West (reindustrialization since the 1970s), its increased competitive advantage through innovation and the “knowledge economy”, and changes in the patterns and methods of labour. Added to this are the panoply of repeated observations on how the places of industrial development and knowledge economy are more often than not places of culture and the arts; moreover, how the casualization of employment, rise in university education, and liberalization in the social order has generated a new environment for industry. The most effective framework for bundling all this together is, arguably, the Creative Economy.

The Creative Economy denotes the production of the organizations, industries, professions, policies, and labour associated with creativity, one of the most influential diagrams of which is the UNCTAD Classification of Creative Industries. It featured in the first chapter of the ground-breaking Creative Economy Report 2008 (hereafter CER, 2008; CER, 2010; CER, 2013), a UN publication that evolved and which we consider in the section “Introduction”. The diagram [see below] is paradoxical, in two senses: the CER 2008s early sections assert that the Creative Economy comprises the creative industries (e.g. p. 18), yet it is a mystery what specific structural dynamics or relations (the arrows) pertain between each distinct creative sector (indeed, if they really are distinct economic “sectors” at all). Secondly, it is surely the case that “industries”, like the performing arts or the visual arts or new media, are not actual “industries” in the economics sense, or at least, have not necessarily been industrialized; they often use the very same creative processes, ideas, and skills, as traditional or non-industrial arts, and indeed remain conduits of values that predate the industrial revolution altogether. Indeed, if “industry” is used at all, it could only represent an aggregated production of a generic category of incorporated organizations, abstracted from all the historical, cultural, and social phenomenon that have made them what they are. Pop music, for example, is undoubtedly one of the world’s most profitable industries (and which could stretch across many of the discrete industries in the UNCTAD diagram), yet in the countries represented by its market leaders—the UK and US—music is less an industry product than a product of the youth sub-cultures and their social dynamics in specific places. This, of course, is changing, if the example of South Korea’s industrialization of pop music (or

corporate production is perhaps more accurate a description) is indicative of future global development. Nonetheless, it seems clear, that categorizing “creative” activity according to historic genres provokes more questions than it resolves (Fig. 16.1.).

In terms of methodology, this chapter aims for a critical summary of the discourses of culture and development and creative economy and, in its approach, it will cut across Clammer’s social theory-grounded approach to development strategies (2012; 2015) and the thematic policy interests of De Beukelaer, Pyykkönen, and Singh (2015). While there remains a relative dearth of research on UNESCO’s intellectual development (from Huxley’s famous explication of UNESCO’s “philosophy” to J. P. Singh’s more recent and crucial institutional overview: Singh, 2011; Huxley, 2010), the last few years have witnessed a broad range of policy reports and highly useful historical summaries (Maraña, 2010, UNESCO, 2013, 2015a, 2015b, UNESCO & UNDP, 2013; see also Schech & Haggis, 2000 and Jolly, Emmerij, Ghai, & Lapeyre, 2004, particularly Chap. 8).



Classification of creative industries (Source: UNCTAD, 2010). (Reprinted with permission from UNCTAD: Creative Economy Report 2010, ISBN 978-0-9816619-0-2)

Creativity as a Global Policy Concept

In March 2007, the UN *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* entered into force, with over 30 member states supporting an international treatise on culture, creativity, and global economic development. The Convention had initially been agreed and published by its author, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), in 2005, and had its intellectual origins in the 2001 UNESCO *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*. It also had a political origin in a formal request by a group of member states for more research on the technical and legal aspects of a potential standard-setting instrument on such cultural diversity. Between the intellectual aspirations of an adventurous Declaration (which was driven by a call for cultural pluralism through a

radically expanded creative agency of people, civil society groups, and development organizations) and the deliberations of member states (motivated by their need for bureaucratic monitoring, budget management, and politically expedient cultural policies), the 2005 Convention was born. It remains a central UNESCO-managed convention, arguably the most significant cultural policy document in the world, supported by a productive International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), an international network of technical advisors, stakeholders, and supporters, and an ongoing range of artistic and cultural projects. In the terms of the Convention, “Cultural expressions’ are those expressions that result from the creativity of individuals, groups and societies, and that have cultural content”, and in the context of international funding for development, creativity must be supported (UNESCO, 2005), and protected against the perceived impacts of economic globalization—homogenization, market domination of Western cultural goods, and reduced participation in cultural production in smaller (or developing) countries.

However, the 2005 Convention revealed a significant fault line in a discourse on culture, creativity, and economic development. Between the intellectual aspirations of the 2001 Declaration and the need for a new international treatise on global cultural policy and management, there arguably transpired an ideological shift. Where development had been previously framed by an increasing need for a radical pluralist approach to democracy (and where cultural policy were an increasingly effective means of democratization), something that had been evolving in UNESCO circles since the 1960s, was decisively re-framed by the perceived economic challenges of global markets (barriers to trade and production). And while the 2005 Convention still celebrated the diversity of “culture” and “expressions” worldwide, and necessitated the support of gender equality, minority, and indigenous rights, its parameters were Articles 8–11 of the Declaration—on the production, distribution, and consumption of “cultural goods and services” generated by “creative work”. The nexus of culture and economic development—creativity—was increasingly re-contextualized using terminology derived from the neoliberal revival of neoclassical economics principally promoting the aspirations of international trade through free markets.

The emerging global economy was not a new priority: The UNESCO- established World Commission on Culture and Development published its first *World Culture Report* in 1998, subtitled *Culture, Creativity and Markets* (World Commission for Culture and Development and UNESCO, 1998). While the World Culture Report was itself explicit in its critique of the then “free-market” approach to global economy, arguing for economic justice in international trade relations and the access of developing countries to primary markets, the role of markets themselves, and the new processes of the industrialization of culture (through branding, consumer retail, mass media, and internet) remained insistent as it was theoretically perplexing. Altogether the World Culture Report left the relationships between culture as identity, as heritage, as way of life, and as group expression (the traditional cultural policy concerns) somewhat open-ended. Where the new creative industries (and not cultural policies per se) were being positioned as the new guarantors of cultural development, and where such creative industries were heavily dependent on culture for their creative inspiration, source of ideas, patterns, and designs, and the wealth of materials not assigned to Intellectual Property ownership, what “rights” did culture and the arts possess to protect themselves? Or was culture a common resource, to

be used up and commercialized (for profit) as is the “right” of commercial firms (and commercial firms are the core of Creative Economy, if the regular industrial measures are used).

From the late 1960s, a growing intergovernmental dialogue convened by UNESCO had anticipated many of these issues, arguing not for a King Canute-like opposition to the tide of economic globalization but a radical increase in our understanding of democracy through culture and international cooperation. It advanced a policy triangulation of culture, development, and the creative industries—particularly in relation to the agency of creative labour (the collective workers) in social contexts of labour. Article 2 of the 2001 Declaration continued to bear witness to this past dialogue: it had asserted that it is “creative capacities that sustain public life” (Article 2), “creative diversity requires the full implementation of cultural rights” (Article 5), and that an open process of public policy-making is the only way to construct the conditions for this state of affairs (UNESCO, 2001). Culture was understood as an arena where the deepest held human values, place-based ways of life, identities, and artistic expressions, were politicized and open to contestation in an international public sphere of policy debate. UNESCO was not cast as unquestioned leader but more of convenor of the new global cultural public sphere, and who respected and worked to protect all cultures and yet invited (obligated) all cultures to devise a facility for international cooperation, communication, and critical engagement through political consensus in managing the forces of the new global economy. Yet, the 2005 Convention, an outstanding achievement that it is, bears reference only to the “complementarity” of culture and economy and not the intrinsic inter-reliance of society and economy on culture (cultural as the very basis of economic life, values, motivation, and facility for productivity, and creativity as a process by which workers become active social and political agents, as well as economic agents). The interconnection between culture and economy was a pressing issue during the years the Convention was being drafted and circulated. In 2004, a Multi-Agency Informal Dialogue Group on Creative Industries was set up by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development), signalling how UNESCO was potentially losing its exclusive role in framing culture and the arts for global development. Creative Industries in global development policy was now significant, and creativity must be studied and become an object of policy.

A subsequent range of conferences, reports, and inter-agency dialogue, where the new discourse of creative economy involved the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (via its Special Unit for South-South Cooperation), WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization), as well as a wide range of influential academic advisors (Andy Pratt, David Throsby, among others), heralded a period of somewhat triumphalist aspiration. For as the 2008 report proclaimed, “the creative industries are among the most dynamic emerging sectors in world trade. Over the period 2000–2005, trade in creative goods and services increased at an unprecedented average annual rate of 8.7 per cent. World exports of creative products were valued at \$424.4 billion in 2005” (UNCTAD, 2008, p. iv). The first UNCTAD Creative Economy Report (2008), later updated and expanded to become the Creative Economy Report 2010, was a landmark document and hugely detailed and almost defying summary. Both the reports were less mere “reports” than major policy statements, in a new front in policy research that covered definitional and theoretical work on creative economy, the analysis and measurement of production and outputs

(from IP, distribution to value chains), policy evaluation, international trade (exports and imports), and with all the force of policy advocacy. UNCTAD succeeded in defining creativity as a credible (useful) term in economics, drawing on already established national policy terms from the UK and Australia where “creativity” now more than an industrial term but a politically charged euphemism for fast, attractive, easily consumable, aesthetically appealing goods and services with “cultural” (symbolically meaningful) content. The relation between UNCTADs Creative Economy reports (and UNCTAD’s continued creative economy data production) and the 2005 UN Convention remains complementary, and both are used by policymakers throughout the world. The UNCTAD reports pioneered research, methodology, and data dissemination on creative goods and services, emphasizing the function of the “creative worker” within national and potential international trade; the Convention provides (as an international treaty and legal instrument) the framework for ensuring that the creative worker is enabled to operate in this way. While in ordinary parlance, the term “creative” might well signify the individual, artistic, “intensely subjective” (West, 1997, p. 2) or whose enigmatic semantics emerge from the mysterious, pre-linguistic or epiphenomenal realm of the human psyche, and is so a term that always “defies precise definition” and is “infinite” (Torrance, 1988, p. 43). For politicians and those involved in decision-making for cities, regions, and countries, the “creative” is now a globally accepted policy term for economic development—with a range of agencies and consultancies generating data as policy-useful evidence for its direct economic function in commercial production, and the conversion of creative processes into monetized productions, marketable data, technical knowledge and skills, and commercial transaction.

The Creative Economy reports consolidated a process, which since the 1990s has been re-framing national culture and artistic production (the arts, heritage, crafts, and even design-based activities like fashion and architecture) within frameworks of economic growth but without abandoning an ethically compelling concern for poverty alleviation and sustainable growth. However, in terms of the politics of global development discourse, “cultural development” was effectively displaced by “creative economy” as a universal marker for potential transformative agency. That is, where culture once promised the activation of vital human powers of aspiration, imagination, and communication in the transformative reconstruction of human society, it is now the creative economy, albeit in a more realistic, pragmatic, economic, or industrialized form—as a synergy of clustered cultural industries—that has defined the stronger argument on its effective deployment in the demands of a global economy. Moreover, unlike “culture” and its practices, an economic recontextualization of the creative process more effectively abstracted a cognitive component and generated categories that allow us to recognize and measure knowledge itself as a product and legally circumscribed entity. Industrialized creativity is “a set of knowledge-based activities that produce tangible goods and intangible intellectual or artistic services with creative content, economic value and market objectives” (a definition first promoted by the UNCTAD Creative Economy and Industries Programme in 2005, 2008, p. 4), and thus where Intellectual Property is a major component.

That a policy framework for culture could be co-joined to Intellectual Property was an achievement for many. “IP”, since the 1970s, had been identified by WIPO (established in 1967) as a growing source of economic growth, and was the reason

why, despite deindustrialization and recession, the West remained dominant in world markets. The Creative Economy reports did not favour or promote the commercialization or marketization of culture; they were equally concerned with the value and integrity of culture as emerging from the social life and institutions of ethnic groups. However, they tacitly accept the grand narrative of economic globalization, whereby, our future social and cultural development depends on our reconfiguring of our cultural interests within the orbit of the forces of globalized economic production and international trade. By default, the interests of a Creative Economy-defined cultural realm inevitably favoured the educated, professional, knowledge, and technology-based industrial development, and where the social dynamics of creative labour, employment, and sustainability were taken for granted.

The huge policy achievement of UNCTAD's first framework for Creative Economy was in part that the "production and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual capital as primary inputs" is now globally recognized (the success of the film, communications, and design-based industries, hardly require an argument) (UNCTAD, 2008, p. iv). And politically, the recognition of creativity as a policy term is no small thing. Policy only emerges when ideas and concepts attain to a status of legitimacy for a range of political agencies; these ideas and concepts become policy objects when they are viable as a basis of strategy and action, framing legal protections and the allocation of resources. UNCTAD and their consistent production of economic trade data have been responsible for convincing many other economic agencies of the power of creativity. Even its admittedly fragmentary empirical data of 2010 nonetheless underpinned what became an internationally successful argument, that the creative economy was beginning to dominate world economic developments whether we like it or not. The message to political leaders was—you had better catch up and adapt your policy frameworks accordingly. The price of not doing so, is to exacerbate the situation the initial Creative Economy Report 2008 observed: "In Africa, for instance, despite the abundance of creative talents ... [t]he continent's share in global trade of creative products remains marginal at less than 1 per cent of world exports" (ibid., 2008, p. iv). The Global South had already been positioned as "consumer" and the Global North as "producer", with the unequal and enforced restrictions that this uneven relation entailed.

After the collapse of communism 1989–1992, few predicted the speed at which Western (largely US) cultural products would travel (and within a decade, dominate) not only international trade but many areas of national cultural life in many developing countries. It was during this period that certain business practices, financial priorities, axiomatic principles of organization, and management (such as the role of strategy), formed a set of incontestable notions on the way economic production and markets were configured and behaved. The new norms of economic production were essentially set by US American corporate business enterprise practice, strategic management, and its profit or market-orientated value system, but here emerged an irony. The corporate market-orientated value system denigrated all the intrinsic features of the creative industries—the small-scale, the owner-manager, personalized service, bespoke solutions, individualized, or maverick leadership; a high reliance on routine yet unpredictable creativity; a market sensitivity and often vulnerability; a chronic lack of capital or stakeholder investment, a limited market reach, a local or culturally particular character; in-kind collaborative or communal

labour; and the list could go on. Many of these were characteristics of a local artisanal economy of a previous age. And while some creative industries could appear “corporate” in scope and capacity—the film industry or pop music—on closer inspection, even they relied on long value chains involving small providers and maverick production methods.

Yet—and here was the irony—what the corporate market-orientated value system would denigrate as weak was celebrated as inimitable, distinctive, and uniquely effective in their power to generate value. Indeed, it was these distinctive and unique aspects that reminded us of the cultural and artistic origins of the creative industries—in themselves antithetical to the kinds of corporate management-driven organizations that were dominating or recognized creative leaders of the new global economy. And there were further ironies: the small-scale, individualized aspects of the creative industries were lauded for their social benefits. To paraphrase the first section of the Creative Economy Report 2010, the creative industries perform the following:

- Embrace economic, cultural and social aspects, usefully interacting with technology, intellectual property and tourism objectives.
- Evolve as a set of knowledge-based economic activities, with a development dimension and cross-cutting linkages at macro and micro levels to the over-all economy.
- Foster income-generation, job creation and export earnings while promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development.
- Offer feasible development options, calling for innovative, multidisciplinary policy responses and inter-ministerial action. (CER, 2008, 9–10 and passim)

While these observations are credible, the actual internal relations between “the creative” and development (social, culture and economic) remained so embedded in economic processes of production, organizations, and markets (and the opaque relations between them), that they could only be assumed to be true. Many of the social benefits listed tended to be “externalities” and not the actual products or services of the Creative Economy. Moreover, the terminology used to valorize the unique aspects of the Creative Economy are routine terms taken from neoclassical economics and theories of the market economy, and which themselves do not explain the specificity of creativity as an economic phenomenon. The primary context of both Creative Economy Reports was Development Economics but where the specificity of Development Economics itself was supplanted by new Western notions of growth and enterprise. Consequently, as indicated in this diagram by Creative Economy pioneer Edna Dos Santos Duisenberg, there exist obvious development dimensions around the Creative Economy, but these can only appear as quite separate, and floating (Fig. 16.2):

The context of this diagram in 2006—which, like all the diagrams of the Creative Economy reports, provided seminal visual reference points for policy discourse—was the UN’s strategic development framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which lasted from 2000 to 2015 (United Nations, 2000). It was during the latter years of the MDGs, when it was becoming clear that the UN’s development effort was not entirely successful, that new policy thinking emerged. A new alliance of UNCTAD and

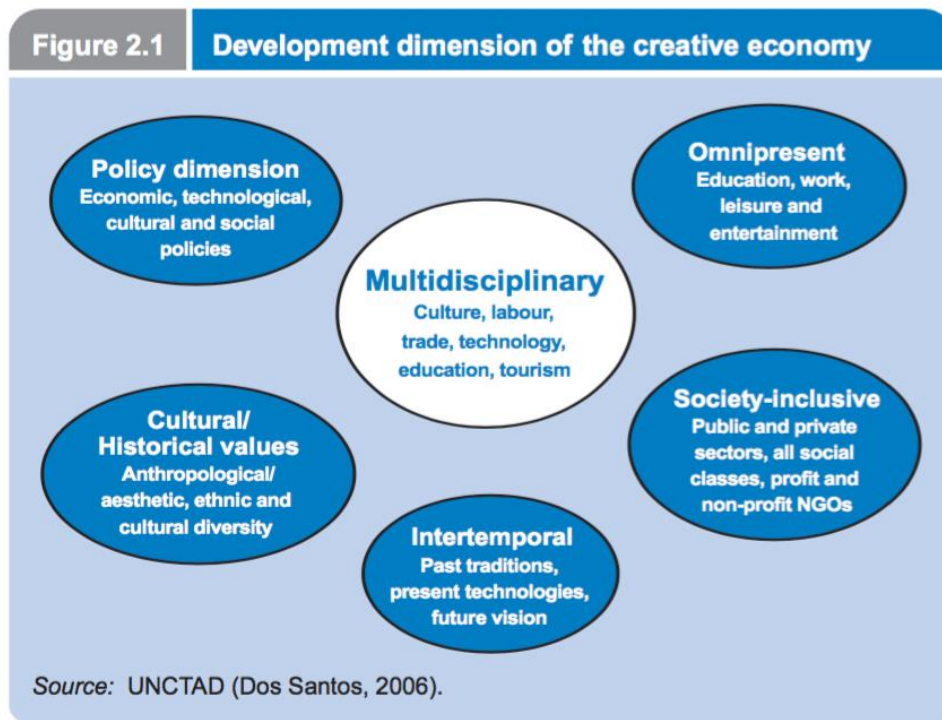


Fig. 16.2 Development dimension of the creative economy (Source: UNCTAD, 2010). (Reprinted with permission from UNCTAD: Creative Economy Report 2010, ISBN 978-0-9816619-0-2)

UNESCO, including a larger range of scholars and INGOs, made possible the Creative Economy Report 2013 (subtitled, “Special Edition: widening local development pathways”). While presenting a “supplementary” comment to the continual data and policy briefings now generated by UNCTAD (increasingly invested in Creative Economy as a dimension of global trade flows), the CER 2013 provides a corrective, somewhat redirecting of a development discourse trajectory back to the period considered in the section “Creativity as a Global Policy Concept”. The Introduction states:

... creativity and culture are processes or attributes that are intimately bound up in the imagining and generation of new ideas, products or ways of interpreting the world. All these have monetary and non-monetary benefits that can be recognized as instrumental to human development. Transformational change is thus understood within a broader framework of human development and is recognized as a process that enhances the effective freedom of the people to pursue whatever they have reason to value. (p. 16)

The report throughout is peppered with statements aimed at the ambiguities in the theoretical relation between culture and economy—ambiguities internal to the previous two reports, and exploited by the increasing “neoliberal” tendency of the UN member states. For this neoliberal tendency, Creative Economy was simply the mechanisms of general (consumer, retail, and service-oriented) economy, suitably liberalized and oriented to export trade and foreign direct investment (FDI), applied to the common, often free or at least cheap, cultural resources of any given social group or place. Culture was a new frontier of yet-to-be-exploited economic resource—and the creative agency of under-exploited social groups (young people, women, artists, artisans, low-skilled but literate office workers) could be maximized with minimal investment. It was to this context that the CER 2013 responded:

“Business as usual cannot be an option and transformative change is needed ... Continuation along previously trodden economic growth pathways will exacerbate inequalities, social tensions and pressures on the world’s resources and natural environment” (UNESCO & UNDO, 2013, p. 154). The CER 2013 also foregrounds as a matter of contention (first articulated in the 2008 report)—the highly creative developing countries who have little access to global trade. This was not simply because of the competitive character of the global market but “the way in which policy ideas about the potential of creativity previously elaborated in the developed world” has been deployed; rather, they “can be fruitfully and critically adapted to local aspirations, assets, constraints and energies” (ibid., p. 20).

A new “pathway” or “path dependency” approach, involved locating the social, material, and place-based conditions for creative production in a way that was economically productive but also “inclusive, equitable and sustainable” (ibid., p. 154). This “people-centred development” entailed a new conceptualization of creative agency, which emerges “organically” from communities and places and “cannot be easily ‘invented’ into industries” (ibid., p. 158). The CER 2013 warned that a creative economy framework is only relative to “particularities of geography and history” (p. 26). Moreover, neoclassical understandings of “economy” as linear and empirically self-evident processes of labour-production-distribution-consumption can misrepresent the complexity or hybrid features of creative labour in various cultural contexts. The arts do not merely produce market-ready art products (if at all) but are social processes of transmitting knowledge, inherited skills, exercising trust or locally mediated authority in representing the symbolic dimension of life or of a people’s identity. Supply chains could also be value chains, but also communal processes of deliberation, collaboration and validation. “Authenticity” was a crucial dimension of creative production in many tradition-based cultures, yet difficult to convey or monetize for a market. “Heritage” as a policy concept has attempted to undertake this role, but it is also struggling to define an interface between the local ecosystem and a visitor economy that at once facilitates yet threatens it. The CER 2013 thus calls for “a fresh analytical approach to help local policymakers bridge the existing evidence gap and rethink how a flourishing local creative economy could help improve the everyday lives of people” (p. 17).

While the CER 2013 also articulated new dilemmas for policy theory and application, three significant criteria emerged as a way of defining an ethically driven creative agency for development—an economy for creativity, not just for market-oriented creative industries. These can be defined as follows: place-based development; inclusive dialogue-centred participation; and a recognition that each separate cultural practice generates its own distinctive creative processes. These criteria, it can be observed, were internal to an earlier discourse on cultural development, to which we now turn.

Development Discourse and the Emergence of Creativity

The Constitution of UNESCO, signed in London on 16 November 1945, famously begins, “That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”; for the “common cause” of war has been “ignorance of each other’s ways and lives” (UNESCO, 1945, *Preamble*). Essentially, the Constitution remains a visionary framework of international cultural relations,

which foregrounded the need for collaborative (if unspecified) cultural projects. In these early seminal statements, the meaning of the term “culture” is assumed to be transparent, and assumed not only to be distinct and separate from the social, economic, and political spheres of life but whose activities span the depths of individual subjectivity (“the minds of men”) and potential for new forms of international “intellectual and moral solidarity”. After the devastation of World War Two, culture became a privileged vehicle for collective aspirations: it had the facility to articulate “democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect” of all, while maintain “full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge” (UNESCO, 1945, *Preamble* and Article 1).

The contemporaneous Charter of the United Nations (1945), however, did not attribute great weight to culture: it is only mentioned in Article 1, clause 3, with the stated aim “To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character” (United Nations, 1945). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), (December 1948), was primarily concerned with life, liberty, property, and mobility, where culture was technically marginal. It was only with the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), adopted in December 1966, that “culture” became a legally defensible policy concept (United Nations, 2003), if a little lacking in detail. While many UN member states took some time to sign up to the ICESCR (China did not sign until March 2001), it was arguably the first attempt to phrase a consensus-based concept of culture, and framed it in terms of an active political advocacy of rights, equalities, and interconnected with the concept of freedom and self-determination. So, intrinsic to culture is the ability to “freely pursue ... cultural development” (Article 1). The ICESCR stated the right to the “enjoyment” of culture (Article 3), requiring “technical and vocational guidance and training programmes, policies and techniques” to achieve this (Article 6).

Article 15 echoes the UDHR and asserts the right to “take part in cultural life”, but along with “the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity” (where creative here is a euphemism for cultural, yet significant in its use in a legal context). The decade of the 1960s was significant for the growing intellectual debates within an expanding UNESCO orbit of conferences and research. A landmark series of studies in cultural policy was initiated at the Fifteenth UNESCO conference in 1968, following a research symposium in Monaco the year before, resulting in the document *Cultural policy: a preliminary study* (UNESCO, 1969). Its significance was not its impact on policy so much as the “field-building” of a new region of discourse where ideas and practices of culture, politics, and development were positioned in dialogue with other UN-level agencies and their member states. For the first time, member states were lobbied and instructed on how culture should be positioned in relation to government and international affairs, not just heritage and national patrimony in the arts. While not entirely successful in this, UNESCO nonetheless set out a credible role for cultural policy within the spectrum of a modern government’s public policies, and asked “What are the most effective procedures for assisting artistic creation?”, and asserted that “the basic problem to be solved is how to secure the freedom of the creative artist, while at the same time giving him the place he should have in economic and social life” (UNESCO, 1969, p. 18).

From the UNESCO debates of the 1960s emerged a recognition of two axiomatic conditions for creative activity (albeit where “creative” remained a euphemism for art or design-based activities of production). These were: social liberty for an individual who is both distinct and different in occupation, and his recognition as an economic agent in civil society. A full discourse analysis could trace these two concerns as they became conceptual themes throughout the complex course of UNESCO deliberations from the late 1960s to the 1990s. In what follows below, we can only register the intellectual advances emerging from the first intergovernmental conferences on cultural policies—starting with Venice in September 1970.

Venice, following comparable high-level conferences convened by UNESCO in Mexico City in July 1982 and in Stockholm in March 1998, generated widespread intellectual interest at the time and produced substantial transcripts and reports, all of which remain significant. At Venice, representatives of 86 member states focused on the public administration of cultural institutions and assets, but around which was woven a surprisingly broad-based discussion on the social and political conditions of cultural production. Attended by British cultural studies pioneer Richard Hoggart (soon to be UNESCO Assistant Director-General), the Conference asserted culture as internal to the “total” development of nation states (where international cooperation on culture was becoming internal to the concept of development). The post-conference report (featuring a paraphrase of deliberations, transcripts of speeches, and 24 resolutions) asserted that the methods of cultural policies should be “no different from those of general development policy” (UNESCO, 1970, p. 9), acknowledging the role of technology and mass media as internal to cultural life, where in a policy context culture should not be defined as just “consumption or the preservation of the past, but, basically a shared experience and participation in a creative process” (*ibid.*, Clause 38: p. 11). Culture was internal to society and hence must also be to “general governmental and social policy” (Clause 40: 11). There were two other prescient critical principles that emerged at the Venice conference worth emphasizing: cultural policies themselves could be “creative” (Clause 28: 11) and cultural facilities are not simply buildings for cultural activity but actively serve to “create a new public” (Clause 38: 11).

The first World Conference on Cultural Policies—acronym MONDIACULT—took place in Mexico City between 26 July and 6 August 1982 and produced what was the first “global” statement on culture (called the Mexico City Declaration). Attended by a huge number of member state delegates but also a range of other political entities, from the African National Congress to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the general report on the conference speeches and deliberations are still an extraordinary read (UNESCO, 1982a). For the first time in any high-level policy-related document, the terms “creative” and “creativity” are used throughout, and where “creative worker” could operate in many different fields, engaging in “creative inspiration”, “a creative mind”, “creative purpose”, and “creative work”. In its definitional sense, the term “creativity” was used in a way that made more sense a few years later when French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s work inspired the term “intermediary” to identify the broad spectrum of roles, people, and skills required for cultural production (Bourdieu, 1984). Creativity was not necessarily the work of an individual artist or designer, but endemic to a production process, which was often collaborative.

The Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies (and supporting documents) was assertive in its support of cultural autonomy against “cultural domination” (perceived as a continued colonial rule in the world through culture). It is often quoted in the same spirit as the 1945 UN Constitution, affirming axiomatic anthropological truths about culture being “the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group” (UNESCO, 1982b, *Preamble*), albeit where anthropology becomes politics when faced with the need for freedom of recognition and social expressions of identity.

The Mexico City Declaration’s section “Artistic and Intellectual Creation and Art Education”, features a strong demand for “the encouragement of activities that will stimulate public awareness of the social importance of art and intellectual creation” (Principle 29). Cultural policies are framed as the means by which civic rights and citizenship are fully understood, and by which a more holistic liberation and recognition are sought in the international as well as domestic arena. The Declaration also coined the phrase “humanize development” (Principle 11), presaging the later Human Development of Amartya Sen and Mahbub Ul Haq (UNDP, 2004). The Mexico conference was not the place for strategy building so much as agenda-setting, where policy meant politics and politicization: it asserted the “democratization of culture” (Principle 21), of culture as a potential force for anti-elitism as much as anti-colonialism and anti-militarism; cultural policy was a means for freedom of opinion and expression, and social equality. Number 50 of the Declaration’s 54 principles states “The Conference reaffirms that educational and cultural factors are essential in efforts to establish a new international economic order” (UNESCO, 1982b).

The policy radicalism of Mexico and its vision of a “new international economic order” was, in hindsight, tempered by the strategy-oriented intergovernmental conference held in Stockholm in 1998. Entitled “Cultural Policies for Development” it featured a huge delegation of 2500, and using an innovative conference format, it deliberated on new policy topics like the role of business enterprise in culture, cultural pluralism, the role of “place” as culture, children and culture, and the cultural politics of immigration (UNESCO, 1998a). At Stockholm, UNESCO’s leadership in international intellectual debate was in many ways affirmed, and where the surviving substantial 111-page report issued four months later made an emphatic and repetitive use of the term “creative” (in terms of creative people, creative ability, creative societies, creative freedom, creative imagination, a desire to “think creatively”, along with the new concept “creative industries”). The particular conference session “Creativity and Cultural Industries” was, predictably perhaps, chaired by a UK representative (the ill-fated Labour minister, Mark Fisher), and is worth quoting: “The Chairman pointed out that the present dynamism in the arts in the United Kingdom, even after several years of cuts in government funding, would tend to show that there is no direct relationship between public support [funding] and creativity.” Added to which: “In response, one participant remarked that this argument is often used by Governments to escape their responsibilities” (UNESCO, 1998a, p. 32). Indeed, co-Chair, Rex Nettleford from Jamaica, pointed out the inherent “tension between creativity, which is by definition ‘subversive’, and the State, which is preoccupied by Order” (*ibid.*, p. 32).

Nettleford also asserted that, in the context of global social and political instability, “creativity” should be used by individuals and communities to “reconstruct” the ways they live together (ibid., p. 32). Nettleford seemed to be echoing some of the more radical aspects of the Draft Action Plan (which had been prepared for the conference), which envisaged the use of creativity in social action, conflict resolution, and political intervention in the cause of freedom of expression (UNESCO, 1998b). Of the Draft Action Plan’s five objectives (each with a proposed “line of action”), two concerned creativity— in the context of “sustainable development” and “cultural industries”. Indeed, if the objective on sustainable development (Objective 3: “Foster cultural creativity as a cornerstone of sustainable development”) was articulated as a theory, creativity is defined in a truly ground-breaking way. The objective’s designated lines of action, point by point, asserted that creativity be central to individuals, communities, knowledge, rights and equalities, institutions, and governmental authority. It defined creativity essentially as the practice of a critical-cultural agency, whereby the material conditions of social freedom are actualized through cultural production, that is, culture can be instrumental in a broader political project: “Governments need to provide the conditions in which artists, cultural entrepreneurs and citizens may think, act and work creatively” (UNESCO, 1998b, p. 24).

First proposed at Mexico 1982, and with UN backing, UNESCO launched the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988–1997), orchestrating international debate, seminars, conferences, training programmes, information and research promotions, cultural cooperation and sponsored cultural projects (World Commission for Culture and Development and UNESCO, 1998). While this decade did not in itself generate the political advances previously hoped, it was the period in which “culture as development” became embedded in the UN’s policy imagination (UNESCO, 1994). It was now a subfield of the growing UN discourse on global development but also—stimulated by the pivotal 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro—for promoting the new project of “sustainability”.

The World Decade was defined by its prior published Plan of Action (1987) and extended the Mexico City Declaration that culture “includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs” (UNESCO, 1987, *Preamble*). Politically, the Action Plan aimed for an international dialogue, which, stated UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, would in turn “invent development forms”. And creativity itself, curiously echoing European avant-garde art, would generate societal transformation through new modes of thought and models of practice, transposing art to everyday life, and shifting our understanding of pragmatic issues in industrial or environmental challenges (ibid., p. 29). The Action Plan further insisted that creativity could contribute to all fields of policy (education, communication, science, and technology), and become as visible in “mass” art and media as the fine arts, and “creative workers” should play a greater participation in the “development of the natural environment and in the design of physical living conditions” (ibid., 96 and 97: section (ii), p. 29). Significantly, some of the most assertive statements on creativity were found in the section on “participation”, contributing to a public life of active self-expression, knowledge, values, and evolving lifestyles.

Reflecting on the World Decade, Maria Paola Goncalves stated that “Creativity is thus the product of participation by populations who wish to involve themselves in their own ‘modernization’ process through innovative inputs combining internal and external inputs. It may therefore be concluded that it constitutes a vital component of any ‘development’ strategy or project” (Goncalves, 1998, p. 44). In 1995, the newly established World Commission on Culture and Development published its first report, *Our Creative Diversity*. It remains a critical document in the annals of cultural policy, particularly as it comes after the collapse of the bipolar communist-capitalist world order (UNESCO, 1995). *Our Creative Diversity* aimed to set the parameters of an explicit “International Agenda” in cultural policy and global development, articulating the rising world-wide demand for more rights and freedoms, civil society participation in governance, and democracy in cultural provision. Moreover, the phrase “creative diversity” was a euphemism derived from the growing interest in “biodiversity” and the new environmental agenda generated by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 and their report (known as the Brundtland Report, where sustainability as a concept was first promoted).

Our Creative Diversity was the most advanced conceptualization of global cultural policy, incorporating the intergovernmental conferences, and arguably providing UNESCO with the expansive frame of reference it uses today. Culture is not merely the arts or creative processes of artistic production: culture is a creative dynamo of social participation, an instrument in the promotion of human rights, a means of gender empowerment, a global media of communication, an approach to nature and the environment, to minorities and immigrants, and even global governance through its inherent capacity to create trans-societal solidarity. The report claimed for culture a central role in defining a new “global ethics” of coexistence and governance. Cultural policy was also a critical heuristic with which to explore, clarify, and critique “key world issues” (UNESCO, 1995, p. 289). The report’s central activist aim was to proclaim in explicit terms the failure of economics-based development and establish the terms “cultural diversity” and “cultural pluralism” as twin axiomatic terms for a global cultural policy that would become the primary critical frame for the evaluation of contemporary social life in a global economy. “Cultural diversity” as a concept maintained that difference is the creative dynamic of all cultural production and expression, and “cultural pluralism” is the mode of governance appropriate to diversity; recognition and participation are essential conditions. The report’s third chapter, “Creativity and empowerment”, understands that in forging an “open and pluralistic” society, creativity will be central to democratization (UNESCO, 1995).

Our Creative Diversity arguably articulates, more than any other document, the intellectual trajectory of UNESCO from its 1945 Constitution to the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in 2001 (and the rise of creative economy). In this section, I have, by way of paraphrase, indicated how the historical discourse of cultural development was, prior to 2005, rich and intellectually evolving by way of intergovernmental conferences and international cultural relations. Understanding creativity became a way of investigating the social and material conditions of intellectual as much as artistic labour—and these were always specific to specific places and local contexts. Creativity articulates a form of human agency that is at once as collective as it is individual and possesses the power to generate new models of coexistence. And understanding the relation between creative human

agency and culture requires participation and collaboration. In short, creativity can never be reduced to a set of employment skills.

The Creative Production of Development

In this section, we will consider three practical examples of development work, each of which are connected only by the way they exemplify this above multidimensional notion of creativity, which had emerged (and declined) within UNESCO's "culture and development" policy discourse. Each example, in very different ways, articulates creative agency as individual and collective organization, fundamentally participatory and place-based (engaged in the complex of society and environment). The first case is an arts development organization called Nanzikambe (Malawi), the second is a cultural Centre called Stanica (Slovakia), and the third a peacebuilding agency International Alert (London based). Each short overview is informed by leading figures from each organization who have each participated in the organizations founding or historical evolution. The purpose of these examples is to assert how—outside the orbit of a Creative Economy dominated discourse—a "developmental creativity" is continuing and mutating in compelling forms.

1. Nazikambe Arts

Nanzikambe Arts, based in Malawi's capital city of Blantyre, is primarily engaged in the arts production of theatre and performance, for local, national, and international audiences. While theatre production and drama are their core competencies, they also extend to visual arts, street arts, and music. As a development NGO in one of Africa's smallest countries, they have obtained funding and strategic input from a range of international agencies (from the Royal Norwegian Embassy to entrepreneurial British development workers like Melissa Eveleigh, an interview with whom informs this section). One of Nanzikambe's original aims, which often appeared as a strapline on publicity, is "making sense of the world through the arts": this indicates the centrality of both individual learning and group knowledge (and the oft-fraught relation between them) to their creative approach. Given the precarious venture of using the arts in sub-Saharan African development work, they sought and obtained official recognition as the Nanzikambe Arts Development Organization, and since 2003 have cooperated with central government development strategy in the key thematic areas of health, good governance, malaria prevention, HIV and AIDS prevention, maternal health, and climate change. Employing 15–20 core staff at any one time, Nanzikambe involves over a hundred part-time workers and even more volunteers, and as an organization provide a rare hub for contemporary arts and development debate in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. *Theatre-making* is at the heart of their artistic mission, often involving productions in specific communities constructed around themes emerging from interaction with that community.

Melissa Eveleigh, a co-founder and development worker, explained how Nanzikambe had evolved as an organization, albeit in an "uncertain" way given their "context-dependent" environment (Interview with Melissa Eveleigh, 2017). The "context" was the persistent range of stakeholders "who had to be satisfied, brought on board, be satisfied, or "give us the nod", and so on; and as for the funding: Nanzikambe, from the beginning, had to demonstrate the value of its work in

concrete terms, “which is very hard in the socially complex and custom-based, village or tribe-structured environment”. Rather than comply with any one development funder’s agenda, however, Nanzikambe maintained a strong working ethos. This was articulated for Eveleigh as “a yes and ... what if? Let’s explore”. She continued, “every situation was a discovery ... we continually asked ourselves: how do we improvise with performance and participatory arts here [in this particular place and situation], and respond to real needs?” Their creative process was equally not formed by adopting a particular “development theatre” template: “every project was specific to the group being addressed”. This was the case, whether it involved working with street kids, with para-legals helping inmates in prisons, or engagement with HIV-AIDS sufferers through workshops and communities, or a range of other contexts.

“Our approach was spontaneous, responsive and unrestricted.” From a nucleus of committed artists and from a small project-based organization, Nazikambe forged a range of competencies, not through professional expertise alone but participation and social engagement. “We used Theatre for Development (TfD) and Theatre of the Oppressed—but *not as templates*.” For instance, she explained, Nazikambe took the typical TfD binary model of “oppressor/oppressed” and “fleshed it out in terms of the real complexity of the social situation”. This was despite the power of consensus that might be generated from the old binaries. This particular “oppressor/oppressed” binary, which underpins so much of the ethical substrate of development policy (identifying the dispossessed, the poor, the victim, etc.), “is actually not practically that useful”. Nazikambe’s work with domestic violence or risk factors for HIV, for example, required in the event a much more socio-culturally complex and nuanced understanding of the situation’s “many layers, levers, interpersonal interactions, social customs, traditions, group behaviors, authority and hierarchies, formal and informal, medical access, transport ... all kinds of conditions are involved in these situations”. The politically charged binaries, such as “oppressor/oppressed”, appear to offer a sense of justice but is not necessarily indicative of an actual source of the oppression or equally the actual outcomes of oppression and their social manifestations. “Oppression does not often just point to one person or a group, which is why we also engage leaders and decision-makers, and work at policy level.”

“In a city with few open public cultural spaces, the Nanzikambe Arts Performance Space was a very new concept, being inclusive and open for any touring performer (in a continent where touring is difficult)”. Nanzikambe operated with what they call an “Activator Network”, which is a range of semi-employed arts managers, producers, and activists numbering over 150 over 20 districts in and around the capital Blantyre. Activators are trained in TfD techniques, story development, social research, interactive performance and education, community mobilization, and specific technical knowledge. They individually negotiate projects and events with communities but also ensure that Nanzikambe can communicate and respond to their social concerns in terms of a dialogue with the community. Their “Tiyeni Methodology” is self-consciously “interactive”, where “Tiyeni” in the national Chichewa language signifies a “working together”. It emerges as a strategic approach to development, expressed strategically in their refusal to enter any given locale or community and impose pre-formulated, generic messages—particularly on communities who are facing specific problems with large issues.

Activators work collaboratively by setting up small social action groups in each community, using “local knowledge” as much as any development data for creating the relevant artistic content for the of drama and performance to be specific to that community. This approach regularly evolved into a programme of community activities culminating in larger scale performances. While reaching a population of 16 million people, Malawi is economically small and Nanzikambe now finds itself being identified as playing a national role in social and cultural development—and inevitably under some obligation to deliver on capacity building for the city’s cultural sector, as well as for government development agendas. Often operating outside the city, in a largely rural country and subsistence farming, Nanzikambe has notably responded to one of the worst African cases of HIV/AIDS and consequent infected or orphaned children, combined with pre-modern customs and consequent fears. This did not take a formal didactic approach to medical knowledge, but with, as Eveleigh conveyed, an emphasis on “creating situations of communication and expression”, where “the local people we gather for our activity or project discover for themselves what they need to know and how they need to use that knowledge”. Many of their techniques are story-based, where an activator or actor will integrate factual information with an evolving narrative directly relating to the communal environmental conditions of that place. Roles within the dramatic narrative “enact a process of collective deliberation and then decision-making”: the creativity is primarily invested in this process, of “transformation through art”.

2. Stanica Cultural Centre

Stanica is an interdisciplinary cultural centre, self-identifying on its website as “creative, educative and critical” (see also Ilic, 2015). It emerged from a building it restored and reconstructed from 2003 to 2005—the old railway station of the Žilina-Zaricie train station, which is still operational. The railway station location provides an appropriate metaphor, of a place as a living metaphor: as their old website stated, “We continue the story of a small train station, where people stop as they’re passing by, to share news and experiences from their travels.” As creative producers, Stanica defined their organization as tri-dimensional—as an independent arts venue, an artistic laboratory, and a collective of cultural activists. Founded by NGO Truc sphérique in 1998 in Žilina (which remains the legal personality of the cultural centre) and initially financed by an EU cultural fund, Stanica opened in 2003 and by 2005 was a notable public facility with a developing gallery, workshop, artists residency space, a cafe, a waiting-room, and a multifunctional presentation venue for theatre, dance, concerts, discussions, and screenings. In 2010, they began using the exterior space around the building now used as a garden, park, summer stage, and a children’s playground, and have now extended to two other locations—an experimental theatre venue “S2” (an alternative construction of beer crates and straw bales, built under nearby road bridge in 2009) and the Neolog synagogue in Žilina (restored and used as an arts and event space since May 2017).

The NGO Truc sphérique hold to a principle—that contemporary arts and culture generate “means of creativity development, personal growth and discovering new forms of communication”. This, in turn, creates “new visions” of social life—beyond the visions of the social order generated in the political or economic sphere. There is an emphasis on young creatives (most of the workers and volunteers in Stanica are in their 20s or early 30s), and also youth mobility, empowering, and providing access

to networks on regional, national, and international levels. In 2000, a “Creative Centre Ateliér” was initiated, with children between 6 and 14 years given workshops to facilitate creative skills in a range of arts, from ceramic, to puppets, animation, and painting.

Stanica centre workers are self-defined as a “collective” not because they all have the same contractual rights or interests (as would a cooperative) but on the basis of their individual (if not personal) sense of commitment. As founder-director Marek Adamov explained: Stanica comprises circles of interconnected “5–6 core-core, 15 core, around 50 volunteers—no elections, no hierarchies, annual discussion meeting, an open strategy but not official” (Interview with Marek Adamov, 2017). He describes its unusual dynamic as “relational—people just know what it’s about, as it’s based on values and it’s how we live”. New members arrive, but “it takes about a year for them to become embedded in the social relations of the place ... the unwritten nature of rules and strategies”. Adamov explains: “We are not averse to arts management models—but we don’t use one. In terms of work, “I have not done anything else ... this is a life vocation ... and the Centre is a collective of friends.” Stanica “makes a space for first of all for us, and then for others”. And the space grows, changes, or develops, as the group does, in dialogue and in relation to everything outside of itself. This is a dynamic, and at times, personal set of relationships: that’s in part, because in the city of Žilina there is “almost no artists” and no cultural sector of creative milieu on which to draw.

In 2013, Stanica published a statement entitled *The DIY Guide: creating a cultural centre* (Stanica Cultural Centre, 2013), which articulated a succinct philosophy of action. The “DIY” dimension of the centre is formed by two social conditions: (i) the specialization and bureaucracy of creativity in social or public space—who, for example, is allowed to design and build a facility, under what permissions and with what qualifications or planning laws. A creative project involving improvised and collaborative building will as a matter of course find itself in confrontation with the authorities. (ii) The lack of economic resource allotted for culture—the perpetual lack of funds for experimental or new forms of creativity. As *The DIY Guide* explained, Stanica’s two pronged response to this is to engage in intellectual collaboration with an architect willing to work within their philosophy (usually pro bono); and to engage in collective recycling, of ideas as much as materials, where costs are minimized as creativity becomes a dynamic of locating, understanding material possibility, reconstructing, and transforming the function of something. We “re-build, re-think, re-make” (p. 4). And this “re-” philosophy, explains Abramov, is not only a matter of arts-based activities but extends to the space and resources—where every space or piece of equipment (the sound system) can be hired, lent, or reused daily for something else (events, schools, markets, or other social activities).

The Stanica facility is defined as “live architecture”, where, as the Guide asserts, space emerges from a triangulation of collaboration with the centre, the architects, and the users. Abramov observed: “How can a cultural centre be a response to change? We began as an arts centre, but we now become more of a community centre—we will accept travelling cinema or children and young people, and now we have a rising second generation in our team ... children who did workshops here are now adults doing exhibitions.” With no guaranteed public funding, he exclaims, a willingness to “work in substandard conditions” is essential, and Stanica prioritizes

the kind of people who are “inventors and investors”—they invent new ideas and are willing to invest time and energy into its realization. Creativity emerges primarily from “the choice of venue”: renovation, design, building, management, programming, negotiations with authorities, legal, and financial management.

In terms of organization, “We are not always democratic.” There is no formal council or Board “with seating and voting”. Rather, there is “argument and people doing their own thing ... and convincing others that it is worth doing”. They are a collective but do not look for “common decisions” or consensus. An example is that “no one decided to build the second building—I started to build it, and people started to join in”. Abramov explains this in terms of an “open schedule” approach, where if one of the team wants to schedule something “they just book it in”—unless they specifically want to discuss it. He explains that “it’s important to have this freedom—freedom not to manage things ... management consumes valuable time, and it usually means trying to control other people: it’s a waste of time”.

Creativity is intrinsic to the operational dimensions of the Centre but not assumed to be all artistic or all exciting; but it’s always stimulating: “If you don’t have money, you have to be creative—many of our designs are motivated by lack of money: no budget, just place and people.” And, Abramov asks, “What is Creativity?”; “it’s nothing special—but to wake up every day and go to work, with a big group of people with similar values. This is more about responsibility than creativity—it’s not a project but a place, and demands a long-time commitment.” Likewise, the question of value, of evaluation or formal quality assessment, so internal to Development work, is not actually that relevant in this context: “We are successful if we still like it; if we still have people for whom can work, and with so many new ideas, if we don’t have to find another job.”

For at Stanica, “every day something new is happening, and every day we have routine in looking after the building, but at the same time we feel there is no routine ... that is our experience. And that is the achievement.”

3. International Alert

International Alert is a “peacebuilding” organization based in London. Working in over 25 countries, it contributes to conflict management of diverse kinds, and to worldwide information dissemination on conflict or and peacebuilding approaches to Development (Interview with Phil Vernon, 2017). The development activities of “peace” extend to facilitating community relations, crime and violence, gender equality, the management and distribution of natural resources, and to climate change. This is in addition to the more predictable and established political problems in citizen-state relations, such as negotiating minority rights and the development of more inclusive societies.

Phil Vernon, Director of Programmes, joined Alert in 2004 at a time in which the organization had pioneered “peacebuilding” as a form of Development. And yet, he asks, “what do we mean by peace? At the time, it still had not been fully defined in the organization.” Alert currently has around 300 staff around the world, with managers in each country who liaise with the head office in London; they operate on a direct reporting basis. Yet, Vernon describes the organization as having created

“something of a think tank intellectual ethos”, where ideas about how to *do peacebuilding* “need to be tailored to the specificities of each context”, thus creativity is not only encouraged but necessary, and consists of “an open dialogue, particularly with people in the field, which is continuous”. He continues, this is not merely a “liberal attitude or value set”, but as “most of our funding is project-financing obtained by the teams on the ground—and not centrally distributed by Headquarters—each project is based on a tailored framework for its own context, and on the creative ingenuity of those involved—staff and partners”.

For Vernon, “creativity definitely exists”, but it is “very much tied to the ideas, and thus emerges from a combination of dialogue and the acute pressure of trying to raise funds and achieve difficult outcomes in conflict situations. So stress is a useful contributor to innovation!”

Following the initial construction of the organization’s identity (as a “peace- building” organization), they evolved a strong critical orientation to the discourse of International Development and Humanitarian Aid in which they were situated, particularly in common understandings of governance. Development organizations in any area, for Vernon, can all too easily build up “a heavy management hierarchy: because of the constant demands for compliance, reporting, investigations, finance and taxation, donor negotiation and political accountability, and so on”. It all naturally generates bureaucracy and a consequent risk-averse management of development work, which craves predictability. In fact “most funding is precisely predicated on outcomes being predictable, something we dispute”. Creativity is not a term Vernon necessarily uses or hears regularly in the organization, but, on reflection, “it’s an appropriate term”. It is appropriate for what is routinely understood as the project-based improvisation and continual extemporization required in unstable, prohibitive and politically problematic situations. IA, for Vernon, promotes a freedom of “pragmatic spontaneity” among its project workers; they have a latitude of decision-making powers over the local design and implementation of a project, albeit within an agreed peacebuilding framework of values.

Alert’s thinking is “to see where creativity emerges”. For Vernon, “we begin by asking, what happens to development when we ‘add peace’: For when we add peace, the economy looks like this ... When we add peace, then safety and security look like this ... When we add peace, justice and access to the law look like this ... and so on.” In all, given the relatively nebulous character of “peace”, development work in this area “requires an initial act of imagination”. But it is imagination informed by a data-grounded and empirical knowledge of a particular place, states Vernon. “We need also to begin assessing what the gap is between the normative idea of peace, justice, and power, and the actuality of people’s lives encountered by the project team ... and assess that gap, and then work practically to close that gap.” This requires the kind of collaborative thinking that can define a pathway, then “strengthening that pathway, removing or negotiating obstacles, assessing distance and time-sensitive factors”.

Vernon’s influential publication “Working with the Grain to Change the Grain” (Baksh & Vernon, 2010) is in part a critique of the UN’s MDGs, and in part, a statement of peacebuilding methodology. It builds on Alert’s Programing Framework and their organizational peacebuilding methodology (International Alert, 2010). Based around

identifying how interventions can “work within the power dynamics of the political economy, while promoting changes to it” (Baksh & Vernon, 2010, p. 5), it is, as Vernon notes, “based on a ‘positive peace’, not simply an absence of conflict”. For “our idea of peace comes with values (a belief in progress, fairness, respect and openness), which are critical to developing and building a civil society”.

He continues, “Another key premise of ours, is that Development [itself] creates conflict.” When power holders are threatened by the changes that development may bring, if they see this as a zero-sum game, blockages arise. For “even as we make development progress in any society, we need also to forge the processes to create peace”. Vernon explains how this involves an organizational epistemology—a means of collective thought. “We work with a picture of a valley or a plain, in which our vision of peace is visible on the other side, and we have to chart a route towards that visible peace, based on an assessment of where the main opportunities are (i.e. the existing pathways we can help improve) and where the obstacles are that we might need to help find a way past, or perhaps try to remove.” For “it’s an assessment of the gap between the normative idea and the actuality (which would be defined in partnership with partners on the ground, such as Rwanda)”. For example, he explains, every organization has its “tool kit” of development strategies. And “development projects can give a country or place a lot of things ... but if the conditions of peace are not there, it can all dissolve”. In the words of “Working with the Grain”, development needs to be reconceived as “a local, endogenous process while the role of inter- national agencies is to promote, catalyse and nudge change, based on a sophisticated understanding of the political economy” (p. 6).

In Rwanda, Alert had to manage the complex situation of “post-conflict but without peace”, and find ways of helping build the conditions for peace. This, they identified, was most productively (and necessarily) found in economic relations (or social relations based around shared economic interests in enterprise and employment). “This included de-mobbed soldiers and prisoners, women, young people (with little knowledge of the genocide except the rampant myths circulating) ... they came together and we have seen situations in which people who were previously enemies now collaborate on business activities.” Vernon explained that the effectiveness of this was that it broadened the scope of the conversations from simply “need to become friends or engage in the problematic task of emotional reconciliation”, to include practical livelihoods-orientated initiatives. It was pragmatic civil alliances that formed the stable conditions for reconciliation”, “a social dynamic on a trajectory towards a more peaceful society”.

A counter example would be in the Philippines, where some enterprise and business alliances are part of a cancerous cycle of corrupt opportunism and may undermine progress towards peace. “A particular economy ... which on the surface might seem OK ... can underpin an informal economy of violence, illegal smuggling, land transactions, drugs and weapons trading.” Vernon asserted the need to achieve a critical understanding of a given political economy—and also the “shadow economy” (Friedrich Schneider’s now infamous term) that it conceals. This, he asserts, is critical “to ensuring the sustainability of peace agreements between government and rebel groups”. And how do Alert obtain access to that form of intelligence? “Through our research and dialogue with those involved, we try to understand how the vertical rebellions of citizens against the state interact with horizontal conflicts between

clans, gangs, identity groups or factions. Vertical rebellions often mask horizontal conflict, which thus comes to the fore when the government reaches peace agreements with rebellions.” For these are “the kinds of dynamic political environments we are dealing with”. In thinking of the creative process, therefore, “creativity is people on the ground—coming up with practical ideas on how to implement the overall peacebuilding framework and relate, incentivize and motivate participants and partner organizations, and the alliances that can help resolve conflict”.

For International Alert’s management, this means continually framing innovative ways of trying out ideas—framing ideas, testing ideas of change, then sharing those with others. Advocacy and outreach is used as a vehicle for this, gauging the responses and attitudes within government and civil society, economic actors in a particular place, and using this to help identify pathways to peace. There is an inherent curiosity to this process: “it all needs to be taken in a spirit of curiosity: peace is an approach to dealing with ‘wicked problems’ and remaining constantly aware of emerging options and pathways”.

Vernon concludes by noting that the problem with many “social change-oriented development approaches” is that they are driven by funding requirements, which create a tendency towards a logic of “problem-solution”, that is, predicting solutions to today’s problems, and using a “linear” problem analysis, (and “where a solution follows from the analysis”). Alert has to accommodate this, of course, as they do the demands of funders, but ours is a vision-based approach to peacebuilding—for example, we imagine, with our Rwandese colleagues, how Rwanda will be in five years’ time with our peacebuilding approach: not just better but with more pathways and more people empowered to becoming better.

Conclusion

The combination of the three cases above—Nanzikambe (Malawi), Stanica (Slovakia), and International Alert (London)—does not exemplify a common approach to creativity. Rather, they exemplify a diversity of approaches all outside the normative principles of the now dominant policy framework of Creative Economy. They all, moreover, exemplify a critical approach to existing templates of development, and with a central focus on their own endogenous growth as organizations they have all generated creative approaches to development in three interrelated areas. These areas were identified in the second section of this chapter as the multidimensional and original UNESCO Culture and Development discourse—where an ethically driven development agenda was characterized by place-based engagement, inclusive dialogue- centred citizen participation, and a recognition of the separate realms of cultural practice. On this latter point, a recognition of the separate realms of cultural practice not only admits that “culture” is a realm that, while conceptually nebulous, can cultivate forms of social autonomy (e.g. individuality and self-expression); and moreover, cultural creativity often exceeds our ability to manage or control it. For UNESCO’s Culture and Development discourse, creative agency as a means of development will involve (and evolve) place- specific forms of self-determination and political engagement—radical democracy, participation, and public culture.

However, as the first half of this chapter explained, the current dominant formulation of creativity (as a veritable global ideology of economic growth) is co-dependent on a set of economic norms, where strategic management, business viability, and trade in the global economy are not just aspirational for some creative industries but of normative value for creative life per se. Indeed, creative workers in developing societies, as the Creative Economy Report 2013 was at pains to point out, find themselves subject to a global regime of development governed by a wholly abstract conception of “economy” and where non-monetary forms of value were only ever supplementary. In time, the lack of intellectual continuity with the historic UNESCO discourse of cultural development—its intergovernmental discourse of combative and pluralistic international intellectual cooperation—opened an ideological chasm. Within this chasm, all understanding of culture as providing the conditions for radical democratic agency through a creative social and public life, was truncated. Currently, it can be argued, intellectual advances in our understanding of creativity are more driven through development practice and not through policy at all (still less, UN-level policy). Contemporary research in development creativity should consider the possibility of a “creative production of development” on the ground.

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Interviews

Interview with Marek Adamov (video conference), 29th March, 2017: 5pm–6:30pm

Interview with Melissa Eveleigh (video conference), Friday 30th March, 2017: 4:30–5:15pm

Interview with Phil Vernon (video conference), Friday 17th March, 2017: 11am–12pm.