

The Innovation Economy and the Housing Crisis

Examining the Decoupling of Vancouver's
Housing and Labour Markets and the Impacts
on the Social Landscape

SCARP

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The Innovation Economy and the Housing Crisis: Examining the Decoupling of Vancouver's Housing and Labour Markets and the Impact on the Social Landscape

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Abstract

As Vancouver navigates economic development in its current-day economic climate, there is pressure to further define the city's global identity as a progressive international hub through supporting and fostering tech and cultural industries - or as coined by the city: Innovation Economies. These innovative industries are creative, non-traditional, and entrepreneurial departures from the transnational finance, service, and resource-based sectors that dominate the city's economy. A handful of districts and neighbourhoods have been identified in and around the Downtown Core as districts to develop and foster Innovation, with the bulk of the labour force primarily made up of young, entry-level professionals in the creative industries. In a residential real estate sector characterized by high costs, competitive and increasingly unavailable rental stock, external investment factors, and contested vacancy rates, 'innovators' are in the very thick of Vancouver's housing crisis, experiencing firsthand the decoupling effects of the housing and labour markets, and raising concerns about Vancouver's uncertain future.

In a post-industrial narrative dominated by its transnational housing market, Vancouver is rapidly outgrowing its capacity to absorb and control the externalities inherent in the neoliberal development model. The revival of the new economy provides promise and possibility amidst increasingly emergent issues of social disparity. New concerns arise in both the long and short term economic sustainability of innovation, the affordability of living, and the retention of the skilled workforce needed to sustain the new economy. Drawing on existing literature and theory on creative cities and cultural economies, and placing them within the context of Vancouver's unique social and economic landscape, this qualitative analytical paper examines the complexities and intersectionalities of Innovative Economies, residential development, and the delicate social spaces situated in between.

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1. Prologue

The purpose of this paper is to frame Vancouver's emerging Innovation Economy against current issues in housing affordability and social exclusion, with the goal of connecting themes of social and economic themes into a holistic and systemically focused analysis. Faced with economic recession and the hollowing-out of its industrial sector, Vancouver in the last thirty years has leveraged its cultural and environmental assets, strategic global positionality, and land-use priorities to transform into a modern-day metropole: a narrative that continues to govern the city's developmental pathways. Together with open immigration and investment policies and the revalorization of old industrial land, the transformation of Vancouver is evident in the transnationalization of its residential property market, which has become central in both government and economic spheres, and in the contemporary public discourse around affordability and social inequality. Indeed, the influence of property speculation, rising land values, and competing land-use interests have all been contentious topics as the last parcels of available land in Vancouver are being deployed in official planning and development processes.

The Innovation Economy is conceived as an economic development strategy to enhance and foster creative enterprises, start-ups, and small businesses in neighbourhoods such as False Creek Flats, Mount Pleasant, and Railtown. The 'Innovative' sectors work to generate new job opportunities and diversify the city's economic base, whilst cementing a marketable commitment towards the new global standard of a modern and competitive new economy. However, in a municipality

characterized by increasingly scarce land resources resulting from intense condo developments in the last quarter century, the development of Innovation and the space it requires becomes inextricably tied to Vancouver's monopolistic housing industry. Therein lies the complexity, placing the new economy against residential development, and reiterating the tensions between the local labour market and the international housing market. Implicit in the discussion are questions around deeply entrenched social issues: for whom does the new economy serve, and who is ultimately left out in the equation? If ongoing residential development and sky-high property values have placed pressure on vulnerable sectors of the population, what is the role of Innovation and how might it contribute to (or be an opportunity to alleviate) existing problems?

By drawing out the interconnectivities between economic development strategies and existing issues of the housing crisis, I argue that Innovation in Vancouver is inherently embedded in the city's distinct socio-economic climate. In more obvious ways, high demand for land and low supply has set the stage for a situation of out-of-control land values and relentless speculation. This imbalanced equation draws skepticism on the viability of a new economic sector in a housing-dependent economy. In more covert ways, Vancouver's expensive real estate strains local labour markets resulting in both short and long term consequences, prompting the question of whether or not the modern paradigm for economic growth (including the Innovation Economy) is at all sustainable in the case of Vancouver, or if it is indeed innovative enough to address the city's complex, twenty-first century problems.

The Innovation Economy presents a window of opportunity for the City of Vancouver and its residents, but it is integrally linked to the contemporary housing and affordability crisis. The objective of this research is to contribute to the bodies of local research in community planning, economic development, and social sustainability. By employing an analytical lens to dissect the many layers and facets of the Innovation Economy, this paper aims to connect social issues to Vancouver's economic interests while addressing the many floating pieces within the gap. I argue that complex and systemic issues requires a collective systems approach, and while the alleviation of social inequity and fostering of economic opportunity are certainly the end goals, so too is the fundamental collaboration needed to facilitate and sustain them. The sources that inform this research are a combination of existing academic literature, media sources that speak to current local events and public discourse, and insights from Dan George. The paper first contextualizes the topic by tracing the city's historical economic development strategies, including the story of Vancouver's infamous housing industry. Secondly, it is important to ground the concepts of the Innovation Economy within the rich fields of existing research in cultural production and creative economies. Thirdly, the paper will delve into the paradigm of modern-day economic development and growth, examining the benefits, tradeoffs, and limitations of the Innovative strategy. With the optimistic goal of blurring the binary between economic and social values, the final chapter will examine untapped opportunities within the Innovation Economy by using keystone examples in which social return can also be factored into economic formula.

2. Introduction

In 2016, the City of Vancouver announced the steps it would take to foster and develop its cultural and creative industry sector - or as it has been coined, the Innovation Economy. Industries that fit under the umbrella of 'Innovation' are wide-ranging and diverse, including social work, health and wellness, technological and digital industries, green economy, film and television, cultural production, telecom, tech apparel, among others (City of Vancouver, 2016). More generally, the Innovative Economy is defined as work that does not neatly fit into the conventional, post-industrial sectors of finance and corporate service that dominate the city's primary economy. As markets, trade, and investment continue to expand beyond regional and state boundaries, cities are increasingly looking to rebrand and reinvent to remain competitive on a globalized stage. Innovation through arts, culture, and entrepreneurialism is touted as the new frontier for growth.

Cultural capital has long been theorized by modern urbanists and utilized by city officials around the world to advance economic development, although the modes by which it is employed varies from entrepreneurial strategies, creative class strategies, to progressive strategies (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007), each containing a set of differing values and associated limitations. Creative strategies to recharge and revalorize city identity has been one of Vancouver's most pivotal undertakings, as exemplified by "spectacles" such as the '86 World Expo Fair, and more contemporarily, the hosting of the 2010 Winter Olympics. These efforts taken by Vancouver to generate

its world class image have made their mark in the city's landscapes. By utilizing mass cultural and mega-event campaigns, the city was able to redevelop of the former Expo site and northern False Creek (now known as Yaletown), recruit large numbers of migrant High Net Worth Individuals, entrepreneurs, and investors, and depart from the economic dependency of primary resources. As Vancouver enters an exploratory venture into the possibility of new economic directions, the question then becomes whether or not the transformative successes of the past can be reiterated in the context of Innovation.

The Innovation Economy looks to be a promising endeavour to cultivate Vancouver's emerging young workforce of creatives and entrepreneurs. Recognising that while residential development and finance and service industries remain dominant in shaping the city's economic makeup, there are also opportunities in new ventures, start-ups, and entrepreneurial undertakings that create jobs, benefit communities, support creativity, and ultimately diversify the industrial portfolio of the city. Noted by Katz and Wagner: "a new growth model and economic vision is emerging... a next economy where we export more and waste less, innovate in what matters, produce and deploy more of what we invent, and build an economy that works for working families" (quoted by City of Vancouver, 2016: p. 5). The message echoes that of Vancouver Economic Commission (2017), who proclaims that "the sectors we support are attracting global talent, companies, investment and buzz to Vancouver. Beyond their rapid growth and ever-growing potential, they are the new foundation of the knowledge economy and this cutting-edge city." More importantly, Innovation paves a path for the young and

emerging workforce to expand beyond the symbolic four walls of the office and reinvigorate new possibilities for the city's economy.

The City of Vancouver's undertaking of the Innovation agenda is not a new phenomenon. In the past, the city has attempted to cultivate its tech and digital potential starting from the Industrial Lands Policies (1995), a comprehensive Urban Structure Policy Report for a 'Proposed High-Technology Zone' in 1999 (Hutton, 2008), Metropolitan Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan (2005), to the False Creek Flats Rezoning Policy (2009). From a grassroots perspective, young businesses have always found gaps in existing systems of work to carve new, functional niches of growth. However, these explorative ventures have long been historically overshadowed in favour of more traditional career routes in the post-industrial, tertiary economic world. Outside of the spectacular rise of Microsoft, Apple and Facebook, who were once start-ups in their own right, success stories of entrepreneurial visionaries have largely been ignored, with artists and cultural producers popularly imagined to be on the margins: impoverished and unemployed, or perpetually locked in the state of contract work and instability. However, there is now a growing body of work among scholars and policy influencers that has been deconstructing these longstanding discourses, arguing that entrepreneurialism and creativity contribute positively to economic fitness, and are "the most promising source of new trade and productivity growth" (Poloz, in City of Vancouver, 2016: p. 12). Indeed, Innovation need not be the high-risk, polarizing binary between immense success or failure, but rather a source of growth that should be nurtured and supported.

There have been numerous studies on artists and innovators reusing inner-city city spaces, and generating products and services that benefit their local economies. Some international case studies include the Hong Kong's reclamation of former government offices for art production in the Police Married Quarters (Tsang & Siu, 2016; Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2017); and San Francisco's historic rise and fall of the dot.com era in its traditionally industrial art spaces in the South of Market Area (Hutton, 2008). This entrepreneurial spirit is now being harnessed by the City of Vancouver, who has identified neighbourhoods in which there is potential to develop spaces and firms for Innovation. Using business data, clusters of innovation have been identified, including the Mount Pleasant, False Creek Flats, Railtown, and the Downtown Eastside (DTES). The City plans to develop these neighbourhoods to their Innovative potential. Each district presents its own unique characteristics and challenges; each requiring their own specific, community-oriented plan.

3. History of Economic Development in Vancouver

Vancouver in 2017 has much of the characteristics of a young and vibrant international city. Boasting an array of recreational and lifestyle amenities, supporting a thriving, year-round tourism industry, and hosting more demand for international luxury stores and automotive dealerships than its larger American counterparts (Global News, January 30, 2017; Vancouver Sun, March 28, 2017), the city has acquired many recognisable accolades in its relatively young timeline of development. Economically, Vancouver also benefits competitively as a gateway connecting Canada to its powerful trade partners across the Pacific, contingent on changing terms trade relative to the value of exports and the value of imports: a narrative that has determined the city's economic relevance both historically and today.

Vancouver's capital today is largely driven by its dominating transnational housing market and its finance and service-based industries, but it has not always been this way. Prior to the 1980s, the economy and its labour market relied primarily on its secondary sector: light and heavy industry, manufacturing, and the processing of goods for trade. Too, the CPR and the Port of Vancouver were essential bodies connecting important trade routes between the British Empire and Asia. With such a vital dependence on trade, transience and mobility became ingrained into the fabric of the city, attracting migrants from around the world in search of work and settlement.

With the arrival of the economic recession in the early 1980's, the industrial sector witnessed an irreversible demise that saw a labour crisis, socio-economic distress, and the hollowing out of industrial infrastructure once vital to the fabric of the city. The crash of the resource sector and the collapse of the welfare state resulted in pressures to revamp governmental and economic structures to what we now see and as the free market, free enterprise system. Vancouver experienced the trickle-down end of the birth and rise of neoliberalism provincially and federally; the state rolled back on its regulatory role in the markets, and social programs were slashed in order to control budgetary limitations. A casualty amongst this upheaval is the dissolution of federally funding social housing in the early 1990s, which surrendered its reigns to the private sector (CMHC, 2017). Transitions from the welfare state to the free market systems began to favour the invisible hand in the development of corporate, finance, and service-based industries.

In the midst of its active economic restructuring, the state searched to capture new streams of capital and labour that align with the emerging neoliberal agenda. And for the first time in the history of immigration in Canada, the state actively sought migrants who did not fit the Anglo-Saxon and European profiles. Instead, it looked across the Pacific towards the newly industrialized, highly developed Four Asian Tigers: Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore (Hutton, 1998). In a succession of campaigns supported by all levels of government, investment and immigration recruiters were employed to entice high net worth individuals (HNWI) to emigrate and settle in Canada. The promotion included the strategic six-month spectacle, the '86 World Expo Fair,

whose primary focus was able to establish Vancouver as a world class city to settle and invest.

To facilitate immigration for Asian HNWIs and their families, the Business Immigration Program (BIP) was established by the federal government. The program eased immigration while simultaneously ensuring that foreign capital brought over by HNWI was injected into the Canadian economy, through: (a) the entrepreneurial stream, in which migrants were required to invest and develop in local businesses; or (b) the investment stream, in which migrants were required to invest large sums of capital into domestic industries. Canada's bid to welcome the Asian Tigers successfully induced large waves of immigration - many of the new arrivals settling in the larger metropolises of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. With its existing Chinese Canadian community and its relative proximity to Hong Kong, many of the new class of Hong Kong immigrants settled in Vancouver, colloquially renaming the city Hongcouver.

The World Expo '86 Fair succeeded in many ways to bring the city to the world, and the Asians to the city. In a time of economic recession and instability, officials across all levels of government sought ways to reinvent and revitalize the city. The project succeeded, and the injection of investment interest and foreign capital facilitated the development of the city. Vancouver pulled away from the small, slow-growth trajectory that it could have become, to the model of a dense and thriving coastal international city. From a secondary economy pre-1980's, to a post-industrial, finance and service economy, Vancouver attempted to rebrand itself as a powerful and emerging player in

the globalized world. It is also important to deconstruct the varying definitions behind globalism; to this end, while the city may not host the multi-national entities and finance/banking institutions typically characterized in global urban centres, it arguably has the the regional assets, development strategies, and transnational economic networks that facilitate its importance on a globalized stage.

3.1. The Rise of the Residential Towers

Integral in the story of Vancouver's urban transformation is its housing market, as these changes are no more evident than they are in the residential towers that surround and decorate the downtown core. The figurative and physical rise of the local housing industry supported much of the city's transformation, yet it is only until relatively recently that the consequences and implications of such intense and singular rapid development are coming to light.

The historic Expo '86 Fair successfully brought the city to the world, and with it, development interest. The former industrial lands used for hosting the exhibition was ultimately sold to Li Ka-Shing and his development company, Concord Pacific (Hutton, 2008). Despite controversy regarding transfer of the sale, the development of False Creek North set precedence in Vancouver's housing market and sparked one of the greatest urban revitalization projects in North America. Previously under-utilized brown land, "the blight of the Vancouver waterfront," as referenced in 1988 by former BC

economic minister, Grace McCarthy, was developed to high density, residential real estate (Business In Vancouver, April 26th, 2016). These developments quickly sparked similar projects elsewhere and contributed to Vancouver's burgeoning housing complex as seen today. However, Concord Pacific developments did not solely operate on a local level; indeed, it acted in conjunction with both provincial and federal levels of government to attract Asian migrants and foreign wealth into the country, once again exemplifying Vancouver's strategic positionality in the Asia Pacific capital circuit. As David Ley noted (2010), one of the most popular streams taken by wealthy Asian migrants through the BIP was the investment stream. Investment did not have the same routine analysis and follow-up demanded from the entrepreneurial stream, and many of the Chinese investors preferred housing as the most reliable source of investment. This sentiment echoed from both the first waves of Hong Kongese immigrants, and subsequent waves of Mainland Chinese (Wong, 1997).

Over the course of two decades, Downtown Vancouver quickly became a cityscape bursting with blue and green glass homes. High density residential development boomed as demand for housing investment soared, with many of the new projects marketed directly (and exclusively) to foreign buyers outside Vancouver seeking to take advantage of favourable immigration policies and relocate their wealth. Overseas specifically to Hong Kong, opportunity to emigrate was compounded by increasing concern regarding the effects and impacts of territorial handover from British rule to the People's Republic of China. Some developments were sold to full capacity before contractors even broke ground - many of which sold to the exclusion of local buyers.

Formally, Vancouver's primary economic foundation had transitioned, but much of the capital flow was obscured by the glass towers within which the trickle-out effects of the housing industry remain unaccounted for under finance, service, and business sectors. Despite the cessation of the BIP under the Conservative Government in 2014, the residential development industry continued to soar in Metro Vancouver. Speculation continues to run abound in a market that had been inherently designed to be international. Intense growth of the housing market as an investor's paradise has made property transfer tax one of the main sources of provincial revenue, accounting for 35-40% of all economic growth in the province (Finlayson in Globe and Mail, September 15th, 2016).

3.2. Uninhibited Growth and the Affordability Crisis

Vancouver benefitted from the boom in residential development from the 80s, but as with all cycles of boom and bust, growth of the housing market is not a infinite phenomenon. Since the 1980s, Vancouver witnessed one of its most pivotal transformations in both its economic sector and housing market. Through active efforts by all levels of government, the city welcomed waves of wealthy migrants, and with them: foreign capital and investment opportunities that have aided the growth of the city. Once faced with economic instability and the collapse of its industrial sector, Vancouver has successfully rebranded itself as a competitive and international player in a globalized world market. Thirty years of government deregulation and the free-market

system, however, has had its long-term consequences, especially in the housing market that has grown well beyond the capacity of the city to absorb, prompting the question if there exists an upper limit to transnationalism, and if this limit has been reached.

Central to this discussion is the development of the Innovation Economy as a departure from the traditional, tertiary industries that dominate the city's economy. Innovation is designated to be a step away from the conventional finance and service-based industries, and a step towards one that is more creative, self-determinant, and aware of the entrepreneurial talents of Vancouver's emerging young workforce. As stated by Steven Poloz, Governor of the Bank of Canada, "a new firm with a new product or service tends to see giant leaps in productivity as it goes from being a start-up to the 'hockey stick' growth phase. A firm only makes that transition once, but an economy can reap the benefit over and over if there is a strong trend in new firm creation" (City of Vancouver, 2016: p. 12). The buzz is reinforced by the Vancouver Economic Commission, who focuses on fuelling innovation, creativity, and sustainability through digital arts, interactive technology, and the green economy by fostering relationships and connecting businesses to the global gateway of Asia Pacific - altogether front and centre in the front pages of its website as a campaign of active public relations.

Despite being consistently ranked as one of the most liveable cities in the world (Daily Hive, August 18, 2016) and now branded as the "#1 start-up ecosystem in Canada, 15th in the world" (Vancouver Economic Commission, 2017), the accolades are contested by Vancouver ranking as one of the world's leading unaffordable housing markets with

median income of Vancouverites not growing at the pace of the costs associated with buying or renting (Vancouver Sun, January 23, 2017; CBC News, January 23, 2017). According to Padmapper.com (2017), the median rental costs for a 1-bedroom apartment in Vancouver has reached a record peak of \$1,900/month as of February, 2017. Vancouver ranks as the most expensive housing market in Canada whilst simultaneously being one of the lowest paid (CBC News, January 23, 2017). In yet another layer atop the complexities of social sustainability, Andy Yan, Urban Planner from Vancouver's own Bing Thom Architects, recently uncovered statistics in the rising percentage of apartment vacancies along transit-oriented developments, with "over 20 per cent in areas around Joyce-Collingwood, Marine Drive and Metrotown stations. The Joyce and Marine Gateway areas both posted 24 per cent; Metrotown was at 22 per cent" (Vancouver Sun, March 30, 2017). Yan cautions that "there may be a lag time in these areas: perhaps they are still in the process of being transformed into full-scale transit-oriented communities," and that there are statistical grey areas in which "temporary residents, such as students or seasonal workers, and foreign residents" have not yet been included in the census count for "units occupied by usual residents" (ibid). The statistical limitations mitigate runaway sensationalism, but the concern remains on whether or not essential transit-oriented corridors, the new vision of Vancouver's housing direction, will be affected by the "darkened windows [that] have come to epitomize the effect of global capital investing in real estate as a commodity" (ibid).

Acknowledging the tendency towards sensational media frenzy and the significant data gaps, the underlying sentiment in general public discourse is resonant: real estate is an entity that is growing well beyond the regulatory controls of the local market, creating an impactful disjuncture between live and work for many of its local residents - who, in the midst of international competition, are relocating to outlying areas to live (Vancouver Sun, March 26, 2017). The nature of Vancouver's housing crisis places communities and demographics under strain; in particular to the context of the creative sector, the younger workforce who now face "high housing prices, precarious employment, shifting demographics and debt [which conspires] to increase intergenerational inequality and put younger people at a permanent economic disadvantage" (Vancouver Courier, May 04, 2016). The precariousness faced by the labour market is further compounded by debt carried over from student loans, with "the average debt among those reporting any debt is \$26,819, with 29 per cent of all students reporting debt of \$20,000 or higher" (Canadian University Survey Consortium, 2015 in The Globe and Mail, March 14, 2017). Ironically, the debt was acquired to attain post-secondary education needed to obtain desirable and professional-level jobs. The City of Vancouver's push towards Innovation as the leading sector in economic growth presents promising opportunities for millennials and young families, who make up a sizeable portion of workers needed to support and maintain such industries; the question remains whether or not economic opportunity can offset the pressures brought on by housing - both as very real budgetary constraints, and the deeply personal doubts that there is a place for them in a city they once called home. The viability of Innovation must then factor in the

sustainability of the Innovators, an equation that brings housing and affordability into the forefront of the issue, in many interlocking ways.

Despite the promising opportunities Innovation may bring, very real limitations may restrict the potential of this growing field. And what cannot be ignored are obstacles faced by Vancouverites as they navigate basic costs of living in an increasingly unaffordable city, with career prospects in the industries of Innovation. The following chapters of this paper will discuss in greater depth the intersectionalities and challenges between work, live, and affordability in the context of Vancouver's past, present and future.

4. Historicizing Innovation: Cultural Production and the Creative Economy

As Vancouver moves along its development trajectory, there is a demand to remain economically competitive and globally attractive to both the larger Asia Pacific economy and Cascadian narrative. Once serving primarily as a finance and service secondary sector to the staple economy of British Columbia, Vancouver faced a large-scale recession due to the collapse of the staples economy, a common story central to the histories of many North American cities facing industrial restructuring in the 1980s. As industrial infrastructure hollowed and unemployment spiked, the city faced this economic crisis by opening its doors to transnational capital, reiterating its positionality as a recipient city to transnational markets: first on the margins of a colonial empire, second on the edge of Asia Pacific flurry, and third as the northernmost point of the Cascadian range (Hutton, 2017). Strategies to jump-start its stagnating economy resulted in the rise and proliferation of the Pacific Northwest palette in all its glass residential glory. With the bust of the staple economy came the boom of a transnational residential property market, one which continues to serve both municipal and provincial interests today.

Implicit in the economic story of Vancouver is its strategic use of cultural capital to invite the world to the city, and the city to the centre stage as a new investment frontier. Taking centre stage, the production show of Expo '86 served well beyond the scope of the Expo Line, which acted merely as a vehicle to the larger agenda of marketing Vancouver. This message was dispersed widely to the HNWIs of the Four Tigers, whose

own advanced economies made them the ideal audience to the federally endorsed Business Immigration Program. Spectacle interacted with the socio-economic conditions of Vancouver, responding to local demand and alleviating (yet displacing) the symptoms experienced by economic recession. The result saw the transformation from Vancouver as a processing capital for the province's resource economy, to an arms-wide-open receptacle of Asian capital flow (Hutton, 2017). More than 24 years later, the show revisited the city in the form of the 2010 Winter Olympics, which once again saw the rise of a new development boom in a district now known as Olympic Village, built in conjunction with the new light-rail service, the Canada Line. Residential development reasserted its grips on Vancouver despite the global market crisis of 2008. By utilizing the largest scales of cultural production and the international platform to market its assets, Vancouver has time and again furthered its own development trajectory in attempt to solidify its placement in the increasingly competitive global order.

Beyond the bright lights and loud crowds of worldly events, creative economies and cultural production have long been studied as agents of progress, resisting and interacting with traditional economies in multifaceted and at times ironic ways. Workers in this field on one hand reject and subvert the mainstream, and on the other enrich and contribute to systems against which they are popularly imagined to oppose. In post-industrial economies, artists and creatives alike have long turned to the inner-city as spaces of refuge for cultural production. The reuse of industrial spaces, engines of a bygone capitalist model of growth, were generally associated with lower costs; too, these spaces were museums of urban history layered against culture and conflict, which

altogether synergized the creative work that was produced (Ley, 2003). In a qualitative study on emerging businesses under Singapore's creative economy, KC Ho (2008) highlighted the elusiveness of "play" amongst creative workers as they interact with the lived environment, a balance that blurred the rigid dichotomy separating public and private spheres. When shopping around for workspace, affordability was listed as the main concern for the young entrepreneurs in the study, drawing them to low-income traditional districts of the shop-house: a business model that historically provided working class communities a place to live whilst etching out a means of living. The affordability of the shop-house inadvertently provided these workers with a cultural impetus that supported and channeled their creative visions, allowing them to symbolically subvert the formal economy while contributing to it in meaningful ways. The dialogue between marginality and the mainstream, as Ho further notes, is largely missing in Singapore's creative industry policy, which focuses on "institutional building, infrastructure development, and manpower development" at the expense of "alternative spaces needed for experimental ventures and start-ups" (p. 1192). Veritably, the pixelization of live and work spheres echoes throughout much of the development discourse of creative economies, from the Singaporean shop-house to loft-living in San Francisco's South of Market Area (Hutton, 2008), to Vancouver's own live-work strategy (City of Vancouver, 1996).

The monumental rise of Singapore's creative economy (now ranked fifth according to Richard Florida's questionable study of global talent and global cities, 2015) offers insight into the interconnectivities between creativity and formal economies both past

and present. Industrial infrastructure that once drove local and global trade set the necessary prerequisites for cultural producers, which in turn nurtured the growth of creative industries in an otherwise hostile capitalist climate that works to push them out. In the post-industrial scene of Vancouver, the dominance of the transnational housing-dependent economy placed downward pressure on artists to find appropriate spaces of live and work, prompting city officials to license and zone specific live-work studios for its marginal yet promising creative economy. However, the success of Vancouver's life-work strategy remains up for debate, with skeptics arguing that live-work studios have become more of a live-live situation, in the midst of an affordable housing crisis where high rent is compounded by low vacancy (Globe and Mail, 2016; TDA, 2012). This historical push-and-pull narrative of succession speaks to the the dynamics of an ever-changing, ever-competing urban reality in which functionality frequently intersect with concentric layers of contestation.

4.1. Artists and the Forces of Gentrification

The movement of artists into traditionally low-income neighbourhoods and industrial districts provides an interesting starting point to conceptualize one of the multiple pathways by which revitalization occurs in urban spaces. Scholars have noted that the reclamation of urban spaces by artists works in tandem with the physical and social relayering of neighbourhoods; more significantly, the presence of artists coincide with changing spatial dynamics, indirectly correlated with increasing property values and the

reimagination of character as they are prescribed to space. These forces in turn prompt cities to opportunistically adopt urban renewal strategies to repurpose and capitalize on underused land (Ley, 2003). Framed in another light, artists constitute one of the many identities within the “creative class”, acting as social pioneers who remediate bygone industrial landscapes for higher and better use; their presence thereby facilitates urban renewal and generates economic growth, as famously surmised by Richard Florida (2005). The repackaging of the inner-city from spaces of “broken windows” (Wilson & Kelling, 1996), to up-and-coming, trendy spaces of cultural vibrancy, alleviates perceived risk and facilitates investment and rebuilding in a new-age reprisal of the terra nullius mentality. Indeed, Florida’s attractive causal effect between artists and revalorization led many North American cities to invest heavily in creative class strategies in attempt to recruit the creative messiahs needed to recharge their precarious, post-industrial economies. This deterministic pathway reveals the connection creative workers have with the formal economy. And in a complex and ironic series of interlocking events, the social pioneers who once sought refuge and respite in affordable areas subsequently see their tenure threatened as they become priced out and outcompeted by the very processes they kickstarted. The invisible eye of speculation and the invisible hand of property revaluation coordinate to induce processes of gentrification, thereby mainstream-washing the industrial character of the inner-city.

Florida’s theory of the creative class offers one pathway by which cities can navigate the uncertain post-industrial terrain. However, its narrow focus runs the risk of silencing the

multitude of functions and users of the inner-city. Urban centres cannot be simply reduced to an interaction between the creative economy and untapped economic potential; invisible in this reduction are the other ingredients simmering below: the stories of the working class and the livelihoods of marginalized communities, both of which complexify the ongoing challenges in planning practice. By largely ignoring existing urban inequalities in favour of a development-centered discourse, the creative class theory normalizes invisibility and reifies the longstanding industry of disempowerment. Indeed, Florida's generalizing theories have been met with strong opposition, namely in Jamie Peck's work which argues that "creativity strategies barely disrupt extant urban-policy orthodoxies based on interlocal competition, place marketing, property- and market-led development, gentrification and normalized socio-spatial inequality" (2005). The complicit roles of artists in the processes of gentrification only encapsulate one narrative of displacement; left out are the other numerous narratives informed by histories of exclusion and conflict. This interplay between growth and marginality in the North America harks back to the building of the colony, during which classes of people were systematically exploited to further the growth of the empire (Choudry & Thomas, 2013). From this viewpoint, the germination of creative economies then intersects with class and racial inequality, a sentiment that reshuffles Vancouver's own industrial past to the forefront of examination.

Exemplifying a case where first world economics exists in conjunction with third world living conditions, and multimillion-dollar, single family detached homes neighbour emergency shelters for the urban poor, the trenchant dichotomy present in the

Vancouver's DTES prompts the question of who truly benefits in the regimes of urban renewal, and who is left to bear the costs. Historically, the DTES and East Vancouver proper supported the city's staple economy and heavy industries, providing employment opportunities for the working class who settled in districts undesirable to the middle managerial class and the upper owner/magnate elite. The economic division of land-use mirrored the stratification of peoples, a history that includes early Chinese and Japanese settlers whose hard labour in the industrial sector contributed to the building of the very Canadian empire from which they systematically excluded (Lim, 2015; Coloma, 2013). From this lens, Vancouver's industrial history was also predicated on a structural industry of enforced disempowerment, a power imbalance that remains unchallenged and unaddressed in contemporary discussions of a new economy. Beyond the dark chapters of racial and class oppression, the collapse of the industrial sector saw the DTES become a hub for urban poverty. The neighbourhood in 2017 continues to support the majority of single room occupancy hotels that are essential (yet inadequate) in housing Vancouver's burgeoning population living in poverty. These conditions are exacerbated by the dismantling of the welfare state, and further concentrated by the displacement effects of inner-city revitalization regimes.

4.2. A Foray into the New Economy

Vancouver's pool of creative talent and entrepreneurs has charged the development of its own creative economy in the 1990s, evidenced by the rise of the multinational media

sector, employing significant numbers of digital and tech workers in the film, TV, and video game industries (Hutton, 2008; Barnes and Coe 2011). But all that glitters is not gold and the “very little [that] holds industry in place” was not enough to sustain Vancouver’s foray into the new economy (Barnes et al, 2016, p. 2). Vancouver’s apparent lack of competitive advantage was reiterated by the sudden downfall of its gaming industry in 2008, and by its multiple failures in developing False Creek Flats as northern ‘South of Market’ replica during the height of the dot.com wave. Informed by lessons of the past, the precariousness of a local creative economy continues to cast a dark cloud that looms over the most recent proposal to turn the 450+ acre plot into a hub of Innovation. The unsustainable boom and busts in Vancouver point to the multiple pressures disadvantaging the region, including cost-competition with Quebec, and more significantly, the overlapping and omnipresence of the transnational real estate market - the latter of which arguably worked to revalorize and gentrify neighbourhoods in ways that the creative economy could not.

Vancouver’s economic and social ecology has been shaped and molded by its unique dependency pathways, which on one hand reveal its resilience, and on the other its economic reliance on external forces. “Breaking out of its ‘sticky place’ and becoming a global ‘slippery space’” (Markusen, 1996 in Barnes et al, 2016, p.1), Vancouver recycled its staples economy to contemporary models of residential highest and best use, simultaneously exposing its limitations as a mid-size contender in a tournament of global giants. The strengths and weaknesses of the city as it navigates post-industrialism bring to light the inherent problem of the resilience discourse. As Barnes et

al. (2016) further illustrates, resilience assumes a degree to which objects or populations are able to recover after exposure to major interruptive forces; to this end, is Vancouver truly exercising its own resiliency when its patterns of economic development have been ongoing episodes of successive displacement, when its own communities are threatened by erasure? The question beckons deeper debate, cautioning us to examine whether growth and progress is truly measured by creative class strategies, new buildings, and infrastructure (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007), or if this discourse of residential density-washing clouds us from seeing those of whom are left behind.

Sociologist, Nathanael Lauster (2016), notes that the creation and organization of neighbourhoods through zoning practice has always been an exercise to divide and stratify social classes and populations. Reclamation of the old and competition for the new expose the intrinsic character of the inner-city as a dynamic space with ebbs and flows, subject to the pressures of internal and external forces. Amidst the instability, however, is the implicit constant of inequality and the reassertion of privilege and marginality as the de facto formula for growth. In the case of the DTES, the urgency of extreme inequality admittedly could not be addressed in the limited scope of this analytical exercise, requiring much more examination at a finer grain scale. As Vancouver moves towards yet another episode of the new economy - this time in the form of the Innovation Economy - the question remains if we can afford to keep endorsing worldly band-aid fixes at the expense of our compounding social wounds, or

if this new entrepreneurial strategy is innovative enough. In short, we need to examine more deeply the nature of our choices and the effects of the trade-offs.

5. Deconstructing the Economics of Innovation

The City of Vancouver's push towards Innovation presents a promising frontier for new economic development. The Innovation Economy encompasses a wide-range of industries across social work, health and wellness, technological and digital industries, green economy, film and television, cultural production, telecom, tech apparel, and others (City of Vancouver, 2016). Despite the seemingly divergent array of interests, the connective tissue holding these industries together is the imagined potential for a new and thriving economic direction. The fostering of entrepreneurialism and small enterprises through this idyllic trope would conceivably lead to the strengthening of Vancouver's core economy by activating the city's emerging young and skilled labour force, and increasing economic diversity within the region.

The imagined horizons of the second tech boom offer a directional shift for this medium-sized international city which, for the last 25 years, has grown robustly primarily due to its transnational residential development industry. But a bet on potential only offers a limited scope to the narrative. Comparable metropolises south of the border, namely Seattle and San Francisco, underwent major economic restructuring akin to that of the Vancouver story (Dempwolf, 2009), but unlike these Cascadian counterparts, our protagonist lacked the availability of physical and economic space and capital interest necessary to nurture the creative industry. Instead, our saviour amid the 1980's recession took the form of residential glass towers, which saw the conversion of many of our industrial lands and consequently provided the jump start needed to necessitate

growth in a time of instability and stagnation. It is a formula that significantly influenced our pathway dependency, and one that continues to dominate contemporary municipal and provincial interests. What little land remained after the residential explosion is ironically what is needed to foster the new economic direction, creating a disparaging conundrum between the Innovation Economy and the industry of housing giants.

Intense redevelopment driven by the living first strategy in the 1990s changed the dimensions of the inner-city. The development industry became conditioned to follow the familiar routine of residential high rises, and in the more recent years, the long term social consequences of this practice came to light as property value reached peak records in 2016 (Business In Vancouver, March 30, 2017) and residents faced increasingly insurmountable affordability barriers. The repercussions prompted the City of Vancouver to re-evaluate the 2011 Housing and Homelessness Strategy, 2012-2021, which noted that “enough supply is being produced to serve our overall population, but it is not the right kind of supply to meet the incomes and housing needs of our residents.” In the context of land-use planning, the residual trade-offs and externalities from decades of redevelopment have pooled and saturated in the last pieces of inner-city land, namely the DTES and False Creek Flats which now serve as contemporary examples that highlight the delicate intersections between housing, social issues, and the new economy. On one hand, the area arguably contains the last parcels of available land for Innovation to break ground, yet on the other, the land is complexified by the encroachment of residential real estate (through speculation or investment pressure) and layers of urban social problems. To this end, the area represents more than just

opportunity and challenges for the new economy. In contrast, I argue that it symbolizes the longstanding power struggle between development legacies of yesteryear and the urgent need for social responsibility today; it is to the degree that whatever may crystallize as a result will signify the city's stance on urban regeneration amidst conflict and contention.

In 2016, the City of Vancouver proposed to develop False Creek Flats as a primary node along the the Innovation Arc. In the history of creative economies, this proposal was not the first of its kind, following a successive series of attempts since the 1990s; each conception stunted by external market busts and poor coordinative cohesion on the local front. It has been by no means an easy task. The latest redevelopment draft envisions a district of firms and workspaces with a sustainable community of entrepreneurs creating innovative local products and services, altogether anchored by the institutional presence of Emily Carr University of Art and Design and the new St. Paul's Hospital. This proposal of a new creative hub is optimistic and forward-facing, yet the compounded issues of the DTES remain unaddressed. In fact, the draft proposal does not mention the priorities of the DTES Local Area Plan, which are systematically categorized within a separate planning project despite the argument that the two are integrally linked as directly neighbouring areas.

One of the bolder externalities that stands out is the imminence of spillover on adjacent, traditionally low-income neighbourhoods. The modernization of the Flats with infrastructure development, new built form and amenities, and increased traffic would

inevitably drive speculation in surrounding areas - in particular, the neighbourhood of Strathcona which has already witnessed the rise of million-dollar-plus transactions juxtaposed against a surrounding backdrop of urban poverty. In addition, the conversion of False Creek Flats from industrial lots to a mixed-use neighbourhood of work and live would intensify pressure from residential developers seeking prospects in an area that is already in high demand. According to Andy Yan's most recent study, it is a trend that has already taken hold as speculation in industrial lands soars an average of 48% and 41% in Strathcona and the Flats respectively (Metro News Vancouver, February 10, 2017). The escalation of gentrification threatens to further displace many communities already existing on the social and economic fringes of the inner-city.

While the introduction of the new economy in Vancouver provides a platform of opportunity for artists, start-up entrepreneurs, and other creative workers, it does not address the delicate and complex social issues of the area, nor does it adequately project the impacts of urban regeneration of this magnitude. As well, employment prospects and economic inclusion of vulnerable populations in the inner-city are not discussed, inadvertently perpetuating the exclusionary paradigm of development in which growth is oftentimes prioritized above social need, and social issues become externalities of the main story. This formula is predicated on hierarchy and linearity: economic opportunity plus capital investment equals jobs, and greater employment feeds back into the economic machine. However, in this positive feedback loop of growth, there are those of whom that were never asked to participate to begin with. Moreover, I would further argue that the exclusionary grounds of participation in the past

has contributed to the complexity we see today - a cycle that needs to be disrupted.

“Opportunity” for some may not be opportunities for others. The potential growth of an economically viable hub may come at the expense of inner-city populations, already facing displacement from communities that are increasingly unaffordable.

Instead of viewing social issues as externalities in development, how might the city expand the concept of opportunity to be more inclusive of the communities of the DTES? Could revenues from the new economy be channeled into social enterprises that capacitate, train, and mobilize residents of the DTES, and to alleviate ongoing issues of urban poverty? More broadly, could the Innovation Economy be an opportunity for the city to disrupt and reconfigure traditional models of development, to not focus solely on economic return but the value of social returns as well? Certainly, the first step towards these socially inclusive goals is collaboration. And from a systems approach illustrating the fine-grain interconnectivities between housing, social issues, and the economy, greater efforts are required in bridging the efforts of the Innovation Economy, Vancouver’s Housing and Homelessness Strategy, and the Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan.

The case of False Creek Flats presents a complex dilemma for planners: how to plan for viable economic opportunities under the powerful influence of residential development, a balance that simultaneously intersects with longstanding social vulnerability and layers of urban poverty. Nevertheless, it is exemplar of 21st century planning in the neoliberal state, with spatial limitations, high property value, conflicting

land-use priorities, and social inequality all serving as competing notes in a disconnected melisma. But true to the definition of innovation, the complexities and challenges that have collected in the Flats over the years offer a rare yet opportune moment to renew and re-envision planning strategy. This references the synthesis stages of Vancouver's housing market, now routine and safe, but at one point a risky re-envisionment itself in the "living first" strategy (New York Times, January 17, 2007). In discussing a new economic future, we are inherently questioning the current status quo by interrogating what has not worked, and what can work better moving forward. As this practice of re-evaluation happens, it is also important to interrogate who has not been included, and what a better, more socially responsible economic approach might look like. This critical exercise is an optimistic disruption of the current ways of practice. More importantly, it opens up the dialogue by providing a platform for the voices of change and progress, that may have been met with more resistance at any other given time. Viewed from another light, planning for a new economic direction intrinsically allows us take risks and try on new frameworks that address and include concurrent issues, and not in spite of them.

5.1 Dan George and the Systems Approach

During the research process for this project, I had the honour of meeting Dan George, President of Four Directions Management Services who articulated the intricacies connecting bodies of governance, communities and agencies, and individuals in a

system of networks and interdependence. Described by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (2017), Four Directions is a “wholly owned Aboriginal economic, social and community development organization dedicated to responding to the expressed needs of individuals, organizations, communities and all levels of government in British Columbia, Canada, and abroad.” Through consultative practice providing expertise in negotiation, facilitation, strategy and communication, George has made a legacy of a career mediating First Nations communities with the wider political and economic forces of the region. George’s work centres around the belief that economic opportunity, in whatever form it manifests, should include the very people for which it affects, for it is inherently within communities and its local networks of relationships and knowledge where stewardship is activated. And it is this sense of inclusion and personal responsibility that contributes not only into economic success, but to whether or not such successes can be sustained.

Dan George’s approach to viewing the world as a network of interconnected systems posits our socio-economic world as a traditional Native longhouse: a room held up by foundational pillars, tables to give the space meaning, and individual legs to support each table. Each part of the longhouse serves its individual role and purpose to form a structure within which community members at every level can belong and participate. This holistic metaphor urges us to deconstruct the notion of externalities as fundamentally unavoidable byproducts of competing interests, and instead reframe them as inherent pieces of a larger system. By understanding the ‘bigger picture’ as relationships between its individual parts, we begin to visualize the economy as it ties

into our social world. From this lens, 'externalities' are not so much external as they are internal components of a moving system, subject to fluctuations, shifts, and reconfigurations of history.

The insights from George are very much relevant to the complexities inherent in Vancouver's redevelopment strategies. Drawing back to the planning process within and around the Downtown Eastside, social vulnerability and urban poverty are extant issues compounded by the rise of the residential property development, the end result of which is an ongoing system of marginalization of displacement. These issues are imagined as externalities to the natural trajectory of development, anchored into the fabric of the inner-city as byproducts of historical trauma, re-enacted cyclically and habitually as development continues along its path. Time and again, the local communities are excluded in the discussion of highest and best use, resulting in further displacement and disempowerment in what has become an industry of normalized, systemic poverty, benefiting the few at the expense of the many. Local users of the space then become observers, further reifying intrinsic power imbalances. By deconstructing the idea around externalities, we begin to see the unequal weight that is placed behind different facets within planning processes: the master narrative versus everyone else, economic 'potential' versus social 'externality'. This debate should not be reduced to that of semantics, or one contained safely atop the academic ivory tower. Rather, it is one of ontological significance that informs the way we approach planning, and more importantly, the strategies by which we foster the much-needed collaboration required to reconcile the pieces of the longhouse that have been so badly thrown off balance. The

need to problematize and reshuffle priorities in the development model is important now more than ever as we move into the new economic paradigm of Innovation, where there is a breach in the status quo and a once-in-a-generation opportunity to positively disrupt the system.

The Innovation Economy marks an important shift in the future of Vancouver. It has the innate possibility of heading down two disparate paths: follow conventional models of development that are marred with structural imbalance, or critically examine the pathways by which diversity and inclusion (alleged values within the mandate) can be creatively engaged. The arrival of the new economy stresses the importance of attracting multinationals to consider satellite offices in Vancouver, and activating the key drivers in the form of small ventures and enterprises headed by creatives and entrepreneurs whose ideas can push and progress a self-sufficient economic future. The analogy of the longhouse crystallizes, where the legs (creative workforce) support the table, the table (creative industries) creates the room, and the room (Innovation Economy) gives purpose to the entire longhouse (Vancouver's economy). For actors in economic development, these relationships symbolizes the goals to the mission and the values to the vision. But the room needs to be expanded to include stakeholders in the community who have thus far been excluded and made invisible. Planners are given a rare opportunity to reconfigure the formula in which social cohesion, economic redistribution, and sustainability all weigh equal parts should they in fact be the fundamental end-goals. And this opportunity, I argue, should focus on systems as a whole and not purely on economic viability of a creative economy.

5.2 Distilling the Values of the Innovation Economy

In the following, I have designed a series of questions examining the benefits and barriers of the Innovation Economy. Each answer produced is interrogated for more detail with “why” questions, which are then interrogated even further until the answers become circular. This exercise was inspired by my talk with Dan George, who pressed me to keep asking questions until the answers are exhausted - for it is only then when our specific values are laid out on the table. Framed within the context of the Innovation, the objective is to tease out recurring themes as they arise in answers and to make visible the entrenched values we have moving forward into a new economic direction. As well, the exercise links concepts of the new economy with greater systems in the city, wherein shortcomings and limitations in answers reveal the specific challenges that require further study.

Why is the Innovation Economy beneficial for Vancouver?

Answer 1:

Because it diversifies career paths for emerging Innovators: the entrepreneurs, artists, designers, and creatives of the city.

Why is the diversification of career paths important in Vancouver?

- Empowers young labour market to think outside of the walls of the corporate office to create innovative products and services that are beneficial to society

Why are innovative products and services beneficial to society?

- Ensures that new ideas are always in the works, never stagnating and falling behind

Why is it important to prevent stagnation and “falling behind”?

- Keeps Vancouver and its labour market progressive and forward-facing, generating continuous demand for work should new economies germinate and proliferate

Why is continuous demand for work important?

- Increase demand for workers in turn generate economic growth

Why is it important to generate growth?

- Consistent economic growth increases competitive strength in globalized market, in a positive feedback loop where growth invites more innovation and more jobs

Why is competitive strength in a globalized market and a positive feedback loop essential in Vancouver?

- Demand incentivises firms and companies to retain workers with supportive and competitive wages and benefits

Why is the retention of workers important, and what are the values of competitive wages and benefits?

- Skilled workers with career stability and security contribute more to other essential industries, thus supporting the local economy through a rippling-out effect

From one answer to the original question of why the Innovation Economy is beneficial to Vancouver (that it diversifies career paths for emerging workers), we are able to tease out a series of important economic benefits to support the development of the Innovation Economy. More importantly, we are able to link innovative industries back to the greater economic engines of Vancouver (that it provides job growth, improve working conditions, supports local economy, etc.). Below are a set of numerically-ordered alternative answers, each with a series of implicit 'why' questions to expand on the possibilities.

Why is the Innovation Economy beneficial for Vancouver? (continued)

1. Broadens Vancouver's economic portfolio
 - Strengthens competitive fitness of the city
 - Should particular industries experience instability, having a diversified economic base builds resilience and buffers damage
 - Economic resilience is important because it assures present and future investment and secures work tenureship for local labour market
 - Confidence in local economic and labour markets increases perceived sense of stability, decreasing risk, thereby contributing to a strong economy
 - Strong economy is more conducive to growth and innovation, which leads to further diversification and greater competitiveness at a globalized scale
2. Encourages and fosters young businesses and ventures to remain in Vancouver.
 - Ensures that skilled workers and entrepreneurial talents continue to contribute positively in local economy, instead of seeking work elsewhere and creating a "brain drain" effect
 - Retaining local labour force is easier than recruiting from elsewhere, as local workers have networks and connections built from socio-cultural communities and professional communities.
 - Tapping into these local networks brings out local knowledge that is vital from a planning perspective, as it etches out the needs and gaps present in local markets
 - In the context of globalization, local workers also have networks that extend beyond municipal boundaries. Should there be growth in job opportunities, work satisfaction, and favourable living conditions, workers from abroad would also be attracted to the city, which could also bring fresh perspectives and ideas that generate innovation
 - In the long term, having attractive career opportunities stabilizes the economy of the city as young workers, their businesses, and their ideas are indicative of a health and growth in the future
3. Capitalizes on localized niches, creative work, and ideas to create locally-specific products and services that are unique to the region

- Solidifies regional identity of Vancouver as a place of creation and innovation, a place where its products and services can be marketable on a global platform
 - Reinforces competitive fitness of Vancouver
 - Attracts investment and workers to Vancouver
 - Increases economic stability and generates growth
 - With regard to competitive fitness, job development, and economic growth (above 3 bullets): if goods and services are inspired by distinctions unique to Vancouver, it positions new economic models to stay within the region
 - Carves a niche market that is solely attributable to Vancouver, which cannot be relocated or outsourced so easily (further contributing to competitive edge)
 - Regionally-based innovation would ideally promote sustainable development and green ideas -- a sector that coincides and supports the Greenest City Initiative
4. Innovative industries may redefine, in finer grain, zoning regulations designating particular parcels and districts for particular industrial practices
- This preserves existing industrial lands by modernizing land use to allow for production and distribution of goods and services of new economies
 - Reduces friction with other land uses by dissuading encroachment
 - Pressures planners to review existing industrial lands in greater detail to understand vacancy, intensity of use, rent controls, and areas of growth.
 - Reviews will concretize what industrial lands should remain traditionally industrial, what can accommodate new economies, or even what can be converted to other best uses (for example, San Francisco's 2002 industrial land survey)

Following this exercise of why Innovative industries benefit Vancouver, the next section aims to address the barriers and limitations hindering this new economic model. Once again, implicit in each answer is a 'why' question to further exhaust the details and highlight recurring themes.

What are the barriers and limitations to Vancouver's Innovation Economy?

1. Affordability barriers in office, commercial, or industrial spaces
 - If spaces are unaffordable, businesses will experience greater upkeep costs
 - Greater upkeep costs limits the number of employable positions
 - Staff shortage decreases business productivity
 - Decrease in business productivity places pressure on profit margins
 - Low profit margins increases affordability barrier
2. Low entry-level wages for workers
 - Low wages for workers disincentives job interest from skilled workers
3. High living costs for workers
4. Lack of available space
5. Encroachment of residential property development
6. Speculation and rise in property value
7. Restructuring property development from residential formula
8. Regional competition
9. Cultural capital and authenticity of spaces
10. Social externalities

5.3 Policy Efforts and Institutional Support

The next section delves into solution-oriented questions that bridge the gaps between benefits and limitations. As evidenced below, the details derived from the answers focus more on policy efforts and institutional support needed to ensure a vibrant and sustainable Innovation Economy. The interrogating 'why' questions from the previous sections are replaced with 'how' questions.

How can Innovation be fostered in the face of these barriers and limitations?

1. Review of commercial, industrial, and office land supply and the rent controls that are needed to preserve existing operations and incentivise new ventures

To this end, the City of Vancouver should foster partnership with local landowners, BIAs, and the private sector (currently operating within Innovative districts) to identify potential financial strains affecting businesses in the area. What kinds of collaborative frameworks are needed to ensure the retention of existing businesses?

- These spaces should be identified as Districts of Innovation (which the City of Vancouver has already done), and in finer grain, reviews of particular parcels and lots should be undertaken, with special attention focused on rent control
- Districts of Innovation should be part of the OCP and LAP, with affordability clauses and spatial allocation added to support companies of innovation
- Local BIAs should be recruited for support
- Review existing zoning designations and amend/specify lots to accommodate innovative businesses

2. Further mediate and intervene with soaring housing prices and rental costs

A strong and sustainable workforce depends on adequate, affordable housing. Housing shortage and high costs deters workers from seeking employment around the city core. The City of Vancouver's housing strategy policies should be considered within the Innovation plan to accommodate the necessary creative workers, where proximity to employment and income should be prioritized in surrounding residential units.

- Review current models of housing with specific regard to non-market rentals, or units dedicated to social housing
- Consider subsidized government housing for students to allow for flexibility concurrent with school terms; alleviate built-up pressure on the supply of existing rental stock
- Better incentivize residential developers to build affordable housing
- Assess vacancy rates in housing stock and develop plans to maximize occupancy and alleviate pressure in rental market
- Encourage subdivision of single-family detached lots to increase density

- Improve transportation corridors connecting Innovation Arc to areas of residence in and around Metro Vancouver
 - Publicly lease lands like False Creek South - challenge with the demise of CMHC federal funding; follow the capital - Vision?
3. Develop greater mixed-use, medium to high density spaces along the Innovation Arc

A hub of vibrancy and a community of creative and institutional workers requires density in the face of land shortage. Density bonuses could be offered to developers if they include rental units for workers employed in the area. This may ensure suitable built forms that accommodate both the areas and the workers.

- Revise neighbourhood LAP where necessary to increase density in districts of innovation, increase FAR for highest and best use wherein 'best' supports creative industries
 - Advise with local homeowner's associations
4. Review the cultural capital intrinsic in inner-city neighbourhoods, instead of focusing solely on economic capital as the key decision-making factor

In economic development models, growth is largely measured in economic value. However, this criteria favours income and revenue, and in a sector led by cultural producers, the value of cultural and social capital weighs as much as much as economic capital. How might the city ensure returns are distributed back to the local community?

5. Develop business models and a set of Innovation criteria that incentivise and attract appropriate businesses and investments to Vancouver

While it is challenging to hand-pick specific businesses to lease for units, the city can encourage Innovative start-ups and entrepreneurs by supporting them through transparent, step-by-step guides in acquiring business licenses, offering conditional tax incentives for businesses in Innovation districts, or assist in networking with funders and investors (through VEC, for example). This may help streamline the processes for setting up new businesses.

6. Re-envision the idea of social externalities as inherent pieces to the puzzle, and not inevitable byproducts to development

This last point is one of the most difficult to address because it scales deep into the mental models and core paradigm of development, forcing us to address longstanding systems of exclusion that have shaped the inequalities we see today. However, there are innovative social enterprises that tackle this issue by bridging the gaps between economic value and social return (more detail provided in the following chapter). To this end, innovative social enterprises could be included as stakeholders to the discussion, the role of whom may facilitate collaboration between private and public sectors, and reshape business models to be more socially responsible.

The exercise of 'why' and 'how' is by no-means exhaustive and necessarily objective. There may be many more benefits and limitations that were unaddressed in this brief endeavour, along with many more innovative solution-oriented approaches to overcoming the challenges. By interrogating once knee-jerk response to a seemingly simple question, we are able clarify intrinsic values in our mental modes of thinking, while unpacking and unraveling the many important intricacies tying Innovation to the other moving pieces of Vancouver.

6. Innovation: The Tip of the Complex Iceberg

As Vancouver progresses its development plans for the Innovation Economy, the benefits are numerous and the outlook is optimistic. In a 30-year history of economic restructuring, the solutions of the past have become hindrances in the contemporary socio-economic climate, a reality with which planners and policymakers have to deal. The silent elephant of the housing boom has awakened in full force as the city faces growing pains, bearing pressure from a runaway transnational market that it can no longer absorb without vast externalities manifested as very real and lived issues of affordability and social justice. In a once-in-a-generation prospect, Vancouver now contends with an opportunity to reshuffle the cards and capacitate its local talents and workers to engage in a potentially self-sufficient, autonomous economy that benefits its residents as users, and not just observers. To this end, it is critical to unpack the limitations and gaps in the wake of the new new economy, to not only understand where opportunities lay, but where there might be room for improvement to embody end goals that fit within the vision and values of a progressive, inclusive, and innovative Vancouver.

Among its many visions and goals, the plan to zone and organize creative hubs for the rise of a new sector recognises the intrinsic value of small businesses and entrepreneurs in supporting the base of Vancouver's economy. Moreover, there is a conscious awareness that small-scale businesses are not enough, but that there must be an active stride towards creating new products and services that address both global

demand and the urgency of social and environmental sustainability. It is a complex endeavour indicative of the many worldly challenges that city and regional planners face, for gone are the days where urban planning was merely instrumental to classifying and organizing spatial use. On these grounds, how might Innovation accommodate and progress the work of already existing businesses in a community, regardless of whether or not their business models fit within the spectrum of innovation?

6.1. The Untapped Potential of Social Enterprise

As an example, False Creek Flats currently holds vital economic and community assets as they pertain to food distribution and food systems. As highlighted in the Industrial Land Policy (1995) and revisited in the Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan (2014), protective measures must be placed to preserve and enhance the functionality of Vancouver's already dwindled industrial zones. The Flats currently house essential food distributing warehouses that service the many industries in and around the downtown core. Too, a significant number of these food distributors have historical and cultural ties to Vancouver's precarious Chinatown, supplying culturally appropriate (frequently at low cost) products to a distinctly Chinese community. For these industrial businesses, proximity in the area serves logistical and practice function, which arguably work in tandem with Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan (2011) by reducing greenhouse gas emissions in time and distance traveled in transportation. While protective measures are in place to preserve industrial space needed for these essential sectors - and according

to the draft local area plan presented on January 2017, there will be active effort to “ensure the ongoing viability of the industrial presence of this location” by “retain[ing] light industrial role” - redevelopment in adjacent spaces may have unintended trickle-out consequences. These essential businesses do not fit the archetype of a new economy, nor do they present appropriately alongside the urban design and character of an institutionally-centred arts and tech hub. What measures may further protect and enhance existing food-related businesses in the area, and more broadly, how might food systems be integrated into the criteria for Innovation?

The field of socially and environmentally sustainable food systems is a relative newcomer to the discourse of city and regional planning. However, it has a longstanding history in community-based organizations who have long determined the centrality of food accessibility in the fight against social inequality. The persistence of the grassroots has recently broken into the awareness of municipal and regional governance, which since then has led to strides in enacting policies to protect and enhance food systems through Metro Vancouver’s Regional Food Strategy (2008) and Vancouver’s Food Strategy (2013). The insurgence of neighbourhood food networks can be exemplified in the 2016 Vancouver Food Summit, and the organization of Sole Food Street Farms who “has transformed acres of vacant and contaminated urban land into street farms that grow artisan-quality fruits and vegetables. By providing jobs, agricultural training, and inclusion in a community of farmers and food lovers, the Sole Food project has empowered dozens of individuals with limited resources who are managing addiction and chronic mental health problems” (2016).

Sole Food Street Farms provides a keystone case study that marries urban land-use with community-based needs, while simultaneously capacitating marginalized communities into a cohesive vision that addresses environmental and social gaps. Too, the social enterprise works with public and private partnership: using land owned by Concord Pacific, a prolific real estate developer, and specialized licensing permission by the City of Vancouver to transform unused private land into urban farms where investment is transformed into social and economic return. The business model may pale in comparison to that of the formal highest-and-best-use mental mode, but it successfully engages with a variety of seemingly disparate stakeholders to create a business that is inherently entrepreneurial, creative, and therefore innovative. Indeed, Sole Food offers full-distribution to restaurants and services in Vancouver, reiterating its potential to effectively partake in the greater food industry of the city as not just a community garden, but as a full-fledged food distributor in its own right.

While social enterprises such as Sole Food and neighbourhood food networks admittedly do not reflect the business models of industrial food distributors in and around Downtown Vancouver, they do present intriguing exemplars of how food systems can integrate well into the paradigm of a new economy. More broadly, the work of social enterprises point to the opportunity to coordinate divergent spheres of influence to generate innovative structures by which return is not only measured economically, but socially and environmentally as well. Still, in encapsulating innovative best practices, obstacles exist in an economic system inherently designed to favour

existing best-use practices at the expense of all else. The existence of Sole Food is predicated on land availability of the private sector and on a unique partnership with Concord Pacific Developments, and the vulnerability of such empowering organizations is clear in the face of intensifying development. To this end, the verdict is out on how Vancouver's Innovation Economy may ensure and enhance upon transformative innovations paved by social enterprises.

The precarious positionality of social enterprise is not a new narrative amidst contemporary neoliberal economies. Funding and the battle for sovereignty have always been barriers against which social enterprise and nonprofit organizations alike operate on an everyday basis. In the face of scarce resources, these barriers also arguably mobilize a level of insurgency in these bodies, forcing them to think outside of the box, take risks, and build alliances to accomplish their visions and goals in ways disinterested and often times competing governments do not. Innovation and complex coordination are then prerequisites for grassroots movements, and in many examples have proven to tackle meta-scale issues to fill-in gaps that local governments have left behind. Revisiting the example, the aforementioned neighbourhood food networks and the entrepreneurial spirit of social enterprise have mobilized both municipal and regional levels of governance to participate by instating policy and regulatory frameworks to further the cause of food security and accessibility. These small to medium-sized community organizations provide micro-scale adaptations to address macro-level insufficiencies. On these grounds, it is of equal importance to acknowledge that while non-governmental bodies are creative and insurgent in procuring social return through

action, securing of capital and investment is instrumental to any cause, a sentiment with which the municipalities of Metro Vancouver are all too familiar.

To this end, the role of authority and partnership cannot be understated in legitimizing and supporting socially-minded movements that are otherwise overlooked and undermined in the greater economic discourse. B Corps serves as another keystone example, who centres for-profit businesses as the fundamental actors of change in the movement for socially and environmentally-responsible industry. “B Corps are for-profit companies certified by the nonprofit B Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency” (B Corps, 2017). By using the power of business to solve social and environmental problems, B Corps dreams of a world where “one day, all companies will compete for not only being the best in the world, but for the best for the world” (January, 2014). Notable private businesses have taken on its “inclusion challenge” to continue redefining success, including Cascade Engineering, Ben & Jerry’s, and Patagonia Clothing and others in over 120 industries worldwide. Through rigorous assessment, the certification measures “practices that intentionally address a social or environmental issue [...] not practices that simply comply with existing laws or norms” (ibid). The certification helps both consumers identify private changemakers, and investors and shareholders turn profit while creating a measurable level of social and environmental return. In brief, by working within the dominant parameters of capitalist growth, B Corps simultaneously subverts it in some ways by exemplifying how innovative practice can collaborate economic and social interests, and not one at the expense of the other.

6.2. Catching the Ship Before It Sets Sail

In order to stay competitive, cities must foster new industries that fit within today's global standards: creative products and manufacturing, cultural, cleantech and green industries, digital entertainment and information, communication technology, and health sciences. These industries are departures from the traditional industrial, service, and finance sectors, and in comparison, offer a multitude of alternative benefits to a more environmentally aware and responsible future to varying degrees. Moreover, a thriving new economy base defines success in a city, rebranding it as a competitive global player. Contemporary investment interests are predicated on the growth of these increasingly popularized industries, and have in many ways dictated a catch-all "cookie cutter" formula in which keywords such as "creative" and "cultural" (and in Vancouver's case: "innovative") have resonated in many cities' official planning directives. Over the past decade or so, creative and entrepreneurial strategies as described by Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris (2007), have widely been adopted. The convergent and parallel evolution of new economies hold an implicit irony in new-age adaptations of creativity and culture: these endeavours are hardly creative or original at all. The formula has been more or less replicated in cities around the world, and in urban centres without full-fledged creative workers and industries, the acquisition of such has become ingrained as a pinnacle of aspiration. The glaring shortcoming, however, is that no locality shares the exact history or socio-economic specificities; any large-scale adaptation of the cookie cutter formula risks ignoring contextual significances, and as Bianchini et al

(1992) caution: a sole focus on large flagship projects is problematic as it funnels resources to only pockets of the city, on only segments of the population.

Creative industries and the promises of economic return have been a path well tread in the post-industrial narrative. Inspired by best practices in cities around the world such as Seattle, San Francisco, New York, London and Singapore, the desire to encapture creative businesses and workers has spread worldwide and given rise to the proliferation of Floridean creative class strategies. As Vancouver moves towards the second and third coming of its creative sector, the question arises of whether or not the figurative ship has already set sail, and if Vancouver, at this point, is too late to the game. The urgency of “jumping aboard” before the opportunity has passed is a serious contending factor in driving ambitious local area plans along the Innovation Arc, bringing to light yet another barrier to social inclusion. Opportunity costs are measured in time but reliant on financial factors that are themselves influenced by globalization’s race to the bottom. On a global stage where competition is rife, Vancouver’s creative economy may not have the time and resources to consider the options more thoroughly before interest and investment is lost to more favourable, tax-incentivised, quick-to-receive locales. Once again, this places socially inclusionary practices (which take time, public, and political will to transpire) in a vulnerable position, reifying the historically-bound systems of imbalance where social good is often discarded in favour of economic growth - regardless of how innovative the former may be. From this critical standpoint, when does it then become more convenient and appropriate to foster social innovation?

Or will the paradigm of empire and marginality be recycled in yet another chapter of the Vancouver story?

Despite these limiting factors, Vancouver boasts a few unique characteristics that give it a competitive edge in attracting and securing business investment: its well-established position as the Asia Pacific Gateway, dedication to the Green industries and environmental sustainability, and relationship to its American counterparts in regional Cascadia. To start, Vancouver has a longstanding history as Canada's largest and most vital port, connecting commerce, trade, and capital from the east to the west. Previously illustrated in this paper, proximity to Asia Pacific trade and capital flow revived the city with a second life in the wake of the staple economy's collapse, the result of which transformed Vancouver to the international city it is today. These east-west partnerships remain invaluable as Vancouver begins marketing its creative and tech capacities, exemplified by the Vancouver Economic Commission, whose "approach to leveraging the opportunities presented through Canada's Asia Pacific Gateway is the belief that relationships and trust must come first. Only then can successful business ventures follow. Reflecting the region's importance to Vancouver and its economic future, we have established a team that is fully dedicated to building these critical relationships within the region" (2017). Indeed, sustained partnerships with international venture capitalists supplement the city's usual spheres of influence (community amenity contributions, development cost levies, property taxes, and utility fees), potentially reinvigorating and diversifying sources of funding.

Secondly, Vancouver's commitment to environmental stewardship and achieving the title of the world's "greenest city by the year 2020" (Greenest City Action Plan, 2011) work in conjunction with a vibrant and thriving new economy. These two strategic efforts work together to brand the city as one of the most progressive and forward-facing in the world, thereby inviting and attracting global investment interest. Lastly, in relation to Seattle and Portland, Vancouver's positionality as the sole Canadian metropole of Cascadia is arguably a competitive advantage in the contemporary political climate. In the 1990s, the weaker Canadian dollar atop provincial tax incentives saw the boom of the gaming and digital arts industries in Vancouver (Barnes et al, 2016) - the demise of which a decade and a half later was a result of rising property values and the strengthening of the Canadian currency. While expensive real estate continues to deter economic opportunities from abroad, favourable exchange rates in the present-day combined with open immigration policies for skilled workers amidst President Trump's anti-immigration campaign paints Vancouver in a positive competitive light.

The draft proposal for the False Creek Flats area planning arranges four distinct hubs to support the Innovation Economy: Back-of-House, where current and future industrial use is preserved; Health Hub, for the relocation of the new St. Paul's Hospital and supporting research and health sciences facilities; Terminal Spine, for the preservation of existing rail systems and potential rezoning in the future; and Creative Campus, for the relocation of Emily Carr Arts & Design University (City of Vancouver, 2017). These hubs share a singular commonality by having distinguished institutional anchors to define identity and specialized use; perhaps the presence of well-known institutions will

provide a sense of familiarity amongst Vancouverites, enhancing synergy for creative businesses and organizations to grow and thrive. With specific attention to educational institutions like St. Paul's and Emily Carr, where innovative ideas are undoubtedly nurtured, the role of these anchors may very influence the development of an innovative work base by bridging knowledge and research with business and production. The mechanisms by which these transfers are facilitated require further research.

In a complicated analysis of benefits and trade-offs, Vancouver's Innovation Economy provides an interesting and contentious case of competing interests, and as well, the potential for multi-level stakeholder collaboration. What is clear, however, is that policies, guidelines, and land use planning are not enough; in an ambitious plan to redefine economic pathways, city-guided business models are also needed to clarify the visions and values of the new economy, an endeavour that is currently underway as an active part of the development process. How social innovations are incorporated into the city's plans remain to be seen.

7. Moving Forward

The scope of this paper has offered an analytical examination into Vancouver's Innovation Economy as it relates to ongoing issues of housing, affordability, and social exclusion. On these grounds, it is important to reflexively address my own positionality as a researcher and writer contributing to the overall body of literature and knowledge, which has thus far been informed from a critical postmodern feminist lens to viewing and articulating urban issues. While there has been no explicit mention of gender, race, or sexuality in this project (a self-acknowledged imitation when broaching broad social issues), I argue that elements of power and control, privilege and marginality are essential to understanding and deconstructing pathways of economic development as it pertains to the social world. These ontological standpoints are rooted in sociological and feminist schools of thought, which in many ways influence my own perspectives in approaching urban and community planning.

Vancouver today is a city experiencing growing pains, symptomatic of a transnational market growing well beyond the means of the local economy to support it. The byproduct of this unchecked growth is no more visible than in the decoupling of the housing and labour markets, forcing both the City of Vancouver and its residents to rethink its quarter century-long economic dependence on the open door, transnational housing market. What was once its saving grace, the residential glass towers now contribute to a growing affordability crisis and a widening class gap: reifying the historically-bound systems of imbalance in which the privilege of the few continue to

work at the expense of the many. As illustrated in this work thus far, Vancouver is not exempt from these unequal power dynamics; indeed it has been the foundation on which the city is built, and arguably a paradigm that continues to inform contemporary models of growth.

In an active effort to diversify its economic portfolio and depart from the rule of the housing industry, the city has embraced the revival of the creative economy which, alongside the Greenest City initiative, attempts to rebrand Vancouver as a progressive and forward-facing global player. The new direction of the Innovation Economy offers promise and potential by capitalizing on the skills of local workers, but from a critical point of view, it is only the tip of the iceberg. Below the waterline exists a plethora of ongoing issues - of the most urgent is the need to address the inequalities that have been compounded by Vancouver's own history of exclusionary development.

Planning in the 21st century is by no means an easy endeavour. In stark contrast, it is a practice embedded within systems of complexities, requiring collaboration, trust, and partnerships from stakeholders across the board. The development of the Innovation Economy is only one piece to a disassembled puzzle, touching upon not only economic need, but social and environmental spheres as well. Still, there remains many other missing pieces that serve as reminders of the fragmented society in which we all live and work. Inherent in this critical rhetoric is also opportunity and potential. As we face these complex challenges at a time of economic uncertainty, we need to be reminded that once in a time not long ago, Vancouver had also experienced hardships when its

industrial sector collapsed. The city exercised regional resilience by mobilizing its available assets and cultural capital, and tapping into its strategic positionality to pull itself out of one of its most historic periods of recession. Three decades after the fact, we now face crisis in a newer form: a burgeoning housing market outgrowing its holding capacity, an economic dependence coming back with a bite. The rise of the new economy presents a promising frontier of a new economic development, and more significantly, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reconfigure the inequalities implicit in the economic models of growth.

To this end, how might the Innovation Economy encompass innovative best practices in social enterprises? And what changes are needed to reshape public discourse on investment return, to broaden the very concept of return beyond the economic to include social and environmental ones as well? While there are challenges and barriers in creating inclusive economic development strategies, it at the very least, provides a refreshing step outside of the dysfunct routine and a hope that the goals of environmental, social, and economic sustainability be realized.

As I reach the end of my research within the parameters of this project, the implementary steps of the Innovation Economy is still underway. During my writing process, I was met with new ideas and emerging concerns along each step of the way, some of which reiterating the complex problems faced of Vancouverites, including issues pertaining to housing and the new arts and tech hub, and others of which shedding new insights and best practices inspiring us to envision how a new economy

might work in the context of our city. Altogether, varying opinions and oftentimes disparate voices reiterate the urgency of the work that still needs to be done.

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