

THE NEW IMPERIALISM: CULTURE, CLASS AND SPACE

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ABSTRACT

A new global economy is evolving that transcends nation states and renders their internal struggles real but relatively unimportant as transnational neocorporatism (TNC) impacts on nations and regions. In the past centuries, culture and economy segued into each other in a relatively benign fashion – culture was the process of celebrating life and creativity. In recent times, culture has been transported into the realm of the economy. Consequently the political economy of culture and space is being restructured. First, culture becomes a tool in the service of capital accumulation. Second, as desires transcend needs, the focus of culture is away from material social practices to the control over consciousness. Third, space is repositioned from tradition and work to that of commodity spectacles. In the process, new forms of social order emerge as in the Cultural Economy, the Creative City, the Creative Class, and the New Urbanism. Paradoxically this new economy is built on old ideas – it has complex historical associations. Underlying this superstructure, the agendas of transnational monopoly capital and corporate power signify a new form of empire and imperialism, as yet understood only in fragments. In addition, the entire conceptual apparatus of the New Economy is derived from conditions in the developed world, particularly the United States, that is in countries where all material needs have already been met. Having experienced the impact of the old Imperialism, developing countries should embrace the new with all due consideration of the consequences, that is of commodity fetishism over the generation of real wealth.

Keywords: *globalisation; culture; ideology, the culture industry; the new economy; the creative class; the creative city; the new urbanism.*

INTRODUCTION: The Problematic of Culture

In order to situate the idea of culture, I begin with two practical examples, one from the place of my birth, another from my life today in Australia. The first example starts at the level of the nation. The second is from a single building.

I was born in Scotland, a small country defeated in battle by England in 1690. Until the British state was formed in the Union of 1707. Since then it has been governed from London, only regaining its own parliament and a degree of autonomy in 1999. For 300 years, the Scottish people had retained their identity solely on the basis of their culture, which was itself somewhat frail. Scotland has therefore been described as a *stateless nation*, leading to the observation:

‘that nation states, at least in the developed world, had economic, political and cultural coherence – that they were self-contained societies, has begun to seem less sure....the easy equivalence of *state and society* seems increasingly redundant’
(McCrone 1992:2)

The case of Scotland raises many issues of the relationship between nationalism, the state, society, culture and identity. The same is true even of individual buildings. In a recent article in

The Sydney Morning Herald a debate arose about how the National Museum portrayed Australia's history and culture (Morgan 2003) Questions arose as to how these should be portrayed, e.g. through chronological progression, narratives, foundation myths, theming, heroic figures etc. Additionally, there was criticism of the museum's 'Marxist rubbish' in its interpretations. The museum was reviewed as to its political correctness, and the \$220,000 dollars spent on this process concluded – 'rather than a truce in the culture wars, the review has opened a new front in the way the nation sees itself' (Morgan 2003:30). Both situations brought to the surface issues of national identity and culture, continuing arenas of debate containing the potential for enormous tensions and social conflict (Agger 1992, Blau 1998, Miles and Hall 2000, Nelson and Grossberg 1988).

As a working concept, culture is attached to many other descriptors, and we hear of commodity culture, post-modern culture, global and local culture, the cultural economy, the culture industry, multiculturalism, cultural capital, cultural regeneration, cultural planning, cultural policy, and cultural heritage. How do we make sense of this? Why are we so obsessed with culture today? How does it affect our lives and our collective future, both economically and in relation to place and space? Clearly, culture cannot be understood through intuition alone. So in order to fully understand the theme of the Seminar, **creative culture and the making of place**, we must begin with an analysis of culture and its evolution.

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| 01 | The Theoretical Conjuncture | --culture and society. |
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| 05 | Bandung | --the culture industry. |

1 CULTURE

The Theoretical Conjuncture - Culture and Society

When Marx wrote the first volume of *Capital* in 1859, nearly 150 years ago, his theory of economics relegated culture to the realm of ideology, part of the superstructure of society which contained all *non-economic* functions such as organised religion, the legal system, and education. Culture and ideology were seen to be synonymous and having little effect on production. My argument in this section is that Marx was correct in his original analysis that culture was indeed ideological; a product of class values and therefore unavoidably politicised. But I will also argue that over the last 150 years its relation to a simple class formation has undergone a radical transformation. In essence, the political content of ideological formations has been submerged as new forms of control over society have arisen. Culture and economy have been integrated, requiring a re-theorisation of ideology, social class, and urban politics, to which Scott, Florida, Landry and others, have contributed.

Nonetheless, certain cultural universals can be identified. Among these the most predominant is that of language, but other norms exist such as marriage and the family system, religious and spiritual rituals, the existence of art and various taboos that reinforce social conventions (Giddens 2001, Hall 1959,1969,1976). These fundamentals may be contextualised within material life processes represented in modes of production e.g. within hunter-gatherer, slave, feudal and pre-capitalist economic forms. Adding dominant ideologies to universal values and modes of production we arrive at a fairly elementary definition of culture as historically delineated class structures and their associated traditions. Dominant ideologies in these terms usually constituted a crude form of politics that allowed property and surplus value from labour to be accumulated, stored and transformed. Resistance to such exploitation frequently became manifest in, for example, the French Revolutions of 1789 and 1848, and the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917. By the onset of the twentieth century however, it had become clear that culture could no longer be so easily associated with the concept of social class. The

period known as the *Fin-de Siècle* centred in Vienna at the turn of the century, symbolised a monumental historical break with past traditions, and the establishment of *modernity* in its economic, cultural and spatial forms (Schorske 1981).

At the beginning of the 20th century, many theorists such as Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin grappled with the culture of modernity, followed by George Lukacs, Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci (Cosser 1971), and the idea of the *Culture Industry* was first expressed by Horkheimer and Adorno in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947). Later, Adorno embellished this idea in his searing essay, *The Culture Industry Reconsidered* (Adorno 1991). The news was not good. Here he suggested that culture in the spheres of high art and low art are commodified in the interests of the market and are destroyed in the process. He expressed the revolutionary idea that culture is colonised by commercial interests and tailored into items for mass consumption. *The outcome is that culture no longer remains the subject of individuals, but individuals become the objects of the culture industry:*

‘the entire practice of the culture industry [defined as] the progressive technical domination of nature, becomes mass deception, and is turned into a means for fettering consciousness.’ (Adorno 1991:86, 92).

While Harvey insists that culture and production are separate events (hence modern/post-modern culture, both Adorno and Harvey’s approaches to culture have been tempered by the concept that culture does not exist as an objective state - ‘the fact remains that *urban culture* as it is presented, is neither a concept nor a theory. It is, strictly speaking, a myth, since it recounts ideologically, the history of the human species’ (Castells 1977:53). Here, Castells rejects the idea which was prevalent up to the middle of the twentieth century that culture was ‘a superorganic entity living and changing according to a still obscure set of internal laws’ (Zelinsky 1973:71). Mitchell expresses this idea well when he comments that:

‘social theorists should dispense with the notion of an ontological culture and begin focusing instead on how the very idea of culture has been developed and deployed as a means of attempting to order, control and define *others* in the name of power and profit’ (Mitchell 1995:104).

Mitchell goes on to say that while culture does not exist as an objective fact, the *idea* of culture remains significant. Perhaps it is also more relevant to say that the idea or ideas of *cultures* remain significant, and that these cultures no longer retain the same relation to production as they did in the past. (Featherstone 1993, Frow 1997, Miles and Hall, 2000).

Three groups of ideas are therefore important in building section two. First culture does not exist as an objective fact, but cultural production as an *idea* remains significant. Second, culture is ideologically defined in relation to both consumption and production. Thirdly, this modifies our understanding of class relations and hence urban politics. So if we now examine the impact of culture on class, we must remember the idea that class relations no longer determine culture— *or do they?*

| | INDUSTRIALISM | POST INDUSTRIALISM | MODERNISM | POST MODERNISM |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| QUALITIES | regulation rigidity fusion standardisation material base hierarchies legitimation | deregulation flexibility diffusion diversification information base grids and networks discretion | order control direction need product history function | anarchy chance indeterminacy desire process destiny signification |
| PROPERTIES | state power class politics mass production strategic planning development nationalism econ. of scope welfare statism specialisation unionisation | corporate power new class politics in time production contextual plan'ng adaptation ethnic fission econ. of scale ind. accountability synergy in labour individual bargain. | construction society community monoculturism class culture permanence similarity | deconstruction ethnicity locality pluralism commodity culture transience diversity |
| PHILOSOPHICAL ATTRIBUTES | scientific rationality keynesianism taylorism fordism | neo-darwinism functionalism flexible specialisms diversification | structuralism realism romanticism formalism narrative contiguity | post structuralism hyper reality mysticism imagery discursive difference |
| SPATIAL EFFECTS and IMPLICATIONS | massification concentration centralisation community base zoning suburban focus | demassification diffusion dispersal locality based complex integrat'n urban focus | urban functions state symbols arch 'styles' paradigmatic syntactic design | urban landscape corporate symbols arch rhetoric eclectic metaphoric codification. |

Figure 1. Properties of industrial and cultural forms and practices (Cuthbert ,1995)

2 CLASS

The Ideological Conjuncture – Culture and Class

If indeed culture does not exist except as a concept, and previously it was seen to be rooted to dominant interests, how then is power deployed and how does it affect the growth of cities? This question is central to the framing of two recent books, *The Rise of The Creative Class* (Florida, 2002) and *The Flight of the Creative Class* (Florida, 2006). Currently, both are highly influential in urban policy and management, and urban governments in many locations are rapidly adopting Florida's ideas e.g. the state of Iowa has already allocated \$US 45 million for a cultural/economic plan along the lines Florida suggests.

As with the culture industry, we find that Florida's ideas are categorically not new. They have their origins as far back as 1870, when Mikhael Bakunin coined the term *the New Class* in reference to a non-capitalist class division based in knowledge rather than assets. Within capitalism, Thorstein Weblen tried to capture the idea of conspicuous consumption that is now upon us by writing his classic text *the Theory of the Leisure Class* in 1899, a nineteenth century predecessor of Florida's creative class (Coser 1971). Similarly in the twentieth century, Alvin Gouldner wrote his now famous work *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (1979).

Gouldner makes a distinction between money capital and cultural capital (knowledge) arguing that capital may be defined as any produced object used to make saleable utilities that provide its possessor with income. Gouldner stated that his *new class* was composed of three forms of

membership – technocrats, bureaucrats and intellectuals, all of whom derive their authority from institutions of higher learning, and whose power is dependent on a mastery over various technical languages – legal, cybernetic, architectural etc. (see also Carter 1985). Given a shift in scale, Gouldner’s *New Class* is in turn echoed more recently in a book called *The Transnationalist Capitalist Class* (Sklair 2001). In this work the main difference in class definition is that Sklair combines the ownership of the means of production with the knowledge necessary to control and reproduce it. The differences between each set of class concepts are expressed in table (1) below:

Sklair’s definitions of class exist above the level of the nation state, and therefore traditional class concepts do not apply, although it is clear he owes a debt to Gouldner (Sklair 2005, 2006). However, one might reasonably assume that these class fractions are repeated at the level of the state:

1. Those who own and/or control the major transnational corporations and their local affiliates (corporate fraction).
2. Globalising politicians and bureaucrats (state fraction).
3. Globalising professionals (technical fraction).
4. Merchants and media (consumerist fraction).

It is open to question as to whether Sklair adopts Gouldner’s definition at both levels since he is only concerned with transnationality. Florida on the other hand remains concerned with urban development at the level of the nation, and his books are replete with comparative examples of nations and cities. Florida raises the problematic of creativity and knowledge to urban development. The key is a new social formation called *the creative class*, with a super-creative core, whose prime economic function is to create new ideas, technology, and other creative content. As the social hierarchy is transformed, new policies of urban growth must be formulated so cities can retain their competitive edge on the basis of social rather than industrial restructuring. In addition, he also differentiates three other classes – the working class (30%), the service class (25%) and the agricultural class (0.4%). The main function of these three classes is to work to plan and not think too much. In a reversal of the traditional logic of urban development which depends on investment in public works, taxation, business incentives, policy initiatives etc, Florida argues that instead, cultural amenities, lifestyle issues and progressive social legislation should be the stimulus for urban growth. In turn, these will draw in the creative class upon which the knowledge economy depends. So are Florida’s ideas new, and if indeed we have a new *knowledge class*, how do we locate this idea and its relevance?

| CLASS HIERARCHY V | TRADITIONAL CONCEPT | GOULDNER. | SKLAIR. | FLORIDA. |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| GLOBAL CLASS FORMATION | Imperialist hegemony | Imperialist hegemony | Capital: transnational Corporate Fraction | |
| UPPER CLASS | Ownership of the means of production | Ownership of the means of production. | Capital: national Corporate Fraction | ? |
| MIDDLE CLASS | Petit bourgeoisie | Ownership of the means of knowledge. :Technocrats :Bureaucrats :Intellectuals | Bureaucrats:State Frac. Professional: Tech Frac. Merchants/ media. Consumerist:Frac | :Super creative core. :Creative class :Service class :Agriculture |
| WORKING CLASS | Wage earners | Wage earners | - | Wage earners |
| UNDERCLASS | Unemployed Unemployable | Unemployed Unemployable | - | Unemployed Unemployable |

Figure 2. Comparison between traditional class concepts and those of Gouldner, Sklair and Florida.

Because of his immense impact on urban policy, and the fact that cities around the world are scrambling to implement his ideas, a few words of caution are recommended. Overall, Florida has presented us with some great illusions that most urban managers, policy makers and planners should treat with all due care. To begin with, cynics might say that Florida has created the mythology of a bright and buoyant future for capitalist exploitation worldwide. In his world, class alliances no longer exist, so urban politics are effectively eliminated.

‘We thus find ourselves in the puzzling situation of having the dominant class in America (the creative class) – whose members occupy the power centres of industry, media and government, as well as the arts and popular culture – virtually unaware of its own existence’ (Florida 2002:xv11).

We should note however that if Florida was to add his so called ‘service class’ to the traditional ‘working class’ where they rightfully belong, it would remain at 55% of the population, not 30% as he suggests. Florida’s creative class is merely a redefinition of the traditional middle class, with no doubt the same values. Nowhere in this equation does power come from ownership, and capital has no influence in the overall equation. So according to Florida, the class of capital does not exist, the creative class does not recognise itself and the working class is disappearing. Curiously the most powerful nation in the world is ruled by a dominant creative class, unaware of itself and has no political authority. The conflict that has occupied the world for centuries over the ownership of nature, the development of the means of production, resource allocation, exploitation and work, has vanished. In his paper on *Creative Cities*, Allen Scott has a withering analysis of Florida’s facile prescriptions when he concludes that:

‘Florida’s euphoric analysis ascribes altogether too much social autonomy to the rise of this fraction of the workforce and pays far too little attention to the concrete, technological, organisational, and geographic conditions that underlie the actual formation of labour markets.....creativity is not something that can be simply imported into the city on the backs of peripatetic computer hackers, skateboarders, gays and assorted bohemians, but must be organically developed through the complex interweaving of relations of production, work and social life in specific urban contexts’ (Scott 2006:11/15).

In a similarly candid critique, Steve Malanga suggests that *the creative class* is little more than ‘Florida’s depiction of the internet bubble’s go-go culture’ (Malanga 2006:2). He goes on to suggest that Florida’s fatal flaw is that his economics simply don’t work. He points to the fact that his top ten creative cities in the US have not grown any faster than employment overall, that is slightly more than 17% in 15 years. Indeed if this period is extended back to 1983, the top ten do not even reach the average. Similarly, it is not culture (based on high taxation) that attracts people to cities, but low taxation and basic amenities, and it is telling for developing countries that the word ‘development’ does not exist in the bibliography to Florida’s book.

3 ECONOMY

The Economic Conjuncture – Culture and Economy

While Florida’s influential work on the creative class appears seriously flawed, the same cannot be said about *the cultural economy* mentioned above. In direct contrast to mainstream economic processes however, and by definition, national *cultural* economies cannot take place elsewhere, nor can they use the developing world as a primary source of labour like other globalised industries. French Perfume cannot be made in China, Australian wine cannot be made in Chile, and Scottish whisky cannot be made in India. But in order to define the cultural economy, a superorganic definition of culture must be retained – that culture exists as an objective fact which we have already decided is problematic. Nonetheless, and according

to Adorno's logic, such a definition allows culture to be commodified, absorbed into the economy and used to increase production. Yet paradoxically, many of the urban features noted by Florida accompany those cities which successfully take part in the marketing of cultural products – a cappuccino lifestyle, fine cultural amenities, the presence of history, and a built environment rich in symbolic referents and sense of place (Cartier 1999, Bassett 1993, Urry 1995, Breen 1994). In contradiction to Florida however, these amenities categorically do not exist as the reason for the successful economic growth of cities and regions, particularly in Asia. As Scott suggests:

'Florida's euphoric analysis ascribes altogether too much social autonomy to the rise of this fraction of the workforce, and pays far too little attention to the concrete technological, organisational, and geographic conditions that underlie the actual formation of labour markets' (Scott 2004:468).

The concrete conditions Scott refers to are reflected in his classic repositioning of Adorno's essay in an article called *The Cultural Economy of Cities* (Scott 1997), extended in his book of the same name (Scott 2000b). This work is also elaborated at length in Scott (1999, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006), but also more generally in Throsby (1997), Appadurai (1996), Featherstone (1993). Scott comments that while the cultural economy 'is incoherent in some respects' he goes on to say 'What provides special meaning to the concept is that the outputs of cultural products industries are almost always susceptible to a sort of convergence on place-specific product design contours and cultural content' (Scott 2000:11). These include both manufacturing and service sector activities. He maintains that the clustering of production complexes in network structures along with their labour markets, constitute proto-urban forms which in turn reshape the geography of cities. Once identified, the enhancement of competitive advantage using these forms becomes a problem for policy and planning alike.

The *New Economies* of Florida and Scott therefore reflect very different premises. While Florida relies heavily on the activities, desires and lifestyles of a new creative class, Scott maintains that the new economy is constituted in an aggregation of cutting edge economic sectors 'including high technology industries, neo-artisanal manufacturing, business and financial sectors, cultural products industries (including the media) and so on' (Scott 2006: 3). Scott also stresses Gouldner's observation that 'the dark side of the dialectic' remains much in evidence in Landry's so called *Creative Cities* (Landry and Bianchini 1995). In other words Florida's rosy picture of a vanishing working class being replaced by a tranquilised middle-class is an unlikely occurrence, and old class divisions will remain in place for many years to come.

One area where all seem to agree however, is in the creation of aesthetic and semiotic content, that is with the *symbolic* as opposed to the *functional* transmission of information (i.e. meanings over messages. See Molotch 1996, Lash and Urry 1994, Stevenson 1992, Squire 1994). Hence the production of the built environment takes on added significance as part of the entire scenario in architectural, planning and urban design terms. Indeed, since the tectonic effect of Frank Gehry's Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, and the rejuvenation of the economy on the basis of a single building, signature architecture and urban design has been on the agenda of all aspiring world cities, and it is to the creation of symbolic capital that we now turn (Sklair 2006, Scott 2001, Lash and Urry 1994)

Reprise: *The New World order can be seen to be increasingly dependent on the manipulation and redefinition of culture as ideology. In consequence the class relationships at the core of capitalism become redefined, and Florida has effectively eliminated urban politics from his agenda. He does this by evaporating the class of capital, redefining the middle class, and involving the working class in a disappearing act. The cultural economy also has its own agendas, but affects the restructuring of space in a much more fundamental manner. Cultural products abstract traditional culture away from the people and align culture with commodity production, consumerism and the satisfaction of desires. In the process, globalisation transforms us from being the consumers of media to being its products. While*

network structures and industrial agglomeration are economic imperatives for a successful economy, they are in themselves, insufficient to fulfill the requirements of a successful cultural economy. Here the idea of image and taste reign supreme, and nowhere so powerfully as in the realm of urban form and design. The creation of symbolic capital from space then becomes highly significant.

4 SPACE

The Spatial Conjecture - Culture and Symbolic Capital

As we have observed, the cultural economy is directly involved in the satisfaction of desires through capitalist commodity production. In the process, the informational revolution scrambles the existing spatial dimensions of the first, second and third worlds by overcoming space with time. High jacking a depoliticised Postmodernist theory, corporate power builds more sophisticated target markets using concepts of difference and deconstruction. In so doing, Castells suggests that spaces of meaning are being transformed into new tribal communities, reflecting ever new forms of consumption. In between, societies and communities are disappearing and are being reconstructed to accommodate a new political, social and moral order reflected in the New Imperialism and New World orders (Hardt and Negri 2000, Castells 1996, 1997, 1998).

Simply stated, the combination of the internet and post-Fordist production, allow a highly specialised targeting of commodity markets which undermine traditional social concepts of community based largely on social class, income, and employment. New geographic communities are become increasingly specialised and segregated, as commodities are fashioned to each group's specific and evolving interests. These are being reconstructed on the basis of lifestyle, informational association, and specialised luxury consumption. In addition, geographic space provides a concrete set of locales where target markets may be situated. On-line communities are also established and each member in a six person family may now belong to a different virtual community on the internet.

In consequence, Urban theorists world wide are grappling with new terminologies to describe emergent spatial forms which are significantly different from the old vocabularies of land use planning emerging from the industrial revolution. Appadurai for example denotes a basic system of spaces emerging from global cultural flows: ethnoscaples, technoscaples, financescaples, and ideoscaples. Ed Soja in *Postmetropolis* suggests a typology of form that deploys such terms as post-fordist industrial metropolis, cosmopolis, exopolis, fractal city, carceral archipeligo, and simcities (Soja 1989, 2000). Castells uses the term *microterritories of consumption*, the social equivalent of the culture industry's localised production complexes. In the interests of economic survival and to encourage external sources of investment, urban management now struggles to relate new forms of production and information to the consequent demands on space, not merely in geographic terms, but in terms of urban form and expression.

'Cities have to accumulate reserves of symbolic capital, for example, blue chip architecture, loft living spaces, aestheticised heritage litter, and other gilded spaces to help provide the *aura* of distinction with which the providers of these sources of investment wish to associate themselves (Miles and Hall 2000:99).

So apart from a reconstructed built environment for production, we also have a new built environment for consumption. The overall genre may be encapsulated by the following processes/strategies as follows:

- 1 *Themed environments*: the branding of environments according to a typology of commodities - theme parks, cultural and knowledge centres, media districts, entertainment centres, Disneylands, etc. (Calvino. Gottdiener 1986).

- 2 *Spectacles*: sites of spectacular consumption and media hype, usually one-off events - such as motor grand prix, international conventions, Olympic games, art, craft, music and film festivals etc (Debord 1973, Ley and Olds 1988).
- 3 *Commodity Markets*: malls and shopping centres, airports and themeports.
- 4 *Conservation Districts*: places where history is reinterpreted, transformed and sold, e.g. London - The Tate Modern Gallery. Singapore (shophouse districts). Lang Kwai Fong (Hong Kong).
- 5 *Cappucino Environments*: places to see and be seen – gentrified districts, frequently transformed from disused infrastructure such as railway stations, ports, disused warehouses, working class homes, into up-market restaurants, galleries, coffee shops, boutiques etc.
- 6 *Cohort consumption*: commodity spaces targeting specific age groups.
- 7 *Luxury consumption*: specialist outlets for perfumes, fashion, jewellery, watches, clothes etc
- 8 *Blue Chip Environments*: sites for signature buildings – Sydney Opera House (Jorn Utzon), The Guggenheim, Bilbao (Gehry), the London gherkin (Foster), the Scottish Parliament (Enric Miralles), The Pompidou Centre (Paris).
- 9 *New Urbanist enclaves*: A new paradigm for architecture and urbanism that has had widespread global impact,
- 10 *Critical Regionalism*: the promotion of a regional aesthetic primarily in post-colonial societies as a medium for restating a new national identity.

So in concert with the New Economy, and the New Class, we also have *the New Urbanism*, which has a similar persuasive influence at a global level (Duany and Plater-Zyberk 1992, Katz 1994, Audirac and Shermayen 1994, Duany and Talen 2002). Once again, the New Urbanism is not new. Its theoretical ideas of the town section emerge from a Scottish philosopher, Patrick Geddes, its imagery from prairie homes and cape New England villages, and its appeal to nostalgia and memory of small town America. In comparison, Kenneth Frampton's ideas of *A Critical Regionalism* carry significantly more authority, particularly for developing nations. What remains undeniable however is that the trilogy of the *New Economy*, *the New Class* and *the New Urbanism*, carry authority because they emerge from the world's most powerful nation, one that must be challenged since it is also capable of unbelievably powerful errors. The extent to which these ideas apply to Bandung is the focus of the next section.

5 BANDUNG AND THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

From the above we can deduce that the generation of benefits to cities from a combination of creative classes and the cultural economy is based on several key factors such as the level of national development, and the inherent wealth of cities, as well as the competition between them for scarce resources. Current social indicators for Indonesia suggest poverty levels of 70% of the population, the same as it did under the left-leaning Sukarno regime in 1965, over forty years ago. The budget deficit is 6.6% of GDP, and inflation stands at 16%. Despite the fact that the Rupiah is currently Asia's best-performing currency against the dollar, it has moved from 3000 in 1994 to 9,000 today, a 300% fall in ten years. This leads to serious questions as to why the market system has failed to deliver its expected benefits since 1965 (Poesoro and Adji 2005).

Indonesia is an inherently wealthy country and a major cause must be the role of institutions in market failure, and how they can be properly regulated in accordance with the law. It would also be wise to question whether GDP remains an appropriate indicator of development, or whether the GNP (Gross national happiness) of the Bhutanese has some value. We must remember that GDP is no indicator of equality, either in wealth, political influence, or human

happiness. It can also be defined as an index of the progressive exhaustion and destruction of the natural world. So overall it would seem wise to concentrate on creating *real* wealth for the Indonesian people in the form of basic resources, clean water, food, education, health services and the elimination of poverty by whatever means is necessary. The value of a creative class policy must be seriously challenged as counterproductive to these goals

Employment in cultural products industries varies enormously from country to country and from city to city. Scott notes that in the U.S. as a whole, 2.4% of the labour force is employed in the culture industry but at the urban level, it is 12% for Los Angeles. The Swedish cultural economy accounts for 9% of the country's labour force, most of which is concentrated in Stockholm (Scott 2004:466). What is evident is that certain Asian countries have begun to capture some of the benefits of the cultural economy. Malaysia for example has its multimedia super corridor, with its administrative and functional centres located at PutraJaya and CyberJaya respectively, India has its Bollywood film industry in Mumbai, as well as vibrant computing and informational industries. China is cashing in on everything from the fashion industry to multimedia production and tourism, particularly in Shanghai.

While Bandung does not have the size and status of these centres, nonetheless it has the huge advantage of a pre-established historic and cultural environment and is unique to Indonesia. In the absence of major research, the future of the culture industry and the creative class remains a matter for speculation. Nonetheless, after Jakarta, Bandung has the greatest potential to combine creative class and culture. industry concepts. We have seen, an *original urban form and design are now prerequisites for economic advantage*. Ominously however, Bandung is struggling to maintain the grandeur of its past history.

Apart from finance and human capital, the fact remains that the quality of urban design in any city is now a prerequisite for economic investment. Simply stated, the most successful cities also possess a natural advantage in history and landscape, and have the highest standards of public space and design. While Bandung is already ahead of the game, and to be critical for one moment, I feel that these benefits could be rapidly lost if development is not severely regulated in all respects, transport, conservation, public space, commerce and industry. The new toll road from Jakarta is a prime example of this, since it is both a blessing and a curse. Against the benefits of improved access between Jakarta and Bandung, and increased profits to companies, we must offset the costs to the community of local infrastructure improvements, traffic congestion, pollution, rising property prices, inflation, and the loss of personal security and fresh air. Is real wealth actually being created? There are also serious problems in simply walking about safely given the condition of sidewalks and unregulated street vendors. Then there is the problematic of strip development over the clustering of activities and the deliberate creation of urban nodes. In addition, public open spaces exist where the least amount of people congregate, and where the idea of pedestrianisation is an alien concept. All of these issues represent formidable obstacles to an improved urban prospect in Bandung.

As we all know, development has both costs and benefits. The new toll road which threatens to turn Bandung into another suburb of Jakarta is a perfect example. On the one hand we must weigh up the economic advantage of increased trade and profits to the private sector, against the public costs of increased prices, pollution, traffic jams, health hazards and personal safety. Whether such developments improve the real wealth of the population, or they simply increase the capacity for speculation remains an open question. The point here is that if Bandung wishes to salvage its existing cultural heritage in order to take advantage of the incipient new economy, much will have to change to protect and enhance the storehouse of wealth which still remains.

Undeniably, much of Bandung's status is due to its climate and colonial history, where it was previously known as the *Paris of Java* and *the City of Flowers*. Dutch Imperialism imposed a vocabulary of urban form and structure on the city, as well as a unique inheritance of Art Deco

architecture. This historic structure of grand boulevards, parks and gardens, magnificent public buildings and spaces contained a vision of urban form and space design which constituted the *central framework of urban life*. But today this urban vision has disappeared. Since 1949 this matrix of social space has gradually been overwhelmed by today's structure of commodity circulation and consumption. As a result, the grandeur of the past is rapidly disappearing under a polluting cloud of uncontrolled development, and with it, the historical vision of a sophisticated urbanity.

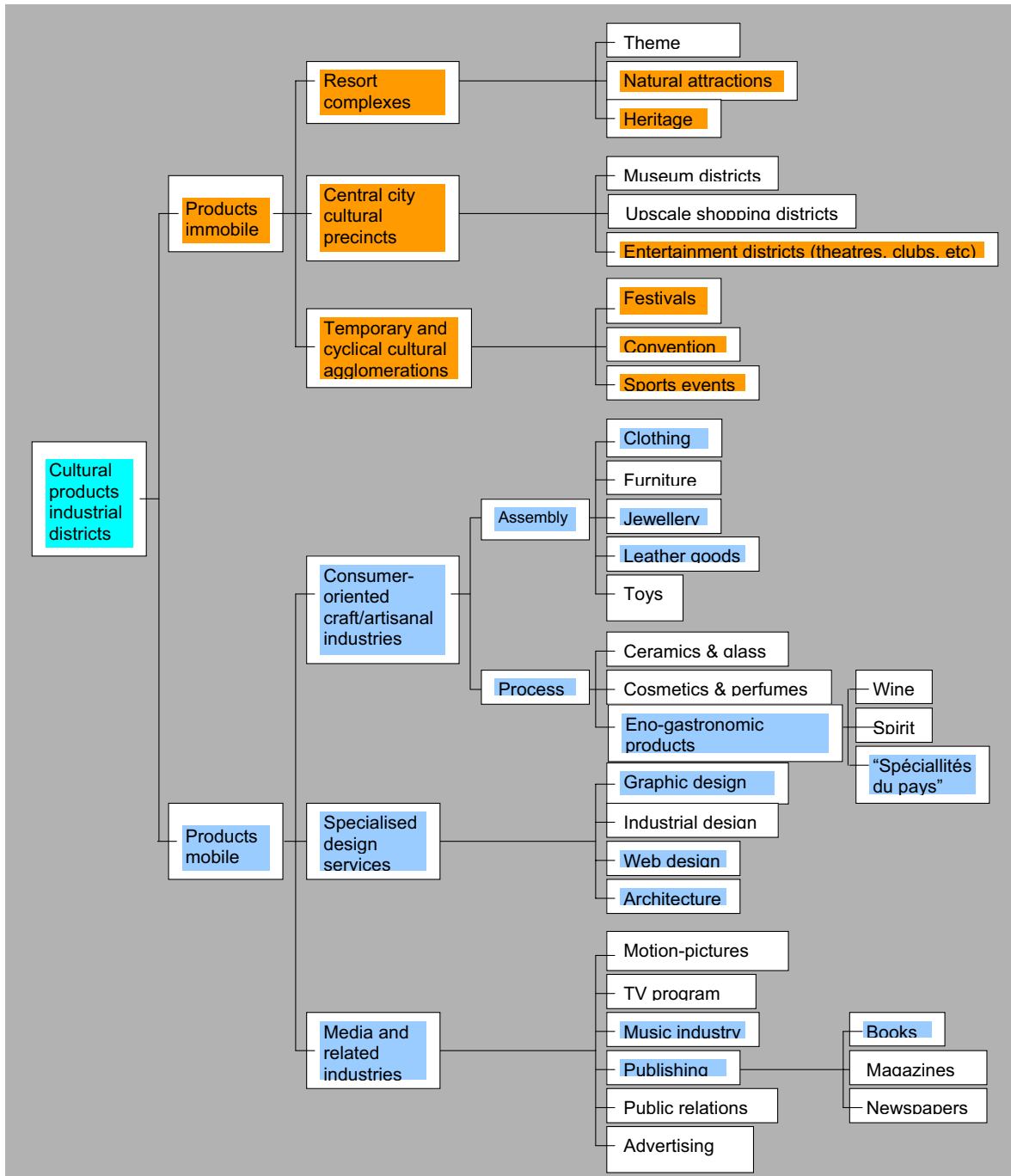


Figure 3. Bandung's Emerging Culture Industry (After Scott 2004:471).

Overall, the expansion of the city is rendering the clarity of its historical structure less distinct and the public realm is slowly disintegrating. Important sites are become less visible and less accessible. Beautiful residential areas are being eroded by traffic and commerce. Strip development has become ubiquitous as transport colonises inadequate infrastructure. The conjuncture between the old historic network of public buildings and spaces now occupies an uneasy relationship to commerce. Since the historic heart of the city and its institutions are now peripheral to the new Bandung, historic public spaces such as Gedung Sate are now located where the *least* amount of people congregate on a daily basis, as are many of the parks and gardens. Conversely, urban space provision in new commercial areas such as Jalan Dago and Cihampelas is seriously inadequate. Historic areas such as Alun Alun Square and Braga, the old heart of the city, have become isolated and have lost their value as nodal public spaces, and mass migrations from Jakarta at weekends overwhelm existing services and outlets, particularly parking. So the clarity of urban form which Bandung was famous for is morphing into a commodity spectacle of clothing outlets, shopping centres, parking lots and hawkers stands, and the ubiquitous urban design concept of pedestrianisation is nowhere to be seen.

Despite this onslaught, it is quite clear that of all Indonesian cities, Bandung Culture is renowned across the Archipelago. Due to its size, the city is still recognizable as a distinct place with a cohesive urban identity. It has one of the country's best environments, both in nature and architecture. It has a unique heritage environment in terms of its Art Deco buildings, its parks and gardens, and has long been a centre for Education and culture. The Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) is a world class university, and is supported by 4 other universities and 34 other institutions of higher learning. There is a burgeoning fashion and nascent music industry, as well as art and cultural activities in the form of artisanal and craft production. Bandung is also a centre for professional services, with specific firms operating at a global level. In addition, Bandung is also the regional centre for the tea and coffee industry. It is a major tourist destination and is thus involved in largest economic sector of the culture industry. Bandung even has its own Cappuccino class setting an example with the correct type of sunglasses, jeans, sports shoes and mobile phones. The key question is whether Bandung can build on its inheritance as a necessary foundation for the culture industry while at the same time controlling the runaway aspects of development that threaten its natural advantage.

So despite the decolonization process of the last 50 years, the imperialist strategies of the developed world continue unabated, albeit in altogether different forms. It is therefore of prime importance to question whether or not developing countries can remain sufficiently outside this sphere of influence so that the benefit of their own cultural economies can be captured. To quote two young Indonesian academics:

'simply adopting pristine Western economic, social and political prescriptions will not bring much improvement in development' (Poesoro and Adji 2005:6)

CONCLUSION

The problematic of culture has been with us now for at least 150 years and will likely be with us indefinitely. Culture must be understood within the evolving dynamic of socio-economic relations, and beyond this has no meaning. In order to mitigate greed, corruption and abuse at a global level, the concept of resistance must be maintained so that all forms of exploitation remain visible. So culture must always retain the ability to be critical of governments, institutions and individuals. Similarly, all concepts transferred from developed nations to developing nations must be treated with extreme caution, and the creative city, the creative class and the cultural economy are three such ideas. Nonetheless, Bandung is one of those cities on the world map that has all the necessary qualities whereby advantage may be

attained through the conscious pursuit of a local culture industry. This seminar represents a great initiative for the city of Bandung and for ITB as its leading academic institution. With this initiative however, comes the continuing responsibility to pursue a methodical and sustained research strategy which will direct future growth and change for an already marvelous city.

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