Performing the Creative-Economy Script: Contradicting Urban Rationalities at Work

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Performing the Creative-Economy Script: Contradicting Urban Rationalities at Work

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DZUDZEK I. and LINDNER P. Performing the creative-economy script: contradicting urban rationalities at work, Regional Studies. The ‘creative economy’ as a guideline for development strategies has long become performative and generated its own urban realities. The paper first critically engages with policy mobility approaches as an explanatory framework for this guideline’s global reach. It then puts forward the concepts of ‘script’, ‘articulation’ and ‘performance’ as an alternative perspective to understand better how this new paradigm inscribes itself into existing and well-established fields of urban politics. The case study on the city of Frankfurt/Main investigates the articulations of the creative-economy script with specific rationalities of urban governance. It traces the way by which a hegemonic understanding has been established that nevertheless is characterized by friction and ruptures that offer opportunities for a counter-hegemonic politics of differentiation.

Creative policies  Policy mobilities  Rationalities of urban governance  Performativity  Regional development

DZUDZEK I. and LINDNER P. 展演创意经济脚本：作用中的矛盾城市理性，区域研究。“创意经济”做为发展策略的指导方针，长期以来已变成了展演性的，并创造了自身的城市现实。本文首先批判性地涉入政策流动的取向，做为这一遍及全球的指导方针的解释性框架。本文接着提出“脚本”、“接合”以及“展演”的概念，做为更佳理解此一崭新范畴如何将自身铭刻进入既有且已稳固建立的城市政治中的另类视角。本文以法兰克福／美茵城市的案例研究，探讨创意经济脚本与城市治理的特定理性之间的接合。本文追溯霸权式理解凭籍建立的方式，但其中仍有着摩擦与破裂的特徵，并提供做为反霸权差异政治之契机。

创意政策  政策流动  城市治理的理性  展演性  区域发展

DZUDZEK I. et LINDNER P. S’en tenir au script de l’économie créative: aller à l’encourent des rationalités urbaines en vigueur, Regional Studies. Depuis longtemps, l’‘économie créative’ comme ligne directrice des stratégies de développement est devenue performatif et a engendré ses propres réalités urbaines. Dans un premier temps l’article considère d’un oeil critique des approches à la souplesse politique comme cadre explicatif de la portée mondiale de cette ligne directrice. Puis on avance les notions de ’script’, ’articulation’ et ’performance’ comme une autre perspective pour mieux comprendre comment ce nouveau paradigme s’inscrit dans des domaines actuels et bien établis de la politique urbaine. L’étude de cas de la ville de Francfort-sur-le-Main examine les articulations du script de l’économie créative avec des rationalités spécifiques de gouvernance urbaine. On esquisse le chemin par lequel une compréhension hiégémonique a été établie qui est caractérisée, quand même, par la friction et la rupture qui fournissent la possibilité d’une politique anti-hégémonique de différenciation.

Politiques créatives  Souplesses politique  Rationalités de gouvernance urbaine  Performance  Aménagement du territoire


Kreativpolitik  Policy mobilities  Rationalitäten urbanen Regierens  Performativität  Regionalentwicklung

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Performing the Creative-Economy Script: Contradicting Urban Rationalities at Work

DZUDZEK I. y LINDNER P. Desarrollo del guión de la economía creativa: el efecto de racionalesidades urbanas contradictorias, Regional Studies. La ‘economía creativa’ como guía para las estrategias de desarrollo tiene desde hace tiempo un carácter performativo y ha generado sus propias realidades urbanas. En este artículo primero analizamos desde un punto de vista crítico los enfoques de movilidad política como una estructura explicativa del alcance global de esta guía. Luego presentamos los conceptos de ‘guión’, ‘articulación’ y ‘desempeño’ como una perspectiva alternativa para entender mejor cómo se inscribe este nuevo paradigma en los campos existentes y bien establecidos de la política urbana. El estudio de caso sobre la ciudad de Fráncfort del Meno ilustra las articulaciones del guión sobre la economía creativa con racionalesidades específicas de la gobernanza urbana. Analizamos cómo se ha establecido una comprensión hegemónica que, sin embargo, se caracteriza por fricción y rupturas que ofrecen oportunidades para una política de diferenciación contrahegemónica.

Políticas creativas Movilidades políticas Racionalidades de la gobernanza urbana Performatividad Desarrollo regional

JEL classifications: B50, O21, R11, R58

INTRODUCTION

Notwithstanding a growing feeling that the ‘creative economy’1 thesis is no longer new or exciting, both the related academic literature as well as the number of ‘practitioners’ involved in creative-city development strategies are still increasing. While in the year 2000 only two papers were listed under the topics ‘creative economy’, ‘creative industries’ or ‘creative city’ in the Web of Science database, this number rose to ten in 2005 and reached nearly 100 in 2010. Upon leaving academia – a field by no means independent of or located ‘above’ its subject-matter – and entering the fuzzy terrains of consultancy and regional development programmes, a similar picture emerges: so-called ‘Creative Industries Reports’ fill metres of bookshelves and have become a must-have for any city wanting to act up-to-date with the latest strategies for regional and urban economic development (GIBSON and KLOCKER, 2004). Whereas in Germany the first of these reports, commissioned by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, was published as early as 1992, the first one with an explicitly urban focus (for the city of Aachen) was only issued in 2005. Some cities started to finance regular progress reports and national as well as European institutions began working on standardized classification schemes for the newly created ‘sector’ (e.g., BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR WIRTSCHAFT UND TECHNOLOGIE, 2009a; DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT, 1998; UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD), 2010). Numerous conferences for practitioners guarantee that the key points of the concept are disseminated even to the most remote corners of municipal administrations. This remarkable amount of publications and newly institutionalized forums for exchange might leave one with the impression that all that is interesting and relevant about the subject has already been discussed and analysed.

Strikingly, however, considerably more has been published on what the creative-economy thesis states, rightly or wrongly, and on what the creative industries really ‘are’ – i.e.: How can they be characterized? How are they different? How important are they? – than about how creative policies travel, translate into practices and produce what they purportedly only describe (for exceptions, see CHRISTOPHERS, 2007; and PRINCE, 2010). Yet the more the thesis is rearticulated as a globally circulating ‘rough guide’ for politicians, practitioners and even the target group of ‘the creatives’ themselves, the more relevant it becomes not only to analyse critically its hidden prerequisites, its shortcomings, its unrealistic expectations, its inadequate causal relations and unclear definitions, but also the ways in which it has already begun to change and structure the world that it assumes to explain. In other words, the talk about the creative-economy with a usually clear motivation to inform economic development practices, continuously rearticulated from influential positions and by prominent representatives, spread across the globe through a multiplicity of academic and non-academic channels, and codified in at least its most basic assumptions and categories, has become performative (PECK, 2005, p. 749). So the problem is not – as GOEKE (2011) recently argued – that a precise, scientific and objective definition of what the creative industries are does not exist, but that one does not know what takes shape as the creative industries once the global talk about them turns into a global-local policy practice. And we even know less about how exactly this practice is established and ‘successfully’ performed.

In what follows we discuss how a general idea of how the parameters of regional economic success change, such as the creative-economy thesis, was able to be translated into a development strategy and adopted in cities all over the world. We ask how it was able to inscribe itself into the power-laden fields of urban governance, to come to terms with established rationalities, to resolve potential conflicts, and to forge new connections between development narratives, institutions and administrative routines. The paper begins by questioning the understanding of creative-city policies as mobile policies and introduces in the subsequent section the concept of articulation to grasp better the contradictions, alignments and disjunctions that shape their implementation. The third section briefly presents the creative-economy script as a common ground and
point of reference for new policy practices. The fourth section consists of our case study on the city of Frankfurt/Main (Germany) where we shed light on the reflexive relationship between the creative-economy script as a point of reference, drawn on by all the reports and development strategies as well as practitioners in their daily work, and the concrete spatiotemporal contexts in which it is articulated, translated into practices and entangled in contestations. This case study is based on qualitative interviews undertaken in August/September 2011, an analysis of the protocols of the city council’s meetings, and several weeks of participant observation in the city’s Economic Development Agency (Wirtschaftsförderung Frankfurt) in 2011.

POLICY MOBILITIES AND MUTATIONS

The observation that urban policies appear to be becoming increasingly alike across cities and countries worldwide has attracted scholarly attention, primarily from political scientists, since at least the 1960s. Early approaches to this phenomenon depicted it predominantly as a process of transfer from one place to another, leading to global diffusion and convergence (Bennett, 1991; Clark, 1985; for a more differentiated picture on the dissemination of creative-city policies, see also Evans 2009; and Luckman et al., 2009). ‘Rational actors’ or at least ‘rational processes of decision-making’ and ‘learning’ but also ‘market-like competition’ and ‘selection of best practices’ often built the cornerstones of these conceptualizations (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996; Rose, 1991, 1993). Policies were dealt with as tools that could be transferred and then applied to similar problems at different locations.

Yet, what at a first glance might look like an apt framework to understand the global proliferation of creative-city policies entails considerable blind spots. Two of them were highlighted in the urban policy mobilities literature of the last decade. First, the prerequisites for and the very process of becoming mobile – which had hitherto become somehow blackboxed by the term ‘transfer’ (or at least reduced to ‘resources’ and ‘infrastructures’) – now received their due attention. This is articulated in terms such as ‘circuits of knowledge’, ‘global consultocracy’, ‘policy networks’, ‘circulatory regimes’ or ‘formations’, and in reflections on the emergence of a ‘legitimate and actionable truth’ as an important moment of mobilization (McCann, 2008, 2011; Peck, 2002, 2003; Prince, 2012; Ward, 2006). Second, changes in form and content were increasingly seen as an important element of and a precondition for the diffusion of policies. The call to ‘follow the policy’, for instance, does not primarily mean to learn more about the itineraries that policies take but to understand how they mutate while travelling from one place to another (González, 2011; Peck, 2011; Peck and Theodore, 2010, 2012).

Both these shifts – towards problematizing mobilization as well as towards understanding the mutation of policies on the move – are highly relevant for the global spread of creative policies. Yet the questions of ‘what exactly is moving when “policy” travels’ (Jacobs, 2012, p. 414), ‘where exactly policies mutate, and how exactly they receive their (temporary) final shape in localized settings remain difficult to address as long as ‘mobility’ and ‘mutation’ remain closely tied to one another. Characterizing Florida’s The Rise of the Creative Class (2002) as a ‘mutable mobile’ (Peck, 2005, p. 767) illustrates the unclear status of the linkage between mobility and mutation: this notion draws on Latour’s network-related terminology (‘immutable mobile’; Latour, 1987, p. 227; 2005, p. 223) but serves to go beyond it by pointing to the fluid-space metaphor as used by Mol and Law (Mol and Law, 1994, p. 665; Law and Mol, 2001, p. 613).

Beyond that, the policies under scrutiny, often vaguely circumscribed as ‘models’, ‘concepts’ or ‘blueprints’, or directly named as a concrete subject-matter (such as ‘broken windows’, ‘zero tolerance’, ‘business improvement district’, ‘creative industries’, etc.), are usually very heterogeneous groupings. They are made up of academic discussions across different disciplines, of new ‘best practice’ schemes at the intersection of fields as diverse as urban planning, regional economic development, policing, or culture and the arts, and they are co-authored by actors from the private as well as from the public and non-governmental sectors. They consist of academic books and papers, reports and rankings, analyses and prescriptions, conferences and workshops, training courses and study programmes, roundtables and consultancy services. Only on rare occasions do these groupings travel as packages with a clearly defined content. Rather, they usually resemble mobile stores with a specific assortment and a broad range of products offered to cities and their administrations.

When the focus is shifted from mutating policy networks to contextual enrolments, and from tightly bundled packages to loose groupings of heterogeneous elements, mobile policies cannot – as the metaphor ‘travel’ might suggest – be seen as ‘just arriving’ at different locations. ‘Arrival’, then, presupposes to receive a specific framing in a concrete local context, to adapt to an established field of power relations and to engage with the different rationalities of urban governance already in place. In the most recent literature on local–global urban policy productions, although often still under the labels of ‘travelling policies’ and ‘policy mobilities’, this seems to be reflected in a feeling of discomfort with the predominant imaginary of a close mobility-mutation nexus that shifts not-so-mobile contexts into the background. McCann (2011), for instance, outlining a research agenda for policy mobility.
studies, highlights the ‘dialectics of fixity and flow’ as his vantage point, and Peck and Theodore (2010, p. 173) emphasize the ‘embeddedness in, and interactions with, local economic, social, and institutional environments’. Conceptually, the growing attention for the localized making of urban policies and their temporary stabilization is reflected in the frequent reference to ‘assemblages’ (e.g., Prince, 2010). This term is of course used with widely differing understandings (Phillips, 2006) and considered by no means necessarily ‘territorial’ (Ong, 2007). However, it often serves as a means, again, to open up a perspective onto the importance of local settings in shaping the concrete design of policies – this becomes strikingly clear from McCann and Ward’s (2011) discussion of assemblages in the introductory chapter and the conclusion of their book on Mobile Urbanism. Still, the question of how local policy performances can be adequately grasped remains under-conceptualized and empirically sidelined as compared with the mobility topic; more broadly, Jacobs (2012, pp. 412, 415) even sees ‘irreconcilable grammars’ at work and calls for a more ‘topological’ approach.

LOCAL ARTICULATIONS

One way of taking this critique seriously is to acknowledge that the ‘reception’ of a mobile policy is in fact a process of intense mutual engagement. This requires a shift in the analytical focus to the simultaneous transformation of policies and of the urban settings into which they intervene and through which they operate (Prince, 2012, p. 320). In this perspective the occurrence of creative-city policies in Frankfurt is not the result of a top-down implementation of a mobile policy that arrived after travelling along the lines of policy networks, but rather a set of performances organized around a permanently contested agreement over the necessity of creative-city development.

The concept of articulation offers a valuable clue to these performances. It has received a broad reception in social sciences (Hall, 1980, 1985; Glynos and Howarth, 2007; Howarth, 2010) and – less prominently – also in geography (Barnett, 2004; Featherstone, 2011). It is often used to explain the appearance of new identities, objects of knowledge or modes of governance (Bair and Werner, 2011; Gibson-Graham, 1995; Hart, 2007; Springer, 2011) and goes back to Althusser (1965/1969). But it was Laclau (1977) who elaborated it more systematically in Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory (p. 42) and gave it a specific meaning when he criticized Wallerstein for explaining historical transformation in his world-system theory (Wallerstein, 1974, 1980, 1989) ‘exclusively by unfolding the internal logic of a determinate mode of production’ (Laclau, 1977, p. 42). Laclau points to the fact that capitalist modes of production are not just realizations of an abstract historical law. Instead, he conceptualizes economic practices as diverse, contested and often intertwined with ‘various non-capitalist modes of production’ (p. 43) which do not exist other than in their ‘particular and concrete “realisation”’ (p. 49). Concrete economies, then, have to be seen ‘as systems of relations constituted by the articulation of different modes of production’ (p. 42). What Laclau emphasizes for the concept of modes of production also holds true for mobile policies: by treating them as travelling packages they appear as ‘a vacant and homogeneous totality created by eliminating differences instead of articulating them’ (p. 45).

In Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, Laclau and Mouffe (1985/2001) develop a more elaborate theory of articulatory practice as part of their discourse theory. There they regard articulations as being ‘constitutive of all social practice’ (Laclau, 1990, p. 59) insofar as meaning and social norms are created by relating different elements. In their own words:

[W]e will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call discourse.

(Laclau and Mouffe, 1985/2001, p. 105)

The implementation, for instance, of labour union policies into a particular set of state-ruled labour relations will dislocate both the identity of the labour union as well as the character of the state intervention (Laclau, 1990, pp. 39f.). Accordingly, with reference to our case study, we draw on articulation as the performative (re-)production of a local creative-policy regime through speech acts as well as through daily practices that intertwine and change different, sometimes even contradictory, rationalities of urban governance.

Articulation in the sense according to Laclau (2007, pp. 139–159) is closely linked to the concepts of heterogeneity and hegemony. Discourses only ‘partially fix meaning’ (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985/2001, p. 113) and the ‘partial character of this fixation’ (Laclau, 2007, p. 140) is constantly threatened by heterogeneous elements that can enter the discourse and effect its restructuring. In this process, these elements do not completely lose their differential meaning in relation to the hegemonic discourse into which they intervene. A discourse links a range of different often contradictory elements and is ‘always [...] in danger of being disrupted by other ways of fixing the meaning of the signs’ (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 27). Discourses, therefore, are characterized by the tension between homogeneity and heterogeneity (Laclau, 2007, p. 155).

Laclau (1996, p. 71; 2007, pp. 69f.) calls this relation that connects a range of often contradictory
claims and subsumes them under one signifier without erasing their difference ‘hegemonic’. In contrast to the commonly known Gramscian definition, for LACLAU and MOUFE (1985/2001) hegemony is the ‘construction of a predominant discursive formation’ as the ‘result of articulation’ (TORFING, 2003, p. 101). The concept ‘green’, for example, can link such unrelated claims as the highly profitable marketization of technically sophisticated low-energy offices and sustainable do-it-yourself community housing projects that operate beyond market structures without erasing their differences. This means that hegemonic discourses are commonly accepted exactly because they are so heterogeneous. They offer templates for a variety of actors with often conflicting or even contradicting demands. The elements that are part of a hegemonic relation are contingently but not randomly bound together. They are deeply entangled in power relations that are permanently renegotiated against the background of discursive regimes that make some more likely to succeed than others. The resulting configuration remains subject to empirical investigation and cannot be determined by theoretical derivation; it thus remains subject to empirical investigation.

Grappling with an, in some cases contradictory, in others rather ‘linear’ creative-city performance in Frankfurt, the articulation perspective helped to carve out four key issues more clearly: First, it goes beyond the imaginary of preconfigured travelling policies arriving at pre-existing urban entities and therefore allows for a better understanding of the mutual constitution of mobile polices, on the one hand, and localized urban governance regimes, on the other hand. Second, it grasps the heterogeneity of mobile urban policies and urban policy regimes and brings to centre stage the question of how different claims become articulated and function together in a common project called ‘creative-city policies’. From this point of view, contingency, permanently precarious stability and mutations are integral parts of the creative-city performance and disarticulations, re-assemblages and transformations of the policy regime are forged in situ. Third, the articulation perspective is sensitive to power relations. It understands regimes of urban governance as the result of processes that privilege certain voices, while others are silenced and enable certain practices, while others are discredited resulting in a ‘contested compromise’ deeply imbued with relationships of power. Finally, it highlights the temporary character of any urban policy consensus and sheds light on forms of contestation and socio-spatial struggles through which governance regimes are permanently reworked. It thereby supports the argument that the creative-city concept cannot be dealt with as an all-encompassing neoliberal “bulldozer effect” by insisting that it is a singular, monolithic, and static phenomenon (SPRINGER, 2011, pp. 2566f.); it rather demands a tracing of the “actually existing” circumstances’ with all their failings and contradictions (LEITNER et al., 2007, pp. 2, 8ff).

THE CREATIVE-ECONOMY SCRIPT

If the global occurrence of creative-city policies is seen as a series of local performances for which articulations with established rationalities of urban governance are crucial, then how can their common grounding adequately be conceptualized without drawing on the idea of policy packages passed on from city to city? Here, ‘metaphors matter’, as PRINCE (2012, p. 328) recently pointed out, suggesting the imaginary of a fluid space to understand better how policies proliferate without necessarily implying the existence of strong networks. This surely helps to avoid some of the pitfalls of policy mobility studies – still often implicitly influenced by a topographical perspective as JACOBS (2012, p. 415) argues – mentioned above. ‘Fluid space’ is powerful in capturing the characteristics of circulatory policy systems – Prince’s main concern. Yet the fluidity metaphor is fairly broad and originates in attempts to differentiate ontologically conceptualizations of space (MOl and LAW, 1994). It is less appropriate for conceptualizing the dynamic mutual relationship between creative-city development as local performances in different cities and their common grounding in the creative-economy script.

In what follows we therefore prefer to use the notion ‘script’ (see also PECK, 2009, 2012) to conceptualize the absent point(s) of reference for local policy-making. This term deliberately evokes associations with ‘stage’, ‘play’ and ‘performance’ and refers to the theoretical perspective of a specific strand of performativity approaches (e.g., CALLON, 1998a, 1998b; BERNDT and BOECKLER, 2009; MACKENZIE et al., 2007) while at the same time reflecting how at least some practitioners experience the making of creative-city strategies – ‘the latest dog-and-pony show we have to perform’ – was how the head of the Economic Development Agency in Frankfurt literally described this in an informal talk after a press conference. As much as staging a play means coming to terms with the peculiarities of the scene, the materials available for the stage setting, the technicians and actors with their abilities and characters, and perhaps even the expected audience, a profound entanglement with existing policy rationalities and their socio-spatial settings is necessary to alter the established ‘targets-plus-instruments packages’ of urban development blueprints and establish a creative-city strategy. Since the script is as much the diagnosis of a problem purportedly omnipresent in post-industrial cities as it is the presentation of its solution, practitioners cannot avoid taking notice of it. Yet, here the script metaphor has its limitations as it implies the existence of a ‘primary original source’ – often incompletely bequeathed, translated, interpreted and rewritten, of course – whereas the creative-economy script is actually the result of an ongoing collective (re-)writing and performing endeavour, to which not only ‘partners in mind’ contribute but also
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sometimes fierce opponents. Each local performance has at least the potential to contribute to the script and alter its content. Like the permanently changing multi-authored text of a wiki article, the creative-economy script can always only by empirical means be ‘reconstructed’ for a concrete moment in time. Of course, not all actors involved – scientists, consultants, politicians, representatives of city administrations – tell exactly the same story when asked about their points of reference for the development of a creative-city strategy.

Yet, beyond all the differences and contestations, an astonishingly broad common grounding to support a creative-economy-oriented readjustment of regional and urban economic development strategies can be identified. This common grounding could roughly be summed up thus: the economic future of cities and regions depends on a new sector of the economy that has been previously widely overlooked; at the same time, sectors that for decades have contributed decisively to urban growth are losing their importance. This sudden change justifies urgent action and demands specific development strategies, putting a newly created classificatory aggregate called the ‘creative industries’ centre stage. These ‘industries’ are said to function rather differently from what used to be the classical subjects of policy interventions, an argument that all the more calls for creative(!) solutions (Healey, 2004), new partners for cooperation and funding instruments. The central focus should now become the hard to grasp ‘creativity’ of individuals and the creative potential of ‘milieus’.

This grounding is broad enough to justify the unifying use of a common denominator like ‘creative-economy script’ and it is at the same time vague enough to allow for an indefinite number of different performances. Some, for instance, are staged around the aim to attract creatives from outside to one’s location by becoming a ‘hip place’, while others see the development of a tolerant ‘plug and play’ milieu as crucial to exploit better endogenous potentials. Some contribute to the neoliberal restructuring of urban governance by justifying short-term employment and a project-based organization of work. Others help to bring the problems of self-precarization and the normalizing stereotype of the ‘poor artist’ to the fore (as in Frankfurt, where the head of the Department for Arts and Culture – Kulturamt Frankfurt – claims to do precisely this). Some include the sphere of alternative culture with its predominantly small-scale venues, meanwhile others try to change the image of a place by concentrating on a few big flagship projects. Whatever the performance is, the staging can surely not be described as an innocent search for the ‘right’ or ‘best’ rendition of the script (against which normative background?) but has to be understood as deeply imbued with interests and power relations.

In practice, the development strategies construed from the creative-economy script identify four different complexes of targets and measures (see also Flew, 2010, who differentiates between a ‘cluster script’ and a ‘creativity script’):

- **Individuals**: A first set of measures is directly addressing the creatives as individuals and potential ‘culturalpreneurs’ (Lange, 2007). This set supports individual talent and closes the gap between ‘creation’ and ‘marketization’. The latter includes not only technical measures to facilitate access to markets but also training programmes to create market awareness and commercial knowledge among the creatives.

- **Milieu**: A second set of strategies concentrates on the milieu aspect of the creative-economy script. It comprises measures to support a broad spectrum of formal and informal meetings, forums, associations, roundtables, and networking activities and includes a generally positive attitude towards ‘subculture’ and its locations, which were previously unconsidered by economic development agencies.

- **Infrastructure**: Support for the specific infrastructure of the creative industries might be financial as well as administrative. Subsidies for theatres, museums or music halls, institutions often established decades ago, are sometimes reframed and assigned a different kind of relevance in the creative industries context. A large part of all initiatives in this category address the provision of affordable space for studios, workshops and offices.

- **Place-branding**: Initiatives to improve the creative image of a location constitute a fourth category. They range from reworking online and published information to financing events that generate publicity and receive wide-scale media coverage.

The nodes where the bits and pieces of policy scripts are articulated as local performances can rarely be determined at the outset of a research process and particularly the cultural industries ‘sit uneasily within the public policy framework’ (Platt, 2005, p. 31). This is well demonstrated by the creative-city performance in Frankfurt, but it probably holds equally true for many other examples addressed in the mobile policies literature. First of all, one would assume the workshops of creative-city strategies to reside with the cities’ economic development agencies. They are, however, also located in urban planning departments and in the departments for arts and culture. Private companies can as well be involved as non-government organizations and civil society initiatives. The performance is multi-sited; it takes place in unexpected settings and in doing so creates the potential for forging new linkages and alliances – in Frankfurt, for instance, ten years ago nobody would have suspected that an illegally seized building with artist studios could become the home of a city-sponsored agency for the procurement of space with the organizer of the squat as its head! Consequently, the reconstruction of how connections and bridges are built between previously unrelated actors
or institutions as part of a local creative-city performance has to be an important part of any empirical research on its working. The following section explores, firstly, how the peculiar performance of the script in Frankfurt was able to come into being by reconstructing how the script linked up with existing rationalities of governance; secondly, how it came to terms with emerging ruptures and frictions; and thirdly, how strategies of resistance developed in parallel with, but not independently of, this performance.

THE FRANKFURT PERFORMANCE

Linking up with economic development strategies

If the diagnosis of an epochal shift – claimed to be encapsulated in the somewhat academic term ‘creative economy’ – suggests that the new regional and urban development strategies were primarily instigated by social scientists (like Richard Florida), this does certainly not hold true in the case of Frankfurt. Neither experts, consultants nor professionals in the city administration were the first to make an issue out of a contextualized reading of the creative-economy script, but it was the representatives of the software and games industries who did. The implications of these origins were far reaching for what followed as they cast what became the identified problems, the settings in which the script was introduced and debated, and the allies that could be mobilized.

Since the beginning of the millennium the software and games industries had steadily gained importance in Frankfurt with new companies such as Crytek, Deck 13 or metricminds growing quickly. These companies felt poorly represented in Frankfurt’s economic and policy networks as they were not formally part of the well-established and institutionalized communications sector with its influential interest groups and close ties with the Economic Development Agency and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Industrie- und Handelskammer). Being excluded from various kinds of support and networking events, they recognized the opportunity to bring the term ‘creative industries’ into play as an alternative signifier and powerful argument for readjusting urban economic policies with respect to the software and games producers. As one representative of the branch put it in an interview:

Since then [2003/04] we were only talking about the ‘creative industries’. That earned us a lot of hostilities because at that time many could not identify with the term. And they kept with their concept [communication industries]. It’s crazy, they just didn’t want to give up their privileges. But ‘creative industries’ subsumes everybody. And there were all these anxieties to lose something. (iwJW, paras 16–18)

This initiative would not have led to a comparatively quick and seamless reception of the creative-economy script if it had not been for some key figures in the Economic Development Agency being already ‘prepared’ for it. This preparedness, again, did neither result from an academic engagement with new theories and strategies of regional and urban growth nor was it seen as the solution for recent problems of economic development in Frankfurt. Rather, it had its roots in the very acknowledgement of a ‘latecomer’ (which Frankfurt was) that a creative industries strategy had become a ‘must have’ for any ‘serious’ economic development agency. This context of an inter-urban competition for up-to-date portfolios of development instruments from which the creative industries as a target sector should not be missing (and perhaps, too, for nicely designed and well-written creative industries reports) was also well reflected in the public call for Frankfurt’s first creative industries report which was co-authored by one of the authors of this paper. The call started in its very first paragraph with pointing to the reports of other German cities. It ended with the demand to provide data for the comparison with other cities. In between, it addressed an enormously broad range of topics and sectors (even including early childhood education programmes and youth cultures), reflecting the fact that a specific reading of the creative-economy script did not yet exist.

Both these threads – the software and games producers striving to present themselves as an important pillar of the urban economy by referring to the creative-economy script, and the challenge for the Economic Development Agency to come up with a creative industries strategy, stimulated far more by inter-urban competition than by identifying local demands or already known target groups – were woven together between 2007 and 2009. The issue was now on the political agenda and it was discussed in the city council in 2008 (STADTVERORDNETENVERSAMMLUNG FRANKFURT, 2008, pp. 56–71) and at an international congress entitled ‘Re-Build This City! Urban Culture, Knowledge Economy and Creative Urban Politics’ held in Frankfurt in the same year. The articulation and iteration of the script in distinctly different settings and contexts during these years worked as a cleaning process during which a multiplicity of positions was successfully sidelined. The congress itself, for instance, started with a striking critique of Florida – Jamie Peck was one of the main speakers – and highlighted the importance of the less commercialized ‘creative ferment’ of a city (ENGELMANN and DREWES, 2008). The report argued with far more differentiation than merely talking up the potentials of the creative industries, and a group of ‘creatives’ published a critical manifesto ‘Creative Frankfurt’ in 2009 (AUTHORS’ COLLECTIVE, FRANKFURT, 2009) in response to what they saw taking shape as Frankfurt’s creative policies. However, subsequently, most of these perspectives were not or only poorly reflected in what became Frankfurt’s creative industries policy from 2009 onwards.
The political parties, too, were just beginning to develop their own positions. The Social Democrats demanded to focus on education and training for creatives, high-skilled labour and concrete assistance for projects which are not immediately marketable because ‘culture as a locational factor does not mean classic arts and letters, but the various subcultures and milieus’ (STADTVERORDNETENVERSAMMLUNG FRANKFURT, 2008, pp. 64f.). The Green Party, on the other hand, defined the role of politics as much more market-oriented:

The free competition of ideas is particularly for the creative industries a crucial precondition. One could almost argue that creativity and the state are mutually exclusive. The most important contribution of the state – and perhaps also of the city – is not to constrain the creativity of companies.

(p. 69)

At that point it was not yet clear how exactly the ‘creative industries’ should be defined. Continuing struggles over how to articulate the concept and how to disarticulate it from other established notions and categories successively fixed this discursive instability. Whereas representatives of the Social Democratic Party, the government of the state of Hesse, and the performing and visual arts voted for a broad understanding that focused on ‘creation’ and included the non-profit cultural sector as a source of creativity and economic growth, representatives from the local Economic Development Agency argued for an entrepreneurial definition. Conceptually, these arguments were related to the equally controversial question of whether the act of ‘creation’ was the decisive anchor of any creative industries policy (consequently having to focus on individuals who were professionally occupied with the non-standardized production of symbolic and material value) or whether creativity was to be attributed to certain sectors like music, film or architecture.

In the course of these debates the script was increasingly read as a creative industries and not a creative cities story. An important impulse in this direction was provided by the adoption of a national definition of the cultural and creative industries at the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology in 2009 (BUNDESMinisterium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, 2009b). This definition fitted smoothly with that favoured by the Economic Development Agency while at the same time isolating the approach of the Department for Arts and Culture. It comprised three elements: first, creative industries have to follow a commercial purpose; second, they include 11 subsectors: publishing, motion picture/video, radio/television, entertainment/arts facilities, news agencies, libraries/museums, retail sale of cultural goods, architecture, design/photo, advertising, and software/games; and third, ‘creation’ is at the core of these 11 sectors. Consequently, all non-profit activities as well as all those creatives whose work occurred outside these sectors were excluded. In Frankfurt, the acceptance of this definition was made easier by the fact that it aligned with European Union harmonization and therefore allowed for competitive comparisons between cities, an important issue of the local debate right from its very start.

The approach that had so far been slowly taking shape gained momentum when articulated with the authority of a new ‘Centre of Competence for the Creative Industries’ founded in 2008 at the Economic Development Agency. This centre explicitly drew on the official definition but ‘shortened’ the label for its target group to ‘creative industries’, deliberately dropping the ‘cultural industries’ component of the denomination used by the Federal Ministry. Rather straightforwardly, the head of the new centre usually states that ‘culture is an issue for the Department for Arts and Culture’ and that those who confuse ‘cultural with creative industries have’t yet understood the topic.” Having relieved themselves of the cultural sector, with its vague and difficult-to-quantify relations to economic development, and also being located within a fairly conventional Economic Development Agency, all doors were now open to link up with already-established-as-reliable strategies of economic development. The language of the ‘Florida narrative’ with its references to an open-minded milieu, cultural diversity, a vibrant art scene, cool places, highly qualified people, and the knowledge economy, faded into the background (without, however, disappearing entirely) and gave way to the rather familiar search for a ‘unique selling proposition’ (WIRTSCHAFTSFORDERUNG FRANKFURT GMBH, 2011, pp. 27f.) within an assumed inter-urban competition between creative cities.

After the stage had been set in this way, with the cultural and the non-profit sector disarticulated from the script, and with creative policies institutionally as well as discursively embedded in the rationalities of urban economic development policies, a general agenda was adopted in 2009. It was designed around three main pillars: first, to support existing firms directly, to encourage entrepreneurship and assist start-ups; second, to stabilize the sector by strengthening business networks; and third, to create visibility, to move Frankfurt to the front of the map of German creative cities, and to alter the city’s prevailing image as a cold and technical centre for the financial sector. Among the concrete measures taken were the attraction of big networking events with even bigger media coverage such as the Art Directors Summit, the Live Entertainment Award, the European Innovative Games Award, the eDIT Filmmaker’s Festival and, in 2012, for the first time, the MTV Awards. Regular meetings such as the ‘Media Wednesday’ or the ‘Communication Dinner’ at the city hall were supported or newly established, and an incubator for creative industries start-ups as well as an agency for the procurement of affordable spaces for creatives were co-funded (see below).
Finally, training courses and special events for artists and creatives were to improve entrepreneurial thinking and capabilities (Wirtschaftsförderung Frankfurt Gmbh, 2011). Taken together, these measures reflect what could be called a ‘lean creative policy production’ directly addressing business development without any detour to the opaque terrain of (sub-) culture or creative milieus and highly compatible with existing rationalities in the fields of economic development, urban planning and cultural policies.

Coming to terms with frictions and contradictions

Looking back to the first years of the development of creative policies in Frankfurt, a recursive moment becomes visible: the disarticulation of the non-profit sector together with the articulation of a general agenda in line with the established market rationale of regional economic development strategies was the specific mode for the creative industries script to spread successfully throughout policy and administration circles, and finally generate acceptance for the foundation of the Competence Centre under the roof of the Economic Development Agency. This, in turn, created an institutionally stabilized structure that was equipped with sufficient authority to define a reading of the creative-economy script as the ‘right’ one, to be articulated seamlessly alongside already established market-oriented development strategies. But however accurate this depiction is, to implement creative policies in practice created much more friction and contradictions than this powerful reflexive moment leads one to expect.

The policies for the provision of affordable space for creatives are an insightful example in this respect (Moreton, 2013). Frankfurt, claiming to be the only ‘global city’ in Germany, is known for enormously high rents while approximately 1.5 million m² of office space remain vacant (Dörrey and Heeg, 2009, p. 33). This vacant space is, however, predominantly owned by big developers and real estate companies, making any negotiation for its temporary use extremely difficult. Consequently, the danger that artists and creatives, after their training, might leave for Berlin with its far more relaxed real estate market is widely acknowledged in the city administration. The head of the city’s Economic Development Agency had already highlighted the problem of affordable work space for creatives in 2008 as a priority when the first creative industries report was officially presented. This finally led to the creation of an incubator for start-ups as well as an agency for the procurement of space for offices and studios.

RADAR, as this agency was named, identifies vacant property, negotiates with the owners, advises and convinces them to offer their spaces temporarily to artists and creatives, and brings them together with potential users. In designing and implementing RADAR, three departments of the city administration were involved: the Economic Development Agency, the Urban Planning Department and the Department for Arts and Culture. The project was the first one for which these three departments worked closely together, with the challenge for them to articulate their different rationalities into a shared agenda. Up until then, creatives and artists as the target groups of RADAR had played a very different role for them: the Economic Development Agency had become aware of their concerns only recently, considering them in terms of job creation, as prospective employers, and as contributors to urban value formation; the Department for Arts and Culture was interested in artistic qualities and in market success; and for the Urban Planning Department, artists and creatives had occasionally played a role in regeneration projects but no clear alignment to the broader context of the department’s work did yet exist.

For the Department for Arts and Culture it was a conceptual challenge to position itself in relation to the creative-city development strategy. Its underlying rational of reducing culture, arts and creativity to mere instruments in the service of ‘higher’ goals – the creation of a specific milieu, the improvement of a city’s external reputation and ultimately economic development – ran absolutely counter to the department’s understanding of what was the goal of cultural policies. From a less conceptual and more strategic perspective, the creative-city strategy entailed the danger of losing political influence once the Economic Development Agency, or the Competence Centre as one of its divisions, interfered in the field of cultural policy and addressed Artists with distinct and clearly economic programmes. Taken together, there would have been good reasons for the Department for Arts and Culture to draw a clear line and distance itself from everything being negotiated under the label of ‘creative policy’.

Yet, given the already long history of neoliberal restructuring of urban governance (Schipper, 2013), the Department for Arts and Culture was also not entirely critical of engaging with market-led policies. However, this impetus was often accompanied by an older, contradicting narrative that saw the relationship between public and commercialized culture as ‘principally antagonistic’ (Hoffmann, 1979/1981, p. 22) and therefore mitigating the resulting ruptures and frictions was an important issue of everyday practices in the department’s work. In addition, a general and comprehensively critical stance towards the increasingly influential creative-city development strategy would have entailed the danger of being marginalized in what seemed to have become the agenda of the day. In this situation, the position of the Department for Arts and Culture towards the script and concrete initiatives like the foundation of RADAR were characterized not by an attitude of dissociation but by a self-confident openness. In an interview a head of division at the
department described creative industries strategies as ‘old hat which just received new weight because of these recent publications’ (IwAA, para. 23), claiming that their work is a ‘precondition for’ and ‘at the core of what is today called support for creatives’ (IwAA, para. 90). This self-confidence was underpinned by the outstanding role which Frankfurt’s cultural policy had historically played in Germany, by the strong financial support it received – with €168 million in 2011, more than any other German city (STADT FRANKFURT AM MAIN, 2012, p. 7) – despite the general trend to cut public expenditure in this sector and with a broad public consensus about its importance for the city. It expressed itself in the credo that the creative-city strategy could be flexibly used and turned to serve the purposes of culture and the arts. She would simply ‘jump on this train’ (IwAA, para. 134) because it involved programmes that could also be profitable for artists, the head of the department explained. When asked if there was the danger that eventually she would not be able ‘get off’ again, she responded:

No, because we have a longer tradition of supporting culture and arts and I think the creative industries need us more than we need them. That is my feeling, because they start to talk about arts and then I would go, ‘hey, that’s not your business!’ […] So I am not afraid to be monopolised because one can always easily stop this with one single sentence.

(IwAA, para. 182)

Acknowledging differences but looking at them from a purported position of superiority was one way how the creative-city development strategy was rearticulated in the Department for Arts and Culture and was able to extend its range without producing too much friction and rupture. Another way was in emphasizing specific bits and pieces of the script that could be put in a line of continuity with established practices and instruments at the department. This underlying continuity was discursively produced by a plethora of sometimes slightly derogative formulations, like ‘that’s something we have been doing for quite some time’, or by terminologically fusing Florida’s emphasis of local attractiveness with the older concept of ‘indirect profitability’ (i.e., attempts to assess the external effects of events, exhibitions, and festivals) (IwAA, para. 23). Expressions like these surfaced repeatedly in the interviews with representatives who positioned themselves closer to culture and the arts than to the newly created category of ‘creatives’. The construction of continuity played an important role, especially in relation to the establishment of RADAR. Here, the Department for Arts and Culture points to its already existing ‘studio programme’, designed to provide working space for artists and now to be partly replaced by RADAR. This implied a remarkable shift from a provision-oriented – informally, artists even live in these studios – to an activation-oriented – receiving space to be successful according to market criteria – procurement of space, which, however, was delegated to the background by the narration of continuity.

For the Urban Planning Department to participate in the realization of RADAR meant to come to terms with a closely related kind of rupture, yet from a rather different point of departure. The Department for Arts and Culture primarily fought over categories and criteria that would potentially redefine its field of responsibilities and either include artists in creative industries programmes or exclude them. Compared with this rather pragmatic approach, the neoliberal undertone of discussions about who counts as ‘creative’ somehow faded into the background. The Urban Planning Department, on the contrary, had to consider explicitly its own position on the spectrum between market and provision as the procurement of space for creatives meant interference in the real estate market. The topic itself was of course a rather familiar one for a planning department, but wrapped in the creative-economy script it received new relevance and a different legitimation. To what extent should urban planning take the creative industries into consideration, which kind of support should they receive, and what should be left to the market?

Although the head of the department depicted its role primarily as one of a technical unit in the service of political demands and emphasized that the decision to support the creative industries can be traced back to a resolution by the city council (STADTVORORDNETENVERSAMMLUNG FRANKFURT, 2010), her stance towards market interference was sceptical. On the one hand, she acknowledged the importance of studios for creatives and had not principally discarded the idea of RADAR, but, on the other hand, she explicitly welcomed that there were ‘many private initiatives that don’t need any support from the city at all and try to provide space’ (IwUB, para. 103). According to her, ‘what the city can contribute is first of all offers for spaces; everything else can be easily managed by the creatives themselves’ (para. 79). Generally, being concerned with vacant space was going to be ‘not among the responsibilities of a planning department’ (para. 138) but a matter for the private owners.

Taking these statements seriously, the involvement in RADAR seemed to be at the limits of what the department was ready to contribute. Here, the dominant position of the script – which the head of the department described as ‘mainstream’ (IwUB, para. 13) and as an ‘actual trend’ (para. 47) – together with political directives, had prepared the readiness to cooperate in RADAR. This cooperation, however, left ambivalences and put the department once again into conflict between the old provisional paradigm of a welfare system and the new paradigm of a self-governing city.

Provoking resistance

Taking the statements of the Head of the Department for Arts and Culture at face value, they come close to
what could be read as ‘appropriation for one’s own purposes’. She claims to be in a position to exploit the script without having to compromise and that she can ‘get off’ this train’ at any moment. Based on our fieldwork, we doubt that this is the full picture of the alignment between the earlier rationality of her department and the creative-economy script. A better example for ‘appropriation’ is the association FreiRaum Frankfurt e.V., a bottom-up initiative that pursues the objective of organizing spaces for non-commercial cultural use and establishing an alternative centre for arts and culture. This initiative is deliberately using arguments highly compatible with the creative-economy script like the ‘hipster image’ or what they call the ‘selling proposition’. The chairperson of the association claims that ‘creatives are important for fuelling the creative ferment of the city and for increasing the visibility of Frankfurt as a creative hot spot within the interurban competition’ (IwEA, para. 98). Yet for her this narrative is merely strategically used in order to receive support from the city administration and has nothing to do with the initiative’s actual intentions:

[W]e try to use the hipster image and the selling proposition. But this is not all cheating. […] It’s about the project, but in a different way. When others say ‘It’s about the project’ then they are not willing to compromise. But we say ‘It’s about the project’ and because of that we don’t want to be instrumentalised from one side or another. It is us who are instrumentalising!

(IwEA, paras 98, 100)

This and other examples from the fieldwork demonstrate that the boundary between ‘alignment’ and ‘resistance’ is contested. Cases of unambiguous positioning do of course exist, but in between them lies a terrain where ‘instrumentalising the script for one’s own purposes’, ‘subversion’ and ‘resistance’ can hardly be distinguished. Moreover, by strategically using a script, it is impossible to subvert it since instrumentalization always entails a moment of re-enactment. However, besides appropriations that can all too easily be co-opted by hegemonic readings, other strategies more successfully challenge the dominant narrative.

One example is the resistance against the project of a new urban quarter for an area of approximately 16.5 ha, not far from the city centre. The university currently has one of its campuses on this territory and a plan devised in 2004 intended to offer the ground for sale in order to cover the expenses for a new university campus in a different location. However, after several years of discussions this first plan was revised and the area was sold to a holding company owned by the city of Frankfurt. In 2010 it was renamed ‘Campus of Culture’ and since then promoted in line with the creative-city development strategy. Frankfurt’s last mayor who had paved the way for the whole undertaking called it a ‘flagship project in Europe’ to engender urban regeneration, according to what is often called the ‘Bilbao effect’ (STADTVERORDNETENVERSAMMLUNG FRANKFURT, 2011; GONZÁLEZ, 2011). Consequently, seven mainly well-established cultural organizations were selected to become the ‘nucleus’ of the new campus (STADT FRANKFURT AM MAIN, 2011, p. 5).

Although the plans for the new quarter also include new residential facilities, the whole outline of the project and its accompanying rhetoric nurtured anxieties that it would first of all address the needs of the better-off, lead to rent rises, contribute to gentrification in its surroundings, and that too many historical buildings had to be ‘sacrificed’ for this large-scale development scheme. For many, it was a mixture of ignorance and provocation that a new urban quarter was planned and labelled ‘Campus of Culture’ without even taking into consideration established and renowned cultural initiatives which were in serious difficulties because they had lost or were in danger of losing their locations: the ‘family Montez’ (an independent art and party location), the ‘Lichter’ film festival, the ‘Hazelwood’ music festival, the two projects ‘Atelierfrankfurt’ and ‘basis’ (studios and exhibition space for artists), the ‘Studieren-denhaus’ and the ‘ivi’ (locations for different alternative cultural events, among them the Japanese film festival ‘Nippon Connection’). In addition to that, the project was implemented in a rather top-down manner with participatory measures coming far too late in the process and often evoking the impression of ‘staged participation’ in a process where all important decisions had already been made long ago.

The platform for the formation of resistance became a ‘right to the city’ alliance, a loosely organized and quite heterogeneous network of groups and associations. Their protest targeted the issues mentioned above – top-down planning, neglect of smaller and less established independent cultural initiatives, expensive housing and the threat of gentrification – and was articulated at a variety of events and in a multiplicity of practical and symbolic forms. On one occasion, for instance, little paper lighthouses were released into the air using balloons – the German term used for ‘flagship’ literally means ‘lighthouse’ – to symbolize the end of prestigious flagship schemes and create the alternative imaginary of a multitude of ‘small flagship projects’ which rise from below and are not implemented from above. On another occasion, when the mayor visited the site a red carpet was rolled out and a sign greeted her ‘Welcome to the Campus of Culture – we are already here!’ thereby calling into question the idea that creativity and culture could be initiated, planned and governed by the city administration. At a panel discussion, the audience had secretly agreed to applaud enthusiastically each time the politicians and planners used the terms ‘flagship project’ or ‘culture’ so as to reveal them as empty phrases in the given context.

These concrete forms of protest have, in a paradoxical way, to be seen as an articulation of the
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creative-economy script too – or perhaps as a ‘counter-articulation’, but in any case not as something ‘external’ to it. What is striking is that they are not just a repetition of established positions of resistance along the well-known lines of critique that focus, for instance, on neoliberalism, disparities, exclusion and social marginalization. Although they are of course linked to these critiques in a reflexive way, in order for them to become effective against a project framed as ‘creative city development’ they have to engage with the new script underlying this very project. They develop an alternative reading by taking bits and pieces of the models, arguments, figures, purported relations and imaginations of the creative-economy script, appropriate them by reinterpretation, link them to new contexts and present them against a different background; and the concrete practices of protest are performances using symbols of the creative-economy script in a way that offers the opportunity to attribute different meanings to them.

CONCLUSION

This paper has deliberately tried to avoid the metaphoric language of ‘travel’, ‘transfer’ and ‘arrival’ so common in the policy mobilities literature. It did not trace the history of all the books and reports, project prescriptions and well-designed web pages that eventually ended up on the tables and computers of the respondents and received their attention. Their individual itineraries to conferences, roundtables and workshops in which they had participated in discussions on the creative-economy script, and on the need to generate development schemes from these, were not included in the research either. We accepted this deliberate omission to the exchange of ideas, arguments and experiences in networks of practitioners as a certain blind spot so as to be able to focus instead on the situated making of policies that articulate the rationalities of urban governance in concrete places with globally available paradigms – a desideratum often called for in the policy mobilities literature.

In order to comprehend the global–local character of the emergence of new urban policies, we relied on the concepts of ‘script’, ‘articulation’ and ‘performance’. They pay tribute to the fact that a common point of reference for these policies does exist – in our case a new regional economic growth narrative – which can hardly be ignored by city administrations and inevitably confronts them with the question: What does that mean for us? Local players use this narrative as a ‘script’, a rough outline that contains problematizations, roles and relationships but which in no way determines the shape of a concrete policy intervention. They formulate specific responses from distinct positions, with different intentions and envisage varying targets. The script is not even stable over time but nevertheless is reflected in these responses and helps to prepare the ground for a new policy performance. Yet the success or failure of the performance always depends on the setting in which it takes place, on the actors involved, the resources available and the audience to which it is addressed. It implies the preparation of a stage, the assemblage of a whole array of instruments and ‘things’ (like, for instance, spaces dedicated for creative uses), and the enrolment of actors who had before never heard of something like, for instance, a creative-economy script. But first of all, at least in the case of creative-city policies (for which to date no accurately formulated blueprints exist), success or failure depend on the way a performance is able to articulate with existing rationalities of urban governance and their power relations.

Our case study from the city of Frankfurt reveals how the specific rationalities of urban planning, culture and the arts as well as economic development articulate with new ideas and practices derived from the creative-economy script in order to bring creative-city policies into being. Fundamentally, three modalities could be identified that mould the continuum between ‘identity’ and ‘irreconcilability’: the identification of equivalences/synergies (‘this fits well into what already exists’); the formulation of antagonisms/exclusions (‘this is the right way to understand what has to be done’); and the balancing of contradictions (‘this implies contradictions but nevertheless there are no workable alternatives’). These articulations are forged in situ, often in unexpected places, and they rely only loosely on examples from other cities. They are entanglements of concepts, instruments and mundane ‘things’, brought together in a permanent process of selection, rejection, contestation, bridging, subversion and reiteration. Following this process unveils how certain performances could become hegemonic whereas at the same time others were marginalized.

How was it possible to enrol actors and institutions from thoroughly different backgrounds and with entirely different agendas in this performance and make it a common project? Within Frankfurt’s Economic Development Agency the newly founded Centre of Competence for the Creative Industries is still regarded as a rather different and ‘exotic’ subdivision, but exactly as such it is able to forge new linkages and build bridges in new directions. It performs its version of the creative-economy script by focusing on a limited number of economically promising sectors, disarticulates business from cultural non-profits, and thus moves the ‘milieu component’ of the creative-economy script to the background. It adds a new twist to the established rationality of the department as a whole by linking more traditional strategies of economic policies with new or modified instruments, by considering new targets and establishing new forms of cooperation with other departments. New
conditionalities of support, requiring business plans and evidence of how the ‘product’ is marketable, pull artists and creatives at an early stage of their career in a certain direction. Cultural events are rated, selected and sponsored according to their contribution to a cool-and-creative-place image and, discursively, criteria of economic success become merged in new ways with notions of artistic quality. Even more importantly, new technologies of interference and governance, partly originating from the field of arts and culture itself (such as awards, networking events, media partnerships, fairs and exhibitions, YouTube presentations, PechaKucha nights, elevator pitches, crowd-sourcing) are appropriated and adopted in new contexts. Many of these interventions bear the general traits of what Peck and Tickell (2002) called ‘roll-out neoliberalism’ and aim at a self-responsibilization of subjects in the sense of governmentality studies.

Whereas the work of the Centre of Competence for the Creative Industries produced friction but did not disrupt the market-oriented approach of the Economic Development Agency, much deeper contradictions and ruptures had to be balanced to enrol the Department for Arts and Culture and the Urban Planning Department. Although the latter principally regarded the provision of space as an issue to be addressed through the market, it agreed to participate in the foundation of an agency for the procurement of offices and studios for creatives. It thereby linked its responsibilities as an administrative body with market mechanisms, but neither submitted to a neoliberal transformation (which would have meant to introduce profit-oriented components in its own work) nor did it agree to remain hands-off and outsource the project to a private company. The Department for Arts and Culture balanced the contradictions between its own rationality of governance and the market-oriented approach of the creative-economy script by subscribing to the primacy of economic development, placing parts of the new agenda in a narrative of proclaimed continuity, and pretending to be in a position that allowed use of the new strategy for their own purposes.

The actually hegemonic position of the creative-economy script, however, is not a ‘general consensus’; it is better described as a temporary and contested compromise that allows for a specific ‘working’ in a given setting. Yet the multitude of ruptures and frictions, contradicting narratives and rationalities of governance that accompany each performance, can never be thoroughly reconciled or silenced, as the cases of the ‘Campus for Culture’ and ‘Freiraum Frankfurt’ demonstrate. Questioning situated articulations allows for a better understanding of how hegemonic positions are constructed, how their connections with other rationalities work, and how they intervene in mundane conceptions of creativity, arts and culture. Here lies the contingent moment of possible change through subversion that opens the way for alternative, counter-hegemonic ‘politics of action-in-the-name-of-differentiation, reaction, rejection, de-activation, detour, redirection and failure’ (Jacobs 2012, p. 419; emphasis in original).

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEWS

IwAA = interview with Ann Anders, Department for Arts and Culture Frankfurt.
IwEA = interview with Elisabeth Amrein, Chairman of the association ‘FreiRaum e.V.’
IwJW = interview with Jörg Weber, a professional networker for the gaming industry.
IwUB = interview with Ursula Brünner, Urban Planning Department Frankfurt.

NOTES

1. So far, a clear distinction between the use of the terms ‘creative economy’ and ‘creative cities’ or ‘creative industries’ is not yet established. In this paper we pragmatically talk about the ‘creative economy’ thesis (which has a certain overlap with the term ‘knowledge economy’) with reference to the rising importance of creativity in Western economies, ‘Creative cities/industries’ as in the title of the pivotal London Creative Industries Mapping Document (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1998) is used to point to the more specific idea of how economic development can be politically stimulated by cities and regions (see also Hutter, 2011, pp. 202f). Creative-economy, therefore, refers more to a conceptual representation; creative cities/industries meanwhile is applied in the context of policy agendas and development strategies.

2. The concept of ‘rationalities of governance’ as used, for instance, by Lockie and Goodman (2006), Rose and Miller (1992), or Swyngedouw (2005) is rooted in the governmentality studies’ debate on ‘rationalities of government’; Barry et al. (1996) and Burchell et al. (1991) elaborate on Foucault’s (1981) ‘criticism of “political reason”’ and his concept of ‘governmentality’ (Foucault, 1991). Both terms are closely related, but ‘rationalities of governance’ in contrast to ‘rationalities of government’ offers a more narrow empirical focus on
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