A 'SECTOR DEAL' AND A CREATIVE PRECARIAT :

Shaping creative economy policy in the UK since 2010

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This chapter analyses the development of policies for the creative economy in the UK over the past ten years. In doing so it seeks to foreground the diversity of these policies across different parts of the UK, as well the contested nature of creative economy policies that are often seen from the outside as homogeneous. It thus challenges the notion that there is one 'UK model' that can be readily exported and applied in different national contexts. The two images below represent the different poles of analysis with which this chapter will engage :
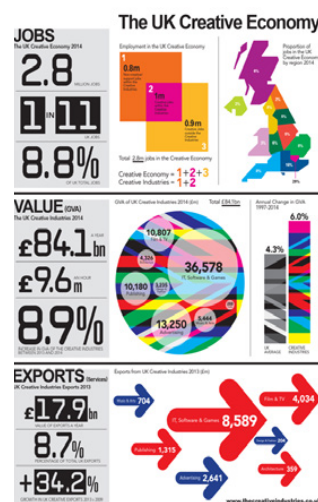

Fig. 1 [1]

Fig. 2 [2]

On the left is a visual representation of the identified economic benefits generated by the creative industries, focussing on increases in GVA ; growth in creative exports ; and the increasing number of jobs being created within the creative economy. Both the content and the visual style of this representation are designed to be easily legible and strongly persuasive to governments and to policy makers. Such succinct summaries focussed on the economic benefits of the creative economy have underpinned the recent development of a 'sector deal' for the creative economy as part of the UK's overall Industrial Strategy. This 'sector deal' has emerged from two broader contexts : the establishment of the 'creative economy' as a policy object and as a major driver of post-industrial economic growth from the late '90s ; and the development of an Industrial Strategy to frame public investment, in an era when the expansion of global trade emerged as a post-Brexit priority and when the economic divide between London and the regions and nations of the UK was also becoming a pressing political issue.

The image on the right is of a building in Hackney Wick (a Creative Enterprise Zone in East London). This ex-pub is at the heart of an area that has recently experienced rapid and significant levels of gentrification (though it is currently also suffering from the acute social, cultural and economic impacts of the global Covid-19 pandemic). The building is currently covered in street art, including the arresting slogans 'meanwhile in East London lunatics decorate a building' and 'from shithouse to penthouse', thus invoking a strong sense of place ; the disruptive power of artistic practice ; and also an ironic sense of the 'transformations' brought about through regeneration/gentrification. This image highlights the precarious nature of creative spaces and of creative work in London, and the vulnerability of its most creative quarters to gentrification, which presents a particular challenge for the development of fair and equitable forms of growth based on the creative economy.

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1 Source: DCMS Estimates June 2015/Jan 2016, www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk (accessed 14 Jan 2020)

2 The Lord Napier pub, featuring artwork by Edwin, Mighty Mo, Dscreet, Malarko, Sony, Static, Charice, Stik & Done, from a project curated by Aida Wilde. See : https://www.huckmag.com/perspectives/reportage-2/the-battle-to-save-east-london-is-this-finally-the-end/ (accessed 12 Dec 2019).

Across these two images we can read the tension between the ambitious growth-driven creative-economy 'sector deal' that was published in 2019 and the impacts of the underpinning precarious nature of work in the creative economy, a tension with which this chapter is particularly concerned. In considering this, it will focus on four distinct but related areas of analysis. Firstly, it will examine the factors shaping the development of a UK-wide Industrial Strategy in 2017 and the specific role of the creative economy within this. It will then consider the distinctive features that have shaped the development of creative economy policies by the devolved governments of Scotland and Wales, before analysing the role of local government policies for the creative economy through the example of the Greater London Authority's (GLA) policy instrument of Creative Enterprise Zones. Finally it will discuss the consequences for effective policy making of the precarity of much labour within the creative economy.

The Creative Economy and the Industrial Strategy

'A separate cultural manifesto, *Create the Future* (Labour Party, 1997) promised to refocus [cultural policy] to "play a major part in the economic regeneration of our country". New Labour were making clear from the start their focus on the economic benefits of culture[3].'

David Hesmondhalgh et al. have written persuasively in *Culture, Economy, and Politics: The Case of New Labour* (2015) about the importance of the relations between the identification of a sector designated as the 'creative economy' and the ambitions for economic growth within (New) Labour Party policies from the late 1990s. This association between investment in the creative industries and economic growth has proven to be remarkably resilient in the intervening years, so that the development of the Industrial Strategy from 2017 drew explicitly on much of the evidence and many of arguments developed in the late '90s and early 2000s. As Martin Smith has argued recently, 'the packaging of the creative industries (…) in the late 1990s was, by any measure, a stunningly successful exercise in political marketing. It has also become a significant UK export.'[4]

The creative economy strategy found within the *Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain for the Future* (2017) can be understood through the lineage exemplified by the publications represented below: from a highly influential mapping of the creative economy in the UK undertaken by Nesta in 2008 (*Beyond the*

Creative Industries), to a 2013 *Manifesto for the Creative Economy* also produced by Nesta, and then finally the *Industrial Strategy* itself, published in 2017.
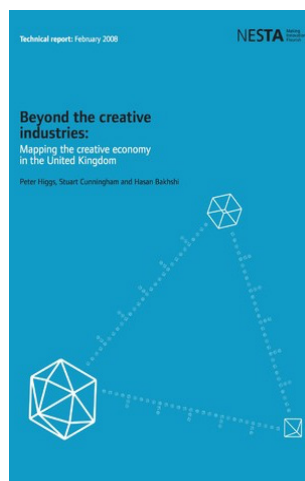
The Industrial Strategy was developed as a response to changing geo-political relationships, and in particular to new conditions of and opportunities for global trade in a post-Brexit world. As a press release in January 2017 expressed it: 'Prime Minister Theresa May will use her first regional Cabinet meeting this morning (23 January) to launch proposals for a modern Industrial Strategy to build on Britain's strengths and tackle its underlying weaknesses to secure a future as a competitive, global nation'[5]. The cover of the Strategy document (see above) shows red, white, and blue rays of light, or energy, emanating dramatically from a map of the UK. These vectors could also I would suggest be read as global trade routes. This is a document that seeks to articulate a sense of national identity as well as laying out an ambitious economic plan. It addresses a number of different economic sectors claimed to be areas of strength within the UK, including the creative economy which, as the

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3   David Hesmondhalgh et al., Culture, Economy, and Politics: The Case of New Labour (2015), p. 59.

4   Martin Smith, 'Creative Industries' Revisited (Lecture at Goldsmiths University of London, 2019)

5   See https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-unveils-plans-for-a-modern-industrial-strategy-fit-for-global-britain (accessed 27 Nov 2019)

extracts below demonstrate, is considered in relation to its track-record and potential in terms of rapid growth ; innovation ; higher education/creative economy collaborations ; immersive tech ; and creative clusters.

> ‣ 'The UK's world-class creative industries are growing at twice the rate of the economy as a whole' (p. 104).

> ‣ 'Collaboration between universities and industry is essential for the delivery of the *Industrial Strategy*' (p. 85).

> ‣ 'The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund has enabled investment in creative clusters across the UK' (p. 203).

> ‣ The UK government has already committed to 'transformative investment into pioneering immersive technologies like virtual reality and augmented reality' (p.203).

The role of the creative economy within the Industrial Strategy found fuller expression with the publication of the *Creative Economy Sector Deal*[6] in 2018, which was agreed by the Creative Industries Council, a body made up of representatives from government and from creative businesses, sector bodies, and research organisations : 'Set up to be a voice for creative industries, the Council focus on areas where there are barriers to growth facing the sector, such as access to finance, skills, export markets, regulation, intellectual property (IP) and infrastructure[7].

The *Sector Deal* opens with an introduction by Greg Clarke (then Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) ; Matt Hancock (then Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) ; and Nicola Mendelsohn, Vice-President of Facebook for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and Co-Chair of the Creative Industries Council, who collectively put the case that :

> 'The creative industries — including film, TV, fashion and design, arts, architecture, publishing, advertising, video games and crafts — are an undoubted strength of our economy ; indeed, they are at the heart of the nation's competitive advantage. From Harry Potter to Grand Theft Auto, Saatchi and Saatchi to Saville Row, the creative industries account for £92bn of Gross Value Added (GVA), two million jobs and are growing twice as fast as the economy as a whole' (p. 2).

The aim of this Sector Deal is further to enhance these identified areas of strength while focussing on what have been identified as the key issues of finance, skills, export markets, regulation, IP and infrastructure. The Sector Deal was announced in March 2018, with the headline, 'making Britain the best place in the world for the creative industries to thrive'[8]. The key policies contained within this Deal include £20 million a year to roll out a cultural development fund so that local partnerships (outside London) can bid for investments ; £58 million to 'harness the power of immersive technologies' ; the development of new codes of practice in relation to copyright ; improving access to finance for high-growth companies ; promoting a Trade and Investment Board to achieve a 50 per cent increase in creative industries exports by 2023 ; and the launching of an industry-led creative careers programme. The value of the investment proposed is £150 million, which though clearly welcomed by the creative sector represents a very small fraction of the £20 billion investment associated with the Industrial Strategy as a whole.

Devolving Cultural Policy : Scotland

So far, this chapter has focused on UK-wide policy making, which tends to be what is most widely known and most influential internationally — that 'significant UK export' to which Martin Smith referred. But cultural policy within the UK is not shaped only at one level or in one place, and there are important and interesting challenges to the language and the priorities of the 'sector deal' to be found in other contexts.

Scotland has achieved a significant level of devolved authority over the past twenty years, since the *Scotland Act* (1998) created the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive. One key moment in which Scotland articulated a distinct cultural policy was in the passing of the *Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act* in 2010, which established Creative Scotland, a non-departmental body of the Scottish Government that took on the functions of both Scottish Screen and the Scottish Arts Council. The merging of these two organizations brought more commercially focused companies together with the arts sector in all its diversity, which generated significant tensions and controversy in the years that followed as new cultural strategies and policies were developed by this hybrid body. Creative Scotland became the national public body for the arts, screen and creative industries, which was also responsible for developing and promoting creative talent in Scotland.

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6   Industrial Strategy: Creative Industries Sector Deal, https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/462717/creative-industries-sector-deal-print.pdf (accessed 27 Nov 2019).

7   https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/creative-industries-council#role-of-the-group

8   https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-britain-the-best-place-in-the-world-for-the-creative-industries-to-thrive (accessed 12 Dec 2019)

The early years of Creative Scotland were marked by significant controversy and contestation. For example, in 2012 'over 100 Scottish artists, including three Turner-prize winners, a Booker winner and a winner of the Costa award [wrote] an open letter protesting at the "deepening malaise" at Creative Scotland'[9]. Two of the key concerns expressed related to what the signatories to the letter saw as Creative Scotland's over-use of 'business speak' and over-emphasis on commercial value. The letter further stated that:

> 'We write to express our dismay at the ongoing crisis in Creative Scotland. A series of high-profile stories in various media are only one sign of a deepening malaise within the organisation, the fall-out from which confronts those of us who work in the arts in Scotland every day. Routinely, we see ill-conceived decision-making; unclear language, lack of empathy and regard for Scottish culture. We observe an organisation with a confused and intrusive management style married to a corporate ethos that seems designed to set artist against artist and company against company in the search for resources.

In response to such critiques, Creative Scotland sought to re-articulate its strategy in a way that stressed common aims as well as a more diversified understanding of value.

In 2014, Creative Scotland published a new 10-year plan entitled *Unlocking Potential. Embracing Ambition: A shared plan for the arts, screen and creative industries, 2014-2024*[10]. It articulated an ambitious 'shared vision': 'we want a Scotland where everyone actively values and celebrates arts and creativity as the heartbeat of our lives and the world in which we live; which continually extends its imagination and ways of doing things; and where the arts, screen and creative industries are confident, connected and thriving' (p. 13). The emphasis on 'confidence' and 'connection' is here presented in the context of an assertion of the assumed shared values of the screen and creative industries, responding it would seem to those earlier critiques of the excessive use of corporate 'business speak' and the narrow view of value associated with the early years of Creative Scotland.

2016 then saw the publication of *A Strategy for Creative Scotland*, which represented a distinct engagement with the nature and the potential of the creative industries in Scotland. For example, it offered a new mapping of the creative economy in Scotland, arguing for the importance of 'splitting out and rearranging some industries into more appropriate categories, adding in industries outside the DCMS definition… to make them more relevant to Scotland at the current time[11]'. Taxonomies are never neutral, and decisions about what is included as a 'creative industry' have significant consequences for policy. The 2016 *Strategy* highlighted the creative activities and industry sectors seen as particularly key for Scotland, modifying significantly the well-known DCMS taxonomy[12].

In addition to this revised taxonomy of the creative industries, the 2016 Strategy also developed a new approach to the articulation and measurement of 'value', drawing on the concept of the 'triple bottom line'. It argued that creative businesses:

> 'Have the capacity to generate strong value for other business sectors — being directly or indirectly linked to tourism, education, health, energy and food — and are often informed by a strong social ethic (…) This ethos defines a new kind of sector with a rich ecology of micro-

DCMS
1. Advertising and marketing
2. Architecture
3. Crafts
4. Design : Product, Graphic and Fashion Design
5. Film, TV, video, radio and photography
6. IT, software and computer services
7. Publishing
8. Museums, Galleries and Libraries
9. Music, performing and visual arts

Scottish Government	
1. Advertising	**10.** Film and Video
2. Architecture	**11.** Computer games
3. Visual Art	**12.** Radio and TV
4. Crafts	**13.** Writing and Publishing
5. Fashion and Textiles	**14.** Heritage
6. Design	**15.** Software/Electronic
7. Performing Arts	**16.** Publishing
8. Music	**17.** Cultural Education
9. Photography	

9 https://www.theguardian.com/culture/charlottehigginsblog/2012/oct/09/open-letter-creative-scotland (accessed 17 Nov 2019)

10 https://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/the-10-year-plan

11 https://www.creativescotland.com/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/34910/Creative-Industries-Appendix-2.pdf (accessed 5 Nov 2019), p. 3.

12 https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/creative-industries-economic-estimates; https://www.gov.scot/policies/creative-industries/ (accessed 5 Nov 2019)

businesses who are fleet of foot and informed by a strong understanding of community interest as well as commercial ability, many working to a triple bottom line of economic, social and cultural value.' (Appendix Two, p. 9.)

The idea of the 'triple bottom line' is borrowed from an accounting framework developed in the 1990s to capture social, environmental and financial forms of value, and associated initially with the work of John Elkington[13]. But in the discussion of Scotland's developing cultural policy it is used rather to highlight to highlight the interlocking impacts associated with three different forms of value : cultural value ; social value ; and economic value. All three types of value have been explicitly evoked by policy makers, cultural organizations and funders in Scotland over recent years. For example :

'These values resonate with the Government of Scotland's economic strategy supporting the *4 Is* in the economy of Investment, Innovation, Inclusive growth and Internationalism ; and also with Creative Scotland's Triple Bottom Line approach -- understanding that creative businesses have … an impact on economic, social and cultural value,' *Dundee's Creative Industries Strategy, 2017-21*[14].

'Partners will establish a common methodology to measure the "triple bottom line" success of the impact of public services in enabling cultural, social and economic development, Screen Scotland, *Partners' Memorandum (2018)*[15].

Cultural and creative organizations here stress both their contributions to the achievement of Scotland's overarching economic strategy and their claim to be generating wider forms of cultural and social value.

In November 2019 the Scottish Government issued a policy statement on the creative industries[16]. This offered a vision of the role that the creative industries could play in Scotland's future, explicitly citing the importance of the 'triple bottom line' while also linking the creative economy to innovation and to growth :

'Our vision is that the creative industries will play a key role in Scotland having a creative future. In order to achieve this vision, we will work towards a Scotland that is open for business for the creative industries — where forward thinking and sustainable business

models and ambitious, innovative and poineering initiatives and ideas are nurtured and developed.
(…)
We aim to create the conditions for creative industries to grow sustainably and with resilience, recognising non-linear growth patterns and the triple bottom line of economic, social and cultural value. Creative businesses should be drivers of economic growth and should be encouraged to be experimental, dynamic, bold, and confident' (p.4).

The language used here may be aiming for consensus, but it produces an uncomfortable, and even jarring, note as it juxtaposes terms such as 'open for business', 'innovative initiatives', 'growth', 'dynamic' and 'bold' with an invocation of the importance of 'non-linear growth patterns' and the potential contributions of the creative economy to achievement of 'the triple bottom line of economic, social and cultural value'. For some commentators, Creative Scotland is still shaping its policies with too much focus on measurable economic impacts :

This era saw the creeping in of technocratic forms of governance, based upon quantitative data, economic indicators and market pricing. (…) When the SNP came to power, they too drank the Kool Aid, embracing this policy wholeheartedly with the creation of Creative Scotland. (…) Over the past two decades, we have witnessed the ongoing neoliberal transformations of our cultural practices into economic activities[17]'.

Despite Creative Scotland's stated ambition of bringing together the commercially-focussed creative industries and the diversity of arts practices, and their commitment to paying attention to social and cultural as well as economic impacts, the claim here is that Scotland's cultural policy is in fact locked within a neoliberal framework of accountability and metrics that constitute a 'technocratic form of governance'.

Devolving Cultural Policy : Wales

Like Scotland, Wales has seen a significant increase in its devolved powers over the past twenty years, since the passing of the Government of Wales Act (1998) led to the creation of a National Assembly for Wales. Significant recent initiatives related to cultural policy include the publication of a Report undertaken for

13 See Adrian Henriques and Julie Richardson (eds.), *The Triple Bottom Line: Does it all add up ?* (London: Routledge, 2004)
14 Dundee's Creative Industries Strategy, 2017-21, https://dundeecreates.creativedundee.com (accessed 17 Dec 2019)
15 Screen Scotland, Partners' Memorandum, https://www.screen.scot/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/56560/Screen-Scotland-Partners-MOU-September-2018.pdf , (accessed 17 Dec 2019), p. 2.
16 https://www.gov.scot/publications/policy-statement-creative-industries/. (accessed 17 Dec 2019)
17 Mairi McFadyen, 'The Creative Economy: Towards a Culture of Possibility,' https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2019/10/20/the-creative-economy-towards-a-culture-of-possibility/ (accessed 18 Dec 2019)

the Welsh Government in 2014, Culture and Poverty: Harnessing the Power of the Arts, Culture and Heritage to Promote Social Justice in Wales[18]. The review underpinning this Report was commissioned by the Welsh Minister for Culture and Sport in consultation with the Ministers for Communities and Tackling Poverty, for Housing and Regeneration and for Education and Skills and was led by Baroness Andrews, previously a policy adviser to Neil Kinnock and also Chair of English Heritage, who was created a life peer in 2000. The remit for the review was 'to recommend ways in which cultural and heritage bodies can work more closely together to broaden access to, appreciation of and participation in culture in ways that contribute to reducing poverty (p. 3). The Report ranges widely over a series of issues related to barriers to accessing culture and the arts; community engagement with the arts and culture; education and training; cultural skills; and cultural infrastructure, and puts the case that:
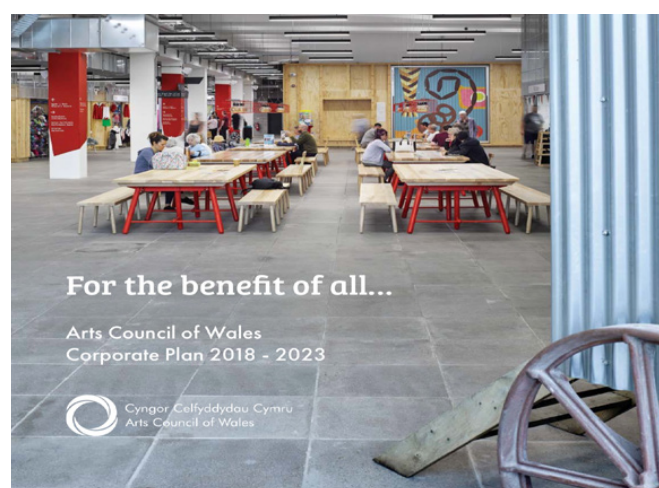
> 'Working out ways to get the most out of cultural and heritage assets, as part of a creative and competitive economy and resilient community, is a problem exercising other countries. But only in Wales, to my knowledge, has any government put this question at the heart of the challenge of finding a broader path to social justice for all' (p. 8).

This close linkage between cultural, economic, and social well-being has become a distinctive strand within Welsh policymaking over recent years, and is built on the conceptualisation of culture as collective and place-based rather than on an understanding of the creative economy as global in reach or characterised centrally by rapid job creation and economic growth. Indeed, the Report argues that: 'the real economic wealth of a country is its people. To consider the short term economic impact of culture and heritage, but not the longer-term economic and social benefit of the role it plays in enriching the lives of its people and stimulating their appetite for learning and education, is insufficient and unacceptable' (p. 9).

Culture and Poverty's emphasis on policy making for the long-term, and also on the importance of developing policy approaches that alleviate poverty and deliver well-being for future generations, is echoed in subsequent Welsh reports and in key legislation, including the Welsh Government's report, Light Springs Through the Dark: A Vision for Culture in Wales (2016) and The Well-Being of Future Generations Act (2015). Light Springs Through the Dark does opens with the familiar statement that 'the creative industries are a vital engine of our economy. They contribute jobs and wealth[19]', but the Foreword by Ken Skates (Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure) also invokes the critical and political legacy of Raymond Williams, citing his 1958 essay 'Culture is Ordinary' (p. 4), to argue that the values of the creative economy need to be more broadly conceived and policy approaches to be flexible enough to deliver diverse benefits through engagement with creativity and culture.

The Well-Being of Future Generations Act (2015)[20] embeds such thinking within public policy as it 'requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change'. The Act identifies seven key well-being goals, including 'a healthier Wales', 'a more equal Wales', 'a Wales of cohesive communities', and 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'. Just as the idea of the 'triple bottom line' has quickly appeared across a range of cultural policy documents in Scotland, such responsibility towards the well-being of future generations is now central to cultural policies in Wales. Thus, for example, The Arts Council of Wales, Corporate Plan 2018-23 asserts that 'We want to work with you to improve the wellbeing and life of our nation through the arts. By investing in the arts you can achieve all seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Together we can make a positive difference to the future generations of Wales[21]'. The primary goal of cultural policy is here presented in relation to future well-being, but it is interesting to reflect on the ways in which this priority is framed within the overall document:

For the benefit of all...

Arts Council of Wales
Corporate Plan 2018 - 2023

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

18 https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/culture-and-poverty-harnessing-the-power-of-the-arts-culture-and-heritage-to-promote-social-justice-in-wales.pdf (accessed 22 Oct 2019)

19 https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/arts-and-culture-vision-statement-light-springs-through-the-dark.pdf (accessed 5 Jan 2020), p. 6.

20 https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/ (accessed 7 Jan 2020)

21 https://arts.wales/sites/default/files/2019-02/Corporate_Plan_2018-23.pdf

For example, the front cover shows a creative space that resonates much more with the shared work environments that have become so central for businesses in the creative economy than it does with images of community-based arts: it is post-industrial space that speaks of urban regeneration while invoking folk traditions through the 'caravan' structure that dominates the right side of the photograph. Stylistically and affectively the document sits precariously between two paradigms of the creative economy.

Local Government and Creative-Economy Policy: the case of London

There is a high concentration of creative-economy businesses within London, and London receives a higher proportion of cultural investment than other parts of the UK. However, there is also a stark difference in per-capita public spend on culture across the city, and particularly between inner-London Boroughs and outer-London Boroughs. Those living in inner-city boroughs benefit from more than ten times the level of investment in cultural activities compared to those living in outer-city boroughs. To this stark inequality can be added a variety of other issues that make the sustainability of creative spaces and creative businesses in London particularly challenging. This is the context for the Greater London Authority's recent Creative Enterprise Zone policy initiative.

The *Creative Enterprise Zones Prospectus* (2017), which is linked to the Greater London Authority's 'Good Growth Strategy' outlines the goals of the Creative Enterprise policy as follows[22]:

> **1.** 'To provide the conditions to help artists and creative businesses to put down roots in the areas they have helped regenerate' (p. 5).

> **2.** 'Based on Enterprise Zones, they will offer incentives to retain and attract artists and new creative businesses to an area by offering permanent affordable workspace, business and skills support, business rates relief, super-fast broadband, and a pro-culture Local Plan' (p. 8).

> **3.** 'The zones will be clusters for creative production and respond to local needs' (p. 8).

> **4.** 'CEZs are underpinned by policies within the London Plan where "planning obligations may be used to secure affordable workspace at rents maintained below the market rate"' (p. 8).

Throughout 2018 a number of London Boroughs submitted bids, including detailed business plans, for specific areas to be designated Creative Enterprise Zones, and six localities were eventually successful in obtaining this designation in early 2019. The geographical distribution of these is indicated below. Although six localities were successful, this involved seven local authorities plus the London Legacy Development Corporation (which has responsibility for planning on the Olympic legacy site and adjacent areas).
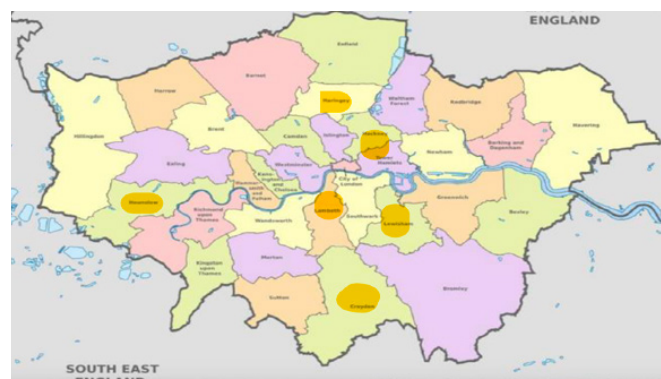

Fig 3: Boroughs containing Creative Enterprise Zones in 2020.

In every case (bar one) employment levels in these CEZ Boroughs are below the national average, and the proportion of residents from black and minority-ethnic communities is substantially above the national average. In a Deprivation Index covering 317 English local authorities, all CEZ boroughs are recorded as being within the most deprived third. Finally, property prices across the Boroughs are well above the UK median of £310,000, and particularly high in Hackney where the deprivation index is most stark. These statistics capture the challenges of disadvantage and gentrification that the Creative Enterprise Zones are designed to address through investments in creativity, workspaces, and skills.

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22 https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/creative-enterprise-zones_prospectus-2017.pdf (accessed 7 Jan 2020)

Key data related to these seven boroughs are presented below:

Borough and Population		Employment Rate % (national = 76,2)	BAME % (national = 14)	Median House Price	Deprivation Rank (1 = most deprivated)
Croydon	386,500	75,4	49,9	£ 300,000	102
Hackney	274,300	69	43,6	£ 485,000	7
T. Hamlets	304,000	70,4	54,0	£ 415,000	27
Haringey	278,000	71,3	38,2	£ 432,000	37
Hounslow	274,200	74,2	51,6	£ 355,000	95
Lambeth	328,900	78,5	41,5	£ 450,000	42
Lewisham	303,400	75,9	47,4	£ 352,000	35

Sources: GLA London Borough Profiles https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/london-borough-profiles and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: *English Indices of Deprivation*, 2019, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019

As part of the process of bidding for CEZ designation, each of the localities were asked to define their priorities and their proposed contributions to enhancing economic sustainability and social impacts. The six successful CEZs identified the following objectives and priorities:

‣ **Croydon**: developing Croydon as a music city; delivering a cultural entrepreneurship programme; subsidizing access to creative spaces for young people; offering business rate relief for creative startups; and providing tailored business support for creative businesses[23].

‣ **Hackney/Tower Hamlets/LLDC**: ensuring that planning powers help develop a pipeline of affordable workspace in the area; helping local people develop creative skills; offering creative apprenticeships, internships and tailored business support as part of a commitment to inclusive growth[24].

‣ **Haringey**: Focussing on fashion and furniture making; honouring Tottenham's creator and maker heritage, expanding the availability of creative workspaces and investing in skills and training so that the whole community benefits from anticipated creative growth[25].

‣ **Hounslow**: Building on local TV and film hub by unlocking new affordable studio spaces; engaging local multi-national businesses and strengthening networks; delivering specialist skills training and freelance and SME business support to ensure local residents have a clear route and access to opportunities in the creative sector[26].

‣ **Lambeth**: appointing a Cultural Education Officer to foster collaboration between schools and creative industries; launching a business start-up programme for creative and digital businesses; establishing an international art fair to showcase creativity in Brixton CEZ; adopting an affordable workspace policy[27].

‣ **Lewisham**: supporting creative businesses to connect and collaborate; increasing access to affordable workspace so creatives can stay in the community; linking creative enterprises to the skills, expertise and facilities of local education and cultural institutions; providing career pathways into the creative sector[28].

These ambitious plans had only begun to be realised when the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic struck and required rapid strategic adjustment. The impacts of the pandemic on the creative sector has been vast and potentially catastrophic. However, the creation of the frameworks necessary to manage these six CEZs and to deliver their objectives has at least enabled rapid interventions to support changed business models and defend creative spaces within these specific localities. The medium- to long-term impacts of this work of course remain to be seen.

23 http://news.croydon.gov.uk/croydon-town-centre-to-be-heart-of-new-creative-enterprise-zone/
24 https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-announces-first-creative-enterprise-zones (accessed 23 April 2020)
25 https://www.haringey.gov.uk/news/haringey-creative-boosts-announced-2019 (accessed 23 April 2020)
26 https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/news/article/656/hounslow_announced_as_one_of_mayor_of_london_s_first_ever_creative_enterprise_zones (accessed 23 April 2020)
27 https://love.lambeth.gov.uk/brixton-named-creative-enterprise-zone-mayor-london/ (accessed 23 April 2020)
28 https://lewisham.gov.uk/articles/news/creative-enterprise-zone-launched-in-deptford-and-new-cross (accessed 23 April 2020)

The vulnerability of the creative economy to the shocks generated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the specific challenges of designing government interventions that can respond to the vast number of micro-businesses and freelancers within that economy (there are, for example, over 5,000 self-employed creative workers based within the Hackney Wick and Fish Island CEZ) have both further exposed the fundamental precarity of much work within the creative economy. As reported by the Creative Industries Federation on 6 April 2020:

> ‣ '42% of creative organisations estimate that their income has decreased by 100% since the outbreak.
>
> ‣ 63% of creative organisations predict a decrease in annual turnover of more than 50% by the end of 2020.
>
> ‣ 1 in 7 creative organisations believe they can last less than 4 weeks on existing reserves[29].'

For some analysts, precarity is a necessary underpinning for the creative sector's much-celebrated economic success. Thus, for example, a 2017 report by Nesta, *The State of Small Business: Putting UK Entrepreneurs on the Map*, argued that:

> 'Tied up in the birth and death of businesses is the question of survival. For the individual firm, survival is undeniably good. However, from a whole economy perspective, high rates of business survival do not necessarily make for a strong economy. … business death is not always bad.'
>
> 'Our analysis finds that business survival is negatively related to productivity. (…) Areas where survival is lower and there are high numbers of business births tend to be more productive as creative destruction allows for the reallocation of capital towards higher productivity firms[30].'

Such explicit espousal of the benefits of 'creative destruction' or indeed of 'disruption' more broadly reads rather differently some three years later against a background of widespread and systemic destruction of key sub-sectors of the creative economy in the UK. But dissenting voices could be found even before the current pandemic, suggesting that both economy and society are at grave risk of asking the creative economy simply to deliver too many mutually incompatible goals. Thus, Ulrich Kockel warned in 2019 of the risks involved in assuming that the 'freely available primary resource' of human creativity was always and everywhere available for exploitation:

> 'In conjunction with tourism and a ubiquitous resource called "heritage", "creative industries" came to be seen as the salvation of regions that were otherwise considered economic basket cases … sustained by the continuously renewable, freely available primary resource: human creativity[31].'

Kockel here suggests the limitations of a model of the creative economy that relies on the notion of human creativity as an inexhaustible free good. And the same point is powerfully made by Oli Mould in his recent study, *Against Creativity[32]*. While making a case for the importance of creativity for individuals and for society, he polemicizes against its capture by an economy and a rhetoric that can see no value beyond the economic: 'So creativity, or more accurately the *power* to create something from nothing, had become an individual characteristic that could be traded. Being creative now had *value* It was a character trait that was much sought after by employers, businesses and governments'. The challenge for all policy approaches to the creative economy here is significant: can we understand its capacity to promote social, cultural and economic well-being without falling prey to a model that ultimately devalues and exploits the power of human creativity?

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29 https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/news/press-release-federation-calls-urgent-grant-support-creative-organisations (accessed 23 April 2020)

30 Nesta and Sage, The State of Small Business: Putting UK Entrepreneurs on the Map (2017), p. 37 and p. 9.

31 Ullrich Kockel, Shoormal Conference: New Coasts and Shorelines, Shifting Sands in the Creative Economy, Shetland, 2019, https://issuu.com/shetlandarts/docs/shoormal_programme_a4 (accessed 23 April 2020), p. 9.

32 Oli Mould, Against Creativity (Verso, 2018), Introduction accessible via https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4115-a-history-of-creativity