

THE POLITICS OF URBAN CULTURAL POLICY
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Carl Grodach and Daniel Silver

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-------------|
| List of Figures and Tables | <i>iv</i> |
| Contributors | <i>v</i> |
| Acknowledgements | <i>viii</i> |
| | |
| INTRODUCTION | |
| | |
| Urbanizing Cultural Policy Carl Grodach and Daniel Silver | <i>1</i> |
| | |
| Part I | |
| URBAN CULTURAL POLICY AS AN OBJECT OF GOVERNANCE | <i>20</i> |
| | |
| 1. A Different Class: Politics and Culture in London Kate Oakley | <i>21</i> |
| | |
| 2. Chicago from the Political Machine to the Entertainment Machine Terry Nichols Clark and Daniel Silver | <i>42</i> |
| | |
| 3. Brecht in Bogotá: How Cultural Policy Transformed a Clientist Political Culture Eleonora Pasotti | <i>66</i> |
| | |
| 4. Notes of Discord: Urban Cultural Policy in the Confrontational City Arie Romein and Jan Jacob Trip | <i>86</i> |
| | |
| 5. Cultural Policy and the State of Urban Development in the Capital of South Korea Jong Youl Lee and Chad Anderson | <i>111</i> |
| | |
| Part II | |
| REWRITING THE CREATIVE CITY SCRIPT | <i>130</i> |
| | |
| 6. Creativity and Urban Regeneration: The Role of La Tohu and the Cirque du Soleil in the Saint-Michel Neighborhood in Montreal Deborah Leslie and Norma Rantisi | <i>131</i> |
| | |
| 7. City Image and the Politics of Music Policy in the “Live Music Capital of the World” Carl Grodach | <i>156</i> |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 8. “To Have and to Need”: Reorganizing Cultural Policy as Panacea for Berlin’s Urban and Economic Woes | <i>176</i> |
| Doreen Jakob | |
| 9. Urban Cultural Policy, City Size, and Proximity | <i>195</i> |
| Chris Gibson and Gordon Waitt | |
| | |
| Part III | |
| THE IMPLICATIONS OF URBAN CULTURAL POLICY AGENDAS FOR CREATIVE PRODUCTION | <i>221</i> |
| 10. The New Cultural Economy and its Discontents: Governance Innovation and Policy Disjuncture in Vancouver | <i>222</i> |
| Tom Hutton and Catherine Murray | |
| 11. Creating Urban Spaces for Culture, Heritage, and the Arts in Singapore: Balancing Policy-Led Development and Organic Growth | <i>245</i> |
| Lily Kong | |
| 12. Maastricht: From Treaty Town to European Capital of Culture | <i>264</i> |
| Graeme Evans | |
| 13. Rethinking Arts Policy and Creative Production: The Case of Los Angeles | <i>286</i> |
| Elizabeth Currid-Halkett and Vivian Wang | |
| | |
| Part IV | |
| COALITION NETWORKS, ALLIANCES, AND IDENTITY FRAMING | <i>311</i> |
| 14. When Worlds Collide: The Politics of Cultural Economy Policy in New York | <i>312</i> |
| Michael Indergaard | |
| 15. What’s in the Fridge? Counter-Democratic Mobilization in Post-Industrial Urban “Cultural” Development | <i>334</i> |
| Stephen W. Sawyer | |
| 16. Urban Cultural Policy in Spain: Governing the Entertainment Machine | <i>354</i> |
| Clemente Navarro | |
| 17. Planned and Spontaneous Arts Development: Notes from Portland | <i>377</i> |
| Samuel Shaw | |
| 18. Local Politics in the Creative City: The Case of Toronto | <i>399</i> |
| Daniel Silver | |

CHAPTER 18

Local Politics in the Creative City: The Case of Toronto¹

Daniel Silver

Toronto, like many cities worldwide, has significantly grown and changed in recent decades. But the transformation in Toronto has been especially sudden and dramatic. Its historic Victorian political culture, averse to public amusement and supportive of bourgeois virtues like thrift, family, and homogenous community, has been joined by new themes of individuality, public personal expression, and cultural diversity (Lemon 1984). Traditional self-conceptions like “Toronto the Good” and “Hogtown” now jostle and merge with “Toronto the Could,” “Creative City,” and “Visit Toronto, See the World.”

This chapter uses two case studies to explore how local politics have been affected by these changes. One highlights the politics at stake in cultural work and consumption. In the case of the West Queen West Triangle, a vibrant independent art scene, supported by city officials, politicians, and influential media figures and professionals, sought to resist and alter proposed condominium developments that threatened to turn one of the city’s core post-industrial employment districts into a “bedroom community for the suburbs.” The other highlights the politics of residence and community. In the case of the Wychwood Barns, neighbors clashed over whether to rehabilitate abandoned and dilapidated streetcar repair barns into artist live-work space, an environmental educational center, and a farmers market or to demolish it for a traditional grass and trees park.

Both controversies focused on the role of artists and cultural participation in work and communities, not as sideshows but as core elements of municipal policy. They led to significant rhetorical and ideological reframing of artists and self-expression more generally in Toronto's political culture, reconstituting artists not as delinquents but as do-gooders, not as deviant hedonists but as useful labor and good neighbors. These cases thus offer students of urban politics and municipal cultural policy an excellent opportunity to better understand emerging political coalitions and tactics and how these vary in different city and neighborhood contexts.

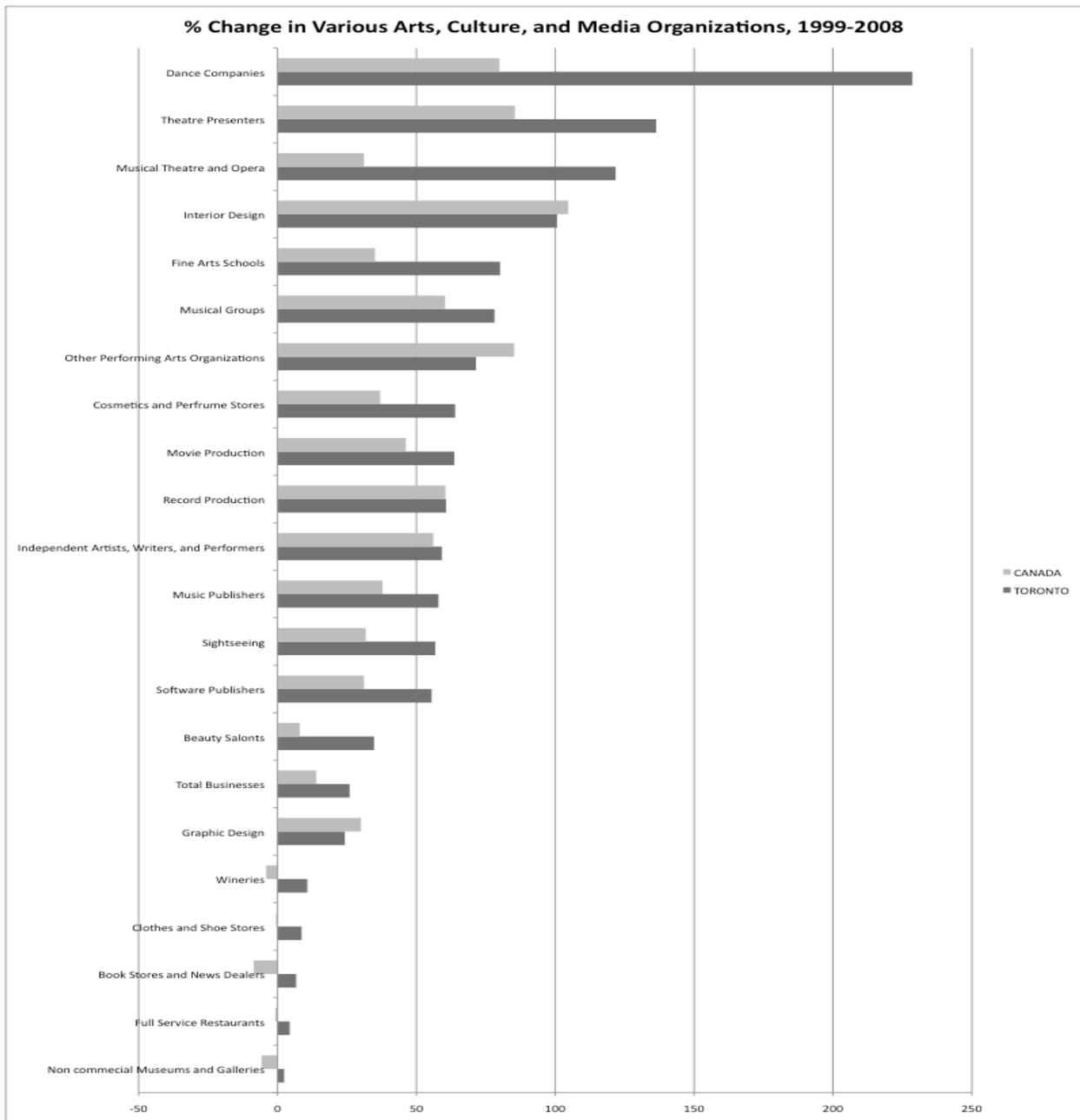
TORONTO FROM HOGTOWN TO CREATIVE CITY

The scope and rapidity of Toronto's recent transformations are profound, with economic, social, and political changes impacting its cultural life. Economically, especially since the early 1990s, manufacturing jobs have declined, service and finance have increased, and the post-industrial "creative occupations" from fine artists to graphic designers to technology and R&D have rapidly grown (City of Toronto, 2011). Trade (and competition) increasingly proceeds globally and on a North-South rather than East-West axis, leading civic and political leaders to promote the arts and culture as a carrot for attracting globe-trotting young and dynamic creative workers. Socially, waves of immigrants have settled in Toronto, bringing with them cultural and culinary traditions outside its traditional WASP establishment – first from Southern and Eastern Europe starting in the middle 1950s and 1960s (as well as counter-cultural Americans escaping the Viet Nam draft), then from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean in steeply rising proportions and absolute numbers through the 1980s and 2000s (Bourne 2005). Concurrently, average household size has

been on the decline, as more persons are living alone, with roommates or partners, or in small nuclear families, often in dense clusters of single family dwellings or newly built downtown condominiums – they live less under the watchful eye of the extended family and are increasingly demanding public spaces of sociability outside the home, like restaurants, plazas, cafes, and music venues (Bourne 2004). Politically, in the late 1990s, the City of Toronto was amalgamated with four of its suburbs. Previously connected in an awkward two-tier Metro-City arrangement, the new “Mega-City” instantly became the 5th largest in North America, spurring initiatives to make Toronto a “world-class” city, with cultural offerings playing a key role; it also placed demands on city agencies and arts advocates to explain how the arts benefit the city as a whole, not only the downtown core (Isin 1999).

The most visible aspect of these cultural changes is what has come to be known as the “Cultural Renaissance” (Jenkins 2005). Most notably, architects Frank Gehry and Daniel Libeskind produced strikingly modern and controversial new designs for two of Toronto’s most traditional cultural institutions, The Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario (Patterson 2009). But the “rise of culture” is broader and more deeply integrated into Torontonians’ daily experience than a few redesigned buildings. Figure 1 shows its breadth. Since as recently as 1999, Toronto has seen dramatic increases in all kinds of cultural and expressive organizations and amenities. Nearly all are growing at rates faster than total businesses are. Interior designers and dance companies have more than doubled in this period. Ernest Hemingway, who wrote a column for the *Toronto Daily Star*, once complained, “I hate to leave Paris for Toronto, the city of churches.” There are now in Toronto more holistic health centers, acupuncturists, yoga studios, and martial arts schools per postal code (7.13) than there are churches and religious organizations (5.11) ².

FIGURE 18.1: Percentage Change in Various Types of Expressively Oriented Business in Toronto and Canada between 1999 and 2008



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns.

NOTE: This figure shows percentage change in various types of expressively-oriented businesses in Toronto and Canada between 1999 and 2008. Whereas total businesses increased by about 25% in Toronto others like music publishing, record production, and performance arts organization increased by over 50%, while interior designers, musical theaters, and dance companies more than doubled.

One indicator of not only the breadth but also the depth of these changes is the extent to which arts activism has been integrated with local government. Crucial was the formation of the Toronto Arts Council (TAC) as an arms-length arts granting organization in 1974, taking decisions about arts grants out of the hands of politicians and putting them into artist juries. Toronto Artscape, founded in 1985, began owning, managing, and eventually developing properties that offer below-market rent for artists in order to preserve artist live-work space in the increasingly high rent urban core. The city's Culture department grew in this period, eventually merging with the powerful Economic Development department and producing successive planning documents that charted an expanded role for culture in the city. Though TAC, Artscape, and Culture operate separately, their staffs move in similar social networks, share common ideals, and shift employment from one to the other relatively fluidly.

The cumulative result of these developments is a strong set of organizational bases for translating arts advocacy into action, recruiting new members, and wielding political influence. This is represented in the vocal "Artsvote" movement, which proclaims "I am an artist and I vote," holds mayoral debates, and issues report cards about how arts-friendly candidates for city council are. They exercise classic pressure group tactics, targeting key districts where bloc voting by the rising number of people working in (or married to those who work in) the arts can make the difference in low turnout elections. And these organizational bases are only strengthened by the economic and social changes noted above so that the organized representatives of the arts and culture are able to speak with more clout, and political conflict revolves less about *whether* to deliver cultural goods but over *which* goods and how.

FROM STRUCTURAL CONTEXT TO POLITICAL ACTION SITUATION

Sociologists use the term “political opportunity structure” (Della Porta and Rucht 1999; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996) to refer to the chances groups have of being taken seriously by influential political actors. In Toronto, as we have seen, this structure has been changing. Since the late 1960s, but especially since the mid-1990s, the political context has become more favorable to arts and cultural activists.

Opportunity structure, however, is only a vague path until somebody decides to walk down it, often growing and changing it on the way. This happens through creative political action, which in turn occurs when particular, often conflictual, situations provoke some people to *do* something *against* others. “Cultural Policy” is in large measure the outcome of such contestation, where the conflict revolves around arts and culture. The cases of the Wychwood Car Barns and of the West Queen West Triangle help us to see variants of this political process of cultural policy creation and transformation in action.

LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS SHAPE THE PROBLEMS TO WHICH CULTURAL POLICY RESPONDS

First, let us review the qualities of the two places relevant to their respective cultural policy debates. These shape the contours of the conflicts and the conditions of what would count as a resolution.

The Wychwood Barns are former Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) streetcar repair barns. They were built originally in the early 20th century nearby Wychwood Park, an artist colony from the 1890s that offered a garden suburban experience built on an Arts and Crafts aesthetic of the pristine natural landscape (Berland and Hanke 2002). By the mid-1990s, the barns were barely used, and had become a symbol of industrial-age rust in the midst of a dense, now-Midtown, residential community. Ownership was transferred from the TTC to the city, and the question of what to do with the property and the buildings became a hotly debated matter of public policy, in the neighborhood and beyond.

Three features of the community are relevant to the political controversy that would break out over the fate of the Barns. First, the area straddles the boundary between the pre-amalgamation cities of Toronto and North York. Upon amalgamation in 1998, multiple local political wards were combined, and two incumbent councilors were left vying for one position in the 2000 election. Amalgamation here was not simply a formal jurisdictional change; it immediately disrupted the day-to-day lives of local citizens by politicizing community decisions around loyalties to particular political leaders, who in turn became the symbolic focus of questions about what kind of community the newly created Ward would be. Thus, the victorious Joe Mihevc – a PhD in Theology and Social Ethics, able to casually quote Freud, Jane Jacobs, and recite the history of various parks movements – was eventually the subject of intense scorn and praise, with opponents chanting “Heil Mihevc” at community meetings and supporters referring to his “Zen-like calm” (Landsberg 2002). Local political leadership in this situation became a key variable in political dispute about cultural policy, as Mihevc would become perhaps the driving force behind the movement to transform the repair barns into a cultural community center, as well as the central target of opposition.

Second, not only was the political character of the local community in flux, its social character was as well. From 2001 to 2006, the percentage of the population in Statistics Canada reporting “multiple ethnic origins” went from 34 percent to 43 percent, compared to a citywide average in 2006 of 30 percent. The percent of “multiples” was highest in the census tract immediately nearby the Barns. With steeply rising housing values, new residents with young children, and development pressure, “who are we?” was naturally on the lips of many, while traditional residential and ethno-cultural bases of identity and community were in doubt or flux. “What kind of park do we want?” became a proxy for “what is the nature of our community?” Without any clear answer, these questions became political.

Third, though primarily a residential community, the area has many residents who work in the arts and a sizable base of arts organizations that serve its needs. Nine percent of the Ward’s population work in Arts, Culture, and Recreation, and 16 percent work in social science, government, and education – both well above the city average. About 35 percent of residents have degrees in humanities or social sciences, while by contrast about 12 percent have degrees in engineering or the technical trades. At the same time, fewer people work in manufacturing than in the average Toronto neighborhood while more and more work at home and walk to work. That is, there were many aesthetically sensitive people who were increasingly spending their time walking around, looking at shops and streetscapes. Thus, if “who are we?” was in the air, an arts-oriented, expressive urbanist industrial heritage transformation project was ideally situated as an attractive experiment in new forms of community that would stand in stark contrast to the quiet Arts and Craft colony of its past.

The West Queen West Triangle is a large area of former factories and warehouses in the Western part of the downtown core, just south of Queen Street, one of Toronto's central and iconic commercial strips. Three features are especially salient for understanding the political dispute regarding the place of artists in urban cultural policy that erupted there in the mid-2000s.

First, drawn by cheap rents, proximity to the nearby Queen Street scene, and the “grit as glamour” (Lloyd 2006) provided by concentrations of ethnic minorities and marginal activities,³ many mostly young and single artists and cultural workers moved into the area in the late 1990s. Between 1996 and 2006 the area saw nearly a 5 point increase in the percentage of the population working in arts, culture, and recreation and an 8 point decline in the share of the population married with children (Statistics Canada data, compiled by author); it has about 9 times as many art galleries and twenty times as many tattoo parlors as the average Toronto postal code.⁴ The area thus became a focal point of artistic and creative work, with a strong orientation toward personal experimentation, youthful self-expression and discovery, and spontaneity. This influx led, second, to large-scale development. 1000 new private dwellings were built in Ward 18 between 2001 and 2006, more than were built in the previous 10 years. Thousands of new units are currently under construction. Rents were on the rise and the focus of the scene was shifting from cultural production to cultural consumption, as many artists started moving further west and north.

Third, the local art scene, though oriented toward individuality and experimentation, had strong organizational bases, influential ties, and members with a history of activism. The Gladstone Hotel was its crucial base of operations. A renovated dive reopened in 2005, the Gladstone is an arts-friendly hotel that offers artist-designed rooms and hosts exhibitions, shows, and

performances, mostly from the local independent scene. It is owned and operated by the Zeidler family. Eberhard Zeidler designed the Eaton Centre in the early 1970s, one of North America's first major indoor downtown malls. His initial, eventually rejected, plans included an arts bazaar. His daughter, Margie, responsible for the redevelopment of a nearby industrial building into an arts and creative industry hub, bought the Gladstone, and her sister Christina, herself an accomplished artist, operates it. They have relatively deep pockets and big rolodexes. Thus, the WQW arts scene was not simply a coterie of alternative and experimental artists; they had connections, cash, organization, know-how, and memory of past conflicts to draw on. They had "buzz" and the ability to wield it to their advantage (Silver and Clark 2012). In this situation, it was thus civil society organizations and activist arts groups rather than local political leaders who became the most active political agents of cultural policy development.

CULTURAL POLICY BECOMES POLITICAL AROUND SPECIFIC ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

These two neighborhoods were in many ways tinderboxes for cultural policy controversies that would not only emerge but also be translated into effective action. What lit the fuse? In the Wychwood area, it was the question "what is a park?" Both Mihevc and his opponent Rob Davis campaigned for the Car Barns to become "100% Park," which at the time meant something like "not commercial real estate development." But when it came to specify what "100% park" is, the community split. Artscape had been attending community meetings, and together with Mihevc, began to formulate plans, somewhat outside the normal planning process, to adaptively

reuse rather than demolish some or all of the old buildings. They would house arts groups and farmers markets, community non-profits and community food centers. Local natural preservationist groups proposed returning the area to its original natural state. Some residents dubbed themselves “Neighbours for 100% Park” and started advocating for traditional grass, trees, playground, and sports fields. Others, many tapped by Mihevc, calling themselves “Friends of a New Park,” organized support for considering multiple uses in general and the Artscape proposals in particular. Any one of these alternatives might plausibly be considered a “park.” Opting for one or the other became the focal point for local politics in heated community meetings and elsewhere.

In the case of the WQW triangle, the energizing issue was how and whether artists should continue to live and work in the neighborhood and its scene. One city official actively involved in the case described the issue this way:

We don't want these high rise condos, we don't want these wannabe hipsters, you know, the guys that are brokers on Bay Street (Canada's Wall Street) who want part of this art scene in the evening and, you know what, they're working so hard on Bay Street that they won't have time for the scene in the evening.

(Interview with author)

Moreover, large buildings would replace fine-grained streetscapes defined by many small retail establishments, threatening to disrupt and deaden the walkability and density of experience many locals felt enlivened the scene. As a historically industrial area, the triangle had been zoned for employment; however, developers were pushing for rezoning as a primarily residential area.

Higher rents and new buildings with few viable workspaces (in contrast to the large warehouse lofts and studios) would push many artists to live and work elsewhere. Given the developers' deep pocket books and experience with the planning process, any attempt to modify this course would necessarily involve some sort of political intervention. Largely at the initiative of Christina and Margie Zeidler, Active 18 (named after the local political ward, Ward 18) was formed to advocate for "good urban design" and integrate the special characteristics of the neighborhood – in particular its status as a center of cultural and creative work – into whatever it was becoming.

CULTURAL POLICY CONFLICTS ARE INFUSED BY CLASHING CULTURAL IMAGES

These technical issues of grass per acre or zoning regulations became infused with political passion. They did so in no small part because they embodied charged images about the role of arts and culture in cities and neighborhoods that are hard to reconcile.

The imagery in the case of the Wychwood Barns revolved around two highly emotional questions with no easy answer: how to live with the legacy of industrialism and how to define the nature of a local community. The Barns became the venue for debating both. Run down and boarded up, they were a symbol and reminder of dirty work and a noisy, mechanical intrusion on what could be and had been a pastoral scene. Turning them into a grass, trees, and children's play area quite naturally presented to some a welcome end of that era, a way to kick the

manufacturing age into the dustbin of history. “Artists need space to work, I understand that,” said Amy McConnell, a leader of Neighbours for 100% Park, film producer, and Wychwood Park resident, “but one of the things that makes city life bearable to me is a park” (in Conlogue 2002). The Artscape proposal, supported by Mihevc and Friends of a New Park, proposed an alternative, treating the industrial past as part of a collective learning process. “The Green Barn will be the meeting place of culture and nature..., the community can explore nature while framed by the historical architecture and heritage of the TTC car barns” (Friends, website). Yes, humans had harmed nature, but we are now able to work with her rather than on her and to make work fulfilling rather than alienating – ideals that might, they proposed, be realized by hosting food education centers, farmers markets, and self-expressing post-industrial artists within an industrial heritage building, surrounded by photographs of street car mechanics.

The question of community was equally fraught with symbolic meaning. Neighbours for 100% Park had a vision of community defined primarily by residence; the park was for those who lived nearby, an extension of their backyards. They brought bags of lard to community meetings to graphically show all the fat their kids would fail to burn without ample space. Artists living and working in the park would bring non-residents and set up a division between the cultivated and the uncouth. The Artscape proposal would create an “exclusive space where artists can interface with thespians and activists. Neighbors may intrude if they dare” (Neighbours, website). The result would be the “Habourfronting” of the neighborhood, that is, its transformation into a tourist destination infiltrated by outsiders and unknowns, less a space for diverse openness and more the replacement of one sensibility by another (Neighbors, website).

Friends of a New Park, by contrast, proposed a conception of community based not on privacy but on publicity and interaction. The Barns would create a “dynamic and flexible” space for a mobile community whose identity was in flux and could not be sure what “us” and “them” would mean. “A key aspect of any sustainable project is that it be adaptable and flexible to changing conditions” (Friends, website). Thus, disputes about technical policy questions were energized by value-laden questions concerning whether artists would be good neighbors or dangerous outsiders, whether industrialism was a bad memory to be forgotten or a developmental moment to be continually learned from. The official policies and practices that resulted record how these issues are resolved, or at least managed.

In the case of the WQW triangle, the technical issues surrounding zoning and setbacks were infused with charged symbols. Two themes were crucial: first, the relationship between planning and spontaneity, and second, the relationship between cultural work and cultural consumption. One of the allures of the area was its “organic” character. Nobody planned the neighborhood ahead of time as an artist colony; people simply started moving into warehouse spaces and making them studios. Galleries popped up, with no blueprint. Being a part of that flowering was part of the allure of the scene. The proposed developments, however, when they did include artist work-spaces, did so in a “creative mews.” These would become “a planned arts community,” that would necessarily be “a failure,” said one local artist. “Arts communities grow organically” (in Foad 2007). New glass and steel construction, that is, did not only suggest a new architectural aesthetic for the neighborhood; it was an affront to the scene’s characteristic orientation toward improvisation and spontaneity.

Equally energizing was the question of whether the new developments would tip the balance of the neighborhood toward cultural consumption rather than cultural production. The issue turns on what the local cultural scene was ostensibly *for*. To many local artists and creative workers, it fed into their work: for professional contacts, critical responses, collaborations, new ideas, and more. The developments threatened to change the scene into a consumer amenity, not unlike granite countertops. Their “contrived arts alleyway is the antithesis of creative industry. Rather than support artists making art, it promises the moneyed a stroll through a simulated artscape” (Foad 2007). The most potent symbol of this perceived threat was in the name of one of the new condominiums: The Bohemian Embassy. Referencing a local bar central to Toronto’s 1960s bohemian culture in the Yorkville neighborhood (a hangout for Joni Mitchell and others), this name, together with glossy photos of beautiful and decidedly un-bohemian people, evoked visceral disgust.⁵ These images of a *work* area turned into a funhouse club scene animated a political movement to keep a foothold for cultural employment in the area.

TACTICS AND RHETORIC: MOBILIZING RESOURCES AND RESOLVING CONTRADICTIONS

Blow-by-blow details of how these controversies unfolded are available elsewhere (Campbell 2011; Berland and Hanke 2002; Lorinc 2002). For present purposes, we can focus on what seems to have been crucial to the eventual policy outcomes from a political perspective. In the Wychwood case, Mihevc was able to use personal contacts with the city’s parks commissioner to get a crucial “seal of approval” for the project and build on a history of collaboration with social

housing agencies to win support for subsidized artist live-work space. Artscape billed itself as knowing how to “leverage” higher levels of government for innovative projects, and they delivered by winning grants. Reports from Culture Department officials explaining the cultural value of the buildings and the civic value of arts hubs offered the legitimacy of “impartial” evidence. Together, Artscape and Mihevc worked a largely inside game to give the project a kind of inevitability that infused the “dreams” of the Friends of the New Park with a sense of realistic possibility while making it seem like a “done deal” to opponents.

Equally important was the rhetorical battle, largely played out in local newspapers, on and off line. The main issue was trust: which group could most plausibly make the case that their proposal would deepen community cohesion and togetherness without creating exclusion and division. Here, Friends of a New Park were key. They gathered dozens of letters of support from local school principals. Their website included hundreds of names of local residents, their addresses proudly displayed. They publically argued that the arts could build local trust just as well as grass and trees: more activity would mean more “eyes on the street” and a safer environment. Far from bringing deviants and hedonists into the area, resident artists would provide theater classes, painting classes, and more. A sense of humor also helped. As Mihevc joked in our interview, opponents “didn’t want artists with their duct taped cars and they didn’t want artists because everyone knows artists smoke more dope than everybody. So my comment back was ‘yeah, but they share.’” By contrast, Neighbours for 100% Park were largely anonymous, rarely granted interviews, and mostly presented themselves as defending private space rather than building public space. Perhaps the most important media moment was when

one member was quoted as saying “she doesn't want anything new to be built nearby because guests at her friend's dinner party won't have any place to park” (Barber 2002). Neighbours for 100% Park were framed as fearful of change and outsiders, defending private turf and separable goods; Friends of a New Park were able to reverse the image of artists as outside and deviant elites and reframe them as upstanding neighbors.

The outcome of the WQW case also turned on both strategic and rhetorical political issues. Tactically, Active 18 could draw on a wealth of high-level professional and government contacts. They used these to put pressure on city staff to develop supportive reports and put their expanding position in City Hall to work.⁶ At the same time, Active 18 was able to use the special talents of their artist membership. They held alternative design charrettes with leading architects and designers encouraging attendees (and media members) to let their imaginations go wild. They issued a “Jane Jacobs Report Card,” drawing on her symbolic status in the city. They would make aesthetically sleek power point presentations designed to show that they were not simply a group of prima donna artists but could in fact out design the designers. Part of their strategy for building support, both from the public at large as well as from key professional and government groups, was to show that their aesthetic abilities were useful resources backed by expert knowledge. This implicitly suggested how much the city would stand to lose if these resources were dispersed, and how much it had to gain by effectively harnessing them for the public good.

Again, the public rhetorical case was vital. Here, Jane Farrow, a resident, former Canadian Broadcasting Company television reporter, member of Active 18's inner circle, and savvy media

messenger, was the key figure. She presented a simple but powerful message: Active 18 was for “good design.” This message was in large measure an attempt to square the circle of spontaneity and planning, by advocating a kind of urban design and planning that would at the same time cultivate improvisational expression. As one Active 18 leader put it, “We know how this story [gentrification] often ends, but let’s try and change this story.” At the same time, Active 18 skillfully portrayed themselves not as NIMBYs but called themselves YIMBYs (Yes in My Backyard). They were for development, not against it; but, so they argued, Toronto needed a kind of development which would unleash its creative potential so that its growth in cultural employment could redound to “public benefit.” That is, their message sought to reframe arts clusters not as the “cultural contradiction of capitalism,” but as core pillars of the new economy. Artists could be useful labor, not only wild bohemians, and for the success of Toronto as a whole, it would be crucial to maintain an urban design in which this kind of work could flourish.

In both cases, then, rhetorical success involved some creative synthesis of seemingly contradictory themes. The revamped Wychwood Barns could be, somehow, both publically open to all and a basis for particular local solidarity; they could fuse both industrialism and environmental stewardship. The WQW triangle could be both planned and creative; it could grow rapidly while drawing new consumers and be home to affordable artist workspace and professional networks. Whether these syntheses are practically or even logically possible is not the point. Rather, from a political perspective, they show that policies that hold out the hope of uniting, or at least putting together in dialogue, seemingly divergent symbols may have especially heightened political resonance.

OUTCOMES: SUCCESS IS MORE THAN REALIZING SPECIFIC GOALS

What are the main outcomes of these rhetorics and strategies? Now called the Artscape Wychwood Barns, the TTC barns were rehabilitated according to Artscape's plans, at a price tag of around 20 million Canadian dollars, with funds coming from a variety of sources such as development fees for nearby condominium proposals, provincial and federal grants for subsidized low-income housing (on the novel proposition that below-rent artist space could be eligible for such funds), foundation and private donations, loans backed by the city, not to mention tax exemptions. They now house a year round farmers' market, a community food organization, several artists and arts groups, various music education programs, a children's theater, and more.

In the WQW Triangle, the city's Culture department, together with Active 18, brought the case before the Ontario Municipal Board (a provincial commission that decides local development disputes). They argued for "no net loss" of cultural employment space on the grounds that the neighborhood was one of the city's – and country's – most important creative industry clusters and that maintaining an interface between work, residence, and consumption was crucial to the economic vitality of these sorts of industries. The board rejected these claims, on the grounds that they were insufficiently supported by hard data and not yet integrated into the City's official plan. Before the City and Active 18 won a rare appeal (pushed for by Mayor David Miller, among other elites), the City had already settled with developers on two of the three specific proposed developments. With the threat of appeal, and with Artscape emerging as a powerful

broker, the third was settled on terms more favorable to Active 18: 90 artist live-work spaces at below market rates (many rent to own), along with another 160 affordable units added to the city's general pool of social housing. 56,000 square feet would be sold to Toronto Artscape, who would own and manage the space in perpetuity. Developers would fund the repurposing of a nearby and historically significant library as a performing arts hub. They would also contribute additional funds for community arts infrastructure projects, and after some further negotiations, new park space. Though not everything Active 18 wanted, these are fairly considerable concessions in a planning environment that was not set up to their benefit,⁷ and, compared to similar development issues in other cities, a fairly remarkable example of political intervention into the planning process in favor of maintaining cultural work districts in the face of rapid residential growth.

“Successful action” is more than meeting specific goals; it is also about creating an enriched platform for further action (Silver 2011). The most significant policy impacts of both cases may be at this level. Thus, one crucial outcome of the Wychwood Barns experience was that Artscape dramatically increased its own repertoire of skills as well as the confidence of others in its competence. Similarly, even though they did not get everything they wanted, Active 18 now exists, and this in itself is a significant result, as they are continuing players not only in their own neighborhood but actively training other groups city-wide looking to learn the ways of YIMBYism. At the same time, many city officials have accepted arts activist critiques that city planners were not properly prepared to deal with planning for arts industries and have undertaken new planning initiatives in response, building closer ties between the Culture Department and the

Planning Department, generating maps and inventories of cultural workers so as to have the hard data they need to make cases for designating cultural work districts, and implementing slow-downs on fast-developing areas (i.e. by placing moratoria on liquor and bar licenses for a fixed period) to facilitate sustainable integration of new businesses into existing scenes. “No net loss,” though rejected by the OMB, has become a de facto policy goal within the Culture and Economic Development Department. Generating new organizational capacity and integrating cultural policy more deeply into the planning process are two crucial outcomes of political action, each one pushing the history of Toronto’s cultural policy apparatus to potentially higher levels.⁸

GENERAL LESSONS

What general lessons can we learn from the Toronto case about the politics of urban cultural policy? First, *connect global changes to local political culture*. Many cities are dealing with changes similar to those in Toronto, such as post-industrialization and immigration. Local political culture, however, will often set the parameters of debate in a given city. In Toronto, this means that themes of productivity and upstanding local citizenship have been crucial; in a different political culture, different themes might matter more.

Second, *pay attention to local political opportunity structures*. In Toronto, over 40 years of economic, social, policy, and cultural changes opened a space for arts groups to wield political influence, feeding back into new policy tools. Similar groups in a different environment might not be so successful.

Third, and closely related to the second, highlight *organizational capacity*. Toronto's rich network of arts-focused civil society organizations provides a powerful platform for turning grassroots cultural policy ideas into action. In places with fewer and less entrenched organizations, cultural policy may run in a more top-down manner.

Fourth, *look within cities*. In different neighborhood contexts, even within the same city, the salience of different political issues can vary highly. In the Wychwood Barns case, showing that arts and culture could contribute to residential community was central; in the WQW Triangle case, showing that arts and cultural groups could provide an economic base for a post-industrial economy was more important. Different political strategies work in different issue-areas and are adopted by the same organizations; rhetorics are flexible and can easily shift from cultural to economic to community justifications for cultural policy interventions.

Fifth, *stress leadership and creative action*. In both cases studied here, plans were not worked out ahead of time but creatively evolved in the course of action. Success meant not only providing new syntheses that combined deeply divisive themes in novel ways but also creating bases for new actions beyond these particular cases and problems.

REFERENCES

Barber, J. (2002) "Wychwood Gift Horse's Teeth Smashed," in *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, Ont.: Feb 27, 2002: A.18

- Berland J. and Bob H. (2002) *Public:Art/Culture/Ideas*, 26: 72-99.
- Boudreau, Julie-Anne, Roger Keil, and Douglas Young (2009) *Changing Toronto: governing urban neo-liberalism*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bourne, L. (2004) "Canadian Cities in Transition: new sources of urban difference," *Dela* 21: 97-107
- Campbell, C. "History of West Queen West," Online. Available HTTP: http://www.chascamp.com/blog/?page_id=5 (accessed September 1, 2011).
- City of Toronto (2011) *From the Ground Up: growing Toronto's cultural sector*, Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.toronto.ca/invest-in-toronto/pdf/groundup.pdf> (accessed March 22, 2012)
- Conlogue, R. (2002) "The Hunt for Good Will in Housing the Urban Artist," *The Globe and Mail. Toronto*, Ont.: Jun 5, 2002. pg. R.5
- Della Porta, D., Hanspeter K. and Dieter, R. (1999) *Social Movements in a Globalizing World*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Foad, L. (2007) "Selling off Queen West," *Now Magazine*. August 23-30, 2007.
- Friends of a New Park. Online. Available HTTP <http://www.anewpark.ca> (accessed January 26, 2010).
- Isin, E. F. (1999) *The Making of the Toronto Megacity: an introduction*. Toronto: York University.
- Jenkins, B. (2005). "Toronto's Cultural Renaissance," *Canadian Journal of Communication*, V. 30: 169-186.
- Landsberg, M. (2002) "Allow artful lodgers to revitalize site," *Toronto Star*. Toronto, Ont.: Sep 29, 2002: A.02

- Lemon, J. (1984) "Toronto among North American cities: a historical perspective on the present," in Victor Russel (ed.) *Forging a Concensus: historical essays on Toronto*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 323-351.
- Lorinc, J. (2002) "Greened Acres," *Toronto Life*, July: 58.
- Lloyd, R. (2006) *Neo-bohemia: art and commerce in the post-industrial city*, New York: Routledge.
- McAdam, D., John D. M. and Mayer N. Z. (1996) *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Moloney, P. (2006) "TTC barns renovation hailed, hated; 'Artiste commune' at Wychwood \$13.7 M project to begin in spring," *Toronto Star*. Toronto, Ont.: Jan 26, 2006: B.05
- Neighbours for 100% Park. Online. Available HTTP: <truepatriotlove.ca> (accessed January 16, 2010).
- Patterson, M. (2009) "The Public Legitimization of Iconic Architectural Developments: a comparative study of the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario," Presented at the 2009 CSA Annual Meeting, Ottawa, ON.
- Silver, D. (2011) "The Moodiness of Action," *Sociological Theory*, 29 (3): 199-222.
- Silver, D. and Terry N. C. (2012, forthcoming) "Buzz as an Urban Resource," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*.

ENDNOTES

¹ This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

² These figures are based on yellow pages listings compiled by the author of over 1500 types of organizations, covering all of Canada at the street address level.

³ As one resident and activist told me, “There’s room for hookers and homeless and drug addicts in my neighborhood.”

⁴ These figures are again based on yellow pages data, for the M6J FSA. M6J has 27 art galleries, compared to 2.5 in the average Toronto FSA; 5 tattoo parlors compared to .5 in the average Toronto FSA

⁵ A local artist turned this disgust into art, projecting onto a wall near the development an image of a woman dressed like the one in the advertisements, but vomiting.

⁶ As one Culture Department official told me, “These guys were totally articulate, they were totally plugged into everything and everyone at City Hall.”

⁷ Most notably, the area lacked a secondary plan, understaffing in the Planning and Legal department made it difficult to move quickly enough to impose many controls on the development process, and the City was often trying to create policy in the course of quasi-legal process before the OMB.

⁸ The election of fiscal conservative Rob Ford in 2010, suburban in policy and aesthetic orientation and strongly opposed by large segments of the arts community, promises to put the strength of this institutionalization to the test. So far, its depth is showing. One of Ford’s first official acts was to create a special arts advisor role, appoint the head of the National Ballet to the position, and pledge to make no cuts to city’s culture budget. A new culture plan passed unanimously. In response to proposed city-wide across the board budget cuts, the Toronto Arts Council has been coordinating major pushback, for instance coaching concerned citizens in how to make effective deputations at City Council meetings.