Artists and creative city policy: resistance, the mundane and engagement in Stockholm, Sweden.

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ABSTRACT

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Much of the literature around notions of the 'creative class' and the 'creative city' has placed artists as a central, typical creative group. However, that literature has often placed artists in a conceptual dichotomy - either they are seen as uncritical champions of creative city policy (because it boosts their profile and markets) or they are placed in radical opposition to it. This paper explores the attitudes of a sample of artists in Stockholm, Sweden to open this dichotomy up to a more nuanced critique. The analysis considers the diversity of views, attitudes and perceptions of these artists towards creative city policy. While opposition and resistance to the application of creative city policy can certainly be found, the paper seeks to move beyond this to examine how the lack of accord between creative producers and policy-makers can be the outcome of more mundane, everyday practices. In addition, artists join together in specific projects and loose, ephemeral networks to address the issues surrounding the implementation of creative city policy in ways which oppose it but also seek alternatives through engaging planners and the public. Overall the paper calls for an understanding of artists which goes beyond the enthusiast/opponent dichotomy towards developing an understanding of the diverse range of artist responses and engagement with creative city policy.

Keywords: creative city resistance mundanity engagement

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INTRODUCTION

Much of the literature around notions of the 'creative class' and the 'creative city' has conceptualised artists as a key creative group (Florida, 2002, 2007; Markusen, 2006; Borén and Young, 2013a). Problematically, the literature has tended to place artists in a dichotomy in relation to the 'creative city' and creative urban policy (Markusen, 2006). Either they are seen as uncritical champions of creative city policy, because it boosts the profile of culture in the city and hence their opportunities, funding and markets, or they are placed in radical opposition to it, because as individuals and collectives they espouse a politics of resistance to how culture is being appropriated in the neoliberalisation of urban policy. However, as Markusen (2006: 1936) argues 'Neither of these stylised portraits probe artists' roles in struggles over urban form and social welfare. Artists as political actors are more self-conscious, critical and activist than either of these dualities suggests.'

In order to open this dichotomy up to a more nuanced critique this paper explores the attitudes of a sample of artists towards creative city policy in Stockholm, Sweden. Stockholm has seen a growth in the adoption of instrumental views of culture, art and creativity as part of its increasingly neoliberalised urban policy (Stahre, 2004; Rutherford, 2008; Loit, 2014), and artists have certainly shown an awareness of and opposition to the exploitation of culture in this context (cf. Harvey, 2012; Novy and Colomb, 2013). However, we would suggest that the many valuable analyses of how cultural producers are organizing against urban cultural policy run the risk of further stereotyping the range of artists' responses, particularly across different contexts. As a complex, global policy mobility (McCann and Ward, 2011) the 'creative city thesis' becomes embedded in local planning contexts in diverse ways which are still relatively unexplored (Borén and Young, 2013b) emphasizing the need for studies which explore the locally contingent nature of artists' responses and organization (Novy and Colomb, 2013). Following in particular the more nuanced analysis of Kirchberg and Kagan (2013) we therefore explore the range of attitudes and responses among Stockholm artists as "crucial cases" (Eckstein, 1992) which blur the enthusiast/opponent dichotomy to produce a more complex understanding of artists' relationship to the 'creative city'.

More broadly, the paper seeks to advance the idea that there are important social, cultural and economic implications for cities in forming a grounded understanding of what creativity actually is, of the views of different producer groups and what can be expected from creative producers of various kinds. Moreover, following recent critiques in the literature (Peck, 2005; Evans, 2009; Borén and Young, 2013a, 2013b; Scott, 2014) it is also high time to move beyond critiquing the 'creative city thesis', particularly the Florida-inspired, fast-policy quick-fixes which have influenced cities around the world for the last decade or so, and instead discuss in a more grounded

and constructive way how art and culture may best contribute to the well-being of cities and their inhabitants, without simply becoming subsumed into the goals of neoliberal inspired urban policy. Therefore we also explore the possibilities for openness and dialogue which arise when rational, top-down planning and policy is left behind and new modes of governance are opened up (cf. Lange, 2011; Metzger, 2011). Following Gibson and Klocker (2005), what kind of 'new conceptual spaces' might facilitate the interaction, rather than opposition, of creative producers and policy makers?

METHODS

The research is based on analysis of planning documents and a range of semi-structured qualitative interviews with planners and artists in Stockholm, Sweden (see also Borén and Young, 2013a). From this material we illustrate the points argued with a number of "crucial cases" (Eckstein, 1992) in order to destabilise the afore-mentioned dichotomy. The main policy documents and strategies shaping policy in Stockholm were analysed to reveal the focus on culture and creativity in Stockholm's urban policy. This was undertaken as an initial stage to gain an overview of how issues of creativity are located within the dynamic policy environment.

Following this thirty-one semi-structured, qualitative interviews, each lasting around one and a half hours, were completed. Ten of these were with key urban actors at the regional, city and district scales of urban governance. These included officials responsible for cultural planning, city planners and directors of Stockholm suburban district administrations and representatives of the city-region authority.

Twenty-one artists' interviews were completed exploring a range of issues around their practice and attitudes in relation to 'creative city' policy. It is difficult to define artists as a discrete group. Following calls in the literature to focus on specific occupations, the sampling process was designed to identify one type of artist with shared characteristics, so that the sample was not so diverse that it was impossible to derive meaningful conclusions. All of the sample work outside the "white cube" gallery system and few of them sell their artworks. There were nearly equal numbers of men and women in the sample, reflecting women's high rates of participation in labour markets in Sweden. All of the sample are graduates, white and Swedish citizens. The artists work in a variety of media (photography, painting, film making, radio, installations) with the goal of creating experimental artistic interventions and conceptual/discursive performance art. They are all 'social artists', ie. their purpose in engaging with art is to create new material and symbolic spaces which encourage reflection upon the nature of urban life generally to provoke new practices and ways of thinking. Many of them are research-led, eg. using interviews with marginalised urban communities, and engaged with critical social theory.

CULTURE, ART AND CREATIVITY IN STOCKHOLM'S URBAN POLICY

Stockholm's economic performance is heavily dependent on knowledge intensive industries (OECD, 2006) and it is, like many other cities in high-cost countries, competing with innovation-rich outputs rather than low-price products. A restriction on

economic development in this type of urban innovation-driven economy is often the supply of highly educated, innovative and creative labour. No surprise then that Stockholm's strategic plans mirror this in their overall imagineering of Stockholm as an 'attractive, world-class city' for the highly educated, with a clean environment, world-class facilities at all educational levels and a vibrant cultural life. The role of culture has in Stockholm, as in so many cities around the world (Evans, 2009), gained a prominent place in urban development strategies. Culture and creativity have become increasingly visible in the main planning documents for the city and city-region, eg. the comprehensive plan from 2010 or the regional development plan from 2010 and in Vision2030, the city's primary strategic vision document from 2007 (updated 2009 and with a new version – Vision2040 – agreed in 2015). Recent national and municipal elections have put in place a broadly leftist-based coalition both at the national level and in Stockholm City Council dominated by the Social Democrats, so the policy context and the emphasis on culture may change again.

In the Swedish context, however, this adoption of culture, art and creativity in urban policy must be seen as internally differentiated. Three key conceptualisations of how culture and creativity are used can be identified from the analysis of plans and interviews with policy-makers. These understandings relate to: 1) social instrumentalism inherent in 'old style' cultural urban policy aiming at goals such as social integration (eg. of immigrants or the unemployed); 2) economic instrumentalism as part of more recent urban cultural policy (eg. promoting the 'globally attractive city'); and 3) that culture is important for social existence. These three different types of understanding also show that older (social instrumentalist) urban cultural policy and newer versions (economic instrumentalist) co-exist side by side and that newer understandings are not fully replacing older ones.

In addition, the different urban plans and levels of the city do not speak with one voice when it comes to culture and art. The regional development plan from 2010 has much more on culture in than its predecessor from 2003 (see also Hermelin, 2011, cf. Hermelin, 2009), but the comprehensive plan from 2010 provides little space and less commitment when it comes to what should actually be done in this field. In some suburbs there are municipal art spaces which follow strategic aims of integrating immigrants and strengthening the local community. However, this is no longer an overarching policy idea for the city but is rather used locally, in certain suburbs with clearly stated social goals. Moreover, the leaders of these art spaces in turn demonstrate a variety of strategies, at times promoting international 'high profile' exhibitions and events as well as social instrumentalism, with the suburban Tensta Konsthall being a primary example of this 'double nature'. This demonstrates that these policies sometimes co-exist, although with different rationales, and that the relations between these policies, different user groups and target audiences (local population and/or globalized knowledge workers, tourists etc) and individual art space directors form complex urban policy ecologies in which notions of creativity are contested and diversified from the over-arching policy agenda.

In conclusion, there is an overarching policy script in Stockholm for the way in which culture and creativity can contribute to a preferred vision of urban development, the main emphasis of which is raising the attractiveness and competitive power of Stockholm in the context of global inter-urban competition. However, this is internally differentiated within the city administration and different levels of strategic planning.

While Stockholm's urban policy is certainly considered to be undergoing neoliberalisation, understandings and uses of culture and creativity are more differentiated than a simple perusal of the main promotional documents would suggest. This complexity also serves to shape the nature of artists' responses. Despite a long history of social movements protesting different aspects of urban development (Stahre, 2004), and the specific example of the 'Cyklopen' anarchist artistic group, Stockholm lacks a 'Mediaspree' or 'Gängeviertel', specific sites in Berlin and Hamburg which have been the focus of activism by creative-led new social movements (Novy and Colomb, 2013; Kirchberg and Kagan, 2013). Stockholm therefore provides a different context in which to explore the diversity of artists' responses, particularly those which take a different form to organized resistance to these visions of the 'creative city'.

ARTISTS' RESPONSES TO 'CREATIVE CITY' POLICY IN STOCKHOLM

In our analysis of artists' responses to Stockholm's urban policy we explore the range of attitudes they hold about the direction which urban policy has taken and the increasingly instrumental use of culture and creativity. In particular, we wish to disaggregate artists as a group and explore the range of their experiences of and relationships with this urban policy, thus moving beyond the 'limiting binary' (McLean 2014: 671) or caricature of artists as enthusiasts/opponents (Markusen, 2006). In their examination of three different artist-led social movements in Hamburg, for example, Kirchberg and Kagan (2013) identify different goals and political responses: opposing unsustainable development models; preserving artistic freedom by campaigning for cheap space; and artists engaging in political opposition through activism but not in their artistic practice. More research is required to understand this complexity of artists' responses.

We contribute to this agenda below in three sections. The first explores opposition to Stockholm's creative urban policy and its perceived neoliberalisation. Here the analysis supports findings from other cities that artists are increasingly in the vanguard of forms of protest which resist the impact of creative city policy. However, we then seek to blur this placement of artists as 'always in opposition', by considering a series of more mundane, habitual, everyday practices and values which are dissonant with those of policy-makers and produce discord rather than outright opposition. Third, we move further along this spectrum to explore a situation where artists actively engage with urban planning processes and policy-makers to shape policy and the role of creativity in urban development. While this may also in part exhibit resistance it is also about artists wishing to contribute to the creation of new conceptual spaces in which ideas about creativity can be talked about in different ways. Throughout the analysis we are sensitive to the idea that these are not discrete categories and that artists may be situated in some or all of them simultaneously or at different times.

Artists Against the 'Creative City'

Current literature has done much to highlight artists' awareness of urban cultural policy and the rhetoric around 'creativity' and how many artists are politically

progressive and critical of elite visions of urban development (Markusen, 2006; Harvey, 2012; Novy and Colomb, 2012; Kirchberg and Kagan, 2013). Harvey (2012) notes that it is increasingly the very actors that 'creative city' policy targets and purports to support who are becoming the vanguard of protest against such policy and its implications for cities and their citizens. Artists have opposed culture- and creativity-led forms of development which they feel will lead to a displacement of more alternative and vernacular forms of creativity, drive gentrification and rising prices (especially property) and marginalise social groups and forms of creativity which are deemed not to 'fit' the overarching policy view of what types of culture and creativity are deemed appropriate in the 'creative city'.

Several of these artists identify an ongoing neoliberalisation of policy and society in Stockholm to which they are opposed. Many of these artists are research-led, using interviews with marginalised urban communities, and they engage with critical social theory. They practice both individually and also as members of loose, ephemeral networks which coalesce around particular projects which are often concerned with the neoliberalisation of the city eg. The New Beauty Council (http://www.newbeautycouncil.org) or Informal Cities (http://www.informalcities.org).

For many of these artists, the 'overnight' neoliberalisation of Stockholm (see Stahre, 2004; Rutherford, 2008, Loit, 2014) primarily means 'the loss of a social project' (a viewpoint relating explicitly to Sweden's and Stockholm's long-term social democratic political stance (see Hall, 1998) that many see as having been eroded in the last decades) and that 'Stockholm is no longer for everyone' (Stock-23, M). A frequently expressed view is that the neoliberalisation of the city is having negative social impacts, meaning that not all citizens are included but that Stockholm has become a place only for the wealthy, but also more specifically that policy and current urban development projects, including the use of culture and creativity, create and legitimate divisions and segregation in society. Ironically artists spoke about a number of factors associated with this neoliberalisation and the drive to create a globally-attractive city which are making it increasingly difficult for them to live in the city-centre and participate in the social and cultural life of the city. These included gentrification and the increasing cost of housing, but also the more mundane operations of the city administration eg. in privatizing small-scale arts spaces or controlling activities such as fly-posting for arts events, policies which artists felt are marginalizing and excluding the very creative activity which current urban policy seeks to value. As one artist commented, '…the authorities don't seem to recognize the value of that alternative form at all in order to raise city attractiveness' (Stock-31, F).

Some of these artists use urban plans in their artistic research. They are critical of the 'simplistic' treatment of art and culture and suggest that 'the writers of these documents are looking for the use value of art' (Stock-23/M), particularly how culture is used as content to brand Stockholm. Planners and policy makers are considered to have too narrow and instrumental a concept of culture in their strategies, and this tends to focus on more mainstream artistic practice. Thus policy fails to recognise or engage with other less mainstream or 'less acceptable' (to urban authorities) forms of artistic practice. One example here would be the city council's 'zero-tolerance' stance on graffiti as part of efforts to create the globally-attractive city. In turn, this can be a major barrier when attempting to co-operate with artists and other cultural producers.

At the same time, however, this resistance is multi-faceted – it is both social critique and instrumental for artists themselves. It could be both resistance and instrumentalism at the same time. For example, many artists noted that a facet of neoliberalised policy was the privatisation of small-scale, more public arts spaces, particularly in the suburbs. While they bemoaned the loss of such spaces for the communities in which they are located, they also highlighted how this hinders their own artistic practices. And opposition can also take different forms, including the subversion of policy and arts funding. As one artist said:

> …if you should negotiate with the housing company, of course you say "it is good for gentrifying – culture, artists"…but you don't have to promise anything…you can have it 'between the roles' [and] smash contextual art into the wall…the interesting thing is to try to work with the power… (Stock-1/M).

Resistance or Mundane Dissonance?

Thus these Stockholm artists, at various times, do oppose the neoliberal appropriation of culture and creativity in a similar fashion to artists in many other cities. However, perhaps academic and media attention has been overly focused on a few high-profile examples, the Mediasprees and Gängeviertels, where relatively large-scale new social movements have arisen in opposition to development. This is also influenced, perhaps, by the tendency for social science to seek out these explicit and more spectacular forms of resistance. In this section we examine artists' responses which differ from outright opposition. Instead, we explore the disjuncture between the everyday practices of artists - the 'routines, habits and skills that we employ on a day-to-day basis' (Binnie et al., 2007: 517) - and the understandings of culture and creativity which circulate in policy milieu, without, as Binnie et al. (2007) caution, interrogating everything through the lens of resistance.

For example, various studies have drawn attention to the tensions between creative policy imaginaries and the everyday realities of creative practices (van Heur, 2010; O'Connor and Gu, 2010; Lange, 2011; McLean, 2014). More broadly, this relates to an identified lack of understanding of the needs of creative producers, and how creative production and consumption rests on a complex ecology of scenes, networks, clusters and formal and informal interactions, which can also be loose and ephemeral (Comunian, 2011; Lange, 2011). For example, O'Connor and Gu (2010) note how, in Manchester, UK the Creative Industries Development Service (CIDS) acted as an intermediary between the distinct languages of policymakers and 'creatives'. Creative producers felt that something was required to represent their interests to policymakers and to help integrate them into local economic development policy to their advantage and the aim was to somehow translate between the different professional languages and the mundane, everyday practices of policy-makers and creative producers.

This more mundane level of misunderstandings between these two professional worlds and their everyday practices was something that Stockholm artists strongly expressed. Artists identified issues such as not being listened to, not being taken

seriously, not delivering 'as expected', their ideas not being incorporated into strategies as intended and the limited conception of art held by policy makers. Artists understood the more mundane exclusions created by professional codes and demands, the different languages and terminologies used by the key actors, and that artists in general are not trained to communicate with planners or politicians. Artists – and indeed planners and strategists - are constrained by a lack of time and resources so they cannot always follow issues in society or engage one another. It takes time to get involved, it takes knowledge, networks and time to follow and understand the laws and policies that are discussed. And not every artist will have the interest or willingness to get involved in influencing planning. Indeed, to 'not deliver as expected' is, for many artists, part of their job description and ethos. From the artists' point of view the assignment is to think anew, 'defamiliarise' and do original (art) work but still contribute to the common issues at hand. Artists highlighted that planners and urban decision makers are not really aware of the *raison d´etre* of art and 'they think artists paint' (Stock-23/M) or they 'print T-shirts for the people' (Stock-1/M).

Of course, an important factor shaping this disjuncture in the practices of these different worlds also relates to power. Individual artists are more dependent on the city and other large institutions than the other way around. If powerful institutions and actors have a limited concept of culture and creativity, then this will present difficulties in communication for cultural producers (who might hold a more elaborated concept) if discussing common problems or tasks to be solved. This should be viewed in the context of the state's funding of art where the decisions about what to fund or not or are informed by art experts. This is not to say that planners and urban policy-makers must become art experts, but rather identifies one of the problems: the barrier of asymmetric power-knowledge relations between the parties involved. In the next section we explore attempts to begin to relate along this barrier.

Artists Engaging the Creative City

This 'creative policy gap' (Borén and Young, 2013b) – or what Lange (2011: 189) describes as the gap 'between "state-led planning" on the one hand and the organisational logic of creative scenes on the other' - includes a lack of appreciation by policymakers of what those engaged in various forms of creative activities could bring to urban policy (eg. a social artist's knowledge of the dynamics of marginalized urban communities). One issue is that this gap between policymakers and creative practitioners can form a barrier to the incorporation of more nuanced creative practices into urban policy.

What is missing is a discussion of alternatives. Jonathan Metzger (2011), for example, argues that cities should make use of artists in planning by enabling them to use their 'artistic license' to think anew and, among other things, to create 'cool' spaces for urban development innovation. A 'cool' place is one where different actors in a planning process meet but where the stakes for them are not high, as they are in more formal planning situations. In a 'cool' place new relations can form and new ideas are allowed and discussed whereas in 'hot' places planners and the other actors in a planning process tend to defend their positions, which in practice often leads to a lack of change. The fostering of interaction between planners on the one

hand, and creative producers on the other - as distinct from placing artists simply in an oppositional role – is a strategy which is lacking. In some cases new social movements opposing creative city policy have forced urban authorities to co-operate with artist-led groups (eg. see Kirchberg and Kagan, 2013 on the example of Hamburg's Gängeviertel), but in others the collaboration has been more strategic and planned (Lehtovuori and Havik, 2009).

In this final section we therefore explore how Stockholm artists think about formally engaging with the planning system and strategy development to develop 'new conceptual spaces' (Gibson and Klocker, 2005) or innovative 'collective imaginings of creative practice' (Bain, 2010: 65) to facilitate the interaction of creative producers and policy makers. As Binnie et al. (2007: 517) argue, the mundane is shot through with 'potentialities immanent to practice and performance [which form] the 'creative potential' of the mundane.' If habitual practices can be disrupted they may open up new possibilities (Harrison, 2000; Highmore, 2011).

Stockholm has been the site of a number of collaborations between artists and different levels of the city administration (see Metzger, 2011; Borén and Young, 2013b, Borén and Young, forthc. for fuller accounts). Four artists, for example, worked directly as part of the Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation for the Stockholm-Mälar region during the period in which the 2010 *Regional Development Plan for the Stockholm Region* was developed. This allowed everyday interaction with regional-city planners, which at least exposed both sides to the prevalent attitudes and values each held about culture and creativity, and allowed the views of artists to have some impact on regional-city planning. In other cases artists produced different kinds of artistic intervention in which artists, policy-makers, planners and other urban officials came together in newly created spaces to interact around key issues and ideas in urban planning and city strategy.

These collaborations reflected a wish among many of these artists not just to oppose the adoption of culture and creativity into Stockholm's urban strategy but to work with urban professionals and the planning system. Again this reflects the tension in opposition, where artists seek to resist what they see as the unacceptable neoliberalisation of urban policy but do not reject an increased role for culture and creativity in policy, more the form that it currently takes. Artists thus expressed a desire to engage directly with policy-making process, and had clear ideas about what artists could bring to the planning process, as one respondent summed up:

> One nice social democratic scenario of what art could do would be to participate and be a central figure in political processes, communication processes and in the formation of mental conceptions of people and of visions and of political desires of people. I think that would be a very nice role for art – to kind of be one of those actors that can change perceptions… Of course, that could maybe lead to innovation that in turn is unacceptable to capitalism, but at least it might create pockets of desire that could create other social relations, other political ethical standards…Other images of what society is about. (Stock-23/M).

Through this engagement artists could help break the dreams embedded in the vision of a consumerist society for the few, a consumerism based on low paid work by the many. Thus in this vision the inclusion of artists' perspectives on culture and

creativity could play a role in the development of urban planning and the management of social relations in a way which is more socially progressive, if artists could work with powerful institutions rather than against them. Artists can thus see progressive solutions to problems with policy and power inequalities, rather than just being cast as 'opponents'.

This is not to cast artists in the image of hopeless idealists. They are well aware of the problems and power-relations inherent in attempting to bring together artists and policy-makers. Artists identified that a key problem for them, even when they are engaged in such processes, is to be taken seriously. Although some artists are seen as bringing in critical aspects and issues to planning processes there is a danger that these are usually merely taken as suggestions and not as an important voice and the expertise that artists have is not used optimally. One problem with achieving more impact in this area is, in the artists' view, that the level of analyses that artists contribute is in some respects too sophisticated to be taken on board by the planning system, particularly as it faces considerable financial and structural limitations to what it can do. As a result, the work of artists in conjunction with planners can become reduced to a kind of 'social decoration' for plans, reports and other documents where artists are involved. That artists' analyses and ideas are not incorporated is also due to the fact that artists do not deliver as expected ie. in a way which dovetails with the mindset, language and practices of planners and policy-makers. Our respondents also cited examples of when radical suggestions by artists (eg. making the subway free in order to integrate the suburbs with the city) have been eliminated from reports, even where they are grounded in research. Artists were also cautious that they did not end up in a situation where the city authorities were using them to do their work, eg. to produce urban social art projects as a type of social welfare with artists becoming a cheap replacement for a functional welfare system.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has considered artists as a key (though diverse) group in debates, policy and practice in the ongoing contestation of the 'creative city'. While far from the only group to consider, the nature of their occupational dynamics arguably makes them a key group to analyse within the general aim of trying to unpack what is going on within 'actually existing creative urban policy' as it is produced, contested and reformulated in locally-contingent conditions around the globe.

Taking as a starting point the need to diversify understandings of this group in different contexts beyond dichotomies of them as enthusiasts/opponents the paper has considered a number of positions which artists in Stockholm hold towards 'creative city' policy and its implementation. Considerable diversity exists. While many of these artists oppose and critique urban policy in this area, as has been demonstrated in many other cities, other relationships are apparent. Artists do value the increased emphasis on arts and culture within Stockholm's urban policy. Some artists seek to subvert urban policy to their own agendas and still see city/state funding as vital to their careers and survival. Other groups of artists join together in specific projects and loose, ephemeral networks to highlight the critical issues surrounding the implementation of creative city policy. However, in the Stockholm case at least, not every action by artists is necessarily about resistance, and much of

the disjuncture between policy and creative practice is related to the dissonance between the every, mundane practices of artists and planners. Partly to address this, and at the same time partly to resist the ongoing neoliberalisation, other artists are becoming involved in the planning process, a development which also demonstrates the diversity of responses from urban authorities and planners who are beginning to see the value of including artists in decision-making, beyond simplistic notions of 'what art can do for the city (economically)'. Future research should do more to explore these more mundane worlds and interactions and how they could contribute to a more progressive creative city policy, an approach which would help to shift the focus away from only looking at organized resistance and new social movements.

Here, planners are beginning to explore how they can interact with artistic communities to influence the nature of planning and to get beyond rather mechanistic understandings of creative city policy, which has often focused on urban mega-events and facilities. What is important is the creation of spaces in which this interaction can take place. While it is a legal requirement that the planning process includes consultation, planners can still be limited by their professional circumstances which often hinder the incorporation of a range of viewpoints and practices. However, planners and planning systems can potentially become more nuanced to incorporate the ideas of a variety of creative producers, especially if this is done in conceptual spaces were the stakes are low and no one risks losing face. These 'cool' places of 'defamiliarisation' (Metzger, 2011) might be where the active translation of ideas (Pratt, 2009) between the groups has the best chance of being productive and successful. There is a creative potential in art that is not allowed to bloom. A creative policy that focuses on socially-engaged artistic analyses rather than branding and middle-class consumption would provide the artist with another role. Rather than reducing the role of artists to opponents this offers the potential for them to function as actors who co-operate with urban authorities in a range of projects, and bring critical thinking to bear on the issue of how artists' visions of creativity might be involved in co-producing more progressive urban policy. This is not necessarily a utopian vision as the Stockholm case suggests. It requires revision to how planning systems operate to open up new spaces and to encourage interaction between policy-makers, planners and the creative sectors. Getting beyond seeing artists as either enthusiastic proponents of or radical opponents to creative city policy can make a contribution to this goal.

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