

Taking it to the streets

Space, labour and resistance in the Vancouver and Paris film industries from 1970 to 2005

by

Christopher Bodnar, B.A., M.A.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Mass Communication

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

9 January 2008

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ISBN: 978-0-494-36778-0

*Our file* *Notre référence*

ISBN: 978-0-494-36778-0

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### Abstract

This dissertation uses the film industries of Vancouver and Paris between 1970 and 2005 to examine the relationship between space, visuality and labour in one “image sector” of the contemporary communication industry. By engaging a spatial perspective in this work, I propose a means of understanding the city as a medium of communication that moves analysis away from a functional transmission view of communications to one based on social practices. Otherwise stated, I argue that research conducted to date has largely failed to provide a sustained analysis of the social construction of space. Given the prominence of urbanism in contemporary policy debates and visual markets in cultural industries, understanding the relationship between these two areas is crucial in assessing the contemporary political economy of communication in a spatial sense. I address this shortcoming by drawing from urban, geographic, film and communication literature to construct a framework for recognizing the interaction of the visual production sector in global markets. My research involves developing a political economy of the film location shooting trend in the “culturally authentic” city, investigating the role of labour in spatial dynamics of visual production and conducting a textual reading of visual products against the sites of their production. I find that the communicative function of the city, present through symbolic capital and perceived by its inhabitants compared to the film industry’s engagement of urban space opens the door to a fertile ground for conflict and resistance. The spaces of the local neighbourhood become sites of production and interpretation of social meaning.

## Acknowledgements

No work is ever the exclusive creation of one individual isolated from community or society. I owe a significant gratitude to many people for their support and help throughout the research and writing of this dissertation project.

Nancy Peden at the Carleton University Library has been a treasure to many graduate students over the years and deserves much more credit than the notation she receives in so many dissertation and thesis acknowledgements. The staff of a number of other libraries also aided my work over the past number of years. Most notable are the Bibliothèque du Film in Paris and the Special Collections branch of the University of British Columbia Library.

A number of industry organizations were helpful in providing information and tracking down data amidst their many other (and more important) queries and tasks in a hectic industry. For this I would like to thank the staff of the Mission Cinema in Paris, the Ile-de-France Film Commission, the BC Film Commission and the City of Vancouver Film Office.

My student colleagues have provided support and friendship. In addition, we have all had the opportunity to learn from and to teach each other. Special thanks to Enda Brophy, Ian Nagy, Melissa Fritz, Patricia Mazepa, Sandra Smeltzer, Charlene Elliot, Faiza Hirji and James Missen.

I owe many thanks to the many individuals in CUPE 4600 who worked together both in the classroom and at the negotiating table in the hope that public education might remain accessible and of a high standard. I extend special thanks to the union's business agent Stuart Ryan.

Many professors have supported my work throughout my stay at university. Of particular note include four mentors: Leslie Regan Shade, Catherine McKercher, Vincent Mosco and Robert Babe. My intellectual development owes each of these individuals great thanks. I am very appreciative to Simon Dalby and Rianne Mahon who sat on my committee, providing invaluable advice and comments at key points of my research and writing process.

I owe a significant debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Michèle Martin. Throughout the process of research and writing, Michèle provided a critical eye to my work and a constant encouragement. Through her arrangements with *l'Institut Français du Presse*, I was able to begin research in Paris. Without this opportunity, my dissertation would have taken a different trajectory, certainly at a loss, and I would have missed an incredible opportunity.

Through the conferences I attended over the past years I learned that Canadians are fortunate to maintain a public system of post-secondary education, despite the attacks it has faced over the past decade. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship program allowed me to pursue my studies with minimal financial hardship. The Dean of Graduate Studies, the Dean of the Faculty of Public Affairs and Management and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Carleton University all provided travel funding relating to my research and conference participation.

Finally, my family has supported me throughout, even when they have not understood what I am doing or why. My parents have always been my greatest supporters. Paige has been a steady companion. Clara is my new muse as I look toward future endeavours.

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## Introduction

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On 21 January 2005, the city of Paris captured media headlines around the world with a curious announcement: after months of public hesitation and outright ridicule of the American project, officials at the Louvre announced that they had agreed, in principle, to allow the filming of *The Da Vinci Code* to take place in the museum. That Paris would host the shooting of a Hollywood film would not be news, normally. But this project, based on a best-selling American novel and produced by Hollywood, highlighted the conflict between an institution of French high culture and the cultural production system of the world's cinematic heavyweight. The museum announced, with grudging enthusiasm, "The Louvre is not a movie set. It is a place that received an average of 20,000 visitors a day." Movie set or not, filming was scheduled to begin within five months.

Lest the nation's cultural elite fall prey to such unabashed cultural imperialism, the Catholic diocese of Paris announced the same day that the Saint-Sulpice church, also a setting in the original book, "is not a branch of Hollywood" and thus would remain out of reach of the film crew's use. The pre-emptive statement was quickly sidelined with the

American studio's announcement that Audrey Tautou had been chosen from a list of twelve leading French actors to play the lead female role opposite Tom Hanks.

Half-way around the world, with far less fanfare, the province of British Columbia announced only hours earlier that it would increase tax credits available to film productions. Although much less glamorous than the Paris announcement, the BC tax credit issue was the subject of intense discussion in months prior to the announcement. The move brought the province's tax incentives in line with other leading Canadian film locations in Ontario and Quebec. Industry representatives and media had speculated that the film industry would flee without comparable initiatives. "If the tax credit isn't changed in B.C., we would have to move to Toronto," Shawn Williamson, Brightlight studio co-founder was quoted across Vancouver media. "We'd keep a small office here, but the majority of our work would go to Ontario." The race for Hollywood's productive activity was not, it appeared, one to be taken lightly.

The British Columbia announcement was banal in many regards. The province had offered tax incentives to the film industry in one form or another for decades. Increasing competition from other provinces and countries threatened to push the industry out of the province. Many other governments were now using tax incentives, along with an array of other policy initiatives to attract production activity to their jurisdiction. The threat of losing market share and, ultimately, the jobs that come with the industry was enough to cause the government to act.

These two events represent the novelty and banality of the film industry's presence and impact in two different regions. Both regions recognize film as playing a significant role in their respective economies, cultures and societies. Each city has built a significant political and economic apparatus and infrastructure to support the activities of the film industries in

their respective locations. Of course, the two regions place differing emphases on the industry's role in their respective locales; Paris allocates a strong cultural component to the role of film as an intrinsic part of the modern city's functions. Vancouver, which rarely gets to play itself in the movies, has a much more economic discourse around the industry. Despite such differences, both cities depend on the infrastructure – comprised of film commissions, tax incentives, luxury service sectors, film-related businesses and an array of policies to facilitate and encourage such activities – to underpin the activities of their visual production sectors. Regardless of economic or cultural discourses around the industry in each region, this infrastructure plays a crucial role in the functioning of the industry and the type of media artefacts produced. It is the similarity of such infrastructure that facilitates the work of a global industry in each location. Such infrastructure is also the basis upon which Vancouver and Paris compete against each other and thousands of other locations around the world as part of the global visual production sector.

It is crucial to recognize that the policy apparatus and service industry infrastructure plays an instrumental role not only in determining where production activities take place, but also what the content of the end products will be. For example, it is not a coincidence that a series of American films set in Paris – including *Bourne Identity*, *Le Divorce*, *The Pink Panther* and *The DaVinci Code* – have been produced since 2001 when the city established its film office. Industry and government representatives promote Paris to writers, producers and directors as a culturally “authentic” location. They understand that the country’s tourism status as the most-visited country in the world with 70 million visitors annually is intimately tied to how the city is represented and recognized on a global scale. There is an impetus to maintain the stories and myths of Paris in order to reproduce the city’s cultural status. In

many ways, the city's economy is underpinned by the strength of its visual consumption activities.

At the same time that Paris is using the visual production industries to bolster its international image, it is doing so using a toolkit developed by a much lesser known region. Vancouver pioneered many aspects of the location shoot and accompanying service industries throughout the 1980s as the city began to host significant amounts of US-produced film and television productions. In fact, if Paris is an excellent case study of how a city might use visual media to reinforce its cultural prestige on a global scale, a study of Vancouver is a "behind-the-scenes" look at a user's guide to the industry's functional aspects. Governments and their film commissions from around the world have used Vancouver as a model for developing their own policy apparatuses. As producers search to reduce costs amidst a media environment controlled by global conglomerates, location production has become the standard rather than the exception to industry operations.

These changes have brought about significant change for both the workers in the industries and the local populations that inhabit the cities in which such production takes place. Film workers in France have witnessed a dramatic change in their relationships with employers as their industry has melded into global production markets, away from the previously national definition of their sector. Many workers have found themselves with only occasional work, caught in a system of labour management that makes it virtually impossible to earn a living without some external support, such as government unemployment regimes. These social security plans have come under increasing scrutiny as government, industry and some unions have attempted to make changes to such plans in an effort to make them more economically sustainable. This has brought about significant tension between workers, employers, the government and unions, resulting in massive protests that have called into

question the nature of cultural policy, the cultural economy and the artist. In recent years, many of these workers have built alliances with workers from other industries, many of whom also live amidst employment insecurity. Out of this, a new movement of precarious workers has emerged to challenge basic economic assumptions of the contemporary service economy.

Vancouver film workers have played an active role in the creation of their industry through their unions, having started lobbying to encourage Hollywood producers to move north in the 1970s and 1980s. Through their unions, workers also approached government and advocated for policy initiatives that, among other things, saw the creation of the B.C. Film Commission and, later, the introduction of tax incentives. In fact, unions in the British Columbia film industry have played such a significant role in the creation and management of the film industry in the region that it has become difficult to distinguish whether they represent their worker members or the industry in general. This has led to conflict between the unions and their own members at some points. At the same time, the unions maintain a voice within the sector that is unprecedented amongst other labour groups in many regions.

Given the stature of visual production activities in Vancouver and the obvious presence of the location shoot in the daily lives of residents, the industry has represented a focal point for social conflict. Many residents view the industry with disdain, as Hollywood productions take over public and private spaces alike, disrupting daily life for many others. Some residents and institutions regularly rent their homes and buildings to film productions. Others create tension with the industry by demanding large fees for use of their property in films or by erecting unsightly signs in front of their homes to deter filming when a production moves into the neighbourhood. In one notable example, a local coalition of drug users attracted international attention when they demanded compensation from the industry

for lost income when addicts and prostitutes were displaced due to filming. In another instance, police confiscated an artist's work analyzing the place-obscuring tendency of the film industry. The exhibit consisted of gallery walls covered in plastic arrows, gleaned from lampposts and boulevards across the Lower Mainland, that are commonly used to direct film crews to location shoots. A local film-related business that rents arrows to productions suggested that the artist took the signs and thus constituted stolen property. After significant media attention, the artist returned the signs, but only after replacing them with photocopies of the signs.

This dissertation examines the interactions between cities and their populations with the visual production sector and its labour force in each of Vancouver and Paris from 1970 through 2005. There is an important relationship between the city and visual production that has marked the development of Western cities throughout modernity. This relationship has been heightened amidst the dissolution of manufacturing or otherwise industrial sectors in many locations. I argue that the concept of cultural capital is an important entry point to analyzing the development of economies in the post-industrial society. The development of cultural capital has become a defining activity for many governments, industries and societies as a strategy to attract certain types of productive activity in a global marketplace for production.

Vancouver and Paris are interesting case studies for such a project. The two cities have very different histories in regard to film. Paris claims the title of the birthplace of cinema and has maintained a strong national cinema through to the present day. An extensive public policy apparatus supports the industry. Vancouver, by comparison, has only hosted any meaningful level of film production since the early 1980s. The work Vancouver hosts is primarily US-based and the city is rarely used as itself in productions. Most often, it

is a stand-in for generic American locations. Very few of the policy initiatives that support Vancouver filmmaking are unique to the city. Nevertheless, unions, industry officials and government departments have managed to adopt the best of other models and take advantage of the key benefits companies find working in the region to attract industry activity surpassing \$1-billion annually. Both cities have taken extensive steps to develop and protect their cultural capital, one as a global city, the other aspiring to such a status. Regardless of the differences between the two cities, they are both part of the same trans-national image production industries and, in recent years, have come to face the same opportunities and challenges.

In approaching a study of these two cities and their focus on cultural capital, it must be noted that cultural capital cannot be understood apart from other traditional notions of economic and social capital. Rather, the concept addresses a gap in understandings of the dynamic tensions that underpin interactions between the economic, social and cultural sectors within a given society. Much research in the field of communication analyzing the film industry has done so from political economic or cultural perspectives. This has resulted in the division of the field into textual and economic analyses; the textual studies are generally viewed as “cultural” in nature while the economic analyses more often encompass factors such as policy, ownership in the sector and, occasionally, labour. In some instances, these divisions have been institutionalized. For example, the “cultural” analyses have become the domain of literature, film and cultural studies programs. Meanwhile communication departments have become the “conservative cousins” of the cultural realm, opting instead for traditional policy and economic approaches.

Missing from both of these realms of study is an understanding that each might provide context for the other. It is helpful to understand that the recent plethora of

American films featuring Paris as a setting is not a serendipitous result of the city's rediscovered cultural mystique by US artists. It is, rather, the product of an orchestrated international marketing and lobbying campaign financed by numerous levels of French government and industry attempting to generate economic activity within the sector. Likewise, an economic analysis of the film industry undertaking a study of how media ownership impacts the revenue objectives of Hollywood firms can certainly benefit from an understanding of how content of the cultural product is impacted by the allocation of economic resources within the sector. Some research acknowledges the importance of bridging this gap (see, for example, Lash & Urry, 1994; Shiel & Fitzmaurice, 2001). Communication research is in an advantageous position to be able to take advantage of the realms of cultural, economic and social research. The field has a foot in each area, although these research trajectories are rarely studied together.

This project attempts to link the cultural, social and economic areas in examining the relationship between cinema and the city. Cinema and the city have enjoyed a romanticized relationship in the history of modernity. Cinema is often viewed as the first modern medium able to capture the movement and change of the urban environment. Likewise, the medium originated and has developed along with the modern city. In my examination I examine the contemporary relationship between the cinematic industry and two cities. In doing so I draw on work from a variety of fields that have taken up varying aspects of film, labour and urban research. In particular, work in the fields of geography and urban studies and communication have approached various facets of cinema's relationship to labour organizations as well as location and spatial tendencies in relation to economic phenomena. I review this work in Chapter 1, outlining key debates in and between fields. This analysis focuses specifically on discussions around theories of socio-economic change occurring in

the early 1970s. Concepts associated with such change and relevant to my discussion are flexible specialization, information society and entrepreneurial labour. In the second half of the chapter I review literature that takes a cultural approach to examining the relationship between cinema, space and spatial design. Much of this discussion is drawn from architectural writing, but leads into discussions within film studies regarding the nature of visuality and perception in modern society. These discussions are particularly important to understanding the relationship between economic research on production and the cultural writing on consumption of media artefacts. From this literature review I identify the research gaps I am attempting to address through this project. The first gap is a theoretical framework that bridges political economic and cultural analysis in the field of communication which accounts for notions of space and labour. Second, I address labour within each city's visual production industry and how it relates to other political and economic factors in each location.

The second chapter addresses the theoretical trajectories I employ in the dissertation. In starting, I address work by geographer David Harvey and urban theorist Edward Soja that, from the 1970s to the 1990s served to “spatialize” the social sciences within a critical framework. I argue that their work, significantly based upon Henri Lefebvre’s writings on space, is important in establishing space as an important element in contemporary social thought. This is important given the priority placed upon time across much of the social sciences, including the field of communication. Both Soja and Harvey apply their spatial thought to understanding how urbanization is a key logic of the organization of production. In particular, the development of the entrepreneurial city has become a primary consideration in governance and, thus, policy discussions at local, national and international levels. I also incorporate a theory of human perception that relates to how spaces are

constituted through human experience and action. To do this I turn to the work of Hannah Arendt and her discussions of human experience which form the basis for a theory of phenomenology. From this I turn to Carey's comparison of transmission and ritual models of communication. While the entrepreneurial city generally understands urban space in a functional model of transmission communications, I argue that the adoption of critical spatial theory within a ritual model of communication begins to illustrate the potential for understanding the city's role in developing a theory of resistance. At the same time, drawing from work that discusses the cultural positioning of Paris and Vancouver, I point out that symbolic capital accumulated around a place acts to obscure social relations. In light of this observation, I suggest that the strength of labour movements have been rooted in recognizing their role in the creation and maintenance of symbolic capital. How labour decides to position itself in relation to the symbolic capital of places of accumulation is the crux of my investigations in this dissertation.

I then move my analysis to the two case studies of Paris and Vancouver. Chapter 3 takes up a political economy of the two locations and the visual production industries within each. This political economic investigation places urbanism at the centre of analysis of the visual cultural economy. It moves into the cultural realm through an engagement of cultural capital as a focus for valorizing visual production in each city. The discussion positions each of Paris and Vancouver in relation to each other throughout the period of study in understanding how the two cities have come to operate within the same global image production markets. For example, when the Ile-de-France region around Paris established a Film Commission in 2004, they did so largely based upon an industry model fashioned in British Columbia over the previous 32 years, but with a twist. While BC markets its locations as stand-ins for many North American cities, Paris presented itself as the only authentic Paris

– the subject of many artists' dreams and accomplishments. Despite using comparable marketing agencies, the origins of the two locations' film industries are far from similar. Through an analysis of the bodies of governance in the two cities' film industries since 1970 and the resulting cultural policies, I argue that urban policy has played an important part in the industry's development. This includes the rise of major public works projects, the liberalization of tourism and cultural trade. I link the political economy of the urban site with the global cultural sector's production through an analysis of global policy shifts over this time. The interface between the corporation – the traditional object of analysis for political economy of communication – and the local site of production is an important aspect to theorize given contemporary trends in cultural production – particularly when the site of cultural production is also the site of consumption. But to better understand this interface, an understanding of labour is essential.

Chapter Four takes up the role of labour in developing the film industries in Vancouver and Paris. When Vancouver film unions began trade missions to Los Angeles to lure away foreign production in the 1980s, they began a trend now termed as "entrepreneurial labour." By 2000, foreign location production increased the pressures on the French cultural sector to increase labour flexibility and to reduce the social safety net protecting the workforce. In 2004, cultural workers staged a series of unprecedented strikes, effectively shutting down the cultural sector across France during its busiest season. Workers recognized that in order to have their concerns addressed, their industry might have to feel some economic repercussions. In the process, French workers redefined their status away from cultural professions and instead started calling themselves precarious and intermittent workers. This chapter examines how labour organizations in Paris and Vancouver defined the nature of their labour functions in the international image production sector. From this,

I argue that each labour movement has come to recognize its role in larger political economic and policy processes. This involves a keen awareness of their urban spatial environments – the authenticity and cultural capital of their cities – and the importance of the agglomeration economy to the well-being of the market and the state. As such, the labour movements have expanded beyond traditional sector roles to encompass larger political and economic purposes.

The final chapter moves beyond the visual production sectors to look at how the industry has impacted and become part of the lives of communities within the regions where they operate. This chapter ties together conceptions of labour, urban environments and image economies to examine how the residents of places understand the communicative value of their lived spaces. How space is recognized as having, to use Carey's (1988) terms, ritual or transmission functions is key to developing cultural and political economic understandings of the city's role in visual media studies. Two case studies demonstrate some of the ways cinema and the visual production sectors have become part of a larger social milieux of each location. First, in 2002 Vancouver prostitutes and drug addicts demanded compensation for lost profits due to film activity or for being shot as extras instead of hiring professional actors. The world took notice. If labour unions might recognize the importance of their role to the image market, surely their acts of resistance or, likewise, facilitation are not limited to the confines of industry categories. In the second case study I examine how the mobilization and strike actions of French cultural workers have led to larger alliances with unskilled workers in other sectors. By dropping reference to their sector and instead referring to themselves as intermittent and precarious workers, this movement began to develop alliances with unskilled workers across the service sector. This lead to worker mobilization and strikes at McDonald's restaurants and Virgin MegaStores, among others.

These strikes had an impact. When the voices of disenfranchised workers converged with the media skills of a cultural workforce, many workers found a new power through solidarity and mobilizations. The use of media and the urban environment in both of these examples provide lessons for progressive political movements in Europe and North America alike and lead to notions of labour that go beyond traditional workplace unionism. Movements such as these begin to merge social activism across society with the well-being of skilled and unskilled, employed and unemployed workers alike.

## Chapter 1

### Defining visual terrains of production: Cinema and the city in contemporary writing

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*The painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web.*

- Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*

Walter Benjamin's treatment of film and, more specifically, the "work of art" during the medium's commercial development is, perhaps, one of the most-referenced starting points for examining visual production in the modern age. The implications of this assertion are not insignificant. Benjamin outlined a predominant concern with realism in cultural production that has troubled, if not preoccupied, cultural discussions of cinema. But the implications of the medium within the reality of the experienced world might be overstated. What Benjamin

identified as unique to the medium of film has, in recent writing, been demonstrated as part of a much larger and longer confinement of visual perception into modes and patterns of sight. And throughout this history, the sites of visual production have remained crucial to establishing a context to understanding the relations between a medium's historical development and its status as a product of social mediations.

This chapter provides a review of research and writing done on the film industry in general and, more specifically, the relationship between film and the city. The work addressed in this review is not defined by a particular field of study or academic discipline. In fact, work on film and cinema from within Communication or Media studies is limited. Further, the body of literature from which I am drawing extends beyond the fields of Film Studies. Rather, this review takes a broad approach to assembling work on cinema and the city by drawing from a diverse set of disciplines, including geography, sociology, labour relations, cultural studies and international relations. In many regards, an overview of this nature constitutes odd bedfellows, wherein the various works constitute no dialogue amongst one another, nor are they necessarily even aware of each other's existence.

As a result, this chapter takes the structure of the initial categories into which I organized materials, based on disciplinary, thematic and conceptual discussions. In the first section, I outline the manner in which the film industry has been used as a case study within discussions of capitalist development. In particular, this encompasses debates over flexible specialization and whether or not a definite disjuncture exists between industrial means of production and post-industrial organization of capitalism. This work focuses specifically on the importance of geography and place to the film industry, particularly since the 1970s. I relate this discussion to communication discussions regarding cultural production and theories of modern and post-modern socio-economic organization.

In the second part of this chapter I turn to cultural writing on film and the city, contextualized by a rise in research and theorizing of visual communication. This section attempts to trace a lineage through the work that developed around cinema and the city throughout the 1980s and 1990s, highlighting the particular attention paid to space in literature, particularly from architectural and cultural studies writing. I conclude this section by pointing toward work that attempts to bridge the cultural and sociological realms of study around cinema and the city. Throughout both sections I attempt to highlight work that specifically addresses cinema as it relates to either Paris or Vancouver.

In concluding the chapter, I critique the work on cinema and the city, both from political economic and cultural perspectives. I base my critique on three primary points. First, very little of the work on cinema and the city, whether from sociological, economic or cultural fields, addresses the functions of social ritual in the creation and use of media. Second, the work reviewed generally views space as an abstraction and place as a novelty. In both instances, spatial analysis is not a primary concern and remains obscure in much of the work. Finally, the interaction between productive processes and cultural phenomena remain separate. Despite recent attempts to bridge social and cultural fields, there remains significant work to be done in developing a framework for understanding visual communication and the city that adequately accounts for the important interrelations between the social, political economic and cultural realms of analysis.

### **“Flexible specialization” and the question of capitalist development**

In the mid-1980s the film and television industries became the subject of research around post-Fordist production. This work suggests that the Fordist model of production was characterized by vertical integration, standardization of mass production and centralized

coordination by dominant firms through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast, theories of post-Fordism propose that systems of production and, in turn, capitalism have undergone a significant transition, if not a rupture, from the Fordist model of mass-production. Replacing the Fordist model, proponents argue, is a “flexible” model of production. In a flexible model, production no longer relies on mass production of similar goods. Rather, small firms specialize in particular types of products for niche markets. Productive functions are carried out by a variety of firms who may be engaged by a series of other coordinating firms, many of whom are actually competitors. In this model, its proponents suggest, firms maintain the ability to respond to market changes quickly and rely heavily on “transaction rich” forms of exchange within close proximity to each other. As a result, the thesis argues that firms are characterized by “flexible specialization” due to their adaptable yet focused nature of service provision or manufacturing. This characterized a larger economic context some writers termed “disorganized capitalism” because of the self-organizing nature of production in the absence of vertically-integrated firms.

Both initial and more recent work identifying post-Fordist qualities of the film industry has contained a distinct spatial logic (Christopherson and Storper 1986; Storper 1987; Scott 1996, 2000). The film industry is a prime example, these writers argue, of a vertically disintegrated industry where, following structural crises in the 1960s and 1970s, networks of smaller independent production firms have arisen in artisan-type models that now rival the old, rigid film studios. Christopherson and Storper (1986) first established the framework for discussions around film and flexible specialization. They suggest that, in fact, the film industry’s original structure was similar to the “craft-production” model of theatre and that the early companies were “small-scale technological innovators,” (306). This structure did not last for long, however, due to the financing arrangements that defined film

as an economic activity rather than an art (306). Companies arose to produce films *en masse* while rationalized production methods were consolidated with distribution channels through the studios. Craft professions were small components in the studio system and through the 1930s unions took hold the task of organizing labour. In this system, markets were secure due to assured distribution channels in vertically integrated companies and risk was, as a result, low. The Fordist or industrial system of production was thus established in the American film industry.

Change in the industry came about in the post-war period with the rise of television and the fall of studio control over theatre chains. Entertainment began to move from the public downtown theatres to the private suburban homes of North American audiences. Meanwhile, the 1948 “Paramount Decision” forced the studios to relinquish their control of theatres, thus reducing their guaranteed distribution channels and contributing to vertical disintegration. In the years following this decision, studios reduced their production in terms of actual number of films shot and differentiated their product from television by offering the spectacle of size, colour and sound only available in theatres (309). Employees began to work on contract for individual film productions rather than through exclusive, ongoing obligations to a studio. Work in Hollywood’s production activities declined. Amidst this, the 1960s saw early movement to filming in foreign locations as Hollywood attempted to appeal to a larger global audience through films with broader appeal (309). By the 1960s, Christopherson and Storper suggest, the studios were scrambling for market stability as foreign sales increased as a percentage of total income while product diversification led to the production of made-for-television films for sale to networks (310). Location production offered the opportunity for studios to reduce costs and increase the diversity of their products’ aesthetics.

Throughout this post-war period studios increasingly contracted out work to independent producers in an effort to reduce costs (311). The 1960s witnessed a significant divestment of real estate property by the studios. Property that did remain in their holdings was managed on “profit centre” bases, lending to income through rentals to third-party or independent producers (310). Vertical disintegration continued through the 1970s bringing about a phenomenon Christopherson and Storper point to as a growing ability of independent producers to rival the studios in terms of numbers of feature films produced (311). By the early 1980s, the Los Angeles film industry had transformed from the pre-war studio system to a dispersed network of specialized firms that had come to comprise the service industry (311). Most important about this structure was that it allowed the studios to effectively disperse the risk of production to smaller, independent contractors while shifting production geographies depending on the advantages offered in different locations at any given point, whether these were aesthetic, economic or logistical.

Christopherson and Storper point out that the restructuring of the industry has left definable spatial manifestations that differ from earlier patterns. Although the industry dispersed outside of California in the 1960s (315), the industry resettled in the Los Angeles area through the 1970s. But this movement back to the area has brought about a distinctly different regional dynamic to the industry: “businesses and the work force have reconcentrated in the Los Angeles region, but shooting has taken on a widely dispersed pattern,” (316). Indeed, the authors point out, a disproportionate number of subcontracting firms (65 percent) were located in Hollywood by 1984, but only 13 percent of the region’s soundstage capacity was located in the same area (316). The reverse pattern was true for regions as analysis moved away from the Hollywood core. These firms depended on the agglomeration within a tight geographic area for the ongoing success of their operations.

This was due largely to the necessity of close interpersonal networks that carried individuals and small firms from one project to the next. Further, the need to deal with risk and uncertainty within a specific industry was the impetus for specialized firms to offer services across a number of entertainment sectors, including film, television and music recording. Workers in this setting were increasingly responsible for organizing their own employment. Given their reliance on individual contacts and the industry's reliance on flexibility of employment relations, most workers operated through their own networks rather than through "an open labor market," (317). When a specific industry does take a negative economic turn, specialized skills are transferable into other sectors' service industries. As a result, Christopherson and Storper argue, "In many respects, the strong social network of the motion picture industry resembles aspects of craft communities in cities in early industrial Europe and the 19th century United States," (317).

The resemblance to craft communities is more apparent in social networks than in the organization of production. Christopherson and Storper highlight that the initial creative end of production requires this transaction-intense network, but after essential elements are secured, including financing and a creative staff, "the level of specialized external transactions drops" and then "transactions principally take the form of retail purchases," (318). As a result, cost dictates and production may take place outside the immediate proximity of administrative and financial transactions. In a larger structural sense, studios become financiers, directing money at potentially profitable projects that go beyond the realm of film, but include entertainment parks, a range of media holdings, and in an increasing number of cases, completely unrelated industries. Meanwhile, independents increasingly make up the bulk of production firms on these projects and the flexibility of production locations allows for circumventing geographically-restricted labour agreements.

and legislation. At the same time, realism has become an aesthetic norm in the industry, allowing studios to film on location without startling audiences' expectations for big-screen in-studio productions. As a result, location production has brought about new production structures and spatial formations as well as audience tastes around consumption. Ultimately, Christopherson and Storper argue that the use of independent subcontractors has cultivated a highly skilled pool of talent, networks and finance that has allowed independent filmmakers to rival the traditional studio conglomerates (Christopherson and Storper 1986).

While Christopherson and Storper track the significant changes in the American film industry throughout the post-war period, their work relies on a line of sociological theory made prominent by Piore and Sabel's 1984 research on the Italian craft industries. Specifically, this work argues that there are distinct and notable temporal disjunctions in industrial development and, ultimately, in the development of capitalism. They argue that Fordism was one element of industrial development, but more recent research indicates another break in development that moves industrial activity into a new paradigm of organization. Storper (1989) provides a more thorough example as to how this rationale supports his research into the film industry:

. . . the institutions that once held the Fordist system together – stabilizing demand at high levels and with a high level of intertemporal certainty – have been broken down by the shocks suffered in the capitalist economies starting with the late 1960s. Principal among these is the breakdown of international macroeconomic coordination under American dominance. It is argued by a number of people – from both historical and game-theoretic perspectives – that it is unlikely that internationally-coordinated Keynesian macroeconomic stabilisation can be implemented and thus bring back Fordism. There is no single dominant power to provide the central coordination such a system would require. If one accepts this premise, it follows that flexible specialization – along with flexible mass production – is one of the few workable possibilities at the level of production organisation to the current state of 'disorganized capitalism'. (275).

The implications of these assertions are significant. While there is significant discussion within any number of fields as to the contemporary control and disbursements of capital and

productive functions, whether there has been a definitive break in capitalist development remains a contentious issue. More important to this discussion is whether the film industry can be taken as the exemplary model or even pioneering structure for all industrial development of the post-war period. This is where subsequent voices have tended to focus their dissent. It is off Christopherson and Storper's work that I base much of the discussion and critique in the next section of this chapter.

### **Information, communication and social organization**

Capitalist development is a central theme to political economic work in communication. In particular, communication-related research is often a focal point in debates as to the state of socio-economic development and the possible existence of temporal and material ruptures or disjunctions around what might be termed the "information society." In fact, the film industry tends to be one example of a variety of media examined in the line of research around capitalist development. Mosco (1996) points out that political economic analysis of the film industry falls into two primary discussions, precisely focusing on the issue of socio-economic changes. On the one hand, the industry is used to demonstrate a structural transformation and subsequent break in the history of capitalist development, most commonly referred to as post-Fordism (109). On the other hand, a structural transformation within the industry is acknowledged, but writers refute the argument that capitalist development has experienced a break in process. In light of this division within the field, before arriving at work specifically taking up the film industry, in general, and Christopherson and Storper's work, in particular, a preliminary overview of broader literature in the field of communication is instructive.

Promotion of the disjunction theory as it relates to contemporary debates around information societies and digital culture originates from two primary writers. The first writer, Daniel Bell, proposed that the widespread emergence and application of computer and telecommunication technologies represent a distinct technological revolution (1989: 165). This revolution, in Western society, is only comparable in scale with the earlier technological revolutions of steam power and, subsequently, electricity and chemistry. As a result, the activities of this “postindustrial” period revolve around “processing, control and information,” (168). In other words, postindustrial society is characterized by service provision as manufacturing declines and communication assumes the primacy in society previously occupied by transportation and energy networks of previous times. In light of these changes, capitalism, Bell argues, is undergoing a significant transition in its processes and operations.

In addition to Bell’s work, the information revolution was popularized in the work of Marshall McLuhan. In his work (1962, 1964), McLuhan argued that the communication environment, as found in the electronic media being developed, has a crucial impact upon the reorganization of human perception (Carey 1967: 15). Influenced by fellow Canadian writer Harold Innis’ work on the central role of communication media changes in the flux of empire, McLuhan’s work points toward a radical social reorganization based on rapid sensory changes related to the emergence of new electronic media. The deterministic nature of McLuhan’s media theories attract significant critique. His work has been influential in setting a research agenda in North American studies and the establishment of communication departments within universities the continent.

The disjuncture thesis has remained popular in contemporary discussions, largely as the result of sociologist Manuel Castells' focus on "network society," (1996). Castells points to his premise in the opening lines of his writing:

My starting point, and I am not alone in this assumption, is that at the end of the twentieth century, we are living through one of these rare intervals in history. An interval characterized by the transformation of our 'material culture' by the works of a new technological paradigm organized around information technologies. (1996: 29)

Evidence for this claim is not simply found in the "things" used by societies, but in the manner by which new technologies become indistinguishable from the "fabric" that constitutes human relations and activity (31). Based on neo-Schumpeterian economic models of innovation, Castells' theory of the information revolution posits that current changes are significant due to the ability to apply knowledge back upon "knowledge generation and information processing/communication devices," (32). This argument's power rests in the force and speed such a process must take in order to be effective: the production of information is continuously accelerated due to the application of the product back upon its own production process. Reflexivity, as a characteristic of modern society, is accelerated in a network society where information becomes the primary commodity. The cumulative momentum of innovation in this model would, in theory, be difficult to obstruct without a full-scale collapse of society.

Disjuncture theories face significant critique by a range of authors concerned with information and communication. Webster (1994) suggests that theories of postindustrialism are similar in the disjuncture underpinnings shared by theorists of postmodernity, flexible specialization and the control revolution (2). Oppositional schools of thought positing a continuity theory of social development include neo-Marxism, regulation theory, flexible accumulation and the public sphere (2). Webster identifies the difference between the two broad areas of thought as how information is conceived. In particular, Webster suggests,

disjuncture theorists often ignore “a notion of information having a semantic content,” (19).

Disjuncture theorists attempt to quantify information, suggesting that there is more information circulating through more and faster channels. Continuity theorists argue that information exists, regardless of how it is recognized or categorized by humans.

Indeed, information as a conceptual problem, rather than information as a qualitative element of human interaction, has become a driving force behind economic assessments relating to the field of communication. Post-war economic theory, particularly in the work of Arrow (1979) and Hayek (1945) highlighted the conceptual problems information posed to economic theory. In recognizing the potential commercial benefit to being able to commodify information, significant portions of economic theory came to focus on the information “problem”; that is, how can information be commodified and represented in economic theory when it cannot be consumed and used up in the same manner as traditional manufactured items, and the value of information cannot be assessed by the capital invested into its reproduction (Babe 1994). In fact, while information generally has insignificant costs of reproduction, the value of much information increases as it is disseminated publicly. As such, information more readily fits with an economic definition of a public good than a commodity.<sup>1</sup>

Continuity theorists providing alternative understandings to the disjuncture line of inquiry have tended toward models that describe social change as a long-term process that is often in opposition to structural transformations. Mansell and Silverstone (1996), writing

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<sup>1</sup> This definition of a public good would encompass the characteristics of non-rival and non-excludable; the use of the good does not detract from the use by others and individuals cannot be excluded from consumption of the good. In actual practice, information has been commodified. But, as Babe points out, it generally costs more to exclude individuals from the use of information than it would to allow open access. As such, public goods are social constructions rather than natural occurrences with distinguishing properties from commodities. Moving away from economic definitions of public goods, it is more worthwhile to consider the public benefit of goods. In this regard, the open access to information provides a public benefit to society based on the principals of collaboration and cooperation – both of which remain possible within the context of competition.

from a liberal political economic perspective, refer to an innovation process of information development that accounts for the control of communication infrastructure within a complex series of social relations. As such, technology is not the product of an accelerating, independent economic process or force, but a socially-constructed artefact produced out of the competing tensions between structure and agency (17). Other work extends this analysis to demonstrate how content in its most basic forms of code – software (Lessig, 1999) and genetics (Boyle, 1996) – have become economic preoccupations for regulators, markets and civil society alike. As such, this literature does not take information as its primary source of concern. Rather, the authors examine the social processes that create, recognize and constitute information.

Many Marxist writers also propose a continuum of capitalist development. Mattelart (1994) demonstrates the underlying mythical currents of war, progress and culture in the development of communication networks. In his analysis, transportation, electricity and information are not separate epochs of industrial organization, but intimately connected and inter-reliant elements of empirical development across time and space. Mosco (1996) also proposes a continuum theory of historical development in his adoption of the concept of structuration, or the “process by which structures are constituted out of human agency, even as they provide the very ‘medium’ of that constitution,” (212) as a key entry point into the study of communication within a political economy framework. Human agents – the locus of social change – must contend with the physical, social and cultural parameters established over time, but for which no one individual or group is responsible. The complexity of social change must, as a result, be viewed not as an immediate occurrence, nor as a technologically defined process. Rather, it is a socially negotiated struggle for control. Technologies resulting

from such processes will have marks of these struggles engrained in their design and prescribed uses.

#### *Flexible specialization and the question of capitalism's organization*

Returning to a more specific discussion of the film industry and the flexible specialization thesis proposed by Christopherson and Storper, one key piece of work stands out in defining the difference of opinions on the topic of film within the organization of capitalism. Aksoy and Robins (1992) take specific aim at the flexible specialization thesis. The authors assert that while changes have taken place in the Hollywood film industry's activities and organization, the flexible specialization thesis is a problematic model for understanding these phenomena. This is important, in part, because the flexible specialization thesis has become the predominant mode of researching, categorizing and explaining the film industry as well as any number of other sectoral classifications (6). As a result, the underlying forces at play in a sector seemingly made up of small-scale, independent producers remains obscure. Aksoy and Robins thus argue that “oligopolistic control never ceased to be a distinguishing feature of Hollywood,” (6).

Aksoy and Robins critique the manner in which the proponents of the flexible specialization thesis suggest independent producers came to rival the Hollywood studios. Rather, they point to the fact that much of the work independent producers secured throughout the 1970s was the direct result of financing dependent on arrangements with production and distribution companies – that is, the major studios (8). While the corporate “majors” of the film industry were divesting themselves of some holdings, they were, in fact, attempting to distribute their risk loads by increasing their overall control across the cultural

industries (11). As a result, the corporate reorganization of the 1980s and 1990s, all rooted in the post-war developments, has brought about “the globalisation of Hollywood and its reshaping within the broader context of an *emerging image business*,” (11, emphasis added). By being able to control the market, the corporate logic is to minimize the otherwise volatile cultural industries by owning rights and distribution channels in as many forms of media possible. As a result, the image business is not so much the result of specialized craft workers transferring talent between sectors, but the convergence of multiple media forms through standardized storage, control of intellectual property rights and common distribution and exhibition platforms.<sup>2</sup>

It is the logic of control for the purpose of risk management within the cultural industries that dominates business decisions. The media company thus takes the form not so much as a rational decision-making body for the efficient allocation of resources and earning of profit, but as a “protective enclave” used to wield power against otherwise uncontrollable and otherwise irrational market activities. It is within this context that Aksoy and Robins suggest we must understand the firm. Moreover, the argument extends to highlight the fact that by focusing only on production, as Christopherson and Storper do, the more pertinent issues of risk driving the cultural industries are lost. The larger elements of risk that threaten the industry are the unpredictability of product success. While cutting production costs are one way of dealing with this problem, the industry players have tried “to expand and extend markets, and to control the critical ‘hubs’ of the film business,” (13). By divesting themselves of productive capacities through contractual agreements with “independent” producers,

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<sup>2</sup> The “problem” with the cultural industries is that, of course, control is constantly challenged on any number of fronts – particularly when the main commodity of the industry is information which is easily reproduced at little or no cost. By 2004, the film industry recognized piracy at the global level as such a significant threat that blockbuster films were launched on the same day globally in an effort to maximize opening-day box office receipts before pirated versions of the product were widely available. More recently, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox began threatening individual countries that release dates would be postponed if piracy was not brought under control. The first target of this strategy was Canada.

entertainment corporations were able to change their functions “from ‘monolithic factories’ into ‘conglomerate organisations,’” (Wasko 1982, quoted by Aksoy and Robins 14). In the end, Hollywood companies have been able to effectively manage risk through flexible management of an entire selection of production options, including the development of low-cost products made in cheaper, remote locations (15).

As Hollywood expands its power through market and resource control, there is increasingly less product differentiation defined by the media through which a cultural commodity may be consumed. By maintaining various sectoral modes of consumption, such as film or cinema, there is an appearance of differentiation and competition that is otherwise increasingly difficult to define. At the same time, the conglomerate Hollywood companies are positioning themselves within a broader global economy and marketplace. Location management is crucial to the industry that “has the scale and power to use the whole world as its stage” (19) and has already “subsumed national film industries and infrastructures” in many parts of the world (20). In the end, Aksoy and Robins agree with Christopherson and Storper that significant changes have taken place in the film and entertainment industries. The underpinning forces of these changes and the scope of analysis along with the recognized degree of malignancy the resulting industry structures have on a global scale are the points of disagreement.<sup>3</sup>

Aksoy and Robins’ discussion defines the opposing view to discussions of flexible specialization and the corporate structure of the cultural industries. Aksoy and Robins provide an in-depth and useful critique of geographical investigations from the 1980s. At the

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<sup>3</sup> Christopherson and Storper responded to Aksoy and Robins’ article in a 1993 comment, penned by Storper, in the *Cambridge Journal of Economics* (Storper, 1993). Storper argues that Aksoy and Robins overstate a number of their arguments. In particular, they argue that flexible specialization does not dictate “collaborative or consensual or trusting relations between firms” but that their research demonstrates an overall vertical disintegration of the film industry (481).

same time, Storper's response to their work (Storper, 1993) also served to air the differences between authors in regard to socio-economic disjuncture theories. The exchange served to highlight important changes in the film and image industries' production structures and geographic contours. Nonetheless, while Christopherson and Storper's initial articles may have overstated the role of flexible specialization in contemporary economies, Aksoy and Robins ignore an important element of the "image markets" – their pervasiveness in every other sector of contemporary society.

In this regard, subsequent research around the sector has distilled the essence of the image production industries and their overall importance to a broad swath of other sectors and, in turn, how the image markets intersect with various local economies. Lash and Urry (1994), for example, highlight the use of both flexible specialization theories and oligopolistic understandings of cultural production in relation to local economies of production and consumption. Meanwhile, the sociological literature around risk, particularly that of Ulrich Beck (1994), provided theoretical underpinning for trends toward corporate and state offloading of responsibility and risk through the systematic contracting out of productive capacities.

Most recently, North American research around the image production industries has taken up questions of production focused around spatial configurations as well corporate control and influence in the sector. Scott (2000, 2005) provides significant contextualization of the French and Los Angeles film industries within the larger socio-economic structures and pressures of the given societies as well as the geographic layout of the industries. His work thus focuses on "the production of commercialized cultural artefacts . . . in great global cities" (2000, p. 1). Scott highlights the competition for production between global cities. He suggests that the French film industry's challenge "is not just how to continue its resistance

to Hollywood, but also how to begin to claim back some of the latter's ever-expanding market domain," (2). This research is important in that it highlights a trend amongst global cities to market their cultural prestige on a transnational image production market, as will be discussed further in Chapter 3. But while Hollywood remains a formidable economic and cultural force for all countries, Scott diverts attention from two important elements of the industry. First, the most significant competition being waged in the film industry comes not from other global cities, but from smaller "backlot" cities performing the productive functions previously done in global cultural centres. Second, such a focus masks a fundamental reality within the industry: the restructuring of film production at a global level is resulting in dispersed productive centres coordinated by key industry coordinators, still generally located in "global cities." These global elite urban centres coordinate, but are also increasingly dependent upon other remote production locations. Scott's singular concern with global cities leaves little room for understanding the productive competition and inter-reliance between cities of varying global stature.

Scott's discussion tends to rely too heavily on the initial arguments of the flexible specialization thesis. Rather than engaging the possible consequences of this trend, the flexible specialization argument initially dismissed secondary production centres as economic by-products or coincidences. For example, Christopherson and Storper's assertion that after creative decisions are made in Hollywood, "the level of specialized external transactions drops" (1986: 318) is, in retrospect, shortsighted. Contemporary observers will realize that a number of offshore image production sector now boast dense networks of specialized transactions. For example, a number of authors to be discussed later (Coe, 2000a; Coe, 2000b; Coe, 2001; M. Gasher, 2002; M. Gasher, 1995; Goldsmith & O'Regan, 2005; Murphy, 1997; Tinic, 2005) have highlighted the importance of specialized external transactions

within the film industry in British Columbia. This research is crucial if an understanding of the film industry's appropriation, development and rejection by other populations in production locations is to be developed.

Within the transaction-rich environments that develop in production locations, local workforces inject their local subjectivity into a global market. In some cases this means the embedding of global signifiers and processes within a local context; in other situations, local subjectivities are re-embedded in the global products. In both instances, there are interactions between the local and the global, but also an increasing blur between the two as locations and their populations integrate their productive activities into a global market. Coe (Coe, 2000b) uses the British Columbia film industry as a case study for the purpose of understanding the film industry integrated “with conceptual concerns surrounding the embeddedness and indeed, embodiment, of processes operating ‘across’ a variety of geographic scales,” (392). The individuals and organizations working in the British Columbia film industry are not, Coe argues, independent of regional or international activities. Rather, they are intricately tied to the larger processes of production coordinated in other locations, namely southern California. These processes encourage some activities such as the filming of low-cost American film and television series, while they discourage other activities by way of resource monopolization, including local, indigenous production.

A body of work within political economic analysis addresses dependencies between the Canadian and American industries (Magder, 1993; Pendakur, 1990). The complexities of these relationships have been too often glossed in some political economic work, particularly at the expense of relating a geographic understanding of economic structures to cultural processes within and across the various geographies. Despite the integration of the spatial into work on the film industry in numerous fields, the theoretical development of this mode

of analysis has been virtually non-existent within the field of communication. For example, while Wasko's (1982; 1994) research on the film industry informed significant portions of Aksoy and Robins' later work, neither her earlier nor later (Wasko, 2003) work draws on a spatial assessment of the industry. This absence of spatial logic is highlighted in her more recent assertion that the political economy of communication "draws upon several disciplines – specifically history, economics, sociology, and political science," (2003: 9) but not geography. This absence is all the more striking given Mosco's proposal that "spatialization" – a term initially developed by Levebvre – constitutes a primary entry point into a discussion of the political economy of communication (1996: 173). Moreover, the very basis for examining the film industry writers such as Christopherson and Storper used – "If the locational trends observed in the motion picture industry are indicative of a general relationship between vertical disintegration and industrial location, then industrial restructuring in the form of flexible specialization could have profound impacts on patterns of urbanization in the coming decades," (306) – has been all but lost in some communication discourse. But given the power of the Hollywood system to relocate "almost at will to find its most ideal conditions," as Aksoy and Robins assert, "the film industries of abandoned regions or nations are left behind as casualties," (19). This, indeed, would be another "profound impact" on urbanization for which research must account.

As a result, the California/non-California creation and production divisions of the film industry are not either/or propositions. In this regard, some of the debate between flexible specialization and oligopoly theorists is overstated. The film industry has had, and continues to have, significant impacts upon the uses of space in cities outside of southern California. At the same time as filming is done in a multiplicity of locations around the world, the spatial organization in creative and command centres still warrants examination.

And this is where the two sides of the argument may find common ground. Christopherson and Storper argue: “The restructured motion picture industry has not only recentralized in the Los Angeles region, it has a different intraregional pattern than that of the major studios,” (1986: 316). And more recently, Wasko argues: “The flexible specialization argument also overlooks the considerable concentration of post-production in California. Even with growing post-production activities in Florida, Vancouver, and Toronto, an argument can be made that Hollywood is still a focal point for production planning, post-production and distribution,” (2003: 40). That the flexible specialization argument suggested a divestiture of power from traditional production locations is overstated in this debate.

While prolonged in its duration, the two sides in the flexible specialization versus oligopoly debate have constructed straw men to target their discussions, at least in regard to space. In fact, an understanding of space is crucial to this discussion, precisely because so much of the evidence of contemporary and historical capitalist development is found in spatial processes and subsequent remnants. By ignoring this evidence and arguing that the locational trends in the film industry remain insignificant in relation to California, Wasko risks shutting off a potentially valuable avenue for further research, not to mention theoretical understandings of ongoing processes. That changes have taken place in the film industry and, indeed, across the entire industrial production process, is evident. What is particularly problematic about closing the door to further examination of this trend – which is precisely what Wasko does by claiming flexible specialization as a sole focus on production at the expense of other sectoral facets – is that critical studies become handicapped by a lack of intellectual and material terrain on which to manoeuvre. Harvey (1989) cautions that the refusal by opponents of flexible specialization to admit to labour and production practices in the organization of capitalism is “dangerous” because “the facts

of deindustrialization and of plant relocation, of more flexible manning practices and labour markets, of automation and product innovation, stare most workers in the face," (191).

There remain significant power structures within the film industry and across the media in general. The power relations, however, are points of flux and change. One task of a political economic analysis of the industry should be to analyze how power relations are changing as well as how they are contested. Recent literature is taking this task to heart.

Working from a political economic perspective, Magder and Burston (2001) point out that the structural changes in the Hollywood film industry might now be better summarized as "virtual" integration rather than "vertical" integration. As production processes are contracted out, central studio firms have maintained their industrial power; despite vertical disintegration, the ongoing central control lends to a "virtual" integration of production. This strategy has brought about "a series of challenges that unions have to date been unable to meet effectively. . . . it hinders unions' capacities to negotiate effectively with so many new, affiliated, yet legally separate entities," (211). Christopherson (2005) notes that both the US government's decision not to enforce the *Paramount* decrees in the 1980s<sup>4</sup> and the removal of the Financial Syndication rules in 1995<sup>5</sup> brought about two series of acquisitions between television broadcasters and studios. This has left a handful of key media conglomerates whose various firms acquire services through outsourced contracts with "nominally independent entities," (30).

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<sup>4</sup> The US Supreme Court's *Paramount Decision* of 1948 divided production and distribution, disallowing studios from owning theatres and removing one link in the commodity chain of an otherwise vertically integrated industry. Further vertical disintegration occurred because of decreased revenue certainty, given that studios no longer had control of the exhibition of their products. This resulted in efforts by the studios to reduce costs through contracting out productions and taking advantages of lower costs by shooting on location while, at the same time, liquidating property assets in Hollywood proper.

<sup>5</sup> The Financial Syndication (Fin Syn) rules, put in place in the US by the Federal Communications Commission in 1970, attempted to limit vertical integration by stopping broadcast networks from setting up syndication branches and by reducing financial incentives for networks to produce their own content. This supported the existence of independent producers who, in turn, would be able to sell their product to the networks.

## **Linking production and consumption**

The attention now paid to the interrelation of production and consumption in relation to processes of vertical integration and disintegration highlights the need to analyze the image industry in a context larger than only the organization of production. To accomplish this, a number of writers have introduced theoretical frameworks that draw upon various fields, including cultural studies and international relations. This work is important for introducing new modes of analysis that serve to benefit political economic discussions by broadening the scope of study to include cultural components as well as a focus that contextualizes, rather than fixating on, production.

Lash and Urry (1994) argue that, with the exception of cinema, the cultural industries developed Fordist models of production later than other production sectors (113). Vertical integration began, for the most part, after World War II. Cinema, on the other hand, instituted Fordist production models earlier and films began the process of vertical disintegration in the post-war years. Lash and Urry allow that flexible specialization is valid in understanding the cultural industries in some productive capacities. For example, in regard to pre-production they explain, “The industry, at least in London and to a great extent in Hollywood too, should be viewed as a ‘transaction-rich nexus of individuals’ who also happen to be firms,” (115). This demonstrates a flexible production process in which the self-organizing capacities adapt more quickly and for lower costs than large firms to the specialized content requirements of markets. But they contextualize the production processes within the industry’s structural limitations. That is, “disintegrated (decentralized) production tends to be tied to an ever more concentrated and globalized distribution function,” (113) which tends to control the industry by virtue of financing powers. The

production, distribution and consumption process, they argue, is marked by an “aesthetic operation”. The aesthetic integration into social life arrives at a dual process where “aesthetic reflexivity” may lend to a phenomenon of “aesthetic-expressive individualization”, but also an “atomization of normalized, ‘niche-marketed’ consumers,” (113).

Hozic (2001) approaches the structure of the global film industry from the field of International Relations, employing commodity chain theory to explain relations across productive and consumption processes in the sector. She argues for understanding commodity chain theory’s ability to supersede “the rift between production and consumption by drawing our attention to the crucial role played by merchants and commercial capital in historical changes that have recast the relative strength of economic agents in commodity chains and led to the creation of a novel and alternative way of organizing international business,” (22). In taking this direction, Hozic suggests that any shift in production to flexible specialization might be overshadowed by the “process of industrial change” made evident through manufacturer/merchant conflicts. In this regard, the film industry’s significance is not that it is unique in its sector’s structure, but that it might be studied within a framework that allows for comparison with other sectors. As such, Hozic argues that “the contemporary process of industrial change in the American film industry could be and should be viewed as a historical process of resurgence and consolidation of merchant power in the American and global economies,” (22). In demonstrating this argument, Hozic’s study of the film industry is based on the premise that studies of Hollywood’s “places” – that is, real estate holdings and spaces of experiential consumption – provide the most visible demonstrations of sectoral transitions within the Hollywood “process”.

The value of Hozic's discussion lies in the explicit attempt to move beyond the production and flexible specialization dichotomy. She effectively demonstrates the changing geographic structures and productive processes of the Hollywood film industry over three periods of industrial development without claiming a radical break in capitalist production. As well, she begins to overcome divisions between the sectoral processes of production, distribution and exhibition by establishing the basis for understanding a dynamic relationship through all of these industry facets. This moves beyond consumer-demand theses of supply-and-demand, demonstrating the complex networks at play in the transaction-intense cultural industry of image production. Finally, Hozic provides a cultural approach to the industry in examining not only the relationships between markets, production processes and commodities, but also the socio-cultural characteristics of the products to emerge from the industry. She further elucidates the means by which the logic of the film industry is tied to the cultural artefacts by which it is driven and that it produces.

While Hozic provides one of the most developed, recent analyses of the film industry's spatial development, her work also underscores a significant absence that typifies much of the research on the image industries discussed to this point: the lack of attention to labour markets and processes is a striking absence. Overall, labour is an understudied area or even "blindspot" of communication research (Mosco, 1989; Mosco, 1996; Mosco & McKercher, 2006). Within studies of the film and image industries, labour is rarely studied, whether as a demographic body, a movement or a collective of subjectivities who define their identities in relation to the industry. Studies that do acknowledge labour tend to consider it as simply one variable – generally an economic variable – in the larger systems of production. This lends little agency to the concept. Nonetheless, a small body of research

has established some entry points into labour within the image industries. The next section reviews this work.

### *Labour and flexibility in the film industry*

Given the overview of flexible specialization literature related to the film industry as already discussed, it remains useful to keep the notion of “flexibility” in mind while discussing labour. In fact, while most post-Fordist literature dwells on the merits of flexible production systems, a more complete assessment from within labour research begins to highlight a number of the problems with this industrial model. Harvey (1990) proposes “flexible accumulation” as a response to post-Fordist literature on flexibility in the production process. Flexible accumulation points to the underlying motivations and strategies inherent in systems striving for flexibility. These include the response by firms and governments in advanced capitalist countries in the 1970s to changing global economic circumstances that brought about a crisis in accumulation largely due to rapid inflation, the oil crisis and the introduction of foreign competition in national (i.e. North American and European) markets. Labour is crucial to studies of flexible accumulation, given that labour became the primary variable in constructing flexible systems that allowed for greater accumulation. The dissolution of Keynesian economics and the welfare state was accompanied by the construction of a core-periphery labour market; a small core of executive management within firms made use of a periphery of workers engaged in a variety of contract, casual and outsourced functions with few or no benefits or opportunity for advancement. The impetus for workers was to be flexible, but not necessarily to partake in the benefits of flexibility enjoyed by the firms and their owners. As a result, the competing concepts of “flexibility”

provide starkly divergent visions of the contemporary workforce organization within the cultural industries. By providing labour with adequate attention, we will find that more useful conceptions of industrial organization, technological change and spatial dynamics may be developed.

Labour is recognized as a key component of the film industry's spatial configuration. As Aksoy and Robins point out, the Hollywood system has the power to relocate at the drop of a hat, thus "the film industries of abandoned regions or nations are left behind as casualties," (19). Transnational firms have access to vast pools of skilled labour around the world; given the significant impact below-the-line labour has on a project budget, there is an obvious advantage to searching the lowest cost scenarios when labourers with comparable skills are easily interchanged. As fickle industries relocate to better suit their profitability and production needs, the industry "casualties" in abandoned locations include a series of skilled workers. The mistake, however, is to understand such workforces as entirely reactionary. In fact, the dynamics of the film industry have been shaped by the proactive measures taken by workers in remote locations, many of whom now operate in competitive, entrepreneurial capacities.

This case is precisely the object of analysis in Murphy's (1997) research into the British Columbia motion picture industry. Murphy examines the Vancouver film industry's labour union efforts to attract production to their market through the 1980s and 1990s. He couches his discussion in Post-Fordist industrial organization literature centred on network formation (531). Work in this realm, he suggests, has focused upon three primary types of relations: intra-firm labour relations, inter-firm employer relations and sector-state relations (532). Murphy points to the lack of research attention paid to extra-firm labour activity in industrial network development. It is along the lines of exploring labour's role in industrial

extra-firm networks that Murphy bases his study of the British Columbia film industry and the role of entrepreneurial organized labour.

The lack of attention paid to the worker networks in the industries is a significant oversight. This gap obstructs an understanding of the interaction between spatial characteristics of production processes and the locational changes of the industry. By evidence of the extensive and intense networks developed by the labour groups in the BC industry, Murphy argues that “the key to success was the unions’ management of relations with other organized actors within the district . . . as well as with external actors – the other motion picture production districts with which it is associated,” (533). The key argument made in Murphy’s work is that the BC motion picture industry would not have grown to become a major remote production site for Hollywood had the professional labour unions not taken the initiative to attract the production to the region. It is because of this active involvement of labour unions in the industry’s development that Murphy terms the phenomenon “entrepreneurial labour,” (549).

Murphy’s work on entrepreneurial labour has become the key point of reference for labour analysis in the industry. And while this work is particularly instructive and compelling as a starting point to understanding the role of various forms of labour in the province’s industry, the theoretical categories he uses for his discussion are problematic. Murphy relies on the same Marshallian labour models developed by Piore and Sabel and adopted to the film industry by Christopehrson and Storper. In taking this perspective, Murphy dissociates the very real pressures larger economic structures had in responding to labour’s efforts to attract production to British Columbia. At the same time, Murphy aggregates the level of activity in the BC labour market away from the individual workers and onto the level of the

legally sanctioned trade union and guild. In doing so, Murphy's analysis obscures the individuality and oppositional voices within the industry's unions and guilds.

More recently, Coe has taken a similar Marshallian approach to theorizing the Vancouver film industry, but moves ahead in developing the complexity of the labour market's networks of interactions. In placing his work within the "local labour market literature", Coe (Coe, 2000a) argues that the labour market is local, but "constituted by external relationships and linkages," (79). Coe bases his discussion on Peck's assertion that "labour markets are formulated more locally," and that they "are social structures, both shaped by, and constitutive of, the particular social and institutional systems in which they are embedded," (80). The labour market is not as much defined by a geographic distinction as it is by "social processes operating in the social space of the labour system," (81). The fact that unions within local regions are able to negotiate their own contracts is a primary factor leading Coe to assert that "labour disputes have often been a defining factor in the competition that has developed for Hollywood's production dollars," (80). While government incentives through tax programs and funding programs are important to the attraction of American productions, the skill, stability and cost of the labour market is one of the deciding factors as to whether a production will relocate. The labour market is one of the only elements controlled at the local level and thus a crucial element for study within any industry.

The primary shortcoming in Coe's work is that he still falls back on traditional organized labour categories in assessing the labour market. In particular, he asserts that "workers tend to develop loyalty to their union or guild rather than any particular employer," (81) thus justifying the study of labour unions as a category representative of worker actions and sentiments. This is, in fact, inaccurate in light of the simple fact that many BC workers,

particularly those in crafts and trades, hold memberships in more than one film union simply to ensure their eligibility for work on a variety of projects. In the BC and French examples, many workers hold their unions in contempt and conduct activities outside union parameters. What this highlights is the fact that workers within the industry use a number of options available to organize themselves, often in spite of dominant economic, social and union structures. In addition, while local labour markets are crucial elements in attracting film work, other recent work reminds us that other factors such as studio infrastructure (Goldsmith & O'Regan, 2005) and government incentives (S. Christopherson, 2005; S. Christopherson, 2006) also play integral parts in structuring local markets within a competitive international level. As a result, these factors must be understood in relation to each other, as interdependent, enabling factors, not as separate or independent entities.

The overall lack of understanding of the relationships between labour, industry and government agencies is a common problem in research on the film industry. Pendakur's (1998) investigation of the BC film industry leads to the suspicion that labour unions and guilds in British Columbia were at some points put under industry pressure to allow significant concessions, while at other points actively conspiring with government agencies and the industry itself to develop business. In regard to the latter, Pendakur states, "One gets the impression from talking with various union leaders in B.C. that they strategically worked with the B.C. Film Commission to attract foreign producers," (1998: 233). As detailed by Murphy and re-affirmed by Coe, this is more than impression, but a fact of the industry's existence throughout the 1980s and 1990s. It was largely the result of organized trade missions and publicity work coordinated and executed by organized labour that the film service industry arrived in British Columbia and, moreover, that the provincial government decided to establish the BC Film Commission. Subsequently, other film unions in Canada

used the model set by BC workers, both in setting up locals in the province as well as organizing their own trade missions south.

Despite this oversight, Pendakur does accurately indicate that within this environment, production firms are able to pit workers of one region against the workers of other regions as they compete for the lowest wage offerings and the most flexible conditions of employment. As outlined above, however, the structural origins of this practice took shape not from the established industry's end, but in the self-organizing context of the labourers. Pendakur concludes by explaining that "workers are pitted against each other," (237), and in a full analysis of the film industry, workers have no more control over final production decisions in regard to location; they respond to global market changes by offering incentives through concessions, but the organization of decision-making apparatuses within the industry is based elsewhere. Nonetheless, the local-global interplay provides new opportunities for subsequent proactive initiatives by labour.

Tinic's (2005) study of the Vancouver film and television industry takes another approach to understanding the impacts of production activities within the city. She argues that the industry's presence in Vancouver has allowed for the creative development of an indigenous industry within the city. Individuals and firms benefit from the presence of international production in two ways. First, the industry provides training and the opportunity to develop networks of contacts. Both of these are beneficial for the development of future work opportunities and, as Tinic suggests, the opportunity for individuals to develop their own projects within the industry. Second, the industry provides financial stability. This comes by way of ongoing employment so individuals may remain active within the industry as well as in the form of investment as individuals search for future funders for their own projects.

While accurate to a point, Tinic's discussion obscures the notion of indigenous production and overstates the involvement of the local workforce within the creative context of the film and television production industry. Indigenous production in her study refers to any production developed by a local producer whether or not it is about or produced for local or domestic audiences. This includes generic productions developed for American and international audiences. Moreover, the producer represents one aspect of the production process; that is, the producer chooses a concept or storyline and assembles an appropriate package of talent to attract investment. Although local producers might accrue professional benefits from the presence of the visual production industry in Vancouver, there is no guarantee that their work is succeeding in the promotion and development of local stories, talent or resources. The lack of perspective beyond the role of the producer is a significant hole in Tinic's work.

Some work has been done to address labour in the film industry specifically. Miller, Govil, McMurria and Maxwell (T. Miller, Govil, McMurria, & Maxwell, 2001). Specifically examining what the authors call the “new international division of cultural labour”, this work examines the competitiveness required of workforces in order to attract cultural production to a specific area. In their discussion, the authors highlight that Hollywood does not operate according to the principles of a free market because there is little opportunity for new firms to enter the market, there is little relationship between the cost of consumption and the cost of production, the industry is highly subsidized by governments and there is little diversity in product (p. 45-6). As a result, the authors argue that Hollywood's hegemony is based on the exploitation of workers through a global division of cultural labour that forces workers in different regions to compete against each other.

Thus, the varying workforces are shown to be contending with complex global systems within their own unique local environments. Once again, in understanding conceptualizations of labour, it is valuable to return to a general discussion of flexibility in the workforce. As will be shown below, we will begin to bridge North American writing on the political economy of the film industry with work produced in Europe. In this regard, of foremost concern in discussions of flexibility in production processes is the tacit, euphemistic nature of the term. Work on flexible specialization, particularly that of Christopherson and Storper (1986), emphasizes beneficial traits of flexibility in relation to the workforce. Flexibility generally denotes positive attributes within an industry of artisans who have control over their productive capacities and the products of their labour. Management and organizational researchers have adopted this terminology to describe any number of processes.

### *Flexibility as oppression of labour*

Harvey (1989) established the groundwork for a critique of flexibility in capitalist development. His discussion encompasses an understanding of capitalist development in using the term “flexible accumulation” to describe political economic developments since the early 1970s. The post-war period saw significant economic growth of national economies in Europe and North America. As the 1970s began, however, Western capitalism experienced a significant crunch. Foreign imports began to take market share away from domestic manufacturers. This was particularly the case with Japan, which was beginning to demonstrate its economic potential in the decades following the country’s post-war re-building. At the same time as manufactured imports became more common, oil prices

skyrocketed, shocking markets worldwide and demonstrating a reliance on a vulnerable fuel supply. Finally, the results of social unrest became startlingly clear as entire city centres in the US hollowed out. Manufacturers closed factories that were outdated or that could not compete with foreign production. Entire cities, including New York, were on the verge of bankruptcy as tax revenues plummeted as the traditional property tax base disintegrated.

The 1970s thus introduced a crisis for capitalism. Rising energy costs, the inability to capitalize investments in real property such as outdated and abandoned property and competition from new global exporters disrupted the domestic markets in North America. Within this environment there became a need for cost variables that could be reduced. Given the constraints on costs beyond the control of companies, one cost variable that could be adjusted was labour. To this point, workers enjoyed the benefits of the strong post-war economy through stable jobs with generous company benefits and a developed social safety net established by the welfare state. Labour unions, in compliance with dominant market hegemonies since McCarthyism in the 1950s, ensured workers and employers in the manufacturing sector stability. Unions were comfortable and part of the established market system. The benefits enjoyed by workers and the obligations of employers to workers through permanent employment arrangements, including collective agreements, were deemed unaffordable in many sectors. By demanding more flexibility from the workforce companies could reduce costs. This meant more than simply adjusting current labour agreements. Rather, entire new flexible labour markets became part of the employment landscape.

Amidst the collapse of the manufacturing sector, a shift toward financial services was emerging. Insurance and banking services were increasingly central to core economic activities in terms of employment and market activity. These sectors, in particular, brought

with them a new realm of employment relationships. Temporary employment agencies emerged to coordinate some secretarial and administrative labour pools. Janitorial workers would be employed on casual bases or through contracting out the work to other agencies. Casual employment arrangements and fewer full-time employees to which employers held long-term obligations brought about significant amounts of the desired labour “flexibility” desired in the market. Workers began to assume more risk around their employment as companies distanced themselves from previous long-term obligations. In these arrangements, the structure of labour arrangements began to take on what Harvey calls a core/periphery form of organization. Key decision-makers would constitute the core or centre of the labour market, enjoying the greatest security and benefits. Close to the core would be managers and workers in high-skilled positions who would be otherwise sought-after talent in the labour market. These positions would enjoy significant stability. The periphery of the labour arrangement would include a variety of administrative positions and labourers, many of who worked on contract or through other temporary work agencies, with few or no benefits and little long-term employment security. The “flexibility” that emerged in the labour market was thus much more to the advantage of employers. Harvey thus suggests that the new regimes of offshore production and labour control established during the economic shifts of the 1970s are better described as regimes of flexible accumulation. Flexibility in labour markets, production locales and input sourcing, among other factors, characterized the new drive to accumulation in Western capitalist markets. Flexibility was, at best, a euphemism for new regimes of control within labour management.

Vosko (1998) elaborates on the nature of flexibility conceptualized in employment systems over the past three decades. She points to human resources theory developed by John Atkinson (1984, cited in Vosko: 125) that categorizes different types of flexibility.

These range from “numerical flexibility” wherein firms use temporary employment measures to adjust to rapidly changing production needs, to “functional flexibility” where a few workers perform numerous tasks across the organization (126). Other “flexible” techniques include maintaining distance between labourers through the subcontracting of tasks and “pay flexibility” that provides significant pay differences between various workers (126). Vosko points out that such practices often lead to a system that requires maximum flexibility from workers for the benefit of maximum flexibility of the firm. Responsibility of the firm for its workforce is minimized while risk is transferred to the individual employees. As such, labour flexibility is often understood as “demarcating a complex material and ideological strategy that has strong prescriptive elements,” (126). In more practical terms, the quest for flexibility is often a gloss for the attempts to liberalize labour regulations for the benefit of the firm, not the worker.

A further branch of Marxian studies takes the critique of post-Fordist literature further. Dyer-Witheford (1999) proposes another means of reading the post-Fordism debate within the communication industries. Dyer-Witheford points directly to the mid-1980s work of Piore and Sabel, explaining that these writers are “fascinated by the prospects of escaping the alienation of modern capitalism by return to small-scale, cooperative, artisanal production. For these theorists, the disintegration of Fordism amounts to a moment equivalent in importance to the first industrial revolution,” (56). The result of this work was, Dyer-Witheford explains, a rapid academic output of research applying Piore and Sabel’s work to every industry and discipline. The attraction to this line of thought was that it allowed an entry point to a discussion of technology without having to employ a domination theory of technology (57).

But the outpouring of euphoria was, if anything, premature. The Post-Fordist thesis too easily ignored the core-periphery phenomenon of the workplace where firms employed a few full-time salaried workers while maintaining a periphery of temporary, contract workers. And specific to the role of communication in the restructured firm, Dyer-Witheford explains,

. . . many theorists of post-Fordism are remarkably silent about the way automation and global communication have been deployed to swell the reserve army of the unemployed, in a way that ferociously undercuts the strength of movements struggling for improved conditions of work and life. (58).

Work, such as Murphy's analysis of the BC film labour unions, tends to view resistance not as something that happens against capital, but something that happens within the system; resistance becomes a sort of competitive function that helps the system refine itself. Labour and management are increasingly allies in this model. The most ill-affected workers are often ignored entirely in this realm of research.

Drawing from the predominantly Italian tradition of autonomist Marxism, Dyer-Witheford attempts to open new theoretical avenues for understanding technological change and worker resistance. This work focuses not on the capitalist system of production, but on the power "of the creative human energy Marx called 'labour' – 'the living, form-giving flame' constitutive of society," (65). As such, it is not labour that requires capital, but capital that requires labour: "Labour can dispense with the wage, and with capitalism, and find different ways to organize its own creative energies: it is potentially *autonomous*," (68). With this understanding of labour's relation to capitalism, we might better understand capitalism as the reactionary body, forced to constantly react to and attempt to assimilate all that appears oppositional or contrary to itself (66-7). The result of this, Dyer-Witheford quotes Tronti, is that "the entire society now functions as a moment of production," (67). The crisis capitalism has experienced has not been that of changing audiences and consumption

patterns. Instead, the crisis is better defined as the continuous need for capital to assert its control in and through society. The most effective means of maintaining this control has been to establish a society where all activity is, to the greatest extent possible, part of a productive system.

Dyer-Witheford's work begins to point us in the right direction for developing a conception of labour within contemporary society. But it also falls short in providing any tangible spatial understanding of labour within the social system he critiques. The technological concern of his work obscures other questions that might arise in regard to how the social practices of a society where every moment is an instant of production might take socio-spatial manifestation. Touza (2002) adopts this problematic in a study of the urban phenomenon of science centre development and a discussion of spatial branding and informal learning as a productive activity. Other studies, (Bagnall 2003) indicate the importance of consumer performance in leisure spaces such as museums increasingly regulated for the purposes of consumption. The actions of individuals inhabiting space create the value, through ritualistic visitation and consumption, for which they are paying to consume. Herod (1997) further emphasizes that too often spatial design and construction are taken as given products of capitalist modes of control rather than possible creations of labour that were subsequently complemented by capital's adoptive actions.

The opportunities opened up by Dyer-Witheford's conception of labour, alongside the spatial blindspots in his work lead to useful modes of understanding creative power within the cultural industries, within a geographic context. This will be taken up further in the next chapter. But first, in order to begin an adequate investigation of the visual industries and their sites of creation, an overview of research into visual production and urban systems is required. This is the subject of the following section.

## The city and visual communication

Having thus far categorized discussions of cinema from a production-oriented, political economic approach I now turn to a body of literature that takes a cultural approach to the organization of the city. This work originates largely within the fields of architecture, urban studies and film studies. This literature begins to address the relationship between cinema and the production of space, largely within the urban context. While useful in theorizing the visual in relation to experienced space, the cultural work on cinema and space would complement the work done on the political economy of visual production industries. As a result, following the review of cultural work, I introduce these two bodies of work at the end of this section, proposing that this intersection of cultural and political economic elements of work is mutually beneficial. This will provide a basis for my own theoretical perspective, to be further developed in the next chapter.

In beginning an approach to cinema and the city, a larger body of work must be considered that encompasses the general notion of visuality and the city. This became a concern in urban and architectural writing in the 1960s, but was only developed by writers examining cinema and space in the 1980s. In his 1960 book entitled *The Image of the City*, Lynch proposes that the way a city looks has a direct impact upon the manner in which its residents and visitors perceive it. Lynch introduced the term “imageability” into the vocabulary of spatial designers. The definition attributed to this concept is “that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer,” (9). As such, Lynch argues that the more highly imageable a given city is said to be, the more sensuous an observer’s experience of the urban space may be. As such, the visual element is complemented by other forms of sensual perception. Moreover, the

experience of the city over time would yield “a pattern of high continuity with many distinctive parts clearly interconnected,” (10). While change might happen within the city’s space, this would occur “without disruption of his basic image, and each new impact would touch upon many previous elements.”

Lynch’s work became the common point of reference in numerous fields beginning to approach the urban environment and visual culture. But the actual process by which individuals come to terms with the “imageability” of their environments is obscure in Lynch’s work. Images thus become a primary concern in understanding spatial experience and individuals are responsible for interpretation and ordering of images based on their own experiences. In other words, individual perceptions are granted vast amounts of autonomy without any sense of structural order or constraint influencing the individual. Such a focus on individual perception without acknowledging structural limits or influences is often identified as characteristic of many post-modern discussions. Collins (Collins, 1991) takes particular issue with this point and argues that much of what considers itself “post-modern” spatial theory too often omits analysis of the “institutionalized image-making” that overlays narrative upon spaces. This highlights two potential traps in contemporary cultural studies. The first trap is assuming that individuals are awash in conflicting symbols to the point where they are constantly confused by their environments, thus rendering meaning as eternally relative. The second problem in this line of thought follows closely. In this work, it is presumed that when individuals do make sense of their symbol-laden worlds, it is only the result of their own unique experiences and interpretations of the world; any inference of similarity between individual perceptions is coincidental.

An early approach to relationships between cities and cinema was brought to light by an exhibit at Paris’ La Villette centre in 1987. An edited collection of papers by academics,

designers, architects, directors and screenwriters accompanied the exhibit. While the political economic work outlined above focuses on the labour and economic issues regarding location shooting, this French collection of writing takes up the artistic and aesthetic relations between the city and cinema. That a focus on the aesthetic relationship between cinema and the city would take place in France is of note. There has been a noted preoccupation with on-location shooting in France beginning with the *Nouvelle Vague* movement of the 1960s. The movement out of the studio and into the streets was a pivotal moment in filmmaking both in France and in the rest of the world, given the aesthetic and technological legacy established. In this light, the relationship between space and film has a longer history in French writing, although a more focused analysis on the spatial constructs of the city emerged in the 1980s.

Sansot (1987) suggests that while the agglomeration of capital and technological innovation found in the city was crucial to the development of cinema, the modern city's surface, along with the introduction of electrical lighting, were aesthetic precursors to the medium's creation. "The urban rain," Sansot explains, "that reflects and mixes lights, signals and shadows was our first film," (18). Virilio (1987) picks up on the theme of electric light in the city in explaining that the technology was not only reflected against the city's exterior skin, but became a means of transmission.

The rise of visual transmission does not mean there was a natural tendency toward realism in the medium's use. Rather, Virilio argues, the extension of illumination beyond one's immediate surroundings highlights a larger "blindness" or realisation of the potential for visual observation that cannot be constantly perceived. The advent of visual transmission via electrical systems introduced an amplification of stimulus and the inability to perceive all information available at a given moment, even to the point where the visual stimuli obscure

comprehension. Otherwise stated, the spread of visual transmission “naturally prevents perception – communication – just as the night or fog suppresses the contemplation of things,” (155). These general observations on vision, light and the city highlight the difficulty in assessing a role of representation to any visual medium. Bonitzer points out that the role of representing both material reality and the imaginary was a function of the double identity contained in cinema from its earliest days; the works of the first French filmmakers, Lumière and Méliès represent the opposing roles of realism and fantasy envisioned for film (1987: 49).

In film, the city can be used as a legitimating device, even when done for the purpose of obscuring reality. François and Boucris (1987) claim that the city has a more significant role in film than in other forms of media: “Its presence is much larger: an observation that takes the force of evidence,” (167). In this regard, whether the city is playing itself or another place, its mere appearance as a film place provides the audience with visual evidence that establishes a tone for the overall narrative. As such, the film location matters in a number of ways beyond the simple economics of production. But the tension that exists between the economic and aesthetic influences on a film is important and provides an important intersection for the discussion of the city and film production.

The 1987 *La Villette* exhibit and collection of essays is one of the first concerted discussions to focus on the relationship between the city and cinema and proposes some useful ways of establishing an analysis of the topic. The exhibit also sparked additional interest in the issue of cinema and the city. A body of literature unique to architecture and film developed through the 1990s, exploring the relationship between the two media. In particular, two publications contributed to seeing that the discussion of this relationship moved forward. First, in 1994 *Architectural Design* devoted a special issue to theorizing the

relationship between film and architecture. The primary concern of authors in the journal was how experience is structured, to varying degrees, by the media of film and spatial design. Key to the discussion was whether individual experience is structured by a designer and to what degree this experience might vary, given each particular medium, from one individual to the next. The second publication was a collection of essays resulting from a Cambridge University symposium. Most papers in this collection focused specifically on the depiction of architecture in specific films, and the use of cinematic tools in the design of architecture.

The adoption of cinema within an architectural context highlights some of the nuances of spatial theory in theorizing the creation of space, whether architecturally or cinematically, not to mention the role of the city. For example, Rattenbury (1994) vehemently argues that “architecture is essentially, inherently different from film” (35) due to the linear, controlling – indeed, dominating – nature of film. This compares to the much more robust opportunities for interpretation of architecture, given the medium’s characteristics, such as its “leaky, intransigent, alterable, endlessly subject to total shifts of context, meaning, form, understanding as it is experienced,” (35). Rattenbury makes his comments in specific regard to French architect Jean Nouvel’s Arab Institute in Paris. The building is an often-cited example of the convergence between film and architecture. The windows, one of the most obvious manifestations of this merger, control light through automated camera-like apertures. By focusing on this relationship, Rattenbury suggests that the interest between the two media is, in part, the result of searches for narrative. This search has placed “linear forms over spatial, three-dimensional, material ones,” (36). Instead of searching for “an argument for a symbiosis of media,” Rattenbury suggests that the relationship between film and architecture is better understood within the context of cultural observation. The academic task is not to forge a relationship, but to assess the larger socio-

cultural understanding of relationships between the two media. Such an argument, while challenging the varying properties of the two media, also negates the possibility for any unique aesthetic relationship between what Dear (1994) refers to as the “two spatial arts,” (9).

Rather than the two arts being irreconcilable, Dear suggests that they have instead been in a state of alienation, each recognizing the other in a referential history, but each “casting about for new theoretical compasses” beyond each other’s disciplinary writings. Given the significant attention paid to geography within contemporary social theory<sup>6</sup>, Dear suggests taking human geography as a basis for exploring how architecture and filmmaking “forge new time-space relationships,” (13). In film, it is the camera that creates space between the viewer and the viewed, for example. The camera’s relationship to the filmed object defines the spatiality of film itself; the film does not create new spaces<sup>7</sup> so much as it defines spatial relationships. Architecture, in turn, uses the cinematic principal of displacement in its contemporary manifestations, relying on distance and varying speeds of the observer to experience the spatial constructs. In stating that “distance means difference,” Dear points out that while speed and movement have been so often used to define “post-modern” architectural experience of space – paralleling writing on cinema as well – the focus of much discussion has been on the space as opposed to how individuals use the space to constitute social relations and ritual. Distance and perspective are thus integral to the spatial dynamic as to how both cinema and architecture take on spatial characteristics in similar fashions. This is important because neither form of spatial structuration is reduced to “the

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<sup>6</sup> Dear begins his discussion with a reference to Lefebvre and an examination of Derrida.

<sup>7</sup> The notion of creating new spaces is often brought up in contemporary work on cyberspace. Understanding media as defining relationships within spaces is a more useful means of discussing the phenomenon.

visual” alone. As a result, Dear’s discussion serves as a useful departure point for exploring a more cohesive spatial relation between cinema and space through a geographic lens.

One year following *Architectural Design*’s issue on film and architecture, Cambridge University hosted a symposium on cinema and architecture. The resulting published collection of essays demonstrated an overriding concern with exploring the digital media rise in relation to architecture. Most of the papers in this collection focused specifically on the depiction of architecture in specific films, and the use of cinematic tools in the design of architecture. But the context established by the editors for these discussions was important. Hogben (1995) explains the apparently close relationship film has had to the significant international trade agreements of the 1990s and Mitterand’s “spectacular last-minute hijack of the GATT trade talks over the protection of French Films,” (50). But, he explains, cinema also became a key tool in urban development, whether in the French “*Petits Projets*” of urban revitalization pairing “architects and film-makers working together as urban pathologists” (50) or the competitive inter-city efforts to attract film production. Hogben suggests that in these instances, “the answer to the questions how and on what grounds architecture should meet film evidently must be the city itself, or at least homage to, or propaganda of the same,” (50). But finding such a relationship insufficient, Hogben refers back to previous discussions about the novel and the city:

. . . as the novel was said to eclipse architecture as the primary vehicle of civic representation in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, does film now doubly leave architecture in the shadows, perhaps as no more than a scenic backdrop for the actions by which film captures the city in flux? Or is it more likely that far from a prior reality the city itself is a construct of the parallel projected hard and soft depictions of architecture and film? (50)

In answering these questions, Hogben suggests that the film spectator is often content to know a range of cities based on the “projected fictions” of cinema. Indeed, in an industry closely tied to the tourism offices of cities around the world, this is an important aspect to

the film industry. As such, the fictions of urban space found in film “are measured not by faithfulness to the spatial, social, political actualities but by the degree to which individually and as a set they define all the possible histories and geographies not our own – the plurality that is definitively not home,” (50).

Meanwhile, in the same collection Penz (1995) remarks that the integration of cinematic techniques into architectural design practices is particularly prevalent. In particular, the ability to quickly and roughly juxtapose spaces through images shot on video makes architecture the spatial equivalent of performing *mise en scène* in film. Penz compares this practice to *caméra-stylo* style of “writing” a story through the camera as developed by the *nouvelle vague* directors. (124-5). Penz outlines a way of conceptualizing the use of cinematic tools in architectural design processes that compares the architect to the director of a film. A sort of narrative master develops in this conception. This is not far off from the comparison of film from the novel, where both analogies struggle to define a narrative role for media in the creation of the city. As such, the city is not the backdrop against which action occurs, but the very result of refracted events projected through and filtered by the media used for developing narrative stories within a society.

Two additional publications from 1995 further suggested lines for analyzing the relationship between visual culture and the city that emphasize the continuum of visual culture as something more than simply a momentary or new phenomenon. Donald (1995) suggests in his study of “modern spaces” that “The city is not a place,” (92). Rather, the city might be better understood as “a historically specific mode of seeing, a structure of visibility that incorporates not only the analytic epistemology theorised by Benjamin and achieved by Vertov, but also the primitive fantasies hypothesised by de Certeau and realised in the fantastic cities of Ufa, Hollywood and Manga,” (91). The relationship between the city and

cinema is, again, not a characteristic to be measured in terms of numbers of projects making use of certain technologies or locations. Rather, it is part of a more complex socio-cultural relationship used in a society to define the parameters of daily norms, beliefs and, indeed, reality.

A crucial element in defining a relationship between cinema and the city, however, remains not to over-attribute the role of cinema in defining transitions to modern culture that otherwise might be proven false when placed in a broader analysis. Along these lines, Schwartz's (1995) study of *fin de siècle* spectacle in Paris acts as a particularly important reminder that notions of the public spectacle and sensationalism were not invented with cinema. In her assessment of public spectacle at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Schwartz documents various forms of public spectatorship that pre-date cinema. In her analysis, however, Schwartz suggests that throughout this period, the rationalization and reconstruction of the city led to an increasingly structured visual culture.

The relationship of cinema to the urban structure is relatively new to the past decade, but the problems of perception and visual culture are not. Schwartz outlines the importance of understanding the human penchant for the fantastic and grotesque spectacle that obscures the real and imagined lives of urban inhabitants. This, in fact, problematizes the role of vision within the dominant theories of human action. Vision in modern culture is largely recognized as a superior mode of sense perception, providing accurate verification of information and events. But the desire to mix such mundane responsibility with the imagined and fantastic imagination suggests that visual perception is, by no means, the unadulterated means of perception.

To better understand the discussion of realism and visual perception, it is instructive to refer to André Bazin's (1967) work on "total cinema". Bazin argues the belief that visual

reproduction could render total organization and control of society the guiding principle for modern technological and social development:

The guiding myth, then, inspiring the invention of cinema, is the accomplishment of that which dominated in a more or less vague fashion all the techniques of the mechanical reproduction of reality in the nineteenth century, from photography to the phonograph, namely an integral realism, a recreation of the world in its own image, an image unburdened by the freedom of interpretation of the artist or the irreversibility of time. (21)

In taking realism as a dominant factor in modern society's intentions, many of the projects of information management and preservation in modernity are crucial in understanding contemporary urban development. This will be discussed further in the next chapter. For the moment, the focus on visual culture in modernity remains integral to understanding the relationship between cinema and urbanism.

Crary (1999) develops a theory of visual culture and the modern city that sets cinema's development within the larger context of organized visual routines. In particular, the modern city planners' desire for rationalized, straight lines that cloistered the urban experience away from the complex labyrinths of the medieval city points to a more complex facet in visual culture. Crary explains that modern obsessions with developing real or true visual representations of society are rendered useless in an assessment of human perception: "I would argue that the importance of this linear system is finally its unintelligibility, its suggestion of the futility and even absurdity of a rationalizable spatial account of vision," (87). The human mode of visual perception cannot be made to fit into rational categories of a realist aesthetic. Attempts to render realism a mainstay in modern life, nonetheless, brought significant challenges to intellectuals and artists who attempted to deal with the resulting social fragmentation brought about by the partitioning of experience into rationalized categories. The result of this was "an anxious attempt to reconsolidate a cohesive visual field (90-1) through the representations of the day in various forms of art and

discourse. What arose from this “empirical study of perception and cognition,” Crary argues, were “powerful *normative* models of subjectivity. A society recognizes itself and its own positivity through the morbid and pathological forms it identifies or invents,” (97). The resulting models of subjectivity, influenced by realist conceptions of human experience, remain prominent today.

Other writers such as Marks (2000) point out that by recognizing the obsession with realism, we can begin a discussion of cinema that questions not simply whether it accurately depicts reality, but challenges “the ideological presumption that cinema *can* represent reality,” (1). Likewise, Virilio (2002) suggests that in our media-saturated society, linear conceptions of time are useless bases for establishing points of reference: “Before us the film stops rolling; time is no longer, for humanity, a dimension in which it can operate,” (16). The realist imperatives actually require non-linear processes to achieve the illusion of realism. However useful the discussions Marks and Virilio begin might be, they remain part of a small, minority perspective in academic work. This work will prove useful in the following chapters, but for the moment these discussions are useful in highlighting some of the primary questions that arise within the study of cinema and the city.

The conceptions of film and architecture as media developed above are important for three primary reasons. First, they move the discussion of cinema and space within a cultural context beyond a simple attempt to point at instances whereby cinema presents a “false” or “inaccurate” view of a space. Instead, the discussion focuses on the importance of understanding how the media used by humans to construct meaning are present within daily lived experience, whether the meaning is otherwise classified under “fiction”, “drama”, or “documentary” categories. Whatever the origins of these narratives, they have currency within the larger analysis of social change under the general heading of “myth”. Second,

given the myth status of narratives in culture, we find a number of ways by which we might begin to assess the origins of such myth. Mosco (2004) refers to Barthe's notion of myth as "depoliticised speech" in suggesting that "the critique of mythology can restore and regenerate" the political nature of social relations. By critiquing mythology, Mosco argues, we arrive at an "intellectual border, where cultural and political economic understandings meet [and] the analysis of myth becomes particularly productive," (31). The third and final aspect to the initial discussion in cinema and architecture is the relationship between visual communication and social change. In comparing film's relation to architecture with the previous relationship between the novel and architecture, Hogben's work points to long-term trends in narrative development and spatial design and conception. Likewise, Schwartz and Crary place visual culture within a larger context of modernity's development. As a result, cinema must be understood as a component of larger social processes. This is a call to researchers of cinema and the city to contextualize their work within larger frames of analysis than any single, immediate example of cultural phenomena. Again, the merger of cultural and political economic analysis offers potential opportunities to address these concerns.

### *Defining cinema and the city*

Given the attention given to the city and cinema in theoretical and research context, I finally return to a small but growing body of recent literature that addresses relationships between cinema and the city. In 2001 Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice published a collection of essays under the title *Cinema and the City*. In attempting to further explore the relationships between cinema and the city, Shiel argues that cinema has, throughout its history, been

concerned with representing spaces – often cities – and that theorists such as Benjamin and Baudrillard have likewise concerned themselves with exploring the phenomena of epochal shifts, consumption and reproduction related to visual media (1). Indeed, Shiel establishes the ground upon which cinema and the city might be studied together as the intersection within lived human experience:

“... cinema has long played an important role in the cultural economies of cities all over the world in the production, distribution, and exhibition of motion pictures, and in the cultural geographies of certain cities particularly marked by cinema . . . whose built environment and civic identity are both significantly constituted by film industry and films.” (1-2)

Shiel explains, however, that it is only recently that interdisciplinary studies into cinema and the city have begun. This is, in part, due to sociological concerns with media effects studies while film studies scholars were largely occupied with textual readings of film artefacts. These two broad areas of study would benefit, Shiel suggests, by combining efforts, foci of study and methodological approaches. For example, sociology would benefit from examining cultural industries and their relationships to urban environments and “their informative and influential allegorizing of objective social realities,” (3). And film studies, in turn, could benefit from developing “a synthetic understanding of the objective social conditions of the production, distribution, exhibition, and reception of cinema and the mediated production of urban space and urban identity,” (3-4). As such, Shiel uses Raymond Williams’ assertion that culture, society and economics must be understood together as “a whole and connected social material process,” (4).

In addition, Shiel outlines the important influence spatial theory has had on social and cultural theory since the 1970s. Given the significant place occupied by spatial theory in contemporary critical analysis, cinema is an appropriate, if not “ideal cultural form” for the study of spatialization given the medium’s “peculiarly spatial form of culture,” (5). The

method by which Shiel proposes the cinema/city relationship be mapped is Jameson's notion of "cognitive mapping" or "the attempt to 'think' a system (today, postmodern global capitalism) . . . which evades thought and analysis," (6).

The integrated approach to studying cinema and the city through sociological and cultural approaches has achieved some currency in recent work. In the Shiel and Fitzmaurice 2001 collection, Swann links the city's visual appearance and contemporary cultural markets. In economies where cultural production has replaced manufacturing, "Many US cities now literally live off their appearances, exploiting their visual rather than their physical or human resources," (2001: 89). Turan (2002) studies the relationship between the city and the rise of the film festival since the 1980s in the context of producing cultural prestige.

In 2003 Shiel and Fitzmaurice published a second collection of essays entitled *Screening the city*, with the specific intention of continuing interdisciplinary discussions between cinema and the city. They propose this by examining film movements in particular regions of cities by periodizing examination: the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for Central and Eastern Europe and post-World War II for North American cities. In the same trajectory, Myrent (2001) looks specifically at the representational significance of Paris in Hollywood films.

Most recently, Acland (2003; 2004) further explores the relationship between cinema and city through the perspective of the cinemagoer. Acland argues that "To understand the practice of cinemagoing, media consumption and social activity beyond film, though articulated at a designated film site, must be considered," (2003: 134). The consumption of cinema entails a series of spatial practices by cinemagoers that influence the spatial and temporal shape of the city itself. These practices and their resulting urban shapes result in the uneven developments across geographic spaces that, in turn, produce social relations

(134). These social relations take the form of spatially mediated class, gender and race divisions and conflicts. Acland's discussion is instructive for the manner by which he relates the tacit knowledge of space with consumption practices around cinema. While specifically focused upon the act of cinemagoing, this study still holds particular relevance to my own discussion, given the nature of social production of spatial environments and technology. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

### **Bridging cultural and political economy studies with social analysis**

In this chapter I have reviewed the manners in which the city's relationship with film and cinema have been engaged by work in political economy, sociology and cultural studies. The common themes to emerge in this literature include the development of capitalism; conceptions of labour in the cultural industries; the confinement or training of visual perception; the relationship between space and vision; and the role of the city in the visual economy/society/culture. Throughout this discussion, I have kept in mind the Benjamin quote with which I opened the chapter. The notion that "the cameraman penetrates deeply" into the web of reality is intriguing, yet troubling. The history of film's use as a human technology demonstrates numerous examples of attempts to document both reality as well as the fantastic and imaginary. Indeed, film can penetrate the reality of daily life in the very process of constructing imaginary stories, as is demonstrated whenever a sidewalk or building is adopted for the purposes of filming. Film is therefore more than simply an attempt to depict the real or unreal. Rather, it is a human tool of representation and perception that has both confined and expanded realms of human experience as part of the human rituals of social interaction of social construction of relationships and myths.

I will conclude by offering a critique of the literature surrounding the film industry. This critique is organizing around three primary points. First, throughout the bodies of literature, whether within political economy or cultural studies, there is virtually no attempt made to couch discussions of the film industry within a discussion that addresses the relevance of such studies on a larger basis. More specifically, much of the literature on the film industry fails to justify its importance on any significant basis. Writing on the film industry from a political economic perspective often fails to address underlying moral philosophical tendencies within the industry. At its worst, this literature takes on conspiratorial tones. Likewise, cultural studies work on film, often fails to establish underpinnings that might contextualize writing in the field. While not dismissing the relevance of the work discussed above, a much stronger position for studies of cinema and the city would derive from a dialogue between the sociological and cultural realms of discussion. Indeed, the study of visual communication within contemporary urban environments is important. Addressing why this area of research is important, however, deserves further explanation.

Efforts have been taken, as outlined above, to begin addressing the obvious gap between sociological and cultural fields in relation to cinematic and urban research (Shiel and Fitzmaurice 2001). At the same time, the field of communication stands to contribute to this discourse by addressing the socio-philosophical concerns around human activities related to these areas of concern. Where this might originate, I propose, is in work that recognizes a difference between media and communication studies, as traditionally defined within the North American field. There is much to be gained, I argue, by focusing first on the communicative purposes of individuals and societies, complemented by an assessment of the media used to extend these efforts. In essence, the study of myth and ritual in cultural

research is crucial to developing an understanding of media development and use in a sociological context.

The second element of my critique in regard to work on the film industry is the weak and often coincidental concern to spatial aspects. In particular, space is often viewed as an abstraction while place is viewed as a novelty. In both instances, spatial analysis is not a primary concern and remains obscure in much of the work. This gap is most evident in the body of communication literature addressing the film industry, particularly within political economy discussions. Given the attention paid to issues of spatialization within the field, for example, more sustained attention to developing this concept in relation to an industry inextricably tied to spatial construction and appropriation of place is deserved. Cultural perspectives are, in general, better informed by critical, spatial thought. Again, the mutual benefit of combining cultural and sociological perspectives deserves further exploration.

Finally, given the themes within the cinema and city literature, particularly in regard to labour and cultural production, there is a significant gap between the study of labour within the visual production industries and the relation of workers to the actual spaces of production and consumption in contemporary urban research. In accounting for the social activities of the industry, through production processes and relations and the spatial distribution of these relations and processes, a much more cohesive understanding of the role the visual industry plays might be developed. This should, moreover, be a starting point for examining the relationships between cultural and sociological threads of research as well as an opportunity to make this research relevant within broader social discussions.

These general points of critique thus guide my research and discussion in subsequent chapters. Having provided an overview of the literature relating to cinema and urban studies in this chapter, I turn to establishing a theoretical perspective for continuing this discussion

with a particular focus relating to my own research. In particular, I focus on the spatial and ritual nature of visual communication in the urban context. This will form the basis for a discussion of my research in subsequent chapters.

## Chapter 2

Space and the urban condition:  
Organizing production and consumption of symbolic  
capital in the entrepreneurial city

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In concluding the previous chapter, I outlined three primary critiques of the film literature as it relates to spatial analysis, labour studies and the overall relevance of socio-philosophical literature. These concerns with the literature are not focused on any one particular area of disciplinary writing, but around inter-disciplinary dialogues. In this chapter I wish to reconsider how cinema and the city might be considered from within disciplinary categories. Such a strategy is not proposed in an effort to designate terrains of ownership in the discussion, but to begin exploring how dialogues across disciplines might prove useful in influencing each other while maintaining the specific “lenses” of each field of study in mind. In proposing this as a plan for discussion, I examine how a study under the guise of “communication research” might be useful for connecting concepts and discussions that are most often considered unrelated in much writing.

To begin this chapter, I outline two conflicting notions of communication, as present within the North American field. Drawing specifically from James Carey, I explain

that transmission views of communication have long dominated communication theories in western society, much to the detriment of the socially-oriented realm of ritual communication. This, in turn is related to the obsession with time over spatial conceptions of social organization across the social sciences. I thus turn to critical writing on space that provides some conceptual approaches to relating the city to visual theory. In particular, the work of Edward Soja and David Harvey proves crucial to developing an understanding of space in critical theory. Despite the overarching influence these two writers have had on contemporary discussions of spatial theory, I argue that Henri Lefebvre's work, upon whose writings Soja and Harvey base their thought, requires primary consideration. My argument is based on the fact that the importance accorded to visuality in Lefebvre's work is largely, if not entirely, ignored by Soja and Harvey. The primacy of visuality to expanding discussions of spatial theory is crucial if we are to understand starting points for establishing a political economy of visual culture in the contemporary city.

In an effort to develop a theory that encompasses individual perception as it relates to space and visuality, I introduce the work of Hannah Arendt. Arendt proposes a theory of cognitive perception that recognizes spatiality as contingent upon individual perception and cognition. In her political theory, Arendt proposes language as a particularly important element in understanding human action in the material world. This recognition of the material world is paramount to an understanding of how humans relate to their material world and their interaction with the physical environment. The lessons to be drawn from Arendt's work relate to contemporary literature on technology and social constructivist approaches to recognizing political influences on technological choices. This discussion establishes the groundwork for how we can approach a discussion of the relationship of cinema and the city.

A central problematic to my work is the question of labour's relation to space, the city and cultural industries of visual communication. To address these connections, I draw from geographer Andrew Herod's work in constructing a labour geography, or a theory of "how workers actively shape economic landscapes and uneven development," (1997: 1). By understanding how workers actively contribute to the shaping of their own conditions, we might better understand a relationship between space, labour and communications. I propose, however, that given the blurring lines between production and consumption, traditionally-defined categories of labour are insufficient for the purposes of contemporary cultural industries. As such, I propose that through the concept of autonomous labour we might begin to examine how other populations might be considered as active members of a labour resistance.

In concluding the chapter, I explore theories of visuality in an effort to relate how, as Lefebvre describes it, a logic of visualization has come to underpin modern thought. I compare contrasting notions of space against notions of perception and visuality. This, in turn, introduces vision as a crucial element to the development of a theory of city space – something neglected in spatial theory that employs a critical perspective – while further relating my theoretical perspective to the realm of communication.

### **North American communication theory**

There have been a number of attempts to write a critical history of communication thought in North America (Hardt, 1992). Much of this work focuses on the largely-ignored work of the Chicago School of Sociology and the tradition of American Pragmatism. This line of thought took a more sociological approach to understanding human interaction than the functionalist approach of psychologically based research that continues to form the

backbone of much North American work in the field. More recently, Peters (1999) suggests that the Chicago School's approach, represented in the work of John Dewey, is one of two trajectories not taken in North American Communication research; the second avenue is the philosophical approach of Martin Heidegger (16). Peters argues that the predominant concern of North American communication studies is to explain how humans transmit information between each other. This is in contrast to studies that might seek to recognize the reasons why humans seek to communicate with each other and the socio-cultural roles of inter-personal contact. In essence, the study of communication has been more concerned with examining media and their effects on humans than on the actual communication of humans using such media. Peters reorients his study around "the idea of communication" in an effort to elaborate on the history of thought that recognizes communication as an object of inquiry. Rather than focusing on the nature of how communication between humans happens, Peters investigates questions as to what human needs are identified by isolating communication as an object of study. In this regard, he outlines human motives to make contact with each other through what might be understood as "authentic" communication. This is an important line of inquiry which, in turn, forms the basis for my own theoretical approach.

In light of Peters' work, I turn to another writer who has similarly problematized the predominant trajectories of communication studies. Carey (1988) makes a similar differentiation between media and communication studies by dividing possible areas of investigation into transmission and ritual understandings of communication. The transmission view, the predominant of the two concepts in North American thought, places the task of communication in the realm of directing messages across space and advancing the movement of time. Transmission conceptions of communication are indicative of what

Harvey (1989) calls “time-space compression” (240), where communication and transportation technologies are recognized as paramount to socio-economic development. This progress-based model values change and takes a pragmatic view of communication as a functional tool in society. Prevalent in much of the social sciences, this understanding of communication places a concern with time – the reduction of transmission delay, the reduction of travel time between points through the use of technology – above any investigation of spatially-oriented studies. As already pointed out in the previous chapter, even communication studies that purport to recognize the importance of space fail to develop any substantial understanding of spatial dynamics in their research. Carey establishes the basis for what might be an alternative model of communication that can better engage space as an element of analysis.

In opposition to the transmission model, Carey (1988) proposes the ritual model of communication. The ritual view proposes an understanding of communication as a way of preserving life within a defined space over time, valuing community and stability. As such, Carey suggests that community ideals are presented in material form, such as in architecture, theatre and news. This “creates an artificial though nonetheless real symbolic order that operates to provide not information, but confirmation, not to alter attitudes or change minds but to represent an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing and fragile social process,” (19). As such, the local structures, ways of life and artefacts are crucial elements in assessing social means of communication. While a society itself might conceive of communication in a transmission or ritual manner, this does not mean that where one is dominant, the other is absent. Rather, the ritualistic model of communication becomes an important way of framing and critiquing social actions, particularly as they relate to local, spatial environments. Further, given this perspective on

communication, the socially-constructed meanings of a community or society become particularly important.

Carey challenges or “problematizes” the notion of communication most commonly used in contemporary North American studies. He rejects the realist notion that “there is an order to things that the mind may discover,” (25). Rather than accepting the assumption that language represents the reality within which we find ourselves, Carey instead suggests that “word comes first” and that, subsequently, “things are the signs of words,” (25). As a result, Carey suggests that communication studies should be focused on the “social processes wherein significant symbolic forms are created, apprehended, and used,” (30). And this is crucial, not only because it begins to shift attention away from technological biases of the field and revert them back to a human-oriented phenomenological investigation of social interaction and meaning. Carey takes the discussion further by arguing that communication itself is not a “pure phenomenon” that can be studied and understood in an objective form. Rather, “we understand it by building models of it,” (31). Given this understanding of communication, the concept can never be understood simply as an exchange of information. It thus requires a more complex understanding of the social world: “It includes sharing aesthetic experience, religious ideas, personal values and sentiments and intellectual notions – a ritual order,” (33-4).

Carey’s description of communication thus places personal experience, within the context of social interaction, at the forefront of concern for a study of communication. The framework Carey raises is important particularly because he broadens the scope of communication studies to include the various “things” of the world, whether formed and organized by humans or found already existing in the world. The ritual view of language and communication forces us into a reflexive mode of analysis, rather than taking processes and

systems as natural or inevitable. Most important to my present study is that Carey's framework requires the study of the world as a system of human-made and ordered signs of our own socially-formed cognitive functions. For a study of space and, more specifically, the city and visuality, within the field of communication, Carey's work reorients the trajectory of investigation. The ritual view of communication problematizes what claims to be objective, empirical research. Questions behind studies of the city must therefore frame themselves in terms of "What is the city and the accompanying symbolic nature of our interaction?" rather than inquiries such as "How do we measure the city's activities against human intentions?" While such a shift does not eliminate economic perspectives of study, it demonstrates their lack of utility unless conducted with a broader scope of socio-political and cultural norms that are also part of human activity. This perspective is reflected in Blum's (2003) work that looks toward describing the "imaginative structure" rather than the physical infrastructure of the city.

Such a theoretical perspective is, indeed, uncommon in the field of North American communication studies where media systems and their effects on audiences have been the primary point of examination. But if such a formulation is to underpin a study of the city and its visual production activities in the film industry, an understanding of human interaction with the physical environment is required beyond the general framework of symbolic order. To develop the theoretical framework around human activity and experience, I refer to the work of political scientist and philosopher Hannah Arendt.

### **Human perception and the dialectic of experience**

Arendt develops a theory of perception based upon the multiplicity of individual human experience. She does this in opposition to what she calls the dominant sociological and

philosophical reliance on time. In particular, she points to the Hegelian dialectic of time that emphasizes anticipation of and movement toward the future. This movement through history is based upon the premise that “The Now is empty . . . it fulfills itself in the future. The future is its reality,” (1958: 41). The resulting projection through time, continuously forward moving, is problematic for Arendt. She points to the fact that the individual is not the focus of concern in such system-oriented processes. In thinking of history and nature, “[t]he connection lies in the concept of processes and are not concerned with single entities or individual occurrences and their special separate causes,” (294). Similarly, in her critique of political economy, Arendt argues that Marx was not, in fact, concerned with the actions of men, but with “the Hegelian concern for history,” (301). The process of history, that is the dialectic, is reified and granted higher status than the action of individuals themselves. Arendt thus advocates an understanding of the political that focuses attention on the individuals rather than a system of history as the primary focus of attention.

It is important to note that Arendt’s critique and distancing from Marx is, in fact, overstated. Her reading of Marx ignores his argument that “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living,” (152). Arendt’s own focus on philosophy seems to filter her reading of Marx; the focus on individual and collective action as an element of social justice within a political realm must be central to an understanding of Marx. The constraints of history within which humans act are not philosophical systems defined by Hegelianism, but rather the mere fact that humans are born into a world, a culture and a class that they did not create, but which they have the potential to change. Overall, Arendt appears to be concerned with distancing herself from Marx for

political reasons, not because their work is antithetical to one another. It is in this spirit that I read Arendt and, while finding her critique of Marx unnecessary if not inaccurate, find utility in her theory of human perception and action.

Arendt allocates decisive power to the individual as a political actor who is responsible for making history. Not only do humans act within space, they also perceive and interpret actions. As such, there is a constant meeting of real or material perceptions in the mind with ideals or ideas either created or stored from previous experience. History becomes, in essence, the stories individuals communicate to make sense of their world as the result of their perceptions and ideas. Because of this, Arendt places emphasis upon the individual's activities – whether labour, contemplation or otherwise, within a given moment. If there is a dialectical relationship to be found in Arendt's work, it is in the collision between the material and the ideal within the individual perceiver's mind rather than in a grand system of historical movement into the future. Perception is a unique process for each individual who responds in their own way, but within a world of shared artifice and negotiated meaning. Given this conception of meaning, Arendt's thought is comparable to that of Carey.

To take Arendt's theory of human perception further, she bases her argument in an understanding of space. Crucial to her conception of space is the individual's own body. If we are to understand the conscious individual as the point of collision between ideality and reality, the individual is a space unto itself. As a meeting point of the real and ideal, consciousness is not one or the other, but a space unto itself that is intrinsic to the human condition. It is also in the human consciousness that Arendt posits time. This is important because the notions of time and space in her work are so interrelated. The best evidence of

Arendt's understanding of this space of consciousness and its relation to time is found in her early dissertation work on Augustine:

Time exists only insofar as it can be measured, and the yardstick by which we measure it is space. Where is the space located that permits us to measure time? For Augustine the answer is: in our memory where things are being stored up. Memory, the storehouse of time, is the presence of the 'no more' as expectation is the presence of the 'not yet'. There, I do not measure what is no more, but something in my memory that remains fixed in it. (1996: 15)

What is central to the concept of space is not solely a physical materiality, but human perception through experiential understanding is what constitutes space. For Arendt, conceptions of space – not geopolitical in a realist sense, but those constituting lived spaces in the sense of logos – became intrinsic in her own development of political theory. As she further explains, "Perhaps man possesses a 'space' where time can be conserved long enough to be measured, and would not this 'space,' which man carries with himself, transcend both life and time?" (15). To this end, reification is crucial to her theory of spatial perception. It is reification that allows for actions and deeds, once performed by the individual, to become objects collected in the individual, but that also exist outside of the individual, as part of a publicly-viewed action, examinable by the individual and others (See Arendt 2000: 281).

To extend Arendt's notion of space, humans constitute space, but also make and order space, both symbolically in language and concretely in action. Arendt describes work as a process of making tools or technologies that enhance individuals' ability to perform other actions with greater ease. Following Arendt's notion of work, I suggest that language and space are, at least in one sense, comparable because they are both technologies. This is somewhat clarified in Arendt's observation that humans live in a world of things "more permanent than the activity by which they were produced, and even more permanent than the lives of their authors," (1958: 96). More precisely, space and language are works made by humans. The material human-made objects of the world that are not for consumption serve

to establish stability against change. This change happens not only in the natural world, but also in the identity of the human individual. The durable nature of the “things” made by humans through work allows individuals to retain a semblance of consistent identity: “In other words, against the subjectivity of men stands the objectivity of the man-made world rather than the sublime indifference of an untouched nature,” (137). We find comfort in the apparent permanence of the material world; we assume its presence precedes our own appearance and will continue beyond our deaths. The material world of “reality” is a shelter against the change and unpredictability of the natural world as well as the change inherent in our subjective identities constituted by the collision of the ideal and real in our own daily experiences. It is through human communication – our rituals – that such understandings of reality are negotiated, shared and reinforced.

Humans must assume the world into which they are created is actual. But the notion of durability through time and in relation to the constantly-changing nature of the human subjectivity is “too abstract” for comprehension in the immediate. Humans thus use the capacity to remember and interrelate experience to make sense of reality. This is the process of making history. It is a product of work as interpretations of events are reified for future reference. The “real” world provides reference points for the human mind. Conceptual notions of space are not definable in realist terms, but relative to the individual subject’s perception and interpretation of various modes of being. Arendt attributes this authority of the subject to the presence of doubt in modernity. This is evident, she claims, in the way history is conceived: “. . . the birth of the modern idea of history not only coincided with but was powerfully stimulated by the modern age’s doubt of the reality of an outer world ‘objectively’ given to human perception as an unchanged and unchangeable object,” (Arendt 2000: 287). The world must be accepted in its phenomenological sense, but there is no

inherent meaning within it. It is in work that humans attempt to establish tools of an “objective” nature for use in observing “natural” phenomena.

In saying that the world of things, created by humans out of the natural world, provides stability for our own identities as well as against the uncertainty of the natural world, Arendt proposes to us a theory of technology. Technologies are works with durability that serve the purpose of stabilizing the realm within which human experience is to take place. While technologies may serve use values that ease the pain of labour or simply routine activities, they also serve larger purposes of stabilizing a perspective from which humans orient themselves to the external world. The things created by humans establish spaces that constitute a predictable and knowable world in which people live. The physical structures of cities, in this regard, are technologies used by humans. Likewise, language, as a seemingly permanent artefact in the world, is both a means through which individuals may articulate their thoughts as well as a point of reference from which they understand various facets of the world.

What Arendt thus proposes is an understanding of communication that goes far beyond the simple transmission of ideas, the analysis of media effects or the nature of propaganda. Humans, by their very nature, need to be in communication with other humans in order to establish a sense of stability and normalcy. But Arendt also notes that Hegel’s conception of history “rested on the insight that modern reason foundered on the rock of reality,” (1958: 301). Given the oppositional position of reality and ideality in Hegelian thought, it has been problematic to attempt to reconcile the two concepts. The result of such incongruence between the two realms in Hegelian experience brought with it the notion of modern doubt, or an understanding that the senses are unreliable and observation is questionable (2000: 289). This doubt suggests that nature might be “unthinkable in terms of

pure reasoning,” (290). A problem of this is that all humans are capable of observing and understanding are the items and processes we create. We can prove mathematics, history and science because they are human creations. But if this is the case, our investigations will only ever mirror categories that are hard-wired into our brains (291).

Thus one of the by-products of modern doubt and the realization that human observation and interpretation is subjective in nature and unreliable or simply redundant has been the attempt to extend the point of observation outside of the human and the natural world. This constitutes an alienation from the world through the rise of mathematics and the sciences of modernity. Through math, the scientist was able put aside geometrical impediments to perception; that is, “Modern mathematics freed man from the shackles of earth-bound experience and his power of cognition from the shackles of finitude,” (1958: 265). That which can be measured is not the final indicator of knowledge. By exploring the “amazing human faculty to grasp in symbols those dimensions and concepts which at most had been thought of as negations,” (265) allowed for the possibility of explaining the previously non-existent. But this highlights the fact that perhaps humans do not discover knowledge, but only categorize phenomena by the structure of their own minds: “instead of observing natural phenomena as they were given to him, he places nature under the conditions of his own mind, that is, under conditions won from a universal, astrophysical viewpoint, a cosmic standpoint outside of nature itself,” (265). This argument is similar to Latour’s (1988) analysis of the role of the visual in modernity. Latour (1988) suggests that the age of scientific discovery is not best understood and explained through studies of mental structures or paradigms of thought (22), but through “the transformation of rats and chemicals into paper,” (22). The primary result of scientific research is the production of inscriptions. These representations warrant study due to their relation to garnering support

and legitimacy in “agnostic” scientific and non-scientific communities: “the one able to muster on the spot the largest number of well aligned and faithful allies,” (23) succeeds in providing the most definitive scientific “truth” at a given time (Latour, 1988). This assertion of external observation and inscription of information has two levels of understanding. First is the notion that the faculty of thought is able to abstract the world to levels of symbols for the manipulation of knowledge outside of the imperial methods of measurement previously in the hands of the scientist. But the second notion in this understanding is that humans have physically repositioned their point of observation outside of the “natural” world of the earth to outer space from, for example, satellites. Humans thus become able to observe human existence not from the point of that existence itself, but from its negative – outer space provides the negative of earthly existence. The ability to move perception away from human interaction takes Benjamin’s assertion about the penetration of reality in a different direction; visual technologies can penetrate realms that are beyond human reality to the point where, like the painter, we are once again observers.

As such, Arendt provides us with both an approach to theorizing human perception that encompasses a notion of communication consistent with that of Carey as well as a means of understanding space and symbolic representation in contemporary society. But Arendt’s approach is not entirely sufficient. Arendt does not provide a conception of labour that sufficiently accounts for contemporary notions of human activity. Although not discussed at length here, she divides human activity into the categories of labour, work and action. But such divisions are, in fact, irrelevant to the contemporary struggles in many societies where the realm of labour remains an important realm of political action. Moreover, competing notions of labour, as will be discussed at greater length in subsequent chapters, comprise the realm of action in some arenas. While Arendt provides some useful entry

points for understanding human perception in relation to communication, space and representation, the link to labour and, perhaps even more important, to contemporary socio-cultural dynamics, is largely absent. The discussion of Arendt's work here serves to illustrate a possible avenue of discussion in communication theory that was largely ignored in post-war communication thought. As already shown, there are parallels with work such as Carey's. And in recent geographic work, there is further exploration of the social sciences' relationship to space, including renewed discussion of dialectics of human experience – and with this there is ample room to explore the specific relevance of such inquiries for the field of communication.

### **Considering the spatial: New directions for social theory**

Since the 1970s, a number of fields in social sciences and the humanities have addressed the nature of space in relation to their own disciplines. As reviewed in the previous chapter, a significant amount of work done in the area of film and cultural industries has come out of geographic discussions. Given the prominence of this work in setting research agendas of the previous three decades, the consideration of spatial conceptions should be a component of communication research pursuing these fields. At the same time, while work in the political economy of communication places emphasis on “spatialization” as an important point of study, the actual implications of space in communication research remains underdeveloped. Understanding the origins of the “spatial turn” in social theory is therefore important. But further to this, as I will document, examining the influences upon contemporary spatial discussions will lead us to interesting linkages and unexplored avenues with visual culture. The origins of spatial thought, particularly in North American work, come from the work of French sociologist Henri Lefebvre. Two writers, David Harvey and

Edward Soja, are responsible for integrating Lefebvre's thought into more widespread use.

While Harvey and Soja each develop their spatial understandings independently of each other, both heavily rely on Lefebvre's writings on space as a fundamental underpinning to their own writing. By having conceptualized space into three primary constructs, Lefebvre's work lays out the manner in which space is conceived in contemporary discussions.

Lefebvre (1991) proposes a triad for understanding space. First, spatial practice constitutes the reproduction and stability of a society. This includes the creation of routes such as roads and manners of using space that allow for continuity within a society. Second, representations of space are conceptualized notions of space. Examples would include spatial abstractions such as those used in architectural plans. Third, spaces of representation are the institutionalized spaces within a society where complex social interactions take place. This might include various public spaces such as agoras. These three conceptions of space are crucial to the work of Soja and Harvey.

The project of tracing a genealogy of space in the contemporary social sciences has been a primary concern for urban theorist Edward Soja. In constructing this genealogy, however, Soja encompasses perspectives from across disciplines. This is important, Soja suggests, because there has been a misbalance in modern European and North American thought that has repeatedly favoured historicism over the spatial (1989). Soja points to sociologist C. Wright Mills' notion of the historical imagination. This imagination directs critical social theory to a purpose of "search[ing] for practical understanding of the world as a means of emancipation versus maintenance of the status quo," (14). But there is a fundamental problem with historicism, in Soja's opinion; having framed much of critical sociological work of recent generations studying in the social sciences, the historical imagination provides "an overdeveloped historical contextualization of social life and social

theory that actively submerges and peripheralizes the geographical or spatial imagination,” (15). Such a bias toward time and history is observable in many of the philosophical and sociological traditions that emerged as dominant discourses in the past 200 years. Most notable in critical theory, studies of dialectics have posited the subject of their analysis in strictly temporal terms. As such, the general approach to modern social theory is that, true to Hegelian conceptions of dialectics, the movement through time brings societies closer to a subsequent period of existence. In other words, struggles occur for the movement through periods of development.

In an effort to remedy the constraints of temporal dialectics, Soja proposes a trialectic based upon Lefebvre’s three categories of space. Soja’s spatial conceptions are directed toward describing cityspace. In this model, Soja terms perceived space as “firstspace”, or “a set of materialized ‘spatial practices’ that work together to produce and reproduce the concrete forms and specific patterning of urbanism as a way of life,” (2000: 10). Secondspace, or conceived space, is concerned with the “ideational field, conceptualized in imagery, reflexive thought, and symbolic representation,” (11). It is in secondspace that Soja places the “mental imaginary.” In thirdspace, the real and the imagined meet in “fully *lived space*” which constitutes the “locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency,” (11). The importance of Soja’s conception of space, based on Lefebvre’s general categories, is that he does not place an imperative on definitions that regard space as either entirely socially constructed or entirely phenomenological or otherwise materialist. In this regard, his understandings of space are congruent with Arendt’s discussion of space as a perceived material and cognitively constructed phenomenon.

Understanding the nature of space within human perception and construction is a concern shared by Harvey, who also relies on Lefebvre’s three conceptions of space. Harvey

takes Lefebvre's experienced, perceived and imagined spaces and overlays his own categories of material spatial practices (experience), representations of space (perception) and spaces of representation (imagination), (1987: 206). But Harvey critiques Lefebvre's conception of the interaction between these three types of space. While Lefebvre considers the three spaces to be in dialectical relationship to each other, Harvey cautions that this risks a materialist reading, rendering knowledge as the determined product of material process. Harvey attempts to remedy this by reference to Bourdieu's "matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions" that may be grounded in "objective relations" without attributing structures with "a power of autonomous development independent of human agency," (207). This attempt at reconciling such relations, however, remains insufficient.

What Harvey fails to address in his introduction of Bourdieu's conception of perception, appreciations and actions grounded in objective relations is the manner in which this very matrix is the product of social relations. This is to say that the interactions, perceptions and actions of everyday life are rooted in the individual or, as Soja explains, the fully lived space. But Soja, as well, fails to fully articulate a theory of individual experience that accounts for the nature of space. While the spatial conceptions presented by Harvey and Soja are useful in attempting to move beyond the dependency model of structure and superstructure from so much of Marxist theory, a better definition of the linkages between the construction and uses of space needs development.

### *Ritual, culture and ideology*

A number of critical scholars have regarded the ritual order of societies, particularly as it relates to communication, as the primary element of ideology. Mattelart (1983) argues that

media has been fetishized to appear as though they are “endowed with autonomy, ‘a will and mind of their own,’“ or a “natural force” in society (116). Moreover, the messages disseminated by the media are comprised of signs that normalize social relations (117). This normalization is a mythology that serves as the basis of the proliferation of a dominant ideology.

Barthes (1972) defined myth as the attempt of the bourgeoisie to de-nominate its own class and, instead, integrate itself into the more general concept of the ‘state,’ (138). The bourgeois class universalizes itself through language and symbols such that “ideologically, all that is not bourgeois is obliged to *borrow* from the bourgeoisie,” (139). Myth takes on a naturalizing function by obscuring or removing historical reality from objects and normalizing their presence. Barthes thus argues that myth is “depoliticized speech,” (143). By removing history from an object, myth effectively eliminates the ability to speak about an object politically; the political is part of the past and replaced by the myth. More recently, Mosco (2004) suggests that myth in communication need not be taken simply as post-political, but that it can also be pre-political, serving as a starting point for discussion and the renewal of the political (16). But Mosco is careful not to dismiss myth as a form of domination. Rather, he highlights the important role myth plays in human societies as a fabric that connects individuals and provides an interpretation of meaning for individuals.

Myth, in this sense, is the symbolic representation of ideology, but to a point where the ideas are disconnected from the very myth by which they are to be represented. This illustrates the manner by which myth may, in fact, become depoliticized speech; if the myth is able to survive independently of its origins, it holds a powerful position. But this leaves us with an inadequate definition of ideology for moving ahead. In particular, how ideology

might relate to space, communication and cognition – in essence, a map of ideology’s presence – is lacking.

Jameson addresses this very issue of mapping and ideology in his 1984 essay “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” through his discussion of mental mapping. The notion of mental mapping comes, as outlined in the previous chapter, from Kevin Lynch’s work on the city. Jameson seeks to apply the term on a broader basis to the ideas that we use to organize ourselves within the real world. Using an Althusserian definition of “ideology as ‘the representation of the subject’s *Imaginary* relationship to his or her *Real* conditions of existence,’” (90), Jameson proposes the use of such cognitive maps to better investigate social relations. The objective in this exercise is not to produce a mimetic depiction of all knowledge, but to put forward a symbolic component to the real and imagined worlds of experience. This serves not to map each individual’s relation to their experienced world, but to begin establishing a “new political art” that relates individuals and groups to “the world space of multinational capital” while finding new means by which struggle might take place (92).

The strength of Jameson’s proposal is that his definition of ideology requires not only the abstract relationship between the individual’s conception of real and imaginary, but also the symbolic. The symbolic function of the map allows for the articulation of ideas through cultural artifacts and, likewise, the exploration of ideas by way of examination of the cultural mappings of a given period. Shifts in cultural artifacts can be taken as entry points into the larger social shifts in a given period. But Jameson critiques Lynch’s work for its focus upon the individual’s local experience in the city. While the individual may produce mental maps of particular locations and experiences, Jameson argues that the concept of the mental map is more useful in reconfiguring intellectual explorations of global discourses and

ideas. Indeed, this may be a useful application of the mental map practice, but also limited in its approach. It is, in fact, by way of the individual and shared mental maps within particular localities that we might begin to understand how lived local spaces might be connected to possible global ideational maps. The city is, in one regard, part of a cultural artifact to be read; it is an assembly of symbols that constitute a map. Film, which uses and depicts the city in a variety of ways, constitutes another layer of mapping. Otherwise stated, the local relations individuals construct within their particular settings through interpersonal interaction and the use of media may provide the bases – whether they be understood as myths, rituals or practices – for entry into broader discussions of global movements and ideas. In essence, this is a means by which we might study the patterns of understanding within given populations.

Mental mapping may thus prove a useful conceptual tool for approaching the relationship between human experience, visual production and the city. But while presented as a conceptual problem in the work of Lynch and Jameson, a more detailed discussion as to how mental maps might be conceived is required. In particular, mental maps are more than simply the collected experiences and memories of individual actors. Rather, they encompass a variety of collective memories and power dynamics that coalesce in shared ideas and notions regarding the world. Because of this, mental maps must not only be understood as guides to recognizing patterns of organization. They are, in fact, elements of social relations that are maintained through power within cultural and economic institutions.

*Cultural Capital and social relations*

Bourdieu (1984) provides the conceptual framework within which we might be able to more fully develop an understanding of these relations. In his discussion of different forms of capital, Bourdieu identifies cultural capital as a distinct form of capital that functions in ways separate from the simple accumulation of labour, transferable into money, as in economic capital. Cultural capital is also different from social capital, or the connections of social relations individuals maintain. Bourdieu defines cultural capital as the institutionalized forms of social relations, such as educational institutions and designated qualifications. He further divides cultural capital into three types: the embodied state, the objectified state and the institutionalized state. The embodied state comes out of education within the family and distinguishes class. In its embodied state, cultural capital consists of the informal education and socialization that starts from birth within the family. As such, in its embodied form cultural capital cannot be attained simply by chance; rather, it is part of a complex series of practices transferred from one generation to the next through intimate familial interactions. The objectified state of cultural capital is in the form of material things that can be sold, but that mask the true value of their worth – which is distinguished by taste and scarcity. In its objectified state, cultural capital does not represent the economic value of an item in relation to labour and raw material costs of an item. Rather, it represents the taste of the possessor distinguished by such an item. Finally, the institutionalized state of cultural capital encompasses value assigned by virtue of accreditation, such as degrees through educational systems. When considered in this manner, Bourdieu explains that “cultural goods can be appropriated both materially – which presupposes economic capital – and symbolically – which presupposes cultural capital,” (247).

It is this reference to the symbolic nature of cultural capital that further delineates the normalizing role culture plays in a given society. While the various forms of cultural capital may be transformed into monetary capital, they are not recognized as such. Instead, cultural capital is masked as symbolic capital, or it is “unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence, as authority exerting an effect of (mis)recognition,” (245). This symbolic capital, in turn, lends itself to a “symbolic logic of distinction” where cultural capital provides “material and symbolic profits for the possessors of a large cultural capital.” The social construction of scarcity thus lends to privileged opportunity by way of cultural capital.

The fact that cultural capital is often obscured as symbolic capital means that the system of cultural production, trade and accumulation appears as part of a normalized system. Bourdieu explains that:

Cultural capital in its objectified state presents itself with all the appearances of an autonomous, coherent universe which, although the product of historical action, has its own laws, transcending individual wills, and which, as the example of language well illustrates, therefore remains irreducible to that which each agent, or even the aggregate of the agents, can appropriate (i.e., to the cultural capital embodied in each agent or even in the aggregate of the agents). (247)

It is through the cultural system within a society that individuals and groups “map” their relations to both the social, material and imaginary worlds in which they exist. Individuals use language, cultural objects, education and consumption of artifacts to map out their tastes and social relations, both in a demonstrable manner for others to observe as well as to make sense of their own reality. Mental mapping is useful in relation to cultural capital because of the relation each has to the visual in contemporary society. If the map is understood as primarily a visual artifact, then the objectified capital that carries symbols to differentiate items and brands becomes the map’s key for navigation through social relations in contemporary society. Nonetheless, mental mapping should not be understood as the

exclusive domain of the cultural. Political, economic and cultural factors play structuring roles in individual experience and the overall social body's formation. It is by reading these three components together that we might gain a more complete picture of structuring conditions of social relations and human experience.

Despite the relation between mental mapping and cultural capital, Bourdieu's discussion is more useful than that of Jameson's because cultural capital necessarily makes evident the contradictions of its own system. Bourdieu explains that cultural capital "exists as symbolically and materially active, effective capital only insofar as it is appropriated by agents and implemented and invested as a weapon and a stake in the struggles which go on in the fields of cultural production," (247). And even further, these struggles extend into social classes: "struggles in which the agents wield strengths and obtain profits proportionate to their mastery of this objectified capital, and therefore to the extent of their embodied capital," (247).

Mattelart (1983) highlights the means by which culture becomes a crucial element of delineating class lines through definitions of the "popular" against those of the "elite." In defining the term "popular", Mattelart borrows from Brecht: "Through the term *popular*, we refer to the people who not only participate in evolution, but take possession of it, impose their will on it, condition it," (18). The "popular" is dangerous in the eyes of the elite because it comprises "the idea of men and women united, linked by objective situations and the consciousness of living together, capable of developing solutions for their survival and liberation," (18). That members of the broad population are capable of self-determination runs contrary to the dominant trajectories of communication research in the 20th century that places specialist practitioners in control of decision-making for the rest of the mass society. Dissent in these models is either criminalized or co-opted, both for the ease of

management and control. Mattelart explains that a popular culture, in fact, “can only be defined in a process of opposition to the hegemonic culture. It does not exist in itself,” (24). The division established between classes through cultural distinction is a crucial part of discussing struggle and conflict.

Along the same lines, Bourdieu’s conception of cultural capital necessarily implies struggle and conflict. In order for cultural capital to have value, individuals are required to appropriate, implement and invest the capital. It is employed as a weapon insofar as the scarcity of objectified artifacts, the prestige of embodied capital and the specialization within the institutionalized state are necessarily poised against mass culture. As such, cultural capital is used to demarcate class divisions, but in a way that obscures the accumulation of economic capital through the cultural artifacts and processes of a given family, institution or society. The three types of capital – economic, social and cultural – thus operate together in underpinning the bases of social relations, but are often studied separately. Moreover, Bourdieu’s categories of capital demonstrate the integrative nature of culture, society and economics, rather than a base-superstructure model often proposed in critical studies that would suggest culture is less important or prominent during times of economic crisis. And, related to the notion of mental mapping above, cultural capital offers a conceptual approach to studying the myths within a society that lend to the obscurity, reinforcement and reproduction of dominant economic systems – the ideological construction of human relations to the material world, naturalized through hegemonic processes.

If, as Bourdieu suggests, cultural capital only attains value when appropriated and invested as a weapon of struggle, particularly in cultural production, then the conflicts within such productive processes deserve further analysis. Cultural capital plays an important role in the chapters ahead as I approach city space, labour and the cultural industries within each of

Paris and Vancouver. Of particular importance to the following study is how such investigations are not limited to industry-classified categories of production such as labour, employers and consumers. Rather, the nature of cultural capital lends itself to struggles across society and, in fact, cannot be delineated by industrial classification. And this further highlights limitations of traditional communication studies that limit themselves to studying dominant industrial categories of cultural production. The incorporation of ideology and, in turn, hegemony, might serve to broaden the discussion across society.

This discussion begins to move us toward a more complete understanding of ideology, but there remains an element that proves problematic. In the various conceptions of ideology, the individual is posed as an external actor, available to be plugged into the cultural, economic or social systems. Recent literature on technology highlights this problem, in part. Feenberg (1999), for example, points to the social construction process of development a technology undergoes. A technology may take various forms over its historical development, each addressing a particular problem of knowledge or functional need. These forms reflect the desires and struggles of populations struggling for a preferred model. The process is thus driven by individual actors, not the technology itself. But when a dominant model prevails, the technology itself is presented as a given through a process of closure by those in control of the dominant form. Most important to this discussion from Feenberg's work is the idea that technologies have social assumption and ideologies engrained in their design and function. As a result, technologies comprise much more than simply an objective tool; rather, they reflect systems of control within a society, masked by a normalizing process of closure that makes the artifact itself appear unchangeable and a driving element of production.

Mattelart (1979) outlines the problems in ignoring the socio-cultural elements of technology. He highlights that traditional Marxian conceptions of culture simply establish an oppressive understanding of cultural domination without accounting for the competing voices and the actual contributions workers make to cultural production. Marxian perspectives of domination inappropriately suggest “the productive apparatus only has to change hands (be nationalized) for it to change its character,” (19). Given the engrained cultural assumptions in a piece of technology, such a transfer is itself insufficient. While allocating technology instrumental qualities, such perspectives fail to question the social relations of production beyond the control of the material means of production. This leads Mattelart to ask, “Is not the development of production also essentially a social and political problem whose solution depends on the initiative and creativity of workers?” This argument has been demonstrated by Martin’s historical study of the development of radio and the telephone, with specific attention to the role of the gender in the workforce, control of labour and the engendering of the technologies (Martin, 1991). In particular, the study explores how the workers provided a gendered human tone to the technologies of radio and telephone, but how the workers were also constricted by corporate rules outlining modes of speech and behavior with the public.

Such understandings of worker creativity are important and, in fact, closely related to contemporary research on the city itself. As discussed earlier, a study of communication from a ritual perspective focuses analysis away from systems or infrastructure and toward human activities around such objects. Although not explained in this manner explicitly, recent critical urban theory has focused discussion in this very direction. By asking what the nature of the city and urbanism as a way of life might be, this area of work has redirected attention away from the physical obsession of architecture and toward a socio-cultural

assessment of the city's composition. This composition, above all else and throughout changing city forms, consists of human actors and how they direct their labour comprises the city's physical artifacts. As such, definitions of the city and labour are developed in the following sections.

### **Understanding the city**

As explained earlier, David Harvey's work introduces how we might begin to think about space. More important, he also demonstrates how space can be a particularly important element in studies of labour, economics, politics and culture. Harvey defines his study on contemporary society around the term "post-modernism", beginning in the early 1970s (1987; 1989). In defining post-modernism, Harvey points to the increasing emphasis on flexibility in production and consumption, particularly into the 1980s (1987: 260-1). Within the context of urban studies, Harvey defines post-modernism as the tendency to reject plans that "focus on large scale, technologically rational, austere and functionally efficient 'international style' design" and, instead, a desire to focus on "vernacular traditions, local history, and specialized spatial designs" in any number of contexts "with a much greater eclecticism of style," (262). This, Harvey suggests, lends credit to Jameson's argument that post-modernism is defined by a "cultural logic" that defines a hegemonic structure underlying contemporary processes.

Harvey argues that it is through urbanism that the "flexible" processes of accumulation takes place (263). Important to understanding the process of flexible accumulation, however, is the fact that the political-economic transitions over a given period are closely related to cultural-aesthetic shifts. It is in this regard that Harvey links the cultural perspective of post-modernism with production shifts in means of accumulation. For

example, perhaps the most significant emergence in the 1970s urbanism within capitalist change was the rise of what Harvey calls the “entrepreneurial city,” (264). The entrepreneurial city model of governance saw urban governments restructuring in order to compete with other urban centres for activities that Harvey breaks into four categories: international division of labour; centres of consumption; control and command activities; and government redistributions (264).

At this point, two arguments in Harvey’s work must be highlighted, both of which will help carry us into a consideration of Soja’s work on the city. First, Harvey highlights a state of urban crisis that was experienced by cities throughout North American and to varying degrees, European cities. The urban crisis is exemplary of what Harvey points to as a basic contradiction of capitalism’s desire to be free of material obligations but its need for physical investments in order to return profit. The physical object has a “sclerotic” effect on capital – in essence trapping investment and, thus, creating a crisis when the return on investment slows or when access to the capital is required for other purposes. As a result, there is an imperative to find new ways of extracting profit. This is the role of the entrepreneur, as an individual who is willing to tolerate risk in an effort to achieve return. As Soja explains of Harvey’s work, “Capitalist development must therefore always negotiate a precarious balance between the creation and the destruction of its specific geography, a knife-edge path that becomes most problematic during times of crisis and restructuring,” (2000: 99). The flux between crisis and creation that underlies Harvey’s conception of post-Fordist development is based on the same neo-Schumpeterian economic theory of innovation that fuels much contemporary economic and business-development planning of the past two decades.

The second observation of Harvey's work is that in his discussion urbanism is a phenomenon that encompasses much more than the city itself. In essence, cities are a form of social structuring that necessarily entail social inequality; cities are necessary artifacts of production and accumulation in capitalist market systems. But in light of this, urban environments, with their agglomerations of populations and classes, are primary sites of resistance formations. Urbanism itself is more than simply the agglomeration of populations or the accumulation of profits. Rather, urbanism is a description of a mode of living that entails intense human networks and significant potential for creativity and conflict. Soja picks up on this thread of discussion.

Soja extends the notion of the "city" to the concept of "cityspace" which encompasses "a dynamic process of (social) spatial construction" and is thus not so much something to be explained as "*a source of explanation in itself*" (2000: 11, emphasis in original). In explaining this definition, Soja introduces another term, *synekism* or the "condition arising from dwelling together in one house," (12). The "condition" to which Soja is referring relates to what urban theorist Jane Jacobs identifies as "the spark of city economic life," (quoted in Soja 2000: 3). The city can only be understood in relation to the complex social structures that exist as a result of an agglomeration of individuals living in close proximity.

By drawing from Jacobs, Soja proposes a way of thinking about cities that does not place cities as an object of analysis or an outcome of a particular process. To get at the root of what he is proposing, Soja refers to the work of Jane Jacobs in going back 5000 years to the point when the first cities and their accompanying urbanism as a way of life emerged. Prior to this period, Soja points out, humans had lived as hunters and gatherers. As some members of society engaged in trade, a larger support system would have been developed to allow this activity to continue. What Jacobs proposes and Soja introduces to urban theory is

that the city is not a thing, but a process by which agglomerations of individuals allow for increasingly complex socio-economic systems of administration and management of resources. But these agglomerations also allow for a “condition” of creativity and collaboration. The increased social connections and potential access to accumulated resources allows urban populations the opportunity to focus attention and energies on aspects that are otherwise unattainable. The parallel with Harvey’s work is that this creativity is often a plank upon which innovation strategies rest; the more opportunity for populations to be creative, the more likely an urban population will be innovative and develop a competitive edge over other locales. This conception of urbanism is important because it necessarily places creativity and cultural life at the centre of urban development. These are both the direct products of human interaction and illustrate the creative force of human activity as represented in labour.

An assertion that agglomerations are the root of creative activity and the development of cultural capital is prevalent in contemporary writing across various fields in the social sciences. Randall Collins’ *The sociology of philosophies* (1998) proposes a theoretical approach to the history of thought focused on the personal relationships in specific geographical locations. The opportunity for interaction and the development of face-to-face contact was key to the development of clusters of ideas characterized by “emotional energy” and “cultural capital”. This vein of thought has also attracted attention from policy and academic research prescriptivists looking for formulae to achieve creative environments (Castells and Hall 1994). The resulting studies have attempted to develop formulas for achieving innovative economic clusters around technological developments. Such discussions recognize creativity as a key element to the success of capitalist systems and, thus, urban environments as desired sites of accumulation. Nonetheless, urbanism as a way

of life is not limited to dense urban locations; with the transportation and communication networks present across many geographies, the impacts of urbanism are felt, if not lived, by individuals in remote locations as well. For example, Magnusson (1994) argues that urbanism is the overarching organizational form of social relations in contemporary global politics. One's ability to live an urban lifestyle in a contemporary global society, however, largely depends on one's socio-economic status. Urbanism can be "lived" in any number of places; the ability to practice such mobility depends on one's economic resources. The interconnected cities allow for mobility of individuals, capital and goods while "municipalities are largely anachronistic, because they are tied to particular territories and burdened with tasks of government," (633). Cities thus provide an interesting point of analysis for conflict and resistance to systems of inequality in contemporary socio-economic systems.

In light of these conceptions of the city and urban life, it is evident that a political economy of the urban environment cannot be separate from a study of the cultural and aesthetic movements that are part of such phenomena. If cities are to be understood as the necessary product of living together, encompassing a multitude of ideas, actions and movements, then the political economic and cultural realms cannot be adequately studied and theorized in isolation from each other. Given this need for mutual attention, a more comprehensive framework for understanding human experience within these two overlapping realms of activity must be assessed.

### **Ritual Communication and Spaces of Memory**

The task now is to link the understandings of space and communication, as discussed to this point, in a manner useful to the study of film and the city in subsequent chapters. I suggest

that a logical meeting point is between Carey's assessment of the field of communication and Soja's discussion of geography and urban studies. I propose that the most important parallels between the two writers come in their attempts to expand analysis of social interaction into a process-oriented approach. Carey argues to shift the focus of analysis within communication studies away from an outcome-based approach of the transmission model. His alternative proposal of a ritual model of communication where human interaction is part of a process geared toward the "maintenance of society in time," (18) provides more opportunity for fleshing out a more culturally appropriate understanding of human activities around both the act of communicating and the media through which these actions are performed.

Likewise, Soja (2000) points to two predominant means toward understanding cityspace that understand cityspace as a "source of explanation" for understanding other processes. One way of studying cityspace is by understanding "a set of materialized 'spatial practices' that work together to produce and reproduce the concrete forms and specific patterning of urbanism as a way of life," (10). The second form of analysis brings into focus the "conceived space of the imagination," (11). But, as discussed earlier, within these approaches Soja points out that often "Cityspace is seen as something to be explained, reduced to an outcome or product of essentially social action and intention. Only rarely is it recognized as a dynamic process of (social) spatial construction, as a source of explanation itself," (11). In order to remedy this Soja suggests a third approach in which "the spatial specificity of urbanism is investigated as fully lived space, a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual, locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency," (11). As an example of this approach, Soja equates such an approach to telling an interpretation of "lived time" and thus the creation of "life stories". He explains:

Understanding lived space can be compared to writing a biography, an interpretation of the lived time of an individual; or more generally to historiography, the attempt to

describe and understand the lived time of human collectivities or societies. In all these ‘life stories,’ perfect or complete knowledge is impossible. There is too much that lies beneath the surface, unknown and perhaps unknowable, for a complete story to be told. The best we can do is selectively explore, in the most insightful ways we can find, the infinite complexity of life through its intrinsic spatial, social, and historical dimensions, its interrelated spatiality, sociality, and historicality. (2000: 11-12)

This brings Soja remarkably close to Carey’s framework for studying communication. The attempts to construct and cope with reality are, in fact, the basic activities of humans, observable through ritualized activities that provide social and cultural stability. Carey explains:

Our attempts to construct, maintain, repair and transform reality are publicly observable activities that occur in historical time. We create, express, and convey our knowledge of and attitudes toward reality through the construction of a variety of symbol systems: art, science, journalism, religion, common sense, mythology. (30)

These attempts to organize “reality”, acting as lenses through which individuals and societies make sense of the world, form the basis of ideologies and the source of control and conflict. In an effort to command authority and control, accumulation becomes a primary political objective. While obvious in an economic sense, this is the point where Bourdieu’s conception of cultural capital becomes crucial; an ideology tacitly articulates itself through cultural capital. This is most easily recognized through the symbolic capital within a society’s possession, such as artefacts signified by symbols in dominant cultural references.

In contemporary research, where transmission models of communication are dominant over ritual forms such as oral traditions, the cultural capital recognized in a variety of historical artefacts takes on an added significance. This is because much cultural memory is stored in artefacts, or the media in which messages were transcribed. In Arendt’s sense of technology as a tool to facilitate human activity, media of various sorts, including the city, have become the memory containers of human knowledge. In effect, with the disappearance of oral traditions and ritual-based communication, humans have become reliant on

technologies for the outsourcing of memory functions. The extreme result of this is the contemporary obsession with creating total access to knowledge through electronic networks and databases – reminiscent of Jorge Louis Borges' map as big as the world.

Described in relation to contemporary conceptions of the urban environment, Pierre Nora illustrates both the importance of space and media to the contemporary city and the strategies around the accumulation of cultural capital. Nora explains that memory is a lived practice of daily life: "Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past. . . . Memory installs remembrance within the sacred; history, always prosaic, releases it again," (633). But this takes place alongside an increasing tendency to rely on external means of information storage rather than individually held knowledge. Ritual communication tends toward memory as a form of social storage of information while transmission models displace memory and oral tradition by relying on history, recorded in durable media. Nora proposes that in modernity personal memory has decreased in its prominence as a social ritual. Rather than being an individual act, memory is considered a function of archival storage, thus becoming external to individual experience. He explains, "The less memory is experienced from the inside the more it exists only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs – hence the obsession with the archive that marks our age, attempting at once the complete conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past," (636).

Attempts to ritualize communication within a predominantly transmission-based society means that the preservation of memory takes on a very spatial form: "Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things," (633). The present age searches for memory, precisely because it no longer uses it. Thus, Nora argues that *lieux*

*de mémoire* arise in the contemporary period. These places are “embodiments of a memorial consciousness” that is almost completely done away with. “They make their appearance by virtue of the deritualization of our world – producing, manifesting, establishing, constructing, decreeing, and maintaining by artifice and by will a society deeply absorbed in its own transformation and renewal, one that inherently values the new over the ancient, the young over the old, the future over the past,” (636). As such, archives are viewed as tangible evidence of the past, transmitting information no longer held in a collective consciousness. Memory is removed from social ritual and replaced with transmission-oriented collections.

This is not to say that the perceptions of memory are, in fact, the objective elements purported by contemporary society. Nora explains that the *lieux de mémoire* are not static in meaning, but “only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications,” (639). As a result, the interpretation of the containers of memory’s artifacts are open to interpretation. This creates a tension in contradictions: the effort is to create a library as big as the world, but the entirety of interpretation can never be encompassed by the library. Given this importance of particular locations to the accumulation of cultural capital, the uneven development that results is a product of power dynamics developed over both time and space. The crisis of meaning in a society that recognizes the plasticity of interpretation, accompanied by a continued desire to accumulate cultural capital demonstrates the power dynamics present in contemporary cultural industries. And these processes are based on the activities of individuals, or the workers and audiences who labour through increasingly blurred lines of production and consumption to generate capital embodied in these cultural artifacts.

### **Labour and the role of creativity in spatial production**

Mattelart's earlier question regarding the creativity of workers is provocative, particularly to the political economist in communication studies. Indeed, the role of labour is largely absent from the pages of North American research that has otherwise tended to focus on structural aspects of communication industries such as ownership, policy and market share. There has been, nonetheless, some work focused on labour in the field. And, as in the previous sections of this chapter, there are influences from other disciplines that help develop an understanding of labour's role in contemporary communication studies.

In returning to the work of Miege, touched upon in the last chapter, we find a conception of labour's role in the production of cultural commodities. Miege separates cultural products into three categories: hardware or the platforms used to record or use other cultural products, products with low reproducibility such as original or limited edition prints, and products that are reproducible but that require "intervention" by artistic workers in the form of authorship, recordable performance or design, for example (31-3). The valorization of capital is difficult in relation to the cultural commodity. This is due to the process of reproduction of cultural artifacts requiring the intervention of cultural workers. For example, the production process is structured around what Miege calls a "collective" labour system. By collective labour, Miege means that workers with specialized tasks are part of a larger process. In essence, collectivity replaces artisanal means of artistic reproduction. At the same time, however, the original artist's work or "imprint" must be evident in the final product, regardless of the number of copies made (25-6). The value of the product is, in part, linked to the origins of its conception by an artist. However, once the product is produced as a cultural commodity for the purpose of sale, investment capital is required to bring an idea to production and, subsequently, to market. Thus, the role of the producer becomes

instrumental in the production process for the purpose of raising capital. But Miege cautions that the producer “is not only an intermediary between cultural labor (the singer, the writer, the engraver, the director, etc.) and the industrial capital,” (28) required for reproduction. Rather, the producer plays a role in the product’s development from the earliest stages of conception (28). The reason for this is directly related to the role of capital: if the product must be marketable for the purpose of earning profit on an investment, then the product must be likely to appeal to an audience and of a price that will induce sales. As such, the producer is more than a gatekeeper, but has influence on the actual conception of the products.

Miege explains that the producer’s role is often the target for resistance by artists’ collectives and societies fighting for “creative independence,” (28). But the very systems that claim independence for artists in the creative realm actually serve to limit the benefits of such arrangements to the select few individuals of sufficient stature to demand a share of profits earned from their work (29). The remaining artists and workers are subject to intermittent work in a system that centralizes creative authority in the hands of a few economic coordinators. In order to maximize profit, it is in the industry’s interest to exert significant control over the production process and the workers. From this perspective, the cultural industries are not significantly different from other industries. At the same time, cultural industries have long relied upon cultural capital as a key factor behind the generation of value. The “logic” held by those within the industry is unique in that the driving force is to produce products that will appeal to audience tastes. These logics have, in turn, been adopted across various industries in an effort to differentiate mass-produced products on the basis of taste and the appearance of scarcity. This is precisely the problem Benjamin identified around the notion of “aura” in his study of art amidst mechanical reproduction. A

few select cultural workers – generally those considered stars – are required to lend “authenticity” to products, particularly in fine art and luxury industries while a larger army of workers performs significant productive functions on an as-required basis.

Given the trend toward organizing industry around cultural “logics”, Miege’s focus on the distinctions around cultural industries is useful for developing a conceptual understanding of contemporary industry directions. At the same time, the focus on such distinctions has its limitations as the same logics become prevalent across various sectors whose material products are not initially related to the cultural sector but rely on the sector to create a market through advertising and synergistic partnerships. Moreover, Miege demonstrates how the cultural industries appropriate cultural capital and the process of creativity, but he stops short of turning his discussion toward how workers are, in turn, involved in the formation of their respective industries or, beyond industry lines, their social and spatial environments. As such, Miege’s descriptions of cultural labour and reproduction are important to my study, but insufficient on their own.

In particular, I am concerned here with the emergence of literature addressed in the previous chapter that focuses on entrepreneurial labour. The notion of entrepreneurial labour suggests prematurely that post-Fordist systems of production have essentially localized and decentralized capitalism through small, independent firms that specialize in what are argued to be artisanal tasks. This new form of capitalism is proposed as worker-friendly, having reconstituted decision-making power outside of the integrated firm of Fordist production. I have already outlined the problems with the assumptions underlying this work and the gloss it provides over underlying structural control across contemporary industries, particularly as such discussions pertain to the film industry. But I also see that such work points to particular elements of the worker’s role in systems of production that

are often overlooked. What I am arguing is not that entrepreneurial labour doesn't exist, but that the adoption of such an understanding and promotion of labour – particularly by workers themselves – is particularly problematic.

The notion of entrepreneurial labour in itself is an entry point into understanding how, as Herod argues, "workers may also be actively involved in the uneven production of space as part of their own social and spatial praxis designed to facilitate their own self-reproduction," (1997: 12). In much critical writing, capital is viewed as the force of decision-making processes around spatial investment. Workers constituting labour are viewed as the recipients of decisions, forced to cope with predetermined directives. But this dynamic does not represent the richness of contemporary labour's activities or potential. As already discussed in the previous chapter, Pendakur makes this mistake in relation to the film industry in suggesting that workers in various locales are forced to compete against each other amidst an environment of fickle capital desires and heightened mobility. This assertion, however, obscures labour's role in actually initiating the inter-regional competition as in British Columbia's entrepreneurial labour model (Murphy 1997).

Herod argues that it is generally in workers' perceived best interests to attract productive activity if they desire to continue working. As such, "workers have a vested interest in attempting to make space in certain ways," (1997: 3). This, in turn, means workers and capital constantly cope with the intended and unintended consequences of decisions and actions made by a multiplicity of actors for an equally diverse number of reasons. To conceptualize labour in this way is to significantly challenge the way communication industries have been studied in North American research. The problematic nature of understanding labour in this manner is, for many, that labour has opted to reinforce the dominant market system, even if such a position is seemingly detrimental to workers' well-

being in the long term. Given the various motivations behind individual actions, however, this is only partly the case.

There is a difference between labour movements that actively co-opt the market system as a means of advancement and those that view market-oriented activity as a necessity, at least in the short term, but that view a new form of socio-economic organization as a key objective. This difference is illustrated by two traditions in labour organization. Pure-and-Simple unionism advocates better wages and work conditions for workers. Unions operating under this model often collaborate with employers and governments to uphold the market systems and create stable employment for their members. The Pure-and-Simple unionism model often aligns itself with defined professions ad trades. Conversely, syndicalist movements have traditionally advocated a focus on low-wage, unskilled workers. Syndicalist unionism organize workers with the intention of eventually changing the economic models and bringing workers into a more active position of democratic management of their labour. To achieve such a result, one line of labour studies suggests, workers come to realize that their labour is not actually dependent upon capital in order to fulfill its desired role. This is precisely the point writers such as Dyer-Witheford make regarding the concept of autonomous labour; labour is able to function without external organization of its own activities and is “potentially autonomous,” (1999: 68). At least in this area of discussion, labour is an increasingly-recognized aspect in communication research and, perhaps, opening new debates within the field.

An earlier study by autonomist theorists (Corsani et. al. 1996) assesses autonomous labour within the Parisian production sectors largely dependent upon communication media and accompanying skills of workers. Corsani et. al. refer to production processes, of which a primary labour category is “immaterial labour,” (29). By introducing the concept of

immaterial labour, these writers are responding to arguments that knowledge workers constitute a new, desirable type of labour. They define immaterial labour as activities that produce cultural content and merchandise information. Such a conception of work entails productive activity extending beyond traditionally-defined workdays. The authors suggest that labouring time and free time are increasingly blurred in this conception of labour. This is paralleled by obscured divisions between conception and execution. Elaborate coordinations of knowledge are required in immaterial production and this organization is left to the workers. As a result, the maintenance of social relations between workers is crucial for the development of work opportunities. The creative labourers are also entrepreneurs who manage work across the defined space of their metropolitan region because work no longer happens in one place; instead, one's work takes place across an entire metropolitan region. Within this system, select firms maintain the upper hand in the allocation of resources. The success of this model for the firms is that they maintain control of the creation and production process while having effectively offloaded logistical management of the processes onto the labourers themselves.

This model is, by no accident, very similar to the flexible specialization referred to in the previous chapter. And there is a definite labour perspective to this process. Key individuals are able to effectively capitalize on their social capital and effectively navigate their way through such a process very effectively. Their voices are often amplified by industry associations looking for examples as to why liberalization of industry regulation might be a positive direction for the workforce. Nonetheless, immaterial labour represents a response to the flexible specialization model. Decision-making power is still vested in centralized cores of resource management in corporate headquarters. And the underside to such processes is the growing scarcity of work for the number of labourers whose skills,

although required by their respective sectors, are not central to the industry. The liberalization of industries leaves significant portions of workers, whether skilled or unskilled, without regular work. Particular demographic groups, particularly women and immigrants, are affected more than others. Given the surplus of available skilled labour at any given moment within a metropolitan region, Corsani et. al. term the urban region an “Immaterial Labour Basin.” Instability, masked as flexibility, is a key ingredient of the innovation economy and an attractive aspect to firms and workers looking to relocate.

Significantly different in the present discussion from the flexible specialization model is the fact that workers do not necessarily take to such arrangements willingly. And many establish counter-movements in attempts to reassert influence upon the terrain of production. The strongest expression of such movements come not when workers ask for reform, but when they reject the systems that benefit from their labour and see themselves as truly “autonomous.” Dyer-Witheford highlights that in order for labour to effectively self-manage its activities in an immaterial economy, it must also have access to the means of communication to perform such functions. And it is by having such ready access to and knowledge of communication systems that true potential for social change might be found. As Dyer-Witheford points out, however, this conception has come under criticism precisely because the industries most reliant on immaterial skills, the workers with the most readily available access and know-how to technologies are often the most fragmented and least willing to organize, feeling comfortable privileged or superior in their positions compared with much of the population (1999: 87).

Such a critique is relevant, but the potential within a population to recognize its autonomy against systems of capital is remarkable. This is particularly the case in contrast to moves by other workers’ movements toward an entrepreneurial system of attracting labour.

Both of these models exist within and are promoted by innovation-based theories of economics, including a significant focus upon entrepreneurial forms of organization. But in sharing these common economic underpinnings, the adoption or rejection of capital's organizing influences provide radically diverging perspectives on the potential for worker influence on the productive process. At the same time, both models demonstrate the important role labour has in developing the terrain of production.

How labour conceptualizes its role in the local production process, particularly within the visual production industries, is of particular importance in my discussions in the following chapters. Indeed, the labour movements in each of Paris and Vancouver have employed diverging tactics in efforts to influence the geographic development of their respective industries. This happens although both groups share a basic premise of their actions – namely, that immaterial labour is based on a mix of globally competitive processes constituting labour's self-organization. While this comparison is interesting in its own right, it does not move beyond industry categories of “labour” to address the larger issue of cultural production in the city. In particular, cityspace is increasingly constituted by activities of production through the very act of consumption and the very lines between labour and leisure are further blurred. As noted in the previous chapter, consumers or “audiences” need to be included in a conception of labour, particularly given their role, as Smythe points out, in labouring to produce value for media by way of advertising dollars. When the city itself is a media artifact – a destination point for the visual consumer in the form of the tourist, a production location for film and television crews, an advertising venue for companies that drape building with advertisements, and a site of spectacle for all – the crowds of the city streets are consumers who produce value by their very presence in the urban environment. Given this, conceptions of labour need to be assessed using a broader scope of analysis.

An area of primary interest in this discussion centres around the role of the public as commodified cityscapes as well as audience members who valorize cultural capital through consumption. This is to say that when members of the public – the audiences as well as the accidental backdrop “extras” of visual production industries – recognize their roles as producers of cultural capital, there is much more likelihood of more widespread resistance to dominant forms of cultural and economic appropriation. It is through the “popular” recognition of cultural capital within a given location that individuals and groups begin to recognize the power they wield within a culturally-focused economic sector. Much of this recognition, however, rests within the nature of cultural capital in an industry largely reliant upon visual production. And the visual aspect of this system is what has been largely absent from discussions of space, communication and labour to this point. This is therefore the topic of the final section of this chapter.

### **Visuality in contemporary cultural sectors**

To this point, the significant focus on Harvey and Soja’s work has only briefly acknowledged the debt both authors owe to the work of Henri Lefebvre. Indeed, the centrality of Lefebvre’s work cannot be underestimated within contemporary geo-social concerns across the social sciences. Lefebvre’s three categories of spatial experience form the sociological underpinnings to the vast majority of recent “spatialized” critical literature. At the same time, much of the literature influenced by Lefebvre’s writing ignores an important element of his contemporary social critique: visualization. This is important because visuality, according to Lefebvre, is a defining characteristic of the underlying logics of contemporary society. As such, in this final section I develop a theory of visualization that completes the discussions

of the previous sections in this chapter. In addition, I introduce a definition of film and cinema that will help to delineate the area of study in subsequent chapters.

Spaces in which representation occurs and, likewise, the representation of spaces are crucial to developing an understanding of visual culture in relation to experience of the material world. Lefebvre illustrates the transition of importance from spaces of representation to representational spaces through visualization during the Italian Renaissance. Theories of space based upon an abstraction – perspective – ushered in a new ‘logic of visualization’ that, by way of becoming influential in understandings of space, became pivotal to the means by which spatial design in architecture and urban design were understood (41). Lefebvre introduces two spatial concepts that assert the materiality of the “spatial body” rather than simply a “subjectivity” in individual experience. First, absolute space suggests a relationship between cognition and the material environment. There is an implied complexity in this relationship wherein the individual subject constitutes itself only as a material body, in relationship to the material world. As such, the natural world and the individual are mutually constitutive, meaning that space is inscribed with meaning through individual interaction with others and the world in which they find themselves. There cannot be one prescribed meaning of a particular place in this conception of space. Abstract space, on the other hand, renders the landscape instrumental for the purpose of maintaining power relations. Visual perception is the dominant form of perception in such a regime that attempts to render meaning transparent for the purposes of efficiency and the reinforcement of dominant hegemonies. Prescribed meaning of space takes precedent in this model. Homogeneity is largely the result.

What Lefebvre is proposing is that due to the shift in visuality in artistic representation, the symbolic representation of space became a concern above the actual

spaces in a society where individuals and groups were able to represent themselves and their ideas in a public sense. As such, visuality began to take hold as a primary ideological understanding of relations to space. This is crucial to understanding power dynamics given that authority was granted to visual representation as the legitimate means of spatial design, over actual lived spaces of individual experience. Because of this, visualization remains central throughout Lefebvre's work in explaining power dynamics in modern societies. And by locating a historical transition from spaces of representation to the representation of space, Lefebvre reminds us that the development of a logic of visualization has been gradual, although inextricably linked to the development of spaces throughout modern history.

Jay (1996) takes up the relationship between visuality and space as he highlights the importance of visualization of space within the construction of the modern city, using Paris as a specific example. A principal objective Haussmann brought to rebuilding the city in the 1850s was "to render Paris less obscure, less opaque," (117). This was to happen by way of two projects. The first was to use long boulevards to orient individuals to the city through sweeping vistas from significant landmark to the next. The second means of rendering the city less obscure was to map and survey the city for the first time (118). While the elimination of Paris' apparent obscurity was a successful task in one sense, it also demonstrated the power of new scopic regimes within modernity's urban framework: those controlling the most authoritative representations of space gained an advantage in controlling the physical spaces and their meanings as well. By way of comparison, Vancouver was built with the specific intention of creating rationalized space. Based upon the grid pattern of early military garrisons, the city remains a scene of rationally surveyed and ordered space. Over the past 30 years, the seeming non-space or every-space qualities of the city's

artifice has lent it an advantage to the global cinema industry. The city can become almost any place for the purpose of the camera.

Visual representation became the primary form of ordering the urban landscape throughout modernity. From the aesthetic standardization of urban artifices to the use of photography to record the appearances of criminals, the visual image took precedence in establishing authority and, indeed, the very bases of knowledge in modern society. Cinema's introduction to the urban landscape in the mid- to late-1890s offered new forms of visual representation. The visual image was increasingly able to record the quickening movement of the mechanized urban structures. Such trends were precisely what spurred Benjamin to comment that:

. . . in the studio the mechanical equipment has penetrated so deeply into reality that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of equipment is the result of a special procedure, namely, the shooting by the specially adjusted camera and the mounting of the shot together with other similar ones. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology. (233)

Benjamin's pronouncement recognized a new level of visual logic within the organization of human relations where the cultural symbol, detached from its signified object, becomes the dominant form of cultural product. As previously mentioned in reference to Miege's conception of the cultural industries, the problem of authenticity has remained central to the cultural industries throughout mechanical and, now, digital reproduction. I will explore this further in the following chapter with reference to the city's efforts to build its cultural capital and claims to authenticity in contemporary culture.

One of the ways the city has been engaged as a source of cultural capital, but also as part of an accumulation strategy, is through the promotion of the city as a character in narratives or stories in contemporary culture. In fact, I would suggest that cinema, or moving pictures, became the contemporary medium for the modern storyteller. The city, and

its double on the set, became the dominant forum for experimenting with the representation and exploitation of the medium. The city also plays a larger role within the cultural preservation of stories, institutionalizing the maintenance of images for the public. This has lead Virilio, in a more cynical version of Nora's earlier comments on memory, to suggest that the contemporary city, particularly in Europe, is the collection site of the unwanted past: "a discreetly funeral character," (53). In an age where the museum is one of the most sought-after cultural institutions, the cemetery analogy is appropriate for describing the displays of "products and sentimental flotsam of a failed modernity," (53). This is not a moral judgment, but rather a perspective on the nature of contemporary visual knowledge. In fact, cinema has developed into one of the most comprehensive visual cataloguing instruments of the urban museum: the Internet.

Thus given the interface of the contemporary city, the nature of cinema must be accounted for in the contemporary phenomenology of experience. Deleuze, for example, argues that phenomenology has not accounted for the "social and scientific factors which placed more and more movement into conscious life, and more and more images into the material world," (*Cinema I*: 56). This was, after all, a period when visual knowledge advanced from the frozen, abstract representation in the still image to the life-like imagery of movement, what Deleuze terms the "*movement-image*". But Deleuze cautions that phenomenology cannot be taken as a given; what it sets up "as a norm is 'natural perception' and its conditions" (57) which must not be taken for granted. Natural perception cannot be taken as the "anchoring" of subjectivity in the world. Movement must be understood "as a sensible form (Gestalt) which organizes the perceptive field as a function of a situation intentional consciousness," (57). A basic application of phenomenology to cinema replaces

"implicit knowledge and a second intentionality for the conditions of natural perception," (57). Thus cinema inverts the natural world as an unknowable element:

It is through the world, but makes the world itself something unreal or a tale. With the cinema, it is the world which becomes its own image, and not an image which becomes world. It will be noted that phenomenology, in certain respects, stops at pre-cinematographic conditions which explains its embarrassed attitude: it gives a privilege to natural perception which means that movement is still related to *poses* (simply existential instead of essential). As a result, cinematographic movement is both condemned as unfaithful to the conditions of perception and also exalted as the new story capable of 'drawing close to' the perceived and the perceiver, the world and perception," (57).

This is, in one respect, the very problem of communication studies as a field: the medium is viewed for its potentiality in reducing distances between individuals. This is not, however, the limit of a phenomenological approach to cinema.

Lefebvre (1991) takes a more critical approach to cinema and phenomenology than Deleuze engages (22). First, Lefebvre proposes that cinema is a symptom of spatial abstraction that obscures the presence of political power in patriarchal violence. It is by way of Euclidian space that spatial concepts are only accepted in abstracted forms of representation; that is, space is understood first by way of its representation in visual media through geometric representations. In contemporary knowledge, the visual (by way of the logic of visualization) has become dominant over any other way of knowing. This is evident in the prominence accorded the visual arts, particularly cinema.

The elements of Deleuze's work with which Lefebvre takes larger issue are the bases of the spatialized subjectivity in Husserlian phenomenology on which Deleuze bases his philosophical investigations (1991: 22). This is, in particular, the result of phenomenology's need to propose the individual's material body as subject rather than as, in Lefebvre's terminology, a "spatial body". The spatial body is "the production of a space" and "immediately subject to the determinants of that space: symmetries, interactions and

reciprocal actions, axes and planes, centres and peripheries, and concrete (spatio-temporal) oppositions," (195). This emphasizes the material nature of the body's existence. In particular, the material experience goes beyond emphasizing only the visual nature of phenomenological understanding. The relations between this material placement of the subject in space is an interesting point of analysis when considering recent discussions about the haptic nature of visualization (Bruno, 2002; Marks, 2000). These writers note that the visual sense does not work in isolation from the other senses. Visual perception detects sensual feelings more commonly associated with touch or haptic sensibilities. As Bruno argues, visualization must be understood as part of an emotional encounter with the tactile world. It is when the haptic and the visual are separated that visual experience is abstracted from material reality. For vision to function to its fullest extent, it must be part of and intrinsically reliant upon a full sensory experience of the body in space and in relation to apperceptive mental relations.

The notion of haptic visualization provides context for Lefebvre's discussion of visual abstraction. Modern and contemporary society's reliance on visual communication is problematic only in that the tendency is to move toward abstraction. Indeed, Lefebvre's insistence on understanding the "spatial body" goes a significant distance in maintaining this grounding. I further suggest that Lefebvre's work is most valuable when read in combination with Deleuze, not in opposition, and particularly in regard to their theories of visualization. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) suggest a formula for understanding the relationship between spatial distance and a phenomenological approach that is dependent upon more than simply visual interpretation. In doing so, they differentiate between different conceptions of space, suggesting a dialectic model of space such that smooth and striated spaces are the categories by which we may categorize perception. And in this discussion, the eye need not be

understood as only a visual tool. Rather, they suggest that space be conceived as a haptic experience, allowing for an inter-influential relationship of sensory experiences.

Smooth space is the perception of objects at a close range, while striated space is distant visual perception (493). As a result of the myopic nature of smooth space, the observer is not able to establish continuous orientation based upon identifiable landmarks. Rather, the orientation takes on more of a haptic nature than that of the visual. Slight movement at a close distance completely changes the points of reference upon which one might have fixed their bearings. Striated space has as a quality, alternatively, “constitution of a central perspective,” in which the observer’s distance allows for orientation based upon stably identified points of reference (494). It is this distance that allows the observer to discern patterns that are unrecognizable at close range, and from this perspective depends upon the visual logic of perception to discern universal repetitions without necessarily recognizing the interconnections of the local reality. There is, obviously, dynamic movement between these two notions of space, depending on an individual’s point of perspective.

Deleuze and Guattari do not limit the use of their smooth and striated spatial coupling to visual phenomena. Their applications of the terms range from art to labour. Overall, they suggest that social struggles, aesthetic movements and economic activities can be understood as dynamic movements between environments and situations that allow for varying degrees of creativity, orientation and order. Within this there is not a notion that striation or smoothness is desirable for a given circumstance. For example, the planning of a protest may involve a degree of striation to establish order. The location of the protest will be identified and decisions made as to whether or not protestors will be asked to remain within the area and whether marshals will be necessary to organize crowds. Behind the scenes, the protest might have a high degree of organization and planning, lending to what

appears to be a rigid set of parameters or highly striated space within which the crowd may operate. In actual practice, individual protestors and bystanders may find the crowd to be a disorienting experience, even though they might know that actual space of the protest very well. Compounded with police presence and the firing of tear gas, the space might become difficult to navigate with few recognizable visual cues that would otherwise be used for orientation. In this circumstance, the space becomes smooth, despite the organization by the protest organizers. The smooth space may not be undesirable, however. Within the smooth space of the disorienting protest might arise a sense of creativity and resistance or defiance, publicly demonstrating the brutality of a ruling class' nonsensical actions and further motivating people to take action following the actual protest.

There is another example of smooth and striated space, used in an opposite manner. The creation of smooth spaces that are chaotic is a tactic used by many ruling governments and corporations to reorient spaces and socio-economic systems. In implementing privatization policies within a population, governing bodies recognize social unrest as a phase of implementation. Previously familiar points of reference, such as public social services, are removed, creating a smooth space. The instability created within such environments catalyzes social unrest. In response, the population is given a new set of services to act as social reference points, but this time maintained by private enterprises and offered at a price. The striation and commodification of social relations, public services and cultural practices thus involves a process of disorientation and reorientation in order to gain a position of power. The smoothing of space for one population is a technique of striation for another. But just as a revolution is not necessarily liberating for a population, nor are its outcomes guaranteed. While the smoothing or striation of spaces might be undesirable in

some circumstances, environments allowing for new opportunities may emerge, offering potential for significant positive change.

As a result, although Deleuze and Guattari's notion of smooth and striated is in part a visual process, it also encompasses a full experience of the spatialized body in a social environment. This conception of the visual is particularly useful for a few reasons. First, it does not assume detrimental characteristics by way of the visual. The priority placed upon visual knowledge, as suggested by Lefebvre, is often viewed as negative. Deleuze and Guattari, however, do not begin with this assumption, allowing for more opportunity to recognize possible points of resistance within visual culture. This leads to the second point of utility for such a conceptualization: namely, that the visual works in a complementary fashion to the other senses. Third, the notion of space is not all encompassing, but rather a dynamic movement of perception of cognitive construction. And this is particularly valuable in regard to the final advantage of such a spatial notion in relation to the visual; as Marks (2000) points out, we are able to begin a discussion of cinema that questions not simply whether it accurately depicts reality, but challenges "the ideological presumption that cinema *can* represent reality," (1). And I suggest that in taking this question one step further to question *what* reality is, we can move a critical theory of communication into a phenomenological field of discussion and look at how understandings of experience may be understood. As I will demonstrate in later chapters, this is a phenomenon that takes on an interesting dimension when examined within the context of Paris and Vancouver.

Before putting this into practice, I still feel it is necessary to pause for a moment and develop a better understanding of how meaning may be constituted within space. This is important particularly due to the fact that beyond the immediate act of perception, there is an important element of meaning that is often the contextual framework within which our

actions take place. It is for this reason that I explore Lefebvre's notion of absolute and abstract space within my considerations.

Lefebvre is, indeed, critical of the visual in contemporary society. Based upon the notion that the visual has caused the other senses "first to lose clarity, then fade away altogether," (286) such that the visual is taken for the whole, although it is only one element of any entirety. In this light, the world is reduced to "a text to be read by the eyes" while other means of perception are reduced to "a transitional step towards" visuality (286). Lefebvre's fear is that space is only recognized insofar as it may be visualized, to a point where the visual represses other forms of experience and resulting knowledge. This has dangers, as Marks (2002) points out in explaining that images can unfold and enfold information; that is, images can serve to expose ideas, actions or information, but can also obscure in the same manner. As in Deleuze and Guattari's notion of striated and smooth space, a point of perspective can completely change one's point of reference and, in turn, obstruct or reveal elements of a situation.

Within Lefebvre's explanation of the dangers of the visual, we begin to understand how notions of cinematic representation of "reality" have become, as Marks points out, "ideological." What we have in Lefebvre is a tension between two forms of space: abstract and absolute. Absolute space is a dynamic movement between individual mental perception and interaction with the material surroundings within which ones is found. Abstract space, on the other hand, is the by-product of violence introduced and instituted by the state in an effort to lend empirical assessment of space in order to assign homogeneous meaning. This conception of space "uncritically takes the instrumental as a given," (285). As a result, by virtue of its politically neutering potential, visuality is a vehicle by which institutions of

power move towards the acceptance of larger structural norms. Lefebvre is careful, however, not to imply that this is a uni-directional movement. Rather, he emphasizes that:

Abstract space is *not* homogenous; it simply *has* homogeneity as its goal, its orientation, its 'lens'. And, indeed, it renders homogeneous. But in itself it is multiform. Its geometric and visual formants are complementary in their antithesis. They are different ways of achieving the same outcome: the reduction of the 'real', on the one hand, to a 'plan' existing in a void and endowed with no other qualities, and, on the other hand, to the flatness of a mirror, of an image, of pure spectacle under the absolutely cold gaze. (287)

In this conception of the construction of space, Lefebvre is careful to leave room for resistance. Although close to lamenting the totality of the visual spectacle as with Debord (Debord, 1977), we nonetheless find space for critical assessment of spatial construction, a resulting ability for the critical assessment of power development and, finally, an opportunity to understand movements of resistance that may challenge the homogenizing tendencies of abstract space.

The theories examined in this chapter draw from the varied perspectives of political economic, cultural, visual, communication, spatial and labour studies. From these I propose a theoretical framework that employs a variety of categories that will structure my analysis in the remaining chapters. To summarize, these categories include ritual and transmission models of communication, smooth and striated space, and absolute and abstract space. Throughout, I attempt to underscore the dynamic tension within these pairs of terms and how this tension is translated into the case studies being studied. Underpinning these categories is a conception of human experience that is both dialectic and phenomenological. Within this, it is proposed that the ordering of human experience and the spaces in which humans act within modern society are based specifically on the process of representing knowledge in visual forms. Shared human experiences in the world and the individual conceptions of symbolic and material relations constitute myths, which constitute the

ideological system within a society. Rather than understanding ideology as a necessarily negative aspect, I propose that the stories told within a society and the manners by which they are told provide a powerful insight into the established structures and potential for social change within a society. For this reason, along with the importance of visual cultural in contemporary knowledge systems, the visual production sector is an interesting case study, both because of the stories told through this media as well as the manner by which the media are structured in relation to the rest of the society. For such an investigation to be completed adequately, however, an approach that encompasses both cultural and political economic aspects is necessary.

Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital provides the bridge between cultural and political economic analysis. As such, cultural capital constitutes a primary lens through which the cities, labour movements and visual production industries are studied in subsequent chapters. A study of cultural capital can provide insight into the structures of cultural industries, as outlined in the framework established by Miege, and how cultural capital became a point of conflict and resistance, particularly in regard to the cultural workers' movements in Paris and Vancouver. The notions of immaterial labour and flexible specialization are important to understanding these labour movements and the larger political economic context around the contemporary cultural industries. This study thus provides a political economic study of the visual production industries in Paris and Vancouver and the industries' relations to the two cities. Further, the study also provides a cultural analysis of the visual production industries' relationships to their cities of production and consumption.

## Methodology

The decision to use Paris and Vancouver as the two case studies for this project might appear odd at first glance. Neither city has had any significant relationship with the other in the realm of the visual production industries or otherwise. Nor do the histories of the visual production industries in the two cities have much in common. While Parisian researchers often refer to the city as the birthplace of cinema in 1895, Vancouver had little film or television activity at the start of this study's focus in 1970. Paris has a long history of producing films and, more recently, television shows that attempt to reflect and build the Parisian identity. From the early days of in-studio film production to the work of *Nouvelle Vague* artists in the 1950s and 1960s, the depiction of the city's life has been a priority. Vancouver, on the other hand, has a much shorter film history reaching back only to the 1970s and almost never depicting the city as itself. The city's visual production industries are almost entirely dependent on American Hollywood investment and coordination. In many ways the choice of these two cities is a study of contrasts rather than a comparison. This is intentional. Two other Canadian cities might have provided a more suitable opportunity for a comparative study with Paris. Montreal has a long history as the media production centre for Quebec and there is significant economic, social and cultural ties and exchange between the society and its media industries with those of Paris. Toronto is the English centre for media production in Canada. Although these activities may have little relationship to the industry in Paris, there is at least a longer temporal period of continuous activity with which to compare. Nonetheless, Vancouver is a more appropriate choice for a number of reasons.

Vancouver's film and television production is largely the result of American firms moving productions to the city in an effort to save money while maintaining a certain "look" and consistency of quality. The industry in Paris, meanwhile, has long been lauded as a

unique example of a national film industry that had withstood the pressures of the American cultural sector. When the two cities are examined from the standpoint of their workforces, however, there are some interesting trajectories. The Parisian industry long relied on strong craft traditions to maintain consistency of aesthetic style for film products as well as overall coordination of work within the industry. Although there were widely recognized filmmakers throughout this earlier period, the production of films required strong creative input from a variety of specialized crafts. Although craft definitions and entry into the field was largely controlled by government work regulations, labour unions held important positions in these functions while maintaining a political presence within the industry on behalf of worker members. The role of the workers, however, began to change in the 1960s and by the 1970s the notion of collective and collaborative filmmaking in the French sector had diminished. Tensions increased as worker input into the creative process declined and the traditions of steady employment and suitable wages were eroded. To have an influence on the industry, workers increasingly had to demonstrate their power through strikes; to have a creative influence, workers took to producing their own projects in their spare time. In more recent years, the industry has found itself in competition with foreign pressures both at the box office as well as in production itself; increasingly, French productions are being shot in lower-cost locations in Eastern Europe and Northern Africa in order to save money.

Throughout this, in Vancouver the television workers recognized in the 1970s that the only way they would maintain steady employment in the industry was to attract production to their location. Little domestic production took place outside of Toronto and most producers felt that federal funding systems favoured Eastern Canadian productions. As a result, workers began to look south of the border for projects. Workers began to use their union as a collective lobby tool, sending trade missions to Hollywood in order to attract

production back to Vancouver. Unions lobbied the provincial government to establish a film commission to facilitate and coordinate production in the province. These are roles the unions maintain to this day, even though the tasks have even put the unions in opposition to the interests of their members. Nonetheless, British Columbia unions are recognized throughout the industry as key partners in the sector. This model has met with significant success. British Columbia boasted a film and television industry that far surpassed the annual \$1-billion mark in productions through the 1990s, even reaching \$2-billion in its strongest years. Given desire many cities and countries have to attract film production to their locations, the Vancouver model of industry development is now a standard example used by other locations around the world, including Paris. Amidst the fierce competition between locations for film and television production, the city of Paris now markets itself internationally to producers in Hollywood and around the world using the model established by Vancouver. The globalization of the cultural production industry is taking odd and interesting geographic turns, leading to international competition between powerful cultural symbols such as Paris, London and New York with lesser-known locales including Vancouver, Bucharest and Manila. Because of this phenomenon, Paris and Vancouver make for compelling and interesting comparisons as production locations in the global image production sector.

This study's focus begins in 1970 and continues through to 2005. The choice of 1970 for a starting date is influenced by two primary factors. First, 1970 marked an economic turn in Western societies. As Harvey (1989) notes, the early 1970s saw the end of the post-war prosperity or the golden decades of economic stability. With the uncertainty around oil supply, rapid inflation, the rise of foreign manufacturing competition and corporate restructuring, the 1970s brought about a significant changes in labour markets and corporate

operations that had impacts across Western societies. Economic changes in Western countries also brought about significant changes in cities within these countries. As manufacturing activities moved overseas in some instances and into the suburbs in others, many cities witnessed significant change in their urban landscapes. New economic activities were sought to fill the gap left by abandoned factories. The second factor for choosing 1970 as a starting date was the transition in the types of films being made. It is widely recognized that the 1970s marked a period of creative stagnation in the French film industry after the two previous decades of strong filmmaking during the *Nouvelle Vague* movement. The industry witnessed restructuring throughout the decade as national censorship laws loosened, spurning a rapid growth in low-budget pornography films that monopolized French cinema screens. Rather than being a novelty of the period, these phenomena had lasting influences on the industry's structure and operations, through to the present day. Far from being solely a French phenomenon, the New Wave also had impacts in other countries, including North America. In the late 1960s a small number of renegade American filmmakers, influenced by New Wave aesthetics, took their productions north to Vancouver in attempts to do things differently, away from industry conventions. These productions were evidence for a small number of film technicians that an industry could be viable in the city. Ideas and plans brewed in these individuals' minds through the early 1970s as they began planning to attract further activity to their region. As such, 1970 marks a starting point in Vancouver's visual production industry.

The study's period of focus ends in 2005. This end-point provided sufficient perspective on activities in each location, although the activities and their implications are, of course, ongoing. As well, the last five years of the study are of particular importance for understanding the implications of the previous three decades of activity. It is in 2003 that

labour struggles reached new levels in the French cultural sector. Around the same period of time, in Vancouver a movement of another sort was taking place. Between 2001 and 2003 the city's homeless population, addicts and prostitutes mobilized in a manner that used film as a key point in their demands for acknowledgement in public policy. The themes of the unrest and the actions within the strikes in both of these examples provided important case studies for this project. Moreover, the two examples of recent years demonstrate the socio-economic fissures that have arisen as a result of new recognitions within the workforce and the general public as to the role of cultural capital in society.

As a point of focus, this study begins by examining film in relation to the urban environments of each city. In many instances, however, I have used "visual production industry" rather than "film industry". As demonstrated in the next chapter, the period of study encompassed by this research witnessed significant media consolidation and technological change. As a result, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish the film industry from the television industry or, more recently, online content. Films are not only made for television, but in many instances television broadcasters are investors and strategic partners in film projects. Likewise, the same corporate bodies own many film and television production and exhibition firms. At the same time, the visual production that took place in both Paris and Vancouver was never exclusively the domain of the film or television sectors. Both types of production were happening at the same time in both locations and had similar economic impacts, apart from the practical influence on the actual locations where such production took place. As a result, while the primary focus of this research is film, I have tried to indicate which discussions are specific to film, and which have a broader focus. Overall, when discussing the impacts of this type of activity, I have referred to the visual production industry because the nature and impact of the industry's activities should be

understood as a larger phenomenon within cultural production that is significantly reliant on visual media.

Given the prominence of the visual production industries in each location, there is a significant amount of documentation on the industry's activities in a variety of venues. As a result, I was able to focus on documentary research as the primary information source in this project. The industries in both locations maintain trade publications that document the day-to-day activities of the sector in significant detail. In Paris, the journals *Le Technicien du Film* provided comprehensive background on labour activities throughout the period of study and *Le Film Français* provided extensive materials on the industry in general. For Vancouver, the regional trade publication *Reel West* provided significant background on the industry's activities beginning in 1987 when the magazine was first published. The national trade publication *Playback* also provided substantial background information about the industry, but only from 1986 when the publication was first published. To provide supplementary research for Vancouver from the 1970s and early 1980s I also consulted local newspapers *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province*. Both of these sources provided useful insights into the industry's activities in the city.

Publications from national research agencies also provided the core statistical data used in this study. In particular, cultural and population reports from the Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques in France and Statistics Canada for Canadian data were key sources. In France the Centre national de la cinématographie maintains detailed public data on cinema production, distribution and exhibition. Their annual report on the film sector was a particularly useful resource for data on Paris. A similar resource for Canada, not to mention Vancouver was not available. Rather, evidence of wage rates, economic impact and workforce size was compiled from a variety of sources, including

government reports, union documents and media reports. Film commissions and municipal offices provided additional data. Overall, there is an unequal amount of data available between the two locations. Paris is a city with a long tradition of film activity. In France, cinema is upheld as a key national cultural resource and receives funding accordingly. There are libraries, archives and research bodies in Paris devoted to film. No similar resources exist in Vancouver. In addition, the type of data and purposes for its collection is different in each location. As a result, there is often no comparable data for each location, making analyses of finer points of the industries difficult. In addition to primary research sources I have made use of a variety of secondary sources, primarily journal articles and books written by academics and individuals who have researched the visual production sectors in each location.

Workers in both locations have produced videos of their activities. Likewise, a number of declarations and profiles of grievances are posted online, particularly in the case of French cultural workers. Interviews with figures in both locations were published in trade journals, offering insight into the activities and concerns of workers in each location. Extensive policy documentation is available on each location, including reports on labour relations and industry restructuring. The availability of such data was assurance that the public documentation available was sufficient to inform this research project.

On-site research for this study was conducted in Paris during April and May 2004. Research was conducted in Vancouver from August to November 2004. Additional on-line documentary research was conducted through 2005. The scope of the project was impacted somewhat by advances in technology over the period, particularly in regard to French materials. An initial inventory of available documentary sources was completed during a research sojourn in the fall of 2002. At that time, very few online resources were available

through French libraries and public offices. In addition, few libraries even maintained electronic databases. By the time of the 2004 research period, a number of sources had become available online. As a result, some research that had been planned for on-site research time was delayed, given the newfound availability of data online, and other resources were investigated. While beneficial in one regard, this also risked increasing the scope of research, simply by virtue of the expanding availability of data. As a result, despite the fact that some information has become available since finishing the research in 2005, I have limited the scope of this project to research collected by the end of the research period.

## Chapter 3

Crisis, symbolic capital and two entrepreneurial cities:  
A political economy of Paris and Vancouver

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*"To capture on film the gargoyles of Notre-Dame, to set up a shooting team at the bottom of Sacré-Coeur, to film a languorous kiss in front of the Tour Eiffel, to make the snow crunch on the Parisian cobblestones in May, to navigate the Seine on a barge, to organize a pursuit in the subway corridors . . . for each moviemaker's wish, one or several authorization applications are needed."*

Bureau Parisien du Film, *Paris à l'image*, 2001

On 22 January 2005, the Louvre in Paris announced that it would allow the producers of *The Da Vinci Code* to use the museum in the film rendition of Dan Brown's international best-selling novel. While not a surprise that a book of such astounding commercial success with sales of over 41 million copies would be made into a film, the fact that the Louvre would cooperate with such a venture raised some eyebrows. Although the museum attracts hundreds of weekly visitors on "Da Vinci Code pilgrimages" through the sites of Paris, to that point the Louvre's administration refused to allow its staff to discuss the book with the

public (Gentleman, 2005). The museum itself was already recognized as one of the most difficult French locations in which to film. Daily location fees have been cited at €70,000 and given the high volume of visitors – approximately 20,000 individuals per day – filming is only allowed at night and on Tuesdays when the museum is closed to the public (Schwartzenberg, 2005). Many French filmmakers cannot gain access to the museum, whether for want of scheduling or location fees, not to mention American productions.

The Louvre's decision might be read as an acknowledgement on behalf of the museum of the institution's presence in contemporary transnational popular culture. But a related event happening on the same day only blocks away from the museum underscored the political involvement that influenced the museum's willingness to host *The Da Vinci Code*. In a speech to the top administrators of France's most prestigious museums, the Minister of Culture implored the nation's cultural institutions to open their doors to more film work. He explained: "The image of France, transported by cinema, is a catalyst for visitors from around the world to come to our country, notably to discover and to see with their own eyes the monuments, the museums, the heritage that is revealed to them through film," (Donnedieu de Vabres, Renaud, 2005). To reinforce this claim, the Paris region's new film commission released its own study indicating that 62% of foreign tourists were influenced to visit France based on seeing the country in a film (Schwartzenberg, 2005). The event served to deliver a message to the world's filmmakers that France was open for business, and the government's announcement served to underwrite the promise.

Only hours before the French announcement, half a world away from Paris and with far less fanfare, the British Columbia provincial government announced that it would increase tax credits available to film productions. This move brought the province's tax incentives in line with other leading Canadian film locations in Ontario and Quebec, whose

provincial governments had increased their own tax incentives months earlier. An imperative for the B.C. government was strongly articulated in the province's media. "If the tax credit isn't changed in B.C., we would have to move to Toronto," Shawn Williamson, Brightlight studio co-founder was quoted across Vancouver media. "We'd keep a small office here, but the majority of our work would go to Ontario." Nonetheless, the decision was not a foregone conclusion for the B.C. government. A report commissioned by the government, released later in 2005, indicated that tax incentives and credits provided to the industry amounted to \$65.7 million (InterVISTAS Consulting, 2005). The same report suggested that an elimination of tax credits should result in a production decrease of only 15 percent. Eliminating the credits, however, could provoke a retaliatory response from the industry, the report warned. Cutting production in the province could be used as a means of making an example of B.C. for other regions considering similar reductions in tax incentives.

Each of these two examples serves to illustrate the strategies being employed by an increasing number of governments around the world to attract film production work. Various levels of European governments are estimated to have paid in the range of €1.3 billion in tax incentives in 2004 (Carvajal, 2005). The use of tax incentives to attract production is relatively new, having been developed in North America since 1997. Using tax incentives in Europe is even a more recent phenomenon, having emerged as the idea of "runaway production" posed potential concerns and opportunities for various locales. Nonetheless, both European and North American film industries have long histories around changing notions of space and visual representation playing important roles against political economic concerns of a given period.

This chapter provides a political economic assessment of both Paris and Vancouver as individual cities within a global context since 1970 as well as an analysis of each location's

film industry over the same period. My discussion, however, extends beyond a solely political economic framework as found in most communication studies, and instead bridges the analysis with a discussion of the means by which the cultural specificity of given locations is used within the film industry.

I begin the chapter by providing an assessment of the lackluster Paris and Vancouver film industries in the early 1970s. The lack of innovative work in each industry is part of a larger structural crisis of the economy in the period as the Fordist systems of the post-WWII years conflicted with the increasingly dispersed and decentralized means of production in the emerging post-Fordist society. I suggest that the rise of the urban retrofit during the 1970s and 1980s brought about urban economies increasingly dependent on the development of symbolic capital, made evident through the prominence placed on industries with a high dependency on visual production and consumption. From this, I look more specifically at the cultural production policies in each of Paris and Vancouver into the 1980s, contextualizing the urban dynamic surrounding image production in each location. I proceed to an analysis of the larger structural changes taking place in the overall media policy and ownership dynamics of the period – transitions that had significant impacts on the ways the film industries of each city developed in relation to an emerging global film market. Both cities have become entrepreneurial in their approaches to attracting transnational production activities in the image production sector.

I turn then to an examination of the structural apparatus developed in each of Vancouver and Paris to attract and accommodate certain types of production. I suggest that while Vancouver developed a model to attract foreign production to the city, Paris largely resisted such a model until only recently. Now, both cities operate using the same policy and institutional framework, but employ differing strategies in marketing the cultural

specificity of each location. Understanding the cultural notions used to promote each location is particularly important in understanding the larger dynamics of the industry at a higher level of analysis and points of friction and fissure that have developed between the industry and given populations where it operates.

### **The state of the industry: 1970s and film production in Paris and Vancouver**

To state that the French film industry was in crisis in 1970 is an accurate assessment. Between 1957 and 1969 cinema spectatorship decreased by 56% from 412 million to 182 million audience members per year (CNC, Dec 1986: 16). The French Cinema Office in New York, the agency in charge of promoting French cinema in the United States, closed its doors. In an accident the Victorine Studios lost three large studio stages. Although one was rebuilt the following year, the Saint-Maurice Studios closed leaving France with only 41 percent of the studio capacity available at the height of studio production in 1947 when 46 studios housed the industry's production. For much of the decade the occupation of the remaining studio space averaged around 50 percent. In 1972, the Boulogne Studios closed one of its stages. The Billancourt Studio was under threat of immanent closure, provoking worker protests in 1970. In the end, Billancourt remained open but with sporadic use. By the mid-1980s, the facility witnessed its last productions and was closed in 1990. Although studio fortunes declined, filmmakers nonetheless were making films, but generally on location.<sup>8</sup> The Parisian film workforce, as a result, found fewer production-related jobs and, when work was available, more demanding work schedules as production schedules accelerated to avoid prolonged use of external location facilities. But even this type of work

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<sup>8</sup> The term “on location” is used throughout in reference to television and cinematic productions filmed out of studio in natural settings such as exterior shots or in various buildings that would otherwise have regular functions outside the visual production industry.

fell on hard times as a new competitors took advantage of low-cost film equipment and experienced technicians, proving along the way that sex sells. Pornography became a staple of many theatres' exhibition schedules in the mid-1970s when the government liberalized national censorship laws. By 1976, over half of the 190 films being produced in France fell into the "erotic" category and were restricted for audiences under 18 years of age.

The Vancouver film industry was not in any better position – if, in fact, it existed at all. A handful of directors shot their films in the city in the late 1960s, including Robert Altman's *That Cold Day in the Park* and Mike Nichol's *Carnal Knowledge*. But between 1971 and 1975, the industry remained stagnant, playing host to only a few Canadian productions. Toronto remained home to most English-Canadian television and film production, attracting most federal funding, and even the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation produced little visual content out of Vancouver. Panorama Studios in West Vancouver, built in 1962 in anticipation of a film boom, was "gathering dust" through the decade's early years (Holt, 1973).

The situations in which Vancouver and Paris's film industries languished in these early years of the 1970s were, of course, markedly different. Vancouver previously hosted only a handful of feature-length film productions and maintained little along the lines of a permanent industry, apart from a small network of technicians trained in the industry. There was little coherent film policy at a local, provincial or national level that focused specifically on developing a regional industry. Although Gasher (M. Gasher, 2002; M. Gasher, 1995) highlights the fact that film has a longer history in British Columbia reaching back into the early days of the medium, previous production provided little if any base for the province's future growth in the industry. The only tangible thread connecting any previous work in the

areas, as will be explored in the next chapter, was the workforce that provided a corporate memory of technique and industry structure.

Paris, in contrast, was on a production downswing following two decades of intense creativity recognized around the world as part of the cinematic New Wave. The decline of the studio in France was no accident; beginning in the 1950s New Wave directors engaged a new realist aesthetic that took cinematic production into the streets and lived spaces of Paris. Binh (2003) explains that “at times, the city of the set becomes a personality and that the studio had to make an effort to tie in with real or exterior shots,” (145). While present throughout the 1950s, this idea of on-location production became much more pronounced by the end of the decade with the arrival of the New Wave. Within this, Binh claims, “Paris, from that point on, was no longer a functional setting, but almost an obligatory natural setting. In fact, it’s no longer simply a place where personalities evolve, it’s a space that is part of the personalities, that defines and sometimes imprisons them,” (145). Such attitudes marked a significant change in the nature of cinematic production, both in France but also, subsequently, around the world. Although, as noted by Condron (Condron, 1997), the New Wave itself may have also been influenced by American changes in production, an overall international shift took place across the medium. This new style of cinema influenced directors, including young Altman and Nichols who were headed off to Vancouver, and national waves reverberated around the world with new explorations and adaptations of cinema. Following the infamous May '68 uprisings in Paris, however, France entered a period of questioning its institutions amidst economic turmoil, including rapid inflation, throughout the decade. Although there are memorable films from the decade (Smith, 2005) and fissures in the cinematic establishment allowed women into the industry (Condron), the

period is not recognized as a highly innovative time, if not a point where a structural crisis in the industry began.

An assessment of the film industries in these two cities, however, is not sufficient. Over this period, a global shift in the production activities of many major cities occurred. The 1970s was a period of transition for many sites and governments began focusing on ways of revitalizing urban areas fallen into disuse in previous years. At the same time, there was a need to find new economic activities as industrial production left high-cost urban areas, finding new locales in smaller towns and, increasingly, overseas. As a result, it is difficult to study the challenges facing any city's film industry over this period without equally recognizing the urban transitions unfolding over the same period. As I demonstrate in this chapter, the urban restructuring of this period and subsequent years was closely aligned with a rapid growth in the visual production sectors in these cities as well. This growth was linked to significant changes within the media industries and the policy environment overseeing their operations. While Vancouver and Paris share divergent histories, the structural frameworks governments now employed in each location are based upon similar premises. Within this I argue that the economic histories of the two locations are insufficient to fully explain the dynamics involved in creating image-based economies, particularly around the film industries. The socio-cultural elements of such transitions must be accounted for in such analyses to comprehend the relationship between urban phenomena and changes in production and consumption within a service-oriented communication market.

### **Urban retrofits: new cities in old clothing**

The idea that cities – particularly those in North America – went through a retrofit of sorts in the 1970s has been a pivotal aspect of much critical social science literature for the past two decades. Following the significant social unrest around the world at the end of the 1960s, the urban spectacle became a prominent means through which the city was viewed. Paris was at the forefront of such actions with May 1968 uprisings that came close to toppling the government. Vancouver experienced significant public unrest as hippie culture took over significant portions of public space and Chinese-heritage citizens effectively blocked the city elites' plans to build massive freeway projects through ethnic neighbourhoods.

Given the visually spectacular nature of these actions, many cities recognized the need to visually re-appropriate spaces and subdue dissent (Harvey, 1989). The success of festival-like events and environments has, as a result, become a way of making spaces visually inviting and appealing by establishing practices of spectacular consumption a part of the urban scene. Hannigan (1998) documents the “festival market” as a product of these 1970s redevelopment programs (52-3). Projects included multiple small-scale merchants with short-term leases. Sites used ranged from converted modernist structures to unpopulated spaces of land, such as abandoned warehouses and manufacturing buildings along waterfronts. These developments were to create a focal point for many cities’ cultural and tourist activities. The spectacle inherent in these environments relates to what Harvey (1989) calls the “bread and circuses” formula of social control (88) and what White and Stallybrass (1986) term the carnivalesque of the grotesque. Just as festivals have a place in the history of revolutions, they are also a way of placating publics. The spectacle becomes a dynamic tension between classes as individuals and groups vie for the control of visualscapes within

the urban environment. In festival markets, the history of the working class life in markets and points of trade is appropriated and sanitized for the purpose of controlled, contemporary consumption. Harvey explains, “Cities and places now, it seems, take much more care to create a positive and high quality image of place, and have sought an architecture and forms of urban design that respond to such need,” (92). This translates into a specific strategy of economic development and accumulation in a market that expands beyond the city itself. The visual cityscape became a way of competing for economic and social activity: “Imaging a city through the organization of spectacular urban spaces became a means to attract capital and people (of the right sort) in a period (since 1973) of intensified inter-urban competition and urban entrepreneurialism,” (92).

The city’s image thus translated into a way of understanding urban space amongst inhabitants. Ley (D. Ley, 1996a; D. Ley, 20 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, & 20 University of British Columbia. Dept. of Geography, 1985; D. Ley, 1996b) documents how Canadian cities began transforming their inner cores in the 1970s as industrial activity left and new financial activities plugged cities into global markets. The result was a distinctly post-fordist shift in the actual urban environment; not only did the city’s productive activities change, but the very material infrastructures were renovated away from factory production into loft-style apartments, modeled after artist residences in previously neglected, low-cost industrial districts. This shift in urban lifestyle was part of the development of a new middle-class of urban dwellers engaged in the immaterial production of financial management and creative industries. The transformation of the city and the lifestyles by which its activities were constituted were evident by the later 1970s and the phenomenon of “loft living” was documented by Zukin (1982). This reconstitution through gentrification of the urban core as a desirable – indeed, upscale – lifestyle did not mean that other labour

tasks were absent from the city. Rather, as Sassen (Sassen, 1996) has documented, the workforce engaged in menial labour is largely housed outside of the core, in a peripheral manner. The spatial stratification of urban form in contemporary cities has led to what Marvin and Graham (Graham & Marvin, 2001) term “splintering urbansim” where successive rings of urban areas around the center house those engaged in less-desirable labour supporting the financial command centers. In many instances, third world rings of slums encircle first-world cities of finance.

The physical layout of the city thus comes to mirror social, economic and cultural phenomena within the city’s population and activities (Harvey 1989). Corporations have increasingly maintained core/periphery structures of organization sine the 1970s, where the lowest-waged, least stable work exists at the outer edges of the core with the least attachment to the firm of employment. Many times, these individuals are not even employed by the firm, but by a contracting agency for outsourced work. These workers cannot afford to live in the cities where they are employed and often reside in marginalized neighbourhoods in suburbs and ghettos. Workers at the periphery are also more likely to be female. At the core of the firm, only a small handful of individuals in top management positions enjoy all the benefits and securities of a permanent position. It is in order to attract these individuals and the workforce that constitutes the next rings around this central core that the global city is designed to be entertaining and appealing. There also exists a population of workers with no regular place of employment. These individuals move from location to location as part of a service industry; each new location often represents a new contract with a different employer. Not only are these individuals located throughout the core/periphery model of the corporate firm, but reside in a multitude of locations across the urban region.

In examining the populations of Paris and Vancouver, particular patterns in the workforce develop clarity. Women tend to constitute the workforce that enjoys few benefits, little security and lower pay. In Paris, for example, in 2004, women who had children made up 60.8 percent of the French part-time workforce (INSEE, 2005c). A full quarter of the part-time workforce was comprised of single mothers, over half of whom worked less than 29 hours in an average week. Overall, women comprised 82.6 percent of the part-time workforce in 2004 (INSEE, 2005b). Meanwhile, figures for the period between 1993 and 2004 show that the trend in new business firms is toward smaller staff components and larger casual and contract contingents. In France, the number of new firms with no salaried staff increased from 73.4 percent in 1993 to 83.1 percent in 2004 while all other categories of firm size saw a relative drop in their share of new firms (INSEE, 2005a). By 2004 businesses with no salaried staff comprised 56.7 percent of the entire companies across the country (INSEE, 2004f). Of these firms, 25 percent are located in the Ile-de-France region and an additional five percent are located around the region's periphery (INSEE, 2004b). Although the region holds 18.2 percent of the population, it has a higher incidence of small firms with no salaried employees. The region also has a higher incidence (36.5 percent) of firms with more than 500 employees, although not all employees employed by these firms necessarily live or work in the region.<sup>9</sup>

Canadian statistics provide a similar image of the workforce. For example, when the Canadian census was changed in 1996 to allow respondents to identify their place of employment as "no fixed workplace", the employment figures for the city of Vancouver decreased by 12,630 workers from 1991 results (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2004a). Over the same period, the city witnessed close to a 25 per cent increase in its

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<sup>9</sup> These figures do not include agricultural or financial firms.

“services to business” sector.<sup>10</sup> This is significant because individuals who live in the city but who have mobile sites of work would have previously indicated their home city as their default place of employment. For the larger metropolitan area, however, 88,950 people or almost 10 percent indicated that although they were employed, they had no fixed workplace (*ibid*). This alone signifies a trend toward required flexibility of the workforce by service firms that have constantly changing sites of production or that employ a workforce of individuals who move about coordinating services for clients in varying and dispersed locations – such as in the film industry.

Harvey (1989) points to changes in urban form as having a close relationship to developments in consumption as well. First, he argues, fashion became a mass market, providing “a means to accelerate the pace of consumption not only in clothing, ornament, and decoration but also across a wide swathe of life-styles and recreational activities,” (285). In other words, products were marketed not on the basis of necessity, but on the values of taste. These processes rely very much on media industries to develop lifestyle images related to a product and to reinforce those associations across a wide swath of social associations. As a result, while the desired lifestyle is developed, the means by which one might attain such status are ephemeral, given the rapidly changing array of products and marketing images through which they are promoted. This was accompanied by a second societal move toward consumption based on a service economy. Increasingly, consumption of services was not limited to the sectors of finances and health, but spread across the entire society through an array of entertainment-oriented forms of activities as in the festival-like centers of retail consumption mentioned above. Given that services have a shorter lifespan than material

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<sup>10</sup> The assumption in interpreting these figures is that individuals who live in Vancouver but perform work across the region (e.g. consultants or sales representatives) are most likely to choose “no fixed workplace” on their census forms. The figure 12,630 thus represents the number of individuals previously recorded as working in Vancouver who do not actually work in one specific place.

goods, the overall nature of the service economy allows for the acceleration of markets and accumulation strategies. When accompanied by the ephemeral nature of fashion-oriented taste, the overall pace of consumption is further multiplied.

In light of the festival and theme-park nature of urban redevelopment schemes mentioned above, the city has become not simply the agglomeration of points of purchase, but an overall consumption experience – a service itself, amidst a vast number of services. Harvey suggests that the post-fordist city thus becomes a palimpsest in the environment of rapid consumption. Even as old buildings and designs are torn down or retrofitted and new developments are built, the existing material form constantly changes, at least through its coverings or skin,<sup>11</sup> in order to attract potential consumers and, in turn, foster further consumption. The city is host to an increasingly transient screen with the movement of logos, lighting, signage and such. While based largely on a visual experience itself, the link is made even more explicit in relation to visual production. Cinema accelerates this further both in the rapid change in productive activities across spaces as well as in the representational forces of its product and the locales of its exhibition. Cinema is, in some ways, the fashion industry of urbanism. The products of cinema are the commodity of nostalgia – collections of rapidly outdated, ephemeral images and trends. That cinema arose with modernity is both a product of modernity's modes of production (the mechanical takes over), but also of the quest to document increasing speed and movement.

As cinematic and fashion-like industries have risen in recent decades, “flexible” forms of labour increasingly underpin these sectors of productive activity. And the predominance of

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<sup>11</sup> Skin is a very appropriate word to use in this example, given the relationship between the new mode of consumption and the haptic urban environment created around such experience. For further discussion on the notion of the skin of the city see (Chmielewska, 2005).

the image industries lends well to obscuring the means of production in favour of the image product itself. While labour is the focus of the next chapter, it is important to keep in mind that these changes have not taken place without resistance. Zukin (1996) outlines this in highlighting the importance of using political economic and symbolic elements of analysis in researching the city. She explains:

To ask 'Whose city?' suggests more than a politics of occupation; it also asks who has a right to inhabit the dominant image of the city. This often related to real geographic strategies as different social groups battle over access to the center of the city and over symbolic representations in the center. At stake are not only real estate fortunes, but also 'readings' of hostility or flexibility towards those groups that have historically been absent from the city center or whose presence causes problems: women, racial minorities, immigrants, certain types of workers, and homeless people. (43)

As such, the spatial, symbolic and economic developments within the city are of primary importance to this study and populations' struggles for control of (or at least representation within) the visual and spatial apparatus of the urban environment.

### **Paris and Vancouver in the post-fordist economy**

As mentioned earlier, both Vancouver and Paris experienced their own forms of social upheaval during the 1960s and, likewise, both cities were the sites of significant redevelopment projects conceptualized in the 1970s and carried into the 1980s. Some of the projects are directly related to the construction of the festival market schemes stemming from this period. Vancouver's Granville Island opened its doors in the late 1970s with a public market including artisans, souvenirs and food alongside arts groups, restaurants and parks. The previous industrial lands and facilities, now retrofit for trendy urban consumption, have become one of the city's top tourist attractions. Paris, meanwhile, undertook a reconstruction project over the same period with the demolition of the market in the Les Halles neighbourhood. The replacement structure is generally recognized as a

dreary sub-terrain shopping centre and metro station. But these two projects were only the starting points for a much larger focus on urban projects that came to encompass social and ideological proposals of the period. Both cities saw new developments as a way of communicating new economic and social opportunities to an international audience.

De Villard (2000) provides one of the most comprehensive assessments of Paris' urban projects or *Grands Projets* and their relation to communication through symbolic devices employed in architecture. With roots in the 1970s, the *Grands Projets* were a focal point of François Mitterrand's government and added significant new elements to Paris' visual landscape in the 1980s. The project included the Louvre Pyramids, the Arche de la Défense a new building for the National Library and an Institute of the Arab World. These projects served several purposes. First, the buildings were intended to celebrate French socialism. The Louvre Pyramids and the Arche de la Défense established prominent points on opposite ends of the axis formed by the Avenue des Champs-Élysée, in the center of which is the Arch de Triomphe. The projects thus established a visual, material link between the cultural heritage of the Louvre, down the country's most famous street to the monument of national remembrance and, finally, to the region's new business district at the east edge of the city. The projects' construction further acted to establish a "global city" image and to mark Paris as a capital city within a regional territory (31). De Villard uses Umberto Eco's framework of architecture as a form of communication as a basis for her discussion. Within this, architecture has both primary, functional values as well as secondary, symbolic values (33). In this manner, architecture is "an assembly of aesthetic conventions" that are irrelevant to the functions of the actual structure. It is because of this that a sign may be extracted from its context and reinserted in a new context, charged with different

significations. When understood in a communicative sense, architecture may be viewed as sets of rhetorical rules or devices.

Despite the larger narratives the Mitterand government was proposing within the city of Paris through the 1980s, it is precisely the mixture of style, aesthetic and function within the city that – as much as historical narratives are used – also make breaks from the functional, material forms of the city. There are competing narratives within the production of symbols and, as Harvey (1989) points out, the value of these symbols depends upon the aesthetic taste of societies. Indeed, the struggle to retain the alliances of taste fall to communication professions charged with designing tastes associated with identities and lifestyles. The competing notions of taste, therefore, have fragmented the discourse of architecture (82). As a result, new and old symbols are in constant competition in the renewal and inter-reference of meaning, thus constituting contemporary language games (83).

De Villard, in turn, relates the practice of architecture to the trend of turning toward the design of “shocking buildings” that serve to create symbolic capital within the context of a “brand” (72). In line with Harvey’s framework for the rise of entrepreneurial cities, particularly since the beginning of the 1970s, De Villard suggests that such practices in architecture have attempted to establish permanency despite the new pluralistic modernity of the day. Buildings and their associated urban brands have come as attempts to differentiate cities amidst the development of increasingly standardized spaces, designed for the ease of attracting and accommodating mobile capital (79-80).

Vancouver, meanwhile, also underwent significant changes over the same period, also in an effort to establish itself a global reputation. Tinic (2005) points to the fact that the British Columbia provincial government has been committed to making Vancouver into a

global city at least since the late-1970s. As urban renewal projects like the Granville Island Market were opening, other policy initiatives were mapping out a new appearance for the city as well. In 1978 the province committed to hosting a world's fair in 1986. The Bureau of International Exhibitions approved the event as a world fair in 1980. Soon after, organizers adopted the name Expo '86. The event had a significant impact on the city. In terms of tourism, Expo '86 attracted 22.1 million visitors and received international publicity, helping bolster the city's reputation as a global tourist destination. The 700,000 square-meter fair site saw the development of an entire section of the city that was previously an industrial railway yard.

In drawing the link between Expo '86 and the government's quest to establish a global city, Tinic points to the significant business interests behind the event. Despite an \$800-million public investment in the fair that resulted in a \$311-million deficit, the land was later sold off to Hong Kong developer Li Ka-Shing. Much of the fair grounds have since been turned into condominiums. Tinic points out that Expo '86 happened the same year that the Canadian government announced the Immigration Investment Program that offered landed immigrant status to foreigners worth at least \$500-million and who made at least a \$250-million investment in Canada over a five-year period (38). Many Hong Kong residents subsequently purchased property in Vancouver given the familiarity Ka-Shing's involvement brought and the uncertainty surrounding Hong Kong's pending transition back to China.

The transitions in each city's material reconstructions are reflected in actual social statistics from each location. This data, in turn, indicates further trends in the urban changes in the period. Between 1968 and 1999, the population of Paris dropped by 18 percent, or 465,525 people. Over the same period, development of the surrounding areas saw an overall regional population increase in Ile-de-France of 1.7-million people, or an 18.4 percent

increase (INSEE, 2004e). Of this, 43.5 percent of the population increase took place in the region's five "new towns" – a number of suburban agglomerations established by the national government in the late-1960s to help develop particular urban areas (INSEE, 2004d). The renovation of many Paris residences over this period explains some of the population decline. While many Haussmann-era buildings remain in use, many suites inside have been amalgamated in order to accommodate amenities such as private toilets. Other suites previously used as residential housing now host offices and hotel accommodations. The overall decrease in population in the central Paris region has meant a noted gentrification of the city as working class and support staff relocated to the city's burgeoning peripheral suburbs.

Meanwhile, the Vancouver region's population increased 83.6 percent, from just under 1.1 million in 1971 to almost 2 million residents in 2001 (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2004b; Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2004c). The population of Vancouver alone grew by 29 percent, from 430,199 residents to 554,792 over the same period (*ibid*). Much of the new population growth in Vancouver occurred in the city's downtown core where the West End residential neighbourhood became home to a population housed in high rises with a density level comparable to Manhattan while other sections of luxury condominiums, such as Yaletown, were constructed around False Creek on lands that include the old Expo '86 fair grounds. Housing prices have been a constant point of contention for residents of the city who feel that although Vancouver is commonly ranked at the top of international indices in terms of desirability and livability, it is also increasingly unaffordable for segments of the population not employed in professional white-collar positions.

Over this period, both cities have witnessed significant increases in their tourism industry. Between 1994 and 2000, the number of overnight tourists visiting Vancouver increased by 30 percent, from approximately 6.5 million to 8.5 million people (Tourism Vancouver, 2005).<sup>12</sup> In 2000, the Province of British Columbia attracted just over 5 million foreign visitors from its top 13 visiting nations, staying at least one night in the city. Overall, 82.3 percent of foreign visitors, or 7 million people, to Canada entering through British Columbia did so through Vancouver (Tourism British Columbia, 2002). On a global scale, by 2003 Canada ranked as the tenth most-visited country in the world with an annual visitor growth rate of 1.1 percent, translating into an actual increase of 15.2 million tourists in 1990 to 17.5 million by 2003 (INSEE, 2004a). The model of the entrepreneurial city is well exemplified in this example. Vancouver was now able to compete on a global level for activities of consumption similar to other more recognizable locations such as Paris.

France, meanwhile, receives the highest number of tourists a year of any country – 76 million in 2004 – and Paris remains a central focus for many of these visitors (Euromonitor International, 2005). Between 1990 and 2003, France averaged a 2.8 percent increase in the number of tourists arriving in the country, resulting in an astonishing hike from 52.5 million foreign tourists to 75 million over the period (INSEE, 2004a). Many Paris monuments remain some of the most recognized and famous landmarks in the world, providing a visual recognition that many cities attempt to replicate in their architectural pursuits.<sup>13</sup> This visual currency is demonstrated in visitor records. The most visited cultural sites in Paris remain some of the country's most-recognized national monuments, including the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre Museum and the Georges Pompidou Centre with between 5.9

<sup>12</sup> This figure includes all visitors to the city – international, national, provincial and local – who used hotel accommodations.

<sup>13</sup> Las Vegas, in fact, includes replicas of Paris' most famous landmarks. But the distinctive image provided by the Eiffel Tower marked a quest by many cities to develop their own identity "brands" through architecture.

and 5.3 million visitors each per year (INSEE, 2004c). Nonetheless, these French icons still compete with other global cultural symbols. The most popular national attraction is located just past the Paris region's suburbs; in 2003 Disneyland Paris received 12.4 million visitors in (ibid).

### **Regional production, media ownership and ownership consolidation**

The changing nature of the urban environment in the post-Fordist city is closely related to the changing media environment over the same period. Christopherson argues that trends related to media production and consumption at the local level, such as location production, must be understood within the context of national and transnational regulatory and corporate developments (2005; 2006). Indeed, Christopherson notes that the mid-1980s marked a significant turning point toward consolidated media ownership, which has had a significant impact on the visual production sector. Although the period Christopherson points to is specific to the United States' regulatory system, the ramifications of these changes were global in nature. Increasing ownership consolidation came, in part, due to the U.S. Justice Department's announcement in 1985 that it would not systematically enforce the *Paramount* decrees that had limited the vertical integration of the film sector since the end of the Second World War (27-8). This provided the opportunity for the largest studio firms to reassert their control over distribution and exhibition of their products. Christopherson points to a second significant regulatory change that came about in 1995 when the Federal Communications Commission lifted the financial syndication rules that restricted the production of content by broadcast networks.

As a result off these regulatory decisions, the United States witnessed significant consolidation of ownership, leading to what Christopherson terms "virtual integration" (30).

Firms have not only re-consolidated along the lines of traditional vertical integration. They have also virtually integrated because although a number of firms are operationally independent, they operate through exclusive arrangements with other firms that oversee an “integrated . . . commodity production and distribution chain,” (20). In this regard it is important to understand that access to markets as well as financing remains in the control of key “Hollywood” firms that maintain effective command of the industry’s resource allocation.

Hozic points out that since the 1960s and through the 1990s media production financing fragmented. In such an environment, producers increasingly took a prominent role in assembling packages of genres and star names that could be sold to a variety of financiers. Hozic refers to this as the emergence of mercantile financing arrangements that became prominent in the media industries, particularly in the 1990s. The phenomenon of non-communication firms holding various levels of investment was as much a part of the financial transitions that took place around Hollywood as in the French film industry. This, however, changed in the late 1990s, as a series of media and communication mergers took place, creating a handful of consolidated mega-firms.

The question that arises from this example of ownership consolidation is how such trends impact location production as well as indigenous industries, particularly in regard to the French and Canadian case studies used in the present discussion. Christopherson suggests that the move to in-house production and the fact that firms have an increased interest in reusing content across the various exhibition outlets under their control are key drivers behind “cost-effective batch production,” (30). This, in turn, is a significant element in understanding the willingness to invest in production facilities in locations “that can produce long-term cost advantages,” (31). Hollywood companies are, as a result, investing in

infrastructure in locations that provide significant cost benefits for production, such as the situation with production taking place in Canadian locations. The implications of a consolidated media market are that “independent” producers have fewer outlets to which they might sell their products. As such, the reality of such independents is to develop distribution and exhibition networks, as has been witnessed by firms such as the formerly Vancouver-based Canadian firm Lion’s Gate Entertainment, which calls itself a “mini-major” in the entertainment sector. The company produces and acquires approximately 15 feature-length films annually, over 80 direct-to-video titles and a number of television programs. Lion’s Gate Entertainment has a library of over 10,000 titles, which produced the bulk of the firm’s revenue.

Similar trends are evident in France, although amidst a somewhat different regulatory environment. The French government began allowing private entry into the country’s broadcast system in the early 1980s. In 1983, Compagnie Générale des Eaux and the Havas media group established Canal+, the country’s first cable television station. The creation of Canal+ marked a new understanding around the financing of French film, whereby Canal+’s license carried broadcast quotas for domestic cinema. At the same time, the station was limited to investing in French films, not being permitted to produce the content itself. The result of this policy was a film industry largely dependent on cable channels for financing. By 1990, films received an average of 15.9 percent of their funding from the sale of television rights – a figure as high as 20.4 percent for larger-budget productions (Centre National de la Cinématographie, 1991). The late-1990s marked the peak of television financing of French film when television pre-sales constituted between 28.7 and 34.3 percent of financing in 1996 through 2000. Television stations financed up to an additional 7.7 percent of films through direct investments, bringing their share of film financing up to 41 percent in three

years over the same period (Centre National de la Cinématographie, 2001). Although the French television channels' share of financing decreased after 2000, both in real contributions as well as the percentage of the market financed, television still plays a significant role in the industry. In 2005, television presales constituted 25.7 percent of financing for French films – 13.7 percent of which (or 3.5 percent of total financing) came from Canal+ alone (Centre National de la Cinématographie, 2006). At this point, Canal+ had a hand in financing 57 percent of French films in 2005.

These figures illustrate some important trends in the relationship between consolidated ownership and production financing. As Canal+ emerged in the mid-1980s, the number of films produced decreased by 20 percent from five years earlier. At the same time, 29 films with budgets over the 23 Million FF mark (the highest expense bracket for French films at the time) were produced. The number of high-budget films continued to increase over the following two decades. Although the total amount being invested into the industry was, in fact, increasing over this period, a small number of high-budget films were collecting a greater proportion of the financing available. The plan to cross-subsidize film production through conditions on cable television licenses is obviously successful. But over this same period, a larger percentage of overall financing available is concentrated in a smaller number of films.

Canal+'s role in the French media system remains somewhat controversial. The broadcaster provides a significant financial investment into the French media system every year. While many French filmmakers welcome Canal+'s financial investments, the fact that the company underwrites a significant portion of the film sector means that Canal+ wields significant control in the industry. In 2000, the company's ownership was consolidated with the merger of Vivendi (formerly Générale des Eaux), Seagrams and Canal+ to form Vivendi

Universal, which now owns 100 percent of Canal+ through various holding company arrangements. Vivendi Universal is also the parent company of UGC, a major movie theatre chain in France, Spain, Belgium and Italy and holds a 20 percent stake in NBC Universal, the result of a 2004 merger of the U.S. NBC network and Vivendi Universal Entertainment. And the number of remaining media firms in France is slowly diminishing. The Pathé and Gaumont film companies, although competitors in name, are owned by brothers Jérôme and Nicolas Seydoux, respectively. The two firms have merged their archives and operate their theatre chains under both brands through a strategic alliance. The one significant broadcasting and media firm remaining is the Lagardère Group, owned by the Lagardère family. The firm has extensive holdings in the publishing sector, and 11 European specialty television channels as well as in aviation arms manufacturing. Having produced 850 hours of audiovisual content in 2005, the company was the leading producer of prime-time drama and comedy in France (in numbers of hours broadcast) and number two for general programming. Lagardère also runs France's only multiple-medium (radio, television and Internet) advertising broker (Lagardère, 2006). In early 2006, Vivendi Universal and Lagardère announced plans to merge a number of their private stations, including Canal+, into a new specialty cable broadcasting system. As a result, not only are France's media systems following similar trends to the North American market, but they are increasingly connected through transnational ownership and distribution arrangements.

While the French government's cinema office, the CNC, argues that the production sector in France has little concentration based on the fact that 187 films in 2005 were produced by 156 different companies, the above discussion in fact demonstrates the opposite. Regardless of how many independent firms remain, the diversity of potential distribution channels has declined significantly in recent years. The government's argument

obscures the fact that Canal+ was an investor in 106 French films in 2005 and an additional 14 co-productions with French minority interest, totalling a 126 M€ investment in production. The policy arrangement has effectively assured control of the majority of the French film and television market to one transnational media firm. In light of Christopherson's notion of "virtual integration" given that many producers are only "nominally independent entities . . . integrated into a single commodity production and distribution chain through long-term and often exclusive contracts," (30) there remain fewer options for independent producers to finance and distribute their products.

### *Location production*

The phenomenon of location productions began in earnest in the 1960s, but is directly linked to the structural changes in the industry's ownership patterns over the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most literature explains this development as the result of a structural crisis within the North American film industry following the forced divesture of theatres by their studio owners. A lack of control over exhibition of films meant less ability to buffer losses from poor films with the box office success of other pictures. Hozic argues, however, that the usual economic arguments around the decline of studios and Hollywood might not be as accurate as generally proposed. She suggests that the greatest departure from Hollywood came during the blacklist era when significant portions of the industry's talent were unable to work (85). A number of individuals continued to produce films in foreign locations. Spaner (2003) provides support for the theory of location shooting as an act of resistance in explaining that production done in Vancouver during the late 1960s was largely a rebellion, albeit by a younger generation, against Hollywood conventions. This dispersed production

lead, Hozic suggests, to a failure on the part of producers to “assert their influence both within and outside the corporate hierarchies,” (85), thus providing “merchants” with the chance to fill such a vacuum. The result was a production system increasingly controlled by competing economic interests.

The material forms of these transitions became evident in the 1980s with the rise of horizontally integrated firms across the entertainment sector and increasing reliance on transnational financial arrangements (86). Merchants, able to find financing for films and assemble appropriate talent and technical support for a production, came to rely on competition amongst service providers across varied locations. As a result, Hozic concludes, “The fragmentation and competition of places of production and their attempts at micro-regulation and spatial differentiation have, thus far, only succeeded in strengthening the merchants’ position in the global economy,” (*ibid*).<sup>14</sup>

Hozic’s argument, however, ignores the continued role of transnational media firms in the image production industry. As outlined above, media ownership has consolidated, particularly in the past decade. Rather than an industry controlled by merchants, a more appropriate description would be an industry in which merchants compete to the lowest cost for economic activity that is now directed via transnational markets. It is through an analysis of how these activities have played out at local levels that we can begin to understand how the merchant, policy, labour and transnational interests meet and materialize in commodity production in distinct locales.

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<sup>14</sup> To illustrate this point, in a 1972 article Fouad Said, the president of Cinemobile Systems, a location shooting equipment provider, explains that audiences “sense and appreciate actual locations” in a film or television production and expect a realistic image (155). Founded in 1967, his company responded to the increasing prevalence of location shooting by providing mobile production facilities for location shots. Including generators, cameras, lighting and sound facilities, one of his Cinemobile trucks could be shipped via cargo plane to any location in the world and provide the essential technical resources for a production. By 1972 he was doubling his company’s capacity on an annual basis. Said highlights that the ultimate advantage to hiring a Cinemobile truck is an increase in daily output, labour reductions and ultimately lower production costs (156).

*British Columbia and the adoption of the Film Commission model*

Gasher argues that the film industry attracted the attention of British Columbia's provincial government primarily for its economic development potential. Although it met this criterion, Gasher argues that such activity was based on servicing foreign productions and thus was detrimental to local producers interested in developing local, indigenous productions. Tinic (2005) responds suggesting that many producers in Vancouver would, actually, like to work on their own projects but funding and finance models do not allow significant activity in this regard. These two lines of argument are not in opposition to each other. There is a common thread running throughout Vancouver's film industry and, indeed, that of Paris, putting economic imperative in constant tension with artistic and creative merit within the industry. In a re-reading of the two locations' histories, however, it is apparent that the two locations rely on co-opting cultural signifiers denoting artistic significance of the given places. This reading demonstrates the nature by which cultural capital is presented as an imperative behind the cultural and social capital of the given locations, not to mention the geographic capital inherent in marketing materials produced by each city. The importance of this historical assessment is the manner by which locations have sought to standardize production and market practices around urban support for the film industry. This has taken place at the same time as cities have attempted to differentiate themselves based upon cultural characteristics of their given locations.

Given that Hollywood productions often shot in locations away from the studios throughout the 1960s and in light of a spate of production around Vancouver in the late 1960s, there was reason for British Columbia to consider the industry in a serious manner. In

1971 B.C. premier W. A. C. Bennett's name appeared on a brochure published in Hollywood trade papers, attempting to appeal to filmmakers. The brochure promised "an endless selection of unspoiled scenic locations suitable for films of every type," (Thomas, 1971). Although a specific film office had not been established at this point, the province did have a Hollywood representative. Media coverage of the province's marketing noted that the province was not attempting to "take away production that can be done in Hollywood," but that the province's scenery and costs were appealing to filmmakers (*ibid*). The article makes specific references to an example found in New Mexico's film commission, established in 1968, operating on a \$100,000 annual public budget and having attracted 18 films to the state.

Despite the marketing efforts, feature filmmaking in the province faltered through the early 1970s. In 1972, neighbouring Alberta's provincial government established a film office. The province hosted between six and eight film productions annually through much of the 1970s. By 1973 West Vancouver's Panorama Studios, billed as a state-of-the-art facility, had not been used in a year (Holt, 1973). The few projects that were made in the region demonstrated a lack of ability to facilitate such production, at least from a municipal standpoint. A 1974 production caused a municipal uproar when film crews closed streets beyond the parameters of their permits to film helicopter stunts and riot scenes in the downtown core (Bennett, 1974). The conflict was further aggravated when the Deputy Police Chief learned that 12 off-duty police officers hired for crowd control ended up appearing in the film's riot scene as extras. But the entire incident also spawned curiosity. The high-profile nature of the helicopter and riot scenes attracted significant crowds. A newspaper reporter became an extra in the project and wrote about the shoot and the aspirations of his fellow extras (Southam, 1974). In the end, municipal administrators,

including the Deputy Police Chief, admitted that lines of communication with the industry needed to improve; public interest in the industry was clearly too significant to allow relations to sour.

Nonetheless, by 1975 a significant reduction in production and lack of government support left the B.C. film industry in a precarious position. Industry representatives called on the government to take decisive action to help attract production, get B.C.-made films into theatres and help alleviate jurisdictional overlap between different levels of government (Walsh, 1975). Media and industry commentators suggested that the government “didn’t get it”; the premier dismissed concerns and government reports prepared on possible policy initiatives to aid the industry failed to consult with the B.C. Film Industry Association (BCFIA), the primary industry body, including union, private firm and independent representatives (*ibid*).

The government evoked further outrage from the film industry when, in 1977, they advertised for a Film Development Officer. The position posting provided vague notions of duties and a salary of \$18,500 – equivalent to a public service administrative assistant (Walsh, 1977). Again, the government did not consult the BCFIA. Moreover, the position’s location was Victoria, not Vancouver where much of the industry’s activity took place. Rather than falling under the economic development portfolio, the government assigned the position to tourism. Industry insiders viewed this as an insult to the potential their work held, if not an overall lack of understanding as to how to develop film in the province. In August 1977, the government appointed Wolfgang Richter as the Coordinator of Film British Columbia (Wedmen, 1977a). Richter had little experience in the film industry, though, and none in production. By April 1978 the government had chosen not to renew his contract (Wedmen, 1978a).

In the meantime, BCFIA lobbied the federal government, emphasizing the need for stable industry funding from the Canadian Film Development Corporation if an indigenous industry were to develop (Wedmen, 1977b). Throughout this period, industry representatives, including union officials, continued promoting their location as a potential production center to Hollywood producers. Again, when the provincial government began to take an interest in the industry, concern arose that Tourism Minister Grace McCarthy was more concerned with photo opportunities than policy that would sustain the industry. Local movie critic Les Wedmen suggested that an orchestrated strategy to attract and accommodate the film industry would be required:

The current interest in B.C. as a site for movie-making isn't entirely accidental. Word of mouth does help. But since the colorful and expensive brochure that's been in the planning stage for a year has never been completed and the B.C. government is shy when it comes to advertising in trade papers, McCarthy can't really claim credit for the films being made or about to be made here. (Wedmen, 1978b)

Although the government finally appointed an interim film commissioner, followed by a permanent position from within the industry by 1978, B.C. industry representatives had reason to worry by this point. While their provincial government was slow in taking decisive policy action to support their industry, Calgary-based Tri Media Studios attracted national attention in 1978 with its announcement to build a 100,000-square foot production studio, hotel, entertainment complex, shopping centre and residential development in Happy Valley, just outside the city (Frank, 1978). Media coverage of the industry was already using the moniker "Hollywood North" to describe Alberta's film activity. Tri Media Studios company representatives cited the fact that despite the high number of films being shot, most were not being finished in the province due to a lack of facilities (*ibid*). The new infrastructure, if built, would put B.C. at a further disadvantage.

Amidst such developments the establishment of a Film Commission in British Columbia should have been a much more natural move. The federal government had established new tax breaks in May 1976 in an effort to encourage more Canadian film production (Made-in-Canada films on the rise.1978). The tax provisions established a standing policy allowing film investments to be written off against income to reduce or eliminate taxes on money put into a film meeting certain Canadian content guidelines.

In 1979, many American producers noted that their attraction to Canada was the advantageous tax incentive program (Canada will be film centre, say producers.1979). In addition to the new BC Film Commission, the Canadian Film Development Corporation was also active in promoting Canadian Film internationally. The CFDC was active at the 1979 Cannes Film Festival promoting Canadian films (*ibid*). The program is often chided as a failure due to the number of low-quality Canadian films produced during this period. The incentive was to invest in films, but when they turned a profit and became taxable, the tax incentive was self-defeating. As a result, most investments were made in low-quality films that assured investors they would not turn a profit, thus avoiding taxes on the investment. The program did, nonetheless, have marked impacts on the Canadian industry. In particular, the incentives attracted a number of American productions north of the border. At the same time, regions began considering how to best attract such production to their territories.

Vancouver production manager Bob Gray filled the film commissioner position on an interim basis from mid-1977 through to 1978, providing immediate results. Gray visited Los Angeles, London, and Cannes as well as Canadian centers, promoting the province to foreign filmmakers. Key to his sales pitch was the varied terrain for location shoots, the temperate climate, advantageous exchange rate and proximity to Hollywood (Pyette, 1978). During his Los Angeles trip alone, Gray met with over 60 producers and executives. Even

the short-term results – with three films and a television series scheduled for the summer of 1978 – brought a search for luxury homes and restaurants for visiting cast members, directors and producers (Wedmen, 1978c). By August 1979, one year after the government hired former IATSE business agent Justis Greene to fill the film commissioner position on a permanent basis (McNamara, 1998), more productions were underway than the province had enough crew members to accommodate (Walsh, 1979). The film commission model had taken root and underscored the economic advantage the industry might provide, particularly in the realm of public opinion when the industry garnered such a high profile in the province's media.

It is widely recognized within the BC film industry that any initiative around a film commission would have failed had it not been for the availability of industry representatives to step into the commissioner's role. These individuals continued the work they had previously done as part of their union. Much of the movement to create the film commission came as a result of intense lobbying by industry workers and businesses. The nature of such pressure by the industry's workforce will be discussed further in the next chapter. At this point, it suffices to say that the province adopted the film commission model in light of the potential economic benefit of such an industry, the political cost of ignoring an industry many wanted to see developed and because the model had become somewhat mainstream within North America. In fact, the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) was established in 1975 as a networking body for film commissioners and a referral organization for producers. In 1985 the organization hosted its first Location Expo. This weekend-long trade exhibition functions much in the same way that other industry trade exhibitions operate. The event showcases potential production locations and hosts a series of workshops and panels discussing industry trends.

*Beyond the film commission: Industry infrastructure*

The film commission, in reality, is only one part of developing a film industry presence in a given location. Although Vancouver was able to attract some production activity to its region in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the work was largely based on the availability of particular locations in order to achieve a specific “look” and some cost advantages.

Decisions on where to shoot a film are generally made according to a tripartite formula: costs, crew, locations (Bowness, 1990). Although one of these factors might win out for a particular production, having advantages in each area is important to a location’s competitiveness. The issue of whether to shoot on location or build a set in studio depends on the percentage of the script requiring such a scene. Moving between locations for each scene change incurs extra expenses, making it more economical to shoot in one place whenever possible. As well, the cost of buying out stores that have to be closed and residents who may have to be housed can add up quickly. Thus, the expense of shooting on location often costs as much as shooting in studio. Nonetheless, it remains difficult to find original views in studio, and thus a production can lose a sense of realism and uniqueness. As well, many producers are wary of full-service studios due to hidden costs and thus prefer four-walled studio space when available. (Morgan, 1990).<sup>15</sup>

Regarding crews, in the early years of Vancouver’s service industry, significant numbers of crew members were still flown in from Los Angeles. As will be addressed in the next chapter, Vancouver crews were able to develop based on specific provisions for apprenticeships in their contracts. But crew numbers were limited initially. As well, although

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<sup>15</sup> There are different services offered with various studio rentals. Four-wall studios simply offer a bare facility or, literally, four walls. Full-service studios may offer various equipment and services and generally have a higher cost.

natural locations were available, the city only had one private studio available for production in the 1970s. As industry officials noted, location shooting is not necessarily a preferred option for producers. Although locations are chosen to achieve a particular look, it is often cheaper to shoot in studio, which allows for much more control, such as no lost time for rain and transportation. As one trade publication explained, getting the right look is crucial, as is meeting the bottom line (Cornell, 1990).

Developing appropriate infrastructure was important for Vancouver's success as a production location if the industry was to be managed appropriately in the city and if the industry were to develop into something more than only a one-off location for individual productions. The involvement of government and industry in developing such an infrastructure is crucial. In fact, Goldsmith and O'Regan (2005) argue that the film industry's history in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is an example of what might be referred to today as a public-private-partnership. Government involvement in the film industry, particularly in the example of Vancouver, has been part of tasks ranging from opening a publicly owned film studio and establishing service offices to the broader task of legitimizing the industry's functions within given locations. In this regard, the local and regional policy decisions of governments in British Columbia have played a significant role in developing the nature of the global Hollywood production model. These policy initiatives include the establishment of municipal film offices, developing studio space and implementing tax incentives.

#### Municipal film office

While the B.C. Film Commission started attracting production to the province in the late 1970s, the city of Vancouver soon recognized the need to manage activity within its

jurisdiction to some extent. In 1980 the city established a film office comprised of one individual with the mandate to provide filming permits and to coordinate the services of other municipal offices in the city whose services were required on a regular basis. Following its first eight years in existence and a rapidly expanding service industry through the mid-1980s, the city of Vancouver adopted the Vancouver Film Guidelines in 1988. The guidelines provide a general outline of rules to be followed by film crews operating within the city, including how residents were to be approached if their neighbourhood was to be used for filming. As the industry grew, the office added a second full-time staff person in 1993 along with a fee schedule to offset costs borne by the office as a result of filming activities. Between 1993 and 1997, the city hired four additional temporary staff. These four positions became permanent in 1999, along with a new fee schedule the included application rates and permit fees for production work in the city (Clift, 1999). Overall, the city's policy is basic: fees cover the expenses incurred by city. The city, in turn, facilitates the industry's presence by coordinating permits and working with residents to address concerns. By 2002, the office's annual budget was \$384,000 (City of Vancouver, 2003).

### Studios

As film activity in the city increased, the demand for specific physical infrastructure rose. In particular, a number of films and television shows began shooting in Vancouver in the early 1980s based solely on cost advantage. These were productions that had no interest in any aesthetic opportunities offered by location shooting. In fact, significant portions, if not entire productions, were to be shot in studio. The only studio infrastructure in the Vancouver region was Panorama Studios, originally built in 1962. By the late 1970s, industry

required a larger space – and more space in general. A government-owned warehouse, Dominion Bridge facilities, previously used as a bridge construction site and a bus maintenance facility, became the site of various productions on a temporary basis in the mid-1970s. A decade later in 1985, Panorama studios had been redeveloped for condominiums. Although one private studio initiative was beginning with the building of Northstar International Studios, a larger facility was identified as an essential component of developing the industry. In 1987, the provincial government converted the Dominion Bridge facilities into a full production studio. The same year, American producer Stephen J. Cannell built the North Shore Studios to accommodate various television production he planned to bring to the city. Thus, Vancouver's studio facilities were the result of significant public and private investments into the industry's physical infrastructure. They were also, in the case of North Shore Studios, the first significant investment by an American producer who planned a long-term presence in the city.

Vancouver's studios have fared well since their creation. By 2000, the city had three major studio facilities, each of which operated at between 73 to 90 percent on an annual basis.<sup>16</sup> The occupation stability is largely the result of long-term production contracts for television series or multiple productions with specific producers. Perhaps even more significant is that the studio presence has helped develop clusters of activity within the city. In addition to the actual production space, each studio accommodates long-term tenants that include service companies, talent agents and industry unions.

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<sup>16</sup> Bridge Studios: 73 percent in 2002/03 and 93 percent in 2003-2005. Most of its space is rented under long-term occupancy agreements, thus buffering it against economic downturns in the industry (PAVCO 2005). Due to technological change, however, most of the activity that takes place at Bridge Studios is television given its inability to accommodate most film production. Vancouver Film Studios has managed to maintain approximately 80% occupancy for some stages. Lion's Gate Studios operated at full capacity (at least 90 percent) from 1999 to 2004 (Lion's Gate Entertainment 2001, 2004).

### Tax incentives

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the B.C. government found itself faced with industry demands to increase tax incentives or lose production to other locations. The phenomenon of tax incentives emerged in the late 1990s as an increasing number of regions in Canada and the U.S. as well as internationally entered a phase of competition for production work. As more locations began using the B.C. industry model by establishing film commissions and offices, new competitive advantages were sought by all locations. Thus, through the 1990s tax incentives arose as a means of encouraging producers to work in a given location. Incentives allowed producers to recover significant portions of their labour expenses through tax programs and reimbursements. The scheme was adopted by a number of locations before B.C. joined in.

Following the example of other Canadian provinces, the provincial government in British Columbia introduced the Provincial Services Tax Credit in October 1997. The credit provided British Columbia producers the opportunity to recover 20 percent of labour costs on productions shot in the province. Additional credits of 12.5 percent were available for productions shot outside the Greater Vancouver area and 3 percent for productions training new industry workers (Monk, 1997). That same month the federal government announced a similar tax-credit program to replace the tax shelter previously covering Canadian film investment. Although the provincial initiative corresponded with approximately two years of increased production spending in British Columbia, expenditures began to decline again after 2000 following the end of the government's commitment to the credit. The credit stood at 11 percent in following years until a subsequent increase in early 2005 to match Ontario and Quebec credit levels.

Although the tax incentives have served their purpose in stimulating production activities, the policy burden of such programs is recognized by governments. In a report commissioned by the B.C. government in 2005 discussion arose as to whether the tax credits could be understood as worthwhile given the diminishing returns in actual tax dollars brought in by the province from the industry's presence (InterVISTAS Consulting, 2005). The question only becomes more pertinent as similar programs are offered by governments around the world. In a very real sense, the industry model adopted by the Vancouver industry and the BC government undermines the city's own industry each time other jurisdictions increase their own incentives as global competition for production activities intensifies.

#### *Paris and the location shoot*

In turning from the Vancouver example to Paris, it is important to note that although the two cities have very different histories in regard to their respective film industries, the two have increasingly engaged similar structural models in attempts to lure more production activity. This is important to understand given the converging political economic structures of production across the industry. Such structural similarities increasingly threaten the cultural specificity of given locations, both in terms of the organization of production as well as the cultural products developed by particular populations. To develop this idea, in this section I turn to Paris and the history of location production in the French industry and how their model is increasingly adopting a transnational model at urban and national policy levels.

Location production in Paris began in the 1950s with the emergence of the New Wave movement and an aesthetic choice to take filmmaking into natural settings. The

impact of such decisions on the industry's structure in France was significant. By the mid-1970s French studio occupation rates were as low as 49 percent and only a handful of productions were making use of the space. By 1981, the country had only eight studio stages dedicated to film production, a fraction of the 29 stages in existence a decade earlier. In 1975, industry workers employed by studios constituted only 1.7 percent of the workforce – a significant change from even five years earlier when studios employed 9.5 percent of the workforce. The trend toward location shooting as opposed to studio production remains prominent in the French industry, where only 6 to 11 percent of film production took place in studio in each of the years between 2000 and 2005.

In contrast with the North American film commission model that attempted to coordinate and promote the uses of space by the film industry, Paris responded in a markedly different manner. Despite the reality of the industry's use of natural settings for production, the transition was viewed more as a natural phenomenon and, despite occasional uses of the city by foreign productions, much of the discussion of location shooting remained focused on the national industry. For example, through the 1980s, the French film industry produced resources, largely within the context of professional skills and development initiatives. For example, a two-part series published in 1980 by the technicians' trade journal *Le Technicien du Film* provided a comprehensive listing of how to plan to shoot on location for various sites in Paris and across the country (*Pour vos autorisations de tournage en extérieur*.1981; *Pour vos tournages en extérieur*.1981).<sup>17</sup> A 1981 article in the same journal details a trend toward filming outside of major cinematic centers, largely as a way to save money. Such trends, however, were noted as more common amongst independent producers working on personal projects in lower-cost areas (Dujarric, 1981).

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<sup>17</sup> This worker-produced resource from the early-1980s is, in fact, almost identical in concept and content to production guides produced by the city of Paris for foreign producers in recent years.

Location production, although a well-integrated part of the French film industry, was not viewed as a significant economic factor by the industry or the local municipalities where such production was occurring.

By the late 1980s, however, *Le Technicien du Film* was publishing regular reports on location shooting in various areas of the country. Examples used in profiles included the Paris airports, the Loire Valley, Aquitaine, historical monuments and the Pyrenees (Dujarric, 1988-89; Dujarric, 1989a; Dujarric, 1989b; Wetzel, 1988/89; Wetzel, 1989). Some reports were based around the common use of certain locations that maintained at least one staff member and an application process to approve and facilitate film production activities. Others, particularly focused on regions outside of Paris, noted film offices and financial incentives provided to producers in efforts to attract production.

Through the late 1980s a number of regions in France established support and investment funds for the industry along with offices to coordinate public policy and promotion to industry representatives, similar to North American film commissions (Conter, 2000). Much of this was seen as a way to entice a small amount of production away from Paris, particularly when historical dramas required a rural or town setting. Throughout, however, the Paris region remained largely indifferent to the film commission phenomenon. The metropolitan region remained the central location for approximately 90 percent of the country's film activity. The industry's presence could be taken for granted. Paris' Prefect of Police acknowledged the significance of film activity in the city during a 1989 Municipal Council meeting. In response to a question about rules governing film crews using public space the Prefect explained, "I recall, to start, that if my services are called upon frequently to produce authorizations for 'filming on a public passage', it's because Paris benefits as one of the most prestigious locations, attracting filmmakers from around the world," (Conseil

municipal, 1990). The statement, in addition to hinting at the size of the city's production activities, also points out the cultural prestige with which the city's administration identified the quantity of production. Nonetheless, the city identified its role in film production as limited to issuing film permits through the police service.

This is not to say that the idea of film commissions was absent from other French municipal or regional discussions. In fact, the film commission phenomenon arose in France during the early 1990s when regions around the country organized a forum in Nice to present services, film locations, financial aid and infrastructure available to the film industry. Although this marked the first significant coordination of regional bodies and, in some cases, film commissions in the country, the concept was still viewed – and often resisted – largely as an American or Hollywood activity (Kis, 1991). The market segment these film commissions were attempting to attract ranged from large-scale productions searching for a particular “look” to productions that might otherwise go to other countries due to cost factors. Similar to the British Columbia experience, the development of film commissions was part of the economic strategies undertaken by regions. Film production was recognized specifically as an economic activity and regions and municipalities recognized the potential for attracting some activity to their jurisdiction. A difference from the B.C. model, however, was that French film commission development during this period focused largely on the domestic production market in an attempt to capture at least a portion of the activity otherwise concentrated in Paris.

By comparison, for almost 15 years preceding this period, bodies such as the B.C. Film Commission were approaching European producers and promoting the opportunity to film overseas. Although limited in success for attracting European production, such activities nonetheless demonstrated a significant international scope in the B.C. location market in

comparison with the French system. The greater international interest for the mainstream French industry was found in co-productions, largely through Quebec if a Canadian group was to be a partner. But interest in the larger Film Commission phenomenon did not go unnoticed altogether, as demonstrated in a 1991 feature in *Le Film Français* about the British Columbia film industry (Sengès, 1991). The article, published around the same time as the Nice industry conference mentioned above, profiled the rise of B.C.'s industry and resulting economic impact. It focused on the BC Film Commission, among other structural support systems such as Telefilm Canada, which supported and encouraged the industry's presence within the geographical region. Clearly, interest in the film commission model was emerging in France.

The reasons for France's curiosity regarding international location production, but overall introverted perspective can be attributed to larger policy and economic debates regarding the role of film in national identity. A new genre of film emerged in the early 1980s, generally referred to as *Cinéma du Look* or the *Forum des Halles* genre (Condron, 1997). The distinct fast-paced style and comic-like colour of the films was recognized and critiqued as "a reflection of the importance and influence of television and advertising in late twentieth-century society," (215). The films used the city as a setting, but in a way that turned the urban landscape inside out. Films featured subcultures and those living on the social fringes (215) and, more important to the present discussion, used the built city's interior as the location of action. Subways, theatres, warehouses and the undersides of bridges hosted various films from the genre.

As a result, French cinema witnessed a revival in the early 1980s on an aesthetic front, but faced other challenges as a result of the developing liberalization of audiovisual industries. The licensing of private broadcasters and of cable television in the 1980s and a

consolidation of media ownership through the same period brought about a new challenge to the industry as patterns of film exhibition changed toward private viewing and public cinemas closed. Paris cinemas witnessed a 40 percent drop in entrance rates between 1980 and 1990. Between 1985 and 1993, 135 theatre screens closed in the city of Paris alone (City of Paris, 1993), many of which were independent and provided screens for experimental and art house films. While 349 screens remained in 1993, 70 percent were owned by the country's three largest corporate distributors: Gaumont, Pathé and U.G.C. Further, given the three companies' involvement in production as well as distribution and exhibition, they owned 90 percent of the city's screens exhibiting exclusive engagements, leaving remaining exhibitors to less profitable markets (*ibid*). As a result of these trends, the city's municipal film policy largely focused on helping independent theatres upgrade equipment and cultivating a cinema-going public, rather than on developing the production side of the industry – which was largely viewed as a national government concern.

At an international level, the French government had assumed a central role in the fight to have cinema excluded from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1993. Condron argues that the need to reassert national identity through cinema may account for an abundance of period piece literary film adaptations through the 1990s (213-5). Alternatively, the move might have simply mirrored international trends along the same genre lines. But the rise of the literary genre proved very popular in France and period pieces established a move toward larger budget productions in France. Television channels, particularly Canal+, were now investors in the film industry, contributing to the rising budgets. Television interests also benefited from the development of a genre that could easily transfer between the large and small screens. As a result, not only did the 1990s

witness a rise in the literary period piece for cinema, but also a parallel move into the same subject matter in made-for-television productions.

The subsequent move to period pieces and the associated need for rural settings to film such productions parallel the development of many regional film initiatives across the country, including the film commissions mentioned above. Many regional government bodies began offering financial incentives to producers through the 1990s. Nonetheless, the industry continued to witness the reality that most productions took place within the Paris region. Approximately 90 percent of the country's visual production sector remained concentrated in Paris and the cost of relocating a production could increase a budget significantly. Such costs become difficult to justify when, as one producer explains, "one can find many beautiful, picturesque villages within 40km of Paris," (Wright, 2001). Indeed, Paris hosted 87 percent of made-for-television fiction in 2000, despite the various financial incentives offered by other regional bodies.

While most production remains concentrated in Paris, the development of regional funding programs have brought about another genre called "regional fiction," based largely on the fact that such storylines are not based in Paris (Wright: 10-12). According to Perrine Fontaine, Director of fiction at national public broadcaster France 3, "There is a sort of *Amélie Poulain* phenomenon being found in fiction. The public wants stories anchored in their social and regional reality, but, at the same time, with sufficient poetics and lots of tenderness and emotion. People need fiction that is close to them, that speaks about them," (10). This recognition translated into weekly ratings that attract larger television audiences from outside Paris on Saturday evenings. As a result, some producers in the public sector recognize a need for looking beyond Paris for producing television. France 2, for example,

shoots half of its fiction outside of Paris. “I think that we must stop making television only for Parisians,” explains Laurence Bachman, director of fiction (Wright, 2001).

The fact remains, however, that for much of the history of trying to attract production, regions have had to put money out of their own budgets, rather than being able to offer specific tax incentives. This has left some municipal and regional governments looking for ways of benefiting from production that would go beyond simply the hotel and restaurant receipts brought in by attracting productions. Some regions have stopped providing funding for made-for-television films, focusing instead on feature films for which they can be co-producers (Wright: 11). As a result, some regions hope their investment will generate a financial return beyond the production period.

#### *Economic crises and the emergence of Paris’ new film policy*

Despite the development of commissions and financial incentives in parts of France through the 1990s, the film commission trend did not appeal across the board – particularly in Paris. As already mentioned, Paris had benefit from the concentration of production activity in the capital. But the notion of a film commission to facilitate and attract production to the city was viewed with disdain as an American concept that had little place in France. Meanwhile, municipal politicians were focused on an entirely different issue – the concentration and closure of cinemas in Paris – which although still intricately linked to the aspects of film and the urban environment, provided a policy apparatus to the exhibition and consumption processes of the industry rather than the initial production of visual products.

While cinema was regarded, in part, as an economic opportunity to a number of regions, the overriding concern in Paris’ public debates has been cultural. The practice of

cinema-going and the cultural significance of the city as a place of cinematic production is provided greater currency than the economic imperative of attracting or maintaining production, at least up to the late-1990s. It was only in the late 1990s that larger structural issues regarding the manner by which production fit into the urban fabric figured into Paris' cultural policy discussions. Moreover, a marked difference between Paris' activities in regard to addressing production and those of other cities engaged in similar work, was the focus taken on developing a cultural image around the city.

In 1998 the city provided its first significant indication that film production was also a priority for the municipal government. Paris mayor Jean Tiberi announced the creation of the Paris Film Office, to be operational by early 1999 (Tiberi, 1998). Prior to this, the mayor's office and the Prefect of Police handled film authorizations. The office was created as one part of a three-pronged strategy for improving cinema's place in the capital.<sup>18</sup> The two other elements included the merger of the city's video library and auditoriums and funding for the improvement of experimental and art house cinemas. The new film office would serve to "welcome and promote the City of Paris like other capitals." But Tiberi resisted any suggestion that the city was merely playing catch-up with the industry in other cities. He explained, "This does not aim to copy New York or London, but to endow Paris with a complete and coherent structure for its use by professionals." The purpose behind such an office was explained from cultural and economic perspectives. Tiberi stated, "Foreign productions remain very important in their quality and in the interest they arouse. This

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<sup>18</sup> Throughout this period in the late-1990s, the city of Paris had instituted new laws requiring the cleaning of building facades. Many buildings had not been cleaned since their construction in the 1800s and carried the results of over a century of air pollution. Many monuments were cleaned leading up to the year 2000 and private building owners were required to maintain their own facades as well. The result was stunning, with many parts of the city appearing as though they were brand new.

evolution conforms to the cultural mission of Paris and transports its image in the world. It's also a significant source of economic richness."

Beginning in 2001 with a new municipal government, the city further reinforced its policy concerning cinema by establishing a cultural policy agenda that brought all cinematic projects – from the video library and festivals to production authorizations and aid to art house theatres – under the common banner of *Mission Cinéma*, which included an office dedicated to film issues, including production. The next year, the North Paris Film Commission started through an agreement between municipal and departmental governments of the area. The new commission represents eight municipalities. Both of these initiatives took approaches to the film industry that were more international in their perspective than had been attempted in the past.

It was not until 2003, however, that the global implications of the visual production sector became evident in France overall. In the summer of 2003, workers across the country's cultural sector, including film, television and live theatre, among other sectors, went on strike to protest changes made to their social benefits program. The workers' movement behind these protests will be addressed in more detail in the following chapter. Of concern to the present discussion are the overall implications this action had for the domestic industry. For theatrical-release films, the percentage of production taking place outside of France went from 28 percent in 2002 – a figure that had been stable for at least the five previous years – to 39 percent in 2003 (Centre National de la Cinématographie, 2004). In other words, in 2003 the number of production weeks of French films shot outside the country increased by 49 percent from the year before (Drouhaud & Leclerc, 2004) – a figure that increases to 55 percent if documentary and animation production is excluded (Mieszala, 2004). Telefilms also witnessed an increase in foreign shooting, with the

percentage of foreign days shot outside the country increasing from 19 percent in 2002 to 22 percent in 2003 (Centre National de la Cinématographie, 2004). More important to shifts in telefilm production was that fewer productions shooting outside the country were co-productions; that is, an increasing number of producers were working outside the country not due to requirements from other funders, but simply as a cost-saving tool (Wright, 2003). The Fédération des industries du cinéma de l'audiovisuel et du multimedia (FICAM) suggested that the overall value of work leaving the country was higher than indicated simply by production numbers – up to 45 percent of the value of telefilms was leaving the country with postproduction work taking place in less costly locations. Although the figures for both film and telefilm sectors leveled out again in 2004, the significant shift in 2003 production figures attracted political attention. Producers pointed to the fact that over the previous six years, telefilm budgets remained the same, although artistic costs increased 40 percent as an increasing number of channels called for film actors – who commanded higher salaries – to attract larger audiences (Wright: 13).

The policy response in France moved the country closer to an international model than had been witnessed previously. Beginning in January 2004, the government introduced a tax credit system that provides a 20 percent credit on a film production's expenses, up to €500,000 for fiction and documentaries and €750,000 for animation (Mieszala, 2004). A second element of national policy involved a fund to help regions attract production to their territories. The government would put forward €1 for every €2 contributed by a region, up to a cap of €1 million. The aim of these initiatives was to encourage French productions to spend a greater proportion of their budget in France and to attract more of the overall value of co-productions with French involvement to France.

At a regional level, in 2004 the Ile-de-France government established a film commission to coordinate industry and commission activities in an effort to market the area internationally and to facilitate production within the region through administrative and networking services. Accompanied by a regional fund, making use of the national government's new policy initiative, the commission is charged with a decidedly international approach to its scope. And the standard film commission model coupled with tax incentive schemes and grant funds means the region is much more closely aligned with the transnational image production markets than previously.

Ile-de-France Film Commission director Olivier-René Veillon says his commission operates on the model developed by the B.C. Film Commission. The B.C. Film Commission is, in fact, one of the organizations Veillon points to as having developed a distinct model over many years that is now used globally for film commission activities. Veillon explains,

Vancouver provides a ‘prime example’ of what to do: Bring in important shootings and give a good image of the place, making sure people have good things to say. Paris, right now, doesn’t have a good reputation, partly because it seems like a difficult place to shoot if you don’t know the location. This is where the film commission can help – explaining what is and is not possible in a timely manner and finding alternatives when one option isn’t available. (Veillon, 2004)

The film commission is ultimately a marketing and service organization for the industry’s activities within a given location. But, as Veillon points out, the city is not an easy place for foreign producers to use, whether because of lack of knowledge of the location and procedures, cost or simply a matter of perceived difficulties in working in the region.

In addition to easing the difficulty of navigating permissions and various unfamiliar administrative procedures, the Ile-de-France Film Commission also offers a number of financial incentives. The region established a film fund in 2002 to invest in productions. With investments in cinema and audiovisual initiatives valued at approximately €1.07 million in 2003, these investments comprised 20.87 percent of the region’s cultural budget and three

percent of overall spending by the regional government for the year (Atelier de production Centre-Val-de-Loire, 2004). The region's total spending jumped to €9.4 Million for 28 feature films and seven television movies in 2004. Although a latecomer to the regional funding trend in France, with its high levels of investment Ile-de-France's funds constituted 83.5 percent of the country's total regional investments in the sector in 2004 (Centre National de la Cinématographie, 2005).

Both British Columbia and Ile-de-France's film commissions now operate using similar structures and within the same global market of image production. It is at this point, however, that the strategies used by the two agencies bifurcate. Whereas the B.C. Film Commission model markets the chameleon-like nature of the city's visual landscape alongside economic advantages for production, Paris must market itself as distinctly French, if not specifically Parisian. It is on this point of cultural distinction that the two cities' strategies differ significantly.

### **Symbolic capital and the necessity of taste in image markets**

While the film commission is becoming a standard feature of many public policy programs in support of attracting film around the world, the task for each remains to differentiate their products in a global marketplace. This poses a significant challenge, particularly when most locations are promoted as stand-ins for other places, whether real or imagined. Vancouver may have advantages such as a favourable exchange rate against the U.S. dollar, close proximity to Los Angeles, a variety of locations, tax incentives and skilled crews, providing an easy match when promoting the city to industry representatives. Such tasks are more difficult for a location such as Paris where costs and exchange rates as well as a poor industry reputation are disincentives to producers. As discussed in the last chapter, Bourdieu's

conception of the objectified state of cultural capital is a useful basis for understanding the dynamics of cityscapes in contemporary image markets. In recognizing the “symbolic logic of distinction” inherent in the cultivation of taste around normalized systems of cultural capital, we might begin to recognize the essential role such a concept can have in understanding contemporary urban dynamics in building the political economic structures of the city. Already addressed earlier in this chapter, the city is increasingly dependent upon symbolic capital in developing an image that is attractive to preferred investors, labour groups and consumers. The example of the film industry is particularly interesting as a subject of analysis in this framework because of the various points on which the city works to valorize visual landscapes.

To compare Vancouver and Paris in such a discussion of cultural capital is not an attempt to contrast extremes in the levels of symbolic capital employed by each location. Indeed, I would argue that at least the objectified forms of cultural capital are crucial to the existence of the visual industries in both cities. But the manner in which strategies are developed in each location differ and this is the subject of my current discussion. Paris, in fact, has a much longer history of defining itself by way of cultural capital, both in terms of the city’s physical environment and fine products produced constituting objectified cultural capital as well as through the defined class system and social structures that constitute the embodied and institutionalized forms of cultural capital. The overt engagement of cultural capital at an international level has only developed in Vancouver over the past 35 years.

Paris’ long history as a capital city and its international connotation of France are part of the symbolic capital that normalizes the city’s presence in an international setting as natural. Transferred into a discussion of film, Scott (2000) notes that “It might be said, without undue circularity, that the distinguishing characteristic of French film is its

Frenchness," (104). In this light Paris is also the center of a historically strong national cinema and, as a result its symbols are particularly infused with a national identity and its spaces of production are comprised by a culturally entrenched series of practices. Scott explains,

Yet as the Frenchness of French film is somehow a reflection of French society at large, it is Paris, the place, that mediates the whole process of distillation, and that so frequently infuses it with concrete character. Paris is at once the matrix within which the social machinery of production is entrenched and the main repository of the diverse cultural resources that are both consciously and unselfconsciously mobilized in the conceptualization and execution of cinematic projects." (Scott, 2000, p.104)

Given the presence of skilled workers, service industries and infrastructure within the city, Paris has a mature apparatus to accommodate the film industry. But, as already mentioned, there are various factors that limit production to, overall, a national market. At a time when aesthetic imperatives to use "authentic" spaces in film, almost any location can be built in a studio, providing the director with complete autonomy in staging scenes, unencumbered by the daily activities of the actual city. But it is the recognition of the city as a culturally distinct site that has become the basis of marketing the city as a location to foreign producers.

In fact, the various coordinating bodies for film in the Paris region have attempted to develop a notion of artistic privilege for those working in the city. As a result, Paris initially targeted filmmakers and producers capable of developing financing arrangements for their own location-specific projects. The *Mission Cinéma* office in the City of Paris thus emphasizes the prestige of cultural production in which the city figures. A promotional document reads, "[Paris] tends to be, more and more, the natural backdrop of many films, often playing a sort of supporting role, intimately linked to the action, to the heroes' behaviour, and to the story. It creates its own atmosphere and dynamism, which become part of the film," (Mairie de Paris, 2001). In a world of standardized space, there remains only one Paris. Imbued with cultural significance, to film the city is an ultimate artistic opportunity, as if the filmmaker

has enlisted the talents of a leading actor. In other words, there is an authenticity to productions filmed in Paris that cannot be reproduced in other locations. The office's web site further reinforces this notion in explaining "In the imaginary collective, Paris and the cinema are very closely bound by film scenes, counterparts of actors and music which all moved us," (Mairie de Paris, 2005). Including testimonials from French and foreign directors, the office's promotional materials attempt to lend the city a distinct reputation as a leader in the heritage and ongoing development of the seventh art.

As noted at the outset of this chapter, however, the reality of capturing the city's cultural uniqueness is not necessarily an easy task. As with *The Da Vinci Code*, only political intervention secured the Louvre for the American producers. Even with this, the production left Paris after a bit more than a week because of difficulty dealing with bureaucracy in the city. Instead, the film production rebuilt part of Paris on a London set. The previous year, the city lost a week of production when, again, access to the Louvre could not be secured in a timely manner for the producers of the American film *Ocean's Twelve*. The Minister of Culture's announcement that the country's cultural institutions would be open for filming was an attempt to demonstrate to the international visual production market that working in the city is possible and that the proper political attention is ensuring a hospitable climate for such activities.

As a result, the cultural prestige of working in Paris must therefore be under girded by an efficient and practical system to facilitate such production. In this regard, the film commission's role is particularly important. Given the country's national industry, there is an infrastructure available that combines with the luxury sector. The Ile-de-France Film Commission focuses on its status as one of only ten places in the world that can do everything a studio requires to produce an entire film project. In addition, the commission

fosters relationships with the city's luxury sector to offer productions an array of options for taking care of stars. In a region such as Ile-de-France, above-the-line talent who command the highest wages are close to everything involved in production, including multiple different locations and studio facilities as well as luxury accommodations and amenities. Doing a shoot in Paris thus allows people to live a life that is impossible to live when working on a set.

Vancouver, too, has developed a luxury sector comprised of high-end restaurants and hotels as well as luxury resorts such as Whistler that offer all the amenities that a global city offers to its elite clientele. For Vancouver, this has developed over the past 20 years as a process in response to both the film industry as well as the arrival of rich immigrants. The creation of these amenities has not arisen out of a history or notion of identity present in Paris. Instead, the city has been able to capitalize on its natural setting as a place close to nature. Indeed, there are three ski hills on local mountains within the metropolitan limits and a luxury ski resort within a 90-minute drive. Yachts moor in the city's marinas. Hiking, climbing and biking facilities are all within short distance from the city. Around this reputation for outdoor activities, the city has been able to develop a luxury sector that hosts vacationing royalty, heads of state, celebrities and millionaires. At the present time, Vancouver has a selection of luxury services and amenities that compete with most global cities.

In the end, Vancouver and Paris find themselves competing for visual production activities in the same global production market. Paris' robust film offices – once scorned as part of the American corporate film industry – now attend the annual Hollywood Locations Expo with one of the largest contingents of any region. The Ile-de-France Film Commission runs a writers' retreat for American film writers completing projects that require inspired

time in the City of Light. France offers a tax incentive program modeled after the systems pioneered in Vancouver over the past three decades. And in realizing its need to rely on the city's cultural capital as an advantage when other cost factors might be prohibitive, the Ile-de-France Film Commission signed a partnership in 2005 with film commissions in Berlin, Madrid and Rome to promote filming in these four capitals of European cinema. It would appear that Paris is as much a competitor in the global image production sector as any other city vying for similar activities, including Vancouver.

#### *Cultural capital and the reality of conflict*

Despite the efforts of film commissions to facilitate the presence of visual production in their jurisdictions, the attempts to valorize the cityscape have not been without difficulty. Given the value of the urban visual landscape many individuals who have a creative role in developing the landscape have asserted their creative rights over their work. Since the significant public architectural projects of the 1980s in Paris, an increasing number of architects, landscape artists and visual creators of various background are asserting their rights to control the visual reproduction of their works. The Louvre Pyramid's image is protected by its architect, requiring up to 10 percent of distribution income to be paid as royalties if the building is used in commercial visual media. Architects of other major public works projects maintain similar rights to their works, including the Arche de la Defense and the national library.

The ascendance of intellectual property constraints around public buildings is not simply an interesting anecdote amidst the film policies of a city such as Paris. As Devillard (2000) points out, politicians such as French president François Mitterrand came to see

architecture as a fundamental element in the communication of a city's prominence on the international stage. While this sentiment was articulated through projects built in the 1980s, the idea's rationale was precipitated through the 1970s during a period of de-industrialization in the city and the overall urban crisis that characterized many North American and European cities throughout the period.

While having reshaped the Parisian landscape significantly, the architectural additions stood to paralyze the city's visual industries dependant on location production, particularly the film industry, but including everything from magazines to postcards. Since the Parisian architectural projects of the 1980s, a new legal issue pertaining to film and the city has arisen. Designers of the major projects now demand control over the visual appearance of their work and maintain significant benefits from the laws to enforce their rights. For example, the architect of the Louvre pyramids maintains copyright of the monument's visual appearance while the designer of the Eiffel Tower's<sup>19</sup> recently updated lighting scheme also maintains copyright of the structure's nocturnal visual appearance.<sup>20</sup> This has effectively limited the appearance of these two landmarks in film. Under French law, creators ranging from gardeners and landscapers to lighting designers and architects maintain rights to their

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<sup>19</sup> Although the Eiffel Tower's image – one of the most used and recognized symbols of the French capital – falls into the public domain, the artist commissioned to add a new lighting scheme at the turn of the millennium maintains reproduction rights over the new night time appearance.

<sup>20</sup> The entire issue came to a head in France following the 1994 inauguration of the redesigned Place des Terreaux in Lyon. Artist Daniel Buren and architect Christian Drevet, principal designers of the changes, claimed artistic rights over their work and took the editors of four post card companies to court for printing images of the public space without authorization (Agence France Presse, 2005). The country's highest court dismissed Buren and Drevet's claim, stating that the represented work was only an accessory to the overall place depicted in the post card images.

The decision thus limits an individual author's right to limit the reproduction of a work that constitutes part of an urban landscape, but still leaves a significant degree of control with authors. In a 2002 decision, Michel Duchêne, heir of landscape designer Achille Duchêne, won a court challenge against a jewellery store that used an unauthorized image of a park in a magazine advertisement in 1996. Although not surprising in light of the fact that landscape design is protected as a work of art under French law, the decision is notable given that the designer passed away in 1947 and parts of the park had since been redone.

work. The situation has developed to a point where the Ile-de-France Film Commission felt it necessary to organize a discussion on the topic in late 2005. Involving lawyers and industry representatives, the session provided an overview of recent legal decisions clarifying artistic rights for the individuals described as “authors of the city” (Conseil Regional d'Ile-de-France, 2006).

The situation contrasts somewhat with that of Vancouver where, under Canadian copyright law, it is not an infringement to reproduce an image of an architectural work in cinema, drawings, paintings or engravings (Department of Justice, Canada, 1985). Other artistic works that might appear within the cityscape remain, nonetheless, concerns to filmmakers as legal clearances are obtained for productions. Likewise, a similar provision in the U.S. Copyright Act allows for the reproduction of pictorial images of architectural works, provided the work is normally visible from a public space (U.S. Copyright Office, 2003).

Apart from the fact that many working in visual sectors find France’s copyright laws restricting and debilitating, this example demonstrates a form of resistance within a cultural environment. Artists’ abilities to control the reproduction of their work, even when such work might exist within a public setting, is notable for its potential to resist commodification in the manner other public spaces and icons have undergone. At the same time, this underscores a process whereby more power is constituted in the hands of one individual deemed to be the artist. There is a sense of prestige in being able to re-map a cityscape.<sup>21</sup> This is in spite of the fact that any visual landscape is the result of more than one individual’s

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<sup>21</sup> The re-development of the Parisian neighbourhood in the 13<sup>th</sup> arrondissement around the national library serves as an example of the poetics associated with rewriting the cityscape. The publicity material for the redevelopment in 2002 explained: “Never in the recent history of the capital has such a large territory been chosen for a city within a city. What was just a few years ago a bunch of disparate patches of land and buildings in disrepair is becoming a new Parisian hot bed. On this virtually blank canvas of nearly 130 hectares will be added 8 hectares of parks, 60,000 jobs and 15,000 residents,” (Paris Rive Gauche, 2002). To reinforce this notion, one billboard around a construction site in the neighbourhood in 2002 read: “La ville s’écrit” or “the city is written.”

creative input and labour. At its worst, this can become a way of abstracting spaces for a local population, taking away any notion of collective collaboration in the creation of lived spaces of the everyday.

### **Abstraction and Striation of Urban Space**

The overall processes of urban redevelopment and visual organization might be understood as the production of abstract and striated spaces within the urban environment. These terms are particularly useful in understanding the dynamic tensions that exist within the appropriation of spaces and debate over the meanings and uses of such spaces. The role of visuality is particularly important to these struggles, particularly as contemporary conceptions of visuality attempt to dislocate the visual from other senses of sensory experience. Struggles over the control and meaning of cultural capital can result in populations feeling alienated from their material surroundings as well as the myths and rituals that constitute meanings within their lived environment. In other words, their mental maps become disoriented, referencing meanings and associations no longer possible in their owners' lived experiences.

The striaion of space is a process intrinsic to the development of the film industry, witnessed in the actions of film commissions, in particular. The cataloguing of locations in libraries and databases, referenced by a particular look, style, location, price and other visual and logistical characteristics dislocates the space from its actual place of existence and the social community that live in that space on a daily basis. At the same time, the use of a given location for a film shoot may involve smoothing the visual appearance in order to mask its actual identity. This is the case in many Vancouver film productions where a location's identifying characteristics must be removed in order to turn the city into "Anytown, USA".

By removing visual points of reference the space is smoothed, ensuring the eye an uninterrupted perusal of the generic location, disembodied from any lived experience.

Where such processes become problematic are in the encounters with actual populations in the filming locations. Streets blocked off to public access, neighbours renting their house for productions and familiar streetscapes transformed into Christmas scenes in July and, in the case of Vancouver, the replacement of flags and mailboxes with American stand-ins is the norm for many who live in locations with a film industry. While the novelty of a film production may appeal to a population at first, the repeated disruption of daily life becomes an annoyance for many and an intrusion for some, particularly after repeated disruptions. The smoothing of spaces for the purpose of film productions is disorienting for the local population. Moreover, it does very little to contribute to a local ritualization of space in the case of a city like Vancouver. The stories being told are not about, nor are they for the local population. While cities like Paris have been able to ritualize and mythologize spaces through the medium of film, in the contemporary global market the city's landmarks are emphasized to an international audience while the daily life of the city's inhabitants becomes irrelevant, or little more than a quaint backdrop for the crude lens of the international tourist or filmmaker. No longer does it matter if the route of a car chase between the Eiffel Tower and the Sacré Coeur is illogical if not impossible; the film is not made on the basis of the artists' experience of the city. Instead, it is a way of making use of the recognized cultural capital of the location for the purpose of qualifying for tax credits and the marketing potential of a production shot in Paris. The end result of this phenomenon is the abstraction of space for the local population whose lives are disrupted by the filmmaking and whose stories are not depicted in the final media product. Indeed, to use Lefebvre's terminology, space is rendered homogenous, taking the lived experiences of a

population within their cityspace and making them into a “‘plan’ existing in a void and endowed with no other qualities, and, on the other hand, to the flatness of a mirror, of an image, of pure spectacle under the absolutely cold gaze,” (287). The population is not left helpless within this circumstance, however. Indeed, the very workforce employed in the alteration of these spaces is also part of the population disrupted by such processes. And the workforce is one of the places where we find the first examples of resistance.

### **The city, labour and precarity of the workforce**

To this point, my discussion has generally referred to the city as a material and spatial construct. In following literature addressing urban formations, however, it is particularly important to recognize the constitutive force of urbanism: populations. Scott, Soja and Harvey each note the phenomenon of creativity as particularly important to the overall nature of urbanism. It is the agglomeration of individuals and capital along with the division of labour that allows for specialization and development of very narrowly defined professions and services. As I noted in Chapter 2, however, while populations are recognized as instrumental to the cultural industries, some writers such as Scott fail to acknowledge the social relations upon which such industries are based. Indeed, the work of writers such as Sassen, Zukin and Harvey alert us to the inherently class-based divisions of labour that characterize social relations – and are often exacerbated in urban conditions.

Governments at local, regional, national and international levels have provided industry assistance to filmmakers in both urban locations studied. Throughout this chapter, though, I have also provided reference to a number of examples throughout the history of Vancouver and Paris’ film industries since the 1970s suggesting that government has not been the driving force behind industry developments. Rather, governments have often been

in reactionary positions to an industry developed and promoted by the very workers seeking further employment. In this regard, Herod's (1997) argument that the workforce plays a significant role in attracting and organizing productive activities finds relevance in this discussion. What is important to note, however, is that despite the workforce structures and the importance of labour to productive forces, this remains one of the least studied areas in the field of communication, despite the important relations between labour and cultural production. Harvey explains, "What is really at stake here, however, is an analysis of cultural production and the formation of aesthetic judgments through an organized system of production and consumption mediated by sophisticated divisions of labour, promotional exercises, and marketing arrangements," (1990: 346). These processes are managed by transnational flows of capital. Given the events of the industry described above, the lack of focus on labour remains a significant gap within the field. Therefore, in an effort to draw labour into the political economy and cultural analysis of cinema and the city, I turn to the workforces of Vancouver and Paris' film industries in the next chapter in an effort to theorize workers' conceptions of labour in the contemporary image production industries.

## Chapter 4

## Last Tango in Paris? Cultural Labour in the "Authentic" city

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Interrupting the nation's most-watched entertainment broadcast was more than simply a publicity stunt by France's intermittent entertainment workers. The October 2003 protest took a message against the dismantling of the country's social security system into the forum where many of the activists would be going to work normally. The action followed a summer when some of France's most prestigious international cultural festivals were cancelled and film production came to a halt due to a strike by the intermittent workers. The guerrilla-style invasion of a live television production – followed by similar actions against national news broadcasts, movie theatres and national cultural offices – increased pressure on the government to at least entertain workers' concerns. The actions were serious enough to cause some observers to question whether the industry had experienced its last tango with Paris; many productions left the country to search out cheaper locations with more predictable labour events. Such tactics starkly contrast the actions of Vancouver film unions when they began to make trade missions to Los Angeles in the 1980s to attract foreign production. Their strategy began a trend now termed as "entrepreneurial labour." One set of workers felt entirely alienated from their sector's decision-making system while the other group actively initiated the attraction of production activities to their region. But workers in

both locations were responding to decades of structural realignment of their industries as the visual production sector became increasingly reliant upon “flexible” labour and production processes. While employing opposite strategies, the two labour movements defined their status as precarious and intermittent workers and established political economic projects based on the geographic positioning of their industry. Moreover, sets of workers defined their labour within a cultural framework. French workers recognized their role in producing taste and class characteristics that went far beyond their own industry. Meanwhile, Vancouver workers defined the symbolic capital in their urban landscape and sold this on an international basis. And both Paris and Vancouver workers, while engaging the cultural capital in their industries, were highly integrated into the contemporary construct of urban spaces they inhabited.

In the previous chapter I provided an examination of the French and Canadian urban policy frameworks that have supported the two countries’ respective film industries alongside actions taken by the cities of Vancouver and Paris to accommodate filming. In particular, I highlighted the significant development around film commissions in Vancouver and Paris. Alongside this, I highlighted the three primary elements considered by producers when choosing a film location: cost, crew and locations. Within this, I explained, Paris has undertaken the task of reinforcing the authenticity of the city’s cultural status. This is in contrast with Vancouver’s conflicted status as a chameleon-like “anywhere” for film production, but strong desire to establish itself as a globally recognized city. I argued that the city has become an entrepreneurial agent, attempting to attract production activity based partly on accumulated cultural capital and partly upon relative economic advantage.

It is upon the notion of the relative economic advantage that I pick up this discussion in the present chapter, but with a production location factor not yet touched:

crews or, more generally, labour. Within the context of global cultural industries, film workers are often cited as the primary victims of dispersed transnational production models (Wasko, 1998). While workers are subject to the whims of production relocations, the history of the Vancouver film industry demonstrates that the workers have been and continue to be responsible for organizing the movement of production to dispersed locales (Murphy, 1997). Representatives from Vancouver's film industry labour unions were some of the first to lure production away from the Los Angeles region by way of trade missions and marketing south of the border in the 1960s. They also pushed government to start a film commission. And without the marketing role taken on by these unions, Vancouver likely would not have become the film industry location that characterized the city's reputation through the 1990s. Without continued wage concessions by the same unions, the city would have lost much of its production activity at various points.

In this chapter I detail the labour activities since 1970 in each of the two urban case studies. I do this against a backdrop of the structural changes within each city's film industry in order to draw links between changing production processes, the organization of labour and the conception of labour developed by workers. As such, I rely on the industry's categories of labour division in designating above-the-line and below-the-line workers.<sup>22</sup> In addition, comparisons that prove useful in the following discussion are: unions as managers of production versus unions as managers of oppositional containment; class-based and classlessness conceptions of labour; cultural producers versus industrial producers and spaces of consumption versus spaces of production. I argue that although the activities of

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<sup>22</sup> Above-the-line workers are defined as the positions that demand higher salaries and are difficult if not impossible to eliminate. This includes actors, directors and key creative and production management positions. Below-the-line workers are technicians, unskilled labourers and those whose positions feel the most pressure in efforts to reduce costs. In relocating productions, labour savings are made in the area of below-the-line workers, who can be local to the place of production and thus paid in the local currency.

labour groups in Vancouver and Paris over this period are different, they all rely upon workers having identified and conceptualized their labour and urban environments within immaterial conceptions of cultural production. This is to say that although the labour performed by workers is material by its very nature, workers increasingly recognize immaterial elements that further valorize their actions. These include the creation of aesthetic taste, symbolic capital and visual cultural consumption. As such, the lines between producer and consumer are increasingly blurred, particularly in regard to many of the spaces of production and consumption in the contemporary city.

### **Labour in the context of historical analysis**

The dominant focus of the North American film industry has been as an economic entity rather than a cultural or artistic project. As such, the labour movement, although well represented in the industry, is largely a manager of industrial relations rather than an agent of cultural expression or social change. At a few points, the threat of interrupted labour relations drove productions away; those that returned did so with forewarnings that the industry would not tolerate any level of labour dispute. Given these circumstances, the North American film labour movement is a non-player in social or political movements. This comes in sharp contrast to earlier potential recognized for the film industry's role in promoting social transformation, particularly during the rise of the cultural industries of the 1920s and 1930s (Denning, 1996).

By way of comparison, Paris' film workers are better assessed as part of a movement than by their actual union affiliations. As Smith (2005) points out, the workers' revolts of May 1968 were part of a rebellion against unions such as the CGT that failed to adequately represent workers' interests (11). This, along with the desire to have more diverse voices

represented in filmmaking and the recognition that “everything is political”, are the thematic inheritances of French cinema of the 1970s (12-3). This has translated into a contemporary movement whereby workers have categorized their labour as “precarious” and “intermittent” in order to better identify their status with the labour performed in much of the service industries. But such categories are also used in an attempt to launch a workers’ movement that is inherently political in nature and surpasses the economic framework of labour relations in which traditional unions find themselves bound.

In this chapter, I use the term “workers” to refer to the general workforce in the contemporary film industry. More specific, the term “technicians” refers to workers generally classified as “below-the-line” personnel. These are the workers who are invisible to the general audience, including everyone from makeup artists to camera operators, carpenters and administrative staff. In this, however, I also include actors who work as extras and minor roles in productions. Generally they do not hold star status in the industry and would not hold a given role were it not for their geographic proximity to the site of production.

Technicians are not a common object of study, given that their work is not generally viewed as having creative control or input into the creation of films. This perspective, I argue, is incorrect and the result of a larger ideological viewpoint prominent in society that focuses on a single author as the holder of creative license. Technicians have played and continue to contribute to the creative development of their products and, as will be discussed, have been instrumental in actually organizing their industry. This is very much part of the localism of labour’s productive organization in a global market, as outlined by Herod (1997). Further Benghozi (1989) points to the important role technicians have had in cinema overall. He explains that the technicians traditionally provided institutional memory

to the film industry in studios where productions were shot (80-1). This memory took two forms. First, technicians were often employees of the studios and remained constant from production to production, while directors and actors changed with each new project. The technicians provided a stability of sorts to an industry that otherwise witnessed significant ongoing change. Second, the institutional memory was embodied in the practices of the workers, through their skills in lighting and set design, providing a particular style to their respective production companies (81). In this context, the film technicians provided important skills that determined the aesthetic qualities of the final product.

To understand the contemporary situation of the French and Canadian film workers, a larger historical understanding of the French and Canadian labour movements is required. While French labour protests are notorious for their frequent strikes, the country actually maintains one of the lowest trade union membership rates in Western society, at 9.6 per cent in 2001(OECD, 2001). Nonetheless, unions maintain a powerful presence in certain sectors of French industry. Companies with 20 employees or more are automatically subject to collective bargaining under French law. Within this, however, workers are not required to be a member of the union covering their workplace. Collective agreements are negotiated for sectors between teams of unions and business representatives. In the case of the entertainment industry, which includes film workers, three associations constitute the business side of negotiations and five unions represent labour. In order for an agreement to become government policy, it must be passed by a majority-plus-one vote. Each side represents half of the voting rights.

The five unions are designated as “nationally representative” by the French government (*Trade unions of the world* 2005). Given this status, the five unions act as umbrella organizations, defined largely by political lines, which collectively negotiate national sector

agreements with employer organizations. Union membership is not compulsory for workers covered by such agreements. Local or industry unions may affiliate with the nationally representative organization of choice. Workers who do join a union may do so based on political orientation as opposed to craft or industry categories. As a result, the five unions negotiate on workers' behalf regardless of their actual representative status based on membership.

Scott (2000) points out that the low levels of union membership in the film industry may be due to the security provided by the national social assistance programs. This relationship may be assumed across the national spectrum, given that comprehensive social assistance programs are available to a majority of workers, regardless of their sector. As well, French film credentials, provided through a professional card that allows individuals to work, are administered through the national agency, Centre National de la Cinématographie. As such, union membership is not a requirement to work in the industry. Finally, the low rate of union membership, particularly amongst intermittent workers, is most likely attributable to a strong extra-union tradition of militancy. Over three decades, workers increasingly defined their labour within a more complex system of international production processes. Labour activism is not confined to, nor even a significant jurisdiction of organized labour in the entertainment industry. As a result, entertainment workers have come to situate their labour struggles within a political project rather than a simple economic situation. The result, as discussed in this chapter, has been a powerful workers' movement with a political consciousness and mobilizing objective extending far beyond the narrow economic objectives of their national sector unions.

By comparison, Vancouver's film industry is highly unionized given the unions' role as organizers of labour in the industry itself. In order to work in the Vancouver industry, a

worker must be part of a union. And joining a union requires professional training and accreditation prior to apprentice-like training on set. Union membership is only granted after a requisite number of hours are gained in experience and then work assignments are based on a seniority system of work calls. In this system, the union is responsible for controlling the number of workers allowed into the industry. As a result, they may try to limit the workforce in an effort to guarantee their membership steady work. At the same time, Vancouver unions play a prominent role in attracting business to their jurisdiction. Workers nor their unions have a history of labour activism. Union membership is viewed as a necessary part of the industry's management, but is also a point of friction between producers, the unions and membership at certain points when concessions are demanded for future work.

#### *The Limits of Labour: Entrepreneurial and Invisible Labour*

The predominant categories used to define the labour structures in Vancouver and Paris are, respectively, “entrepreneurial” and “invisible.” In the case of Vancouver, a small body of literature has recently documented the rise of the British Columbia film industry and attempted to theorize trends in the sector’s development (Coe, 2000a; Coe, 2000b; Coe, 2001; M. Gasher, 2002; M. Gasher, 1995; Murphy, 1997; Pendakur, 1998; Spaner, 2003; Tinic, 2005). Murphy’s work outlines the concept of entrepreneurial labour in his cataloguing of labour’s efforts to attract American productions to the city. By comparison, a similarly small body of literature devotes its attention to the workers’ movements in Paris’ film production sector (Boutang, 2003; Corsani, Lazzarato, & Negri, 1996; Corsani & Lazzarto, 2004). These workers have been relegated to the sidelines of an industry that otherwise

occupies a central position in France's cultural sector. This juxtaposition of entrepreneurial and invisible labour movements proves useful for developing an initial investigation of the labour strategies in each of the two cities. But such a comparison also highlights the shortcomings of this binary opposition of categories. As a result, this first section develops a historical comparison of entrepreneurial and invisible labour in the Vancouver and Paris film industries. This serves to outline the origins of such conceptions of labour in each city. The section concludes, however, by highlighting the shortcomings of this framework for analysis and, in turn, suggests additional concepts that help organize an understanding of the labour movements' relations both to their industry and theirs geographical setting, but that also allow for a more detailed analysis of labour's relationships to the visual nature of contemporary cultural industries.

#### *Authorship and the Marginalization of the Workforce*

An important element to understanding the role of the workforce in the cultural sector involves the definition of the artist and what type of input such a designation allows. Gerstner points to post-war France as the period when auteur theory developed in cinema – a tradition he claims is “rooted in the theatrics of a political gesture,” (Gerstner, 2003). More specifically, the notion of the artist is important to positioning the medium of film as part of a cultural economy in which economic scarcity lends cultural capital to an object. He explains, “The privileged station of the author/artist solidified the abstract qualities of both meaning and exchange value for particular historical economies. . . . the art-critical and market-emphasized focus of one great man and his masterwork of art neatly packaged the illusion of artist and masterpiece,” (Gerstner, 2003, p. 4-5). Such an advantage was not

formulated in one decision, but the process has identifiable points of development in French discussions.

The arrival of Alexandre Astruc's 1948 concept of *la caméra-style* was a key period in French cinema. *La caméra-style* is, in essence, an assertion that cinema is a means by which a director is able to express ideas and stories by way of the medium (Gerstner, 2003, p. 6). The camera is a pen, but the world of cinema is able to produce its own works of art, apart from other traditions such as literature. The idea was adopted in French cinema and made into a political calling by François Truffaut (Gerstner, 2003, p. 6-7). But more than simply a way of viewing the principles behind the making of a film, the notion of authorship pervaded film criticism. Largely enforced within the pages of *Cahiers du cinéma*, authorship as a focal point of study oriented attention to particular directors and their work. The consequence of this move was the crafting of a discipline almost entirely removed from the production processes behind the medium, and names being studied.

Staiger (Staiger, 2003) further develops the tradition of authorship studies, pointing out that causality has become a primary issue in much work on the author: "As has become dogma over the past thirty years, the author is a historical notion. That we require human agents or individual authors to explain the existence of discourses is a historical ideology associated with the appearance of humanism and capitalism," (28). Although a useful concept for both capitalism and humanism, the study of author(s) must be recognized as a necessarily political action by virtue of the terrain configured for study and status accorded to human action and its resulting systems. Staiger's comments echo Murdock's discussion of the author over two decades earlier (Murdock, 1980). Murdock argues that the idea of the author arose with modern capitalism and humanism, beginning in approximately 1550 as creative activity was recognized as a human action (21). There exists a tension, Murdock

proposes, between the artist and organizations that both use the artist's work and provide remuneration for the artist's labour. Authorship is thus an ideological concept and generally obscures the actual production process (25). My goal here is not to engage in a discussion of the authorship studies, but the arguments presented by Staiger and Murdock suggest an alternate way of understanding the role of the author in film studies and the marginalization of the workforce. In particular, the consolidation of artistic authority in the hands of the director, both for aesthetic and narrative control as well in the aforementioned national policy providing the director with ultimate authority over a film, marks a political move. The film is not viewed as a collective or cooperative effort in this model and, thus, the workforce outside of key artistic positions is reduced to functional labourers in the process. This is crucial to understanding the role of labour in subsequent discussions.

#### *Vancouver and the Entrepreneurial Labour model*

Although the film service industry that attracts American productions to Vancouver only took off in the early- to mid-1980s, film production has a long and varied history in the province of British Columbia (Gasher, 2002). The portion of history most important to the current industry form comes from the early 1950s when Vancouver's CBC television station debuted (Layte, 1996). The 1953 launch marked a unique movement in Vancouver film, given the significant resources available to local workers and the isolation from Ontario headquarters. The latitude given to the filmmakers at the CBC was part of "the golden years for filmmaking in Vancouver" when "They had creative freedom" and "were encouraged, especially at the local level, to make good dramatic films and documentaries," (Layte, 1996). The most notable product of the period, *Cariboo Country*, was one of the first CBC programs

to ever be shot on location and was done by Vancouver employees against national corporate policy, which discouraged filmed drama (M. J. Miller, 1984; M. J. Miller, 2007). The employees in Vancouver had significant ability to be part of the overall creative process.

Thus, while the CBC may have unwittingly trained some of Vancouver's young filmmakers, labour discontent also sowed the seeds for what would later become one of the industry's most influential organizations. *Cariboo Country* only ever filmed 13 episodes in 1960 and four additional episodes between 1965-67 (M. J. Miller, 1984). Meanwhile, a group of CBC workers organized with projectionists in 1962 to form the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 891 (Caddell, 1999). In forming its own local, the workers gained the ability to negotiate their own contracts apart from what other IATSE locals were doing in other locations. The union local formed specifically for the purpose of working on films rather than television, despite the origins of their training to that point. From its start, IATSE 891 serviced the few American films that shot in Vancouver through the 1960s and into the 1970s, although key crew members were most often from the U.S. or Britain (Caddell, 1999). Apart from a few American films shot in Vancouver in 1969 and 1970, production dropped off in the early 1970s, leaving many in the film industry without work. This period marks a turning point in Vancouver's film workforce activities. Workers went from having intimate involvement in the creative process, as was the case in the CBC example, to providing basic services to American productions. The workforce had little or no creative input into these foreign productions, other than the role they developed in attracting work to their region.

In 1975, following four years of stagnant productions, George Chapman took over the position, albeit temporarily at the time, of business agent for IATSE 891 (Chapman, 2003). Although not employed full time in the industry – like most Vancouverites who were

involved in film – Chapman had experience in various capacities of production in film and television commercials. Within three years, Chapman was successful in securing contracts for an increased number of films shot in Western Canada, but also participated in lobbying the provincial government to establish a film commission. With the film commission established in 1978, Chapman returned to his work outside the film industry, but returned two years later as IATSE 891's business representative, responsible for promoting the union's services in North America and beyond (Chapman, 2003).

Chapman's time as IATSE business representative, spanning from 1980 through 1989, marked a significant growth period in British Columbia film, largely precipitated by the province's film unions. Through cost-sharing arrangements with unions ACTRA, DGC and the Teamsters, Chapman made regular promotional trips to Los Angeles with industry, government and film commission representatives. The purpose of such trips ranged from meeting with industry representatives to organizing informational seminars in an attempt to lure production to Vancouver. The strategy was remarkably successful in light of IATSE's intentions; the union's members saw their work opportunities increase from an average of six productions a year between 1980 and 1983 to 12 productions in 1984 and 23 in 1985 (IATSE 891, 2004).

Further to IATSE's entrepreneurial nature, the union was a key player behind lobbying efforts to get the provincial government in British Columbia to invest in a new studio facility. Partnering with the BC Film and Video Industry Association, from 1984 to 1986 IATSE 891 worked with Gunter Henning of Tegra Industries Inc. to secure government involvement in the redevelopment of the Dominion Bridge building – a previous warehouse and bus maintenance facility being used intermittently by the film industry since 1982 (Cox, 1985; Cox, 1986). As a result of submitting a proposal to the

government and orchestrating tours of Los Angeles studios for provincial government officials, the province took on the studio project, developing it as a part of a crown corporation (Chapman, 2003).

In its activities as an industry union, IATSE 891 instigated a significant number of initiatives in an effort to attract film activity to Vancouver. In this sense, the union local, by virtue of its autonomy from a larger body of interest (i.e. a national union), was able to orchestrate its efforts to attract production to the region and provide its membership with work.

Finding work for union members meant more, however, than simply attracting productions to a given locale. Throughout the growth of the Vancouver film service industry, IATSE focused on assuring that workers developed new skills on the job, thus building capacity for future production opportunities in the future. This skill development was achieved through contract policies that required seniority protocols for productions in the union's jurisdiction. Seniority is not the norm within American film production; instead, crews are generally named, or chosen by key decision-makers in a film's production staff. In fact, only British Columbia, Alberta and Toronto maintain seniority protocols in North America. According to union representatives, seniority has allowed the region to develop skilled crews that might not have been possible had productions only been attracted to locations for the purpose of cost-saving or visual measures. In Vancouver's early film service industry development, key personnel such as department heads were often required from outside the province while locals generally comprised the remaining below-the-line workers. But the union did not use internal department separations initially to categorize workers. As a result, workers were called to work based on seniority across the industry, not according to specific training. In addition, when personnel from outside the province were required, the

union often matched local workers with the external workers, allowing for local training from international crews. This allowed a large number of workers to gain experience in a variety of positions. The resulting multi-faceted nature of the workforce allowed for rapid growth in the industry as experienced crews divided to accommodate more simultaneous productions and, at the same time, train new workers (Ramsden, 2005).

*Meanwhile in Paris . . .*

While the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a significant development of Vancouver's film labour and industry, the same period was somewhat more difficult for the workers' French counterparts. As detailed in the previous chapter, a significant transition took place in French film throughout the 1950s and 1960s where filming moved from the studios to the streets. But while the *Nouvelle Vague* movement was largely finished by 1970, its legacy was evident in the aesthetics of films as well as the economic and productive structures of the industry. Further, changes in the French unemployment scheme contributed to the start of a policy-induced change in human resource management within the cultural sector. Finally, an industry shake-up in the mid-1970s, sparked by changes to the country's censorship laws and the subsequent development of the pornographic growth in the industry, introduced structural precarity into the country's film workforce.

As in virtually every film industry, a large pool of skilled labour is required to perform specialized elements in the production process. The French film industry's structure largely mirrors the production process employed by the North American system. Companies engaged in film production are largely coordinators of ideas, talent and productive means, but rarely control the physical infrastructure used in actual production. As a result, producers

are best understood as coordinators of dispersed resources (Scott, 2005). Rather than human and material resources being coordinated in one location, small, specialized firms are brought together for the purpose of completing individual projects.

While the French industry is similar to Hollywood in terms of dispersed networks of production, the government intervention in the industry is unique. Since 1968 the country has maintained a system of social assistance specific to workers in the entertainment industries (Rabot, 2004).<sup>23</sup> Referred to specifically as Annexes VIII and X, these two articles outlined benefits specific to entertainment professionals classified as intermittent workers.<sup>24</sup> This system recognizes the precarious nature of intermittent work in the entertainment sector.<sup>25</sup> These two clauses have been the key focal points of worker protests in the industry since their creation. The status afforded to the cultural worker, however, was affirmed beyond simple economic definitions in 1985 when the state defined the intellectual property rights of interpretive artists (Rabot, 2004). This decision came alongside legislation that already recognized the intellectual property rights and dramatic control of the French director in the film industry (Scott, 2000). By allocating these property rights to at least part of the cultural workforce, the state effectively ensured that the creative workers maintained

<sup>23</sup> The unemployment system applies to a number of positions across the cultural sector including theatre technicians, artists, film technicians, television technicians and actors. All of these groups were active in the events of the following discussion.

<sup>24</sup> The term “intermittent workers” is used in the French cultural sector to describe the periodic employment status and frequent bouts of unemployment faced by workers. Intermittence is legally defined within the French unemployment insurance program.

<sup>25</sup> As unemployment insurance rules have changed, a growing body of workers have found themselves ineligible for the insurance programs established for their sector, leaving them in precarious work and unemployment situations. Many have adopted the term “precarious labour” to describe the uncertainty of their work situations. Precarity has also come to describe the employment situation of many others in low-wage, non-skilled positions. In recent years, individuals and groups identifying themselves as precarious workers have made links between their own attempts to organize under the banner of “precarity” and the efforts of early-twentieth-century industrial syndicalist movements. In stating that “The precariat is to postindustrialism as the proletariat was to industrialism,” there is recognition of similarities between contemporary precarity movements—at least in Europe—and the effort of the early French syndicalists as well as the Industrial Workers of the World to organize unskilled workers regardless of race in North America beginning in 1905 (Foti, 2004b, p. 27).

control of the industry's commodities or the products of their labour. Otherwise stated, the artistic importance of the film was affirmed above the economic imperative of the industry itself. In order for a company to move ahead with the commercialization of a product, the creative staff must consent to the state of the final product to be released. Most cultural workers, however, found themselves outside of the category of "artistic" workers because they are technicians.

The situation was not ideal for technical workers in the industry. The early years of the 1970s followed a decade that saw the success of the New Wave cinema movement. New Wave directors were responsible for a number of technical and logistical changes that brought cinema out of the studio and into the natural world of everyday life. Hand-held cameras came out of the previous decade as directors took their art to the streets and required equipment mobility while in search of a real-world aesthetic. But the move out of the studio and into the streets was more than a simple progression in style. Rather, the move was part of a larger shift in authorship practices in French cinema.

Along with the departure from studios and the consolidation of power in the hands of the author/director came a reduction in crew size. Fewer workers were required to operate equipment, there was no need to construct sets and crew size was further minimized for shots done in actual apartments and rooms where spatial limits restricted the numbers of individuals able to work on set. New production processes were reducing the number of shooting days. Cost constraints put pressures on production schedules. Whether such changes were simply the result of a natural movement from studio to street remain difficult to ascertain, particularly when considered against the backdrop of Paris' municipal film policy and associated fees. The city's fees for use of public spaces are based on crew size and

additional machinery. As such, there was, and continues to be, a considerable incentive for filmmakers and producers to decrease crew size for location shots.

Workers recognized these trends by the early 1970s and pointed to the detrimental effects reduced crew sizes had on the workforce. Henri Back, Secretary General of the Syndicat des Travailleurs du Film, explained that “more and more filming takes place in real interiors – in apartments or country residences, with reduced crews of technicians and workers. The films shot in studio, with normal budgets, engaging normal crews, are increasingly rare,” (*La situation des professionnels du spectacle*.1970). Back further argued that film qualities were falling as shooting moved outside the controlled environment of the studio. The impact upon workers, meanwhile, was significant:

New methods of directing films have as consequence the reduction of technical teams and workers to a strict minimum in order to obtain the maximum output with the fewest employees, often at the detriment of artistic quality, and without any respect for rules of hygiene or security since filming is done in natural settings. (Back, 1972)

The statement pointed to the then-permanent unemployment, demonstrated by the 900 technicians and workers registered as looking for work in the region of Paris. Meanwhile, the pressure to complete film projects outside the studio became significant: production times reached 70 hours per week in some categories of film, meaning that film crews were increasingly sacrificing the five-day work week enjoyed in studio employment (*ibid.*).

The union concerns were evidenced in the actual practices of directors prominent in the 1960s through to the present. Eric Rohmer, perhaps of the of French directors most concerned with notions of space in his work, explained his feelings toward filming on location in an interview with *Cahiers du cinéma* (Bonitzer, 1981). While he liked the aesthetic feel of location shots – the lack of precision and lustre in the visual images (33) – he also appreciated the mix of the real world with the pragmatics of filming. For this reason,

Rohmer only used interior decorators when in studio and left the décor to whatever place was found for a location shot.<sup>26</sup> In doing this, he hoped the location and whatever his crew and cast brought to the set could contribute to the film. And while he sometimes added elements to natural shots – like ducks in a park – he generally depended on the natural world as his setting, shedding extras when possible and allowing the residents of a given location to populate the background of his films (33).

In the midst of such aesthetic choices, intermittent workers – particularly those outside of key artistic positions – witnessed their work hours and job possibilities continue a steady slide. But in public debate there was also pressure to compromise around new production practices; a public statement by the union in late 1971 acknowledged that an evolutionary characteristic of films meant new technologies and, in some cases, filming in natural settings, was a part of this change. The statement explained, “contrary to widespread information, the workers have never claimed that all films must systematically be filmed in studios,” (*A propos des studios cinématographiques*.1971). But the union points out that films shot in studio have better records at the box office. They denounced “certain directors” as “ideologues of filming in natural settings, for the poetics of using real stones, who oppress the studio,” for allowing producers and public authorities to shirk responsibility to the workers in the name of “freedom of creation,” (*ibid.*). The workers position these “certain directors” as potential allies, but actual enemies, helping the producer to rely on “pseudo-economic imperatives” that allow them to profit from deteriorating working conditions. By 1972, the film technician’s magazine was printing articles providing instructions on how to register for social assistance payments (*Comment s’inscrire au chômage?*1972).

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<sup>26</sup> Rohmer notes that in one film a stage manager’s bedroom became the set for a scene.

French film workers began finding new avenues to voice their concerns and organize their efforts. 1970 marked the first time film workers took their grievances to the Cannes Film Festival. Workers from 11 European countries<sup>27</sup> gathered to discuss the threats they faced in their professions. Western and Northern European unions adopted a resolution identifying “the dangers inherent in the dependence of national cinemas in regard to international capitalism and, more particularly, American capitalism,” (Le technicien du film, No. 172: 5). This pointed at the perceived danger of international market integration. The unions called on their governments to recognize the public service character of cinema and through direct financial support, ensure the expansion of national cinema activities. In regard to international co-productions, the unions called for all co-production agreements to be subject to a prior agreement with unions and professionals involved with the project. Workers called for mechanisms by which they could defend their interests in such projects (31).

#### Pornography and its Impact on French Film Workers<sup>28</sup>

A change in aesthetics and accompanying film locations were not the only factors leading to a change in the workforce. In 1970, Alpha Films, the most significant distributor of pornographic films through the decade, was started. The liberalisation of the national censor in 1974 brought about a significant use of sex to sell new films. Developed into the erotic “genre”, low budget pornography came to play a significant role in commercial cinema given its audience draw, (Magny, 1975a). Amidst more accessible film equipment, both cost-wise

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<sup>27</sup> Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Britain, East Germany, Italy, USSR, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and France.

<sup>28</sup> The subject of pornography is not often discussed in communication studies, despite the genre's role in making many media forms profitable, particularly in their early stages of development (the VCR and the internet, to name two examples).

and in terms of increased mobility of smaller cameras, the porn industry began to take off. In 1974, porn films grossed up to 40 percent of total theatre entries according to entry receipts for some weeks, (Magny, 1975b). By 1976, over half of the 190 films being produced in France were restricted to audiences under 18 years of age.

Some columnists celebrated the liberal atmosphere that allowed pornography's public appearance after de Gaulle's conservative crackdown on skin:

If there is a stampede, it's because these films respond to a demand specified by social conditions: where sexual repression reigns, it is only one form of capitalist repression. The larger the social resistance, the larger the desire for sexual gratification, and thus the larger the repression. It is not difficult to state that the majority of the public in these theatres are the proletariat." (Magny, 1975b)

The same commentator also points out the effects of the porn craze on the rest of the film industry. Magny states that many potential profit avenues are threatened by the arrival of porn and its relative popularity compared to traditional genres. "In a crisis situation, numerous producers and distributors go into new employment (at least partially) in porno . . . to rescue a rapidly sinking industry. There is little else for creators than to cross over or accept unemployment," (Magny, 1975b). One French producer described the genre as "the only profitable medium in France" in 1975, (Zimmerman & Friedman, 1975).<sup>29</sup> Recent work by Smith (2005), points to the fact that some distributors used pornography to finance art and experimental film in the 1970s (3). Overall, though, Smith contends that the porn boom in the mid-1970s distorts the overall industry figures in France (3). When taken as an integral part of the industry's development we should also recognize structural aspects to the industry that were reinforced during this period.

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<sup>29</sup> Pornography's presence in the industry, not to mention the city, is evident through non-pornographic films as well. In the 1975 *Peur sur la ville*, a lead character threatened by serial killer Minos is a porn actress. The city's theatres lining the roads advertise their pornographic titles on large billboards.

Of course, the presence of pornography in a society does not necessarily translate into liberated gender roles or new class freedoms. The profit imperative appears to have been the more significant element in the industry's growth rather than the new form of class liberation. As the industry grew in popularity, French producers began mimicking the American porn industry, moving from soft-core productions into hard-core pictures. And if the economic evidence behind the industry's growth over class relations was not convincing enough, the feminist movement also took the industry on. Through the 1970s the feminist movement came to challenge attitudes around sexuality and gender roles, incorporating both the language of women's rights with that of class solidarity. Within the film industry Yannick Bellon's 1978 *L'Amour violé* challenged dominant attitudes toward female sexuality and rape through a class-based narrative. The film provoked significant public discussion in regard to female sexuality and gender-based oppression, (Condron, 1997). And while Bellon's interjection brought some sober thought to the male-dominated industry, the mid- to late-1970s marked a dark period for creative development in French film.

Faced with a significant budgetary deficit and a film industry in crisis in late 1975, the government designated an "X" classification in the film industry and imposed a tax on pornographic films. By 1976, to show pornographic films, theatres were required to "specialize" in the genre, a requirement aimed at ghettoizing porn to a few marginalized cinemas. Also introduced were a 33 percent seat tax without automatic production aid, and a 20 percent tax on profits. Foreign porn titles were subject to an import fee, effectively ending the exhibition of porn from outside France (Centre National de la Cinématographie, 1986). These actions effectively handed the film industry back to the more traditional genres produced by the mainstream firms and directors. This classification, however, encouraged a doubling in domestic porn production to fill the import shortfall and, as the commercial

director of Alpha France pointed out, that the “X” system brought brand recognition to porn products. While there was only half the number of theatres showing porn in 1976 (109 screens across the country compared with an estimated 400 a few years earlier), foreign sales provided a profit margin that kept the industry afloat (Gibier, 1978). Porn theatres represented a diminishing portion of the French film industry through the early 1980s, although close to half of feature-length films being produced still fell under the “X” classification (Centre National de la Cinématographie, 1986). In 1985 the industry made a further retreat from public theatres and into the household when Canal +, the country’s first cable channel, began broadcasting regular porn features. By 2000, various cable and subscription channels had regular exhibitions or, in some cases, entire formats dedicated to porn, and indicated healthy financial returns (Le Brun, 2000). The result of the porn boom in the mid-1970s, however, was the development of a structural crutch for the film industry’s workforce. The government felt a responsibility to regulate public decency, particularly in an industry holding such a significant position in France. At the same time, by pushing the pornography industry underground, the government effectively created a black market on which many intermittent workers passed other employment breaks, but without recognized compensation. This point was specifically referenced by protesters at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival when defining intermittent work: “It’s the producer of porno cinema who is waiting for a real project,” they stated among a long list of precarious work situations (Derousseau, 2004). In removing the porn industry from the public streets of France’s cities, the government effectively subjugated the industry, its workers and all of the social implications around pornography into a space of silence and invisibility.

*Cooperation and competition in the film workforce*

There were starkly differing positions for the Vancouver and Paris below-the-line labour unions throughout the 1970s and 1980s; in Vancouver, unions occupied a central position in the industry's development while the Paris unions, along with their workers, were marginalized to obscurity. Entrepreneurialism and invisibility, however, do not tell the entire story when considering the industries' respective histories or contexts. Indeed, in each of the two examples the labour movements themselves cannot be understood from a singular perspective. The Vancouver unions, although cooperative with the industry in facilitating its arrival in the city, developed a regional focus that necessarily put them in competition with other geographic jurisdictions – sometimes even putting them at odds with their own umbrella union. At the same time, unions from outside the region sought part of the production activity in British Columbia and set up offices in an effort to take advantage of the production boom. Despite the seemingly positive relations between the unions and other industry bodies, the unions often became targets for concessions and blame when industry cycles threatened to take a turn for the worse. Implicit in this is the fact that often the union as an organization maintained tenuous relations with its own members. In Paris, the unease between unions themselves as well as between the unions and the workers they claim to represent have remained difficult relationships. Amidst hostile and uncertain work and labour environments, workers are increasingly reliant upon their own personal contacts, rather than union contracts, for securing work in the cultural industries.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Despite seniority provisions, union collective agreements only provide a rough framework for work in the industry. A number of provisions and loopholes in contracts allow producers a great deal of latitude when hiring staff. Very rarely are seniority lists used when hiring crews; producers prefer to use workers they know and whose work they can trust.

### Vancouver and Labour Competition and Cooperation

Some of Vancouver's initial labour difficulties began to emerge amidst the industry's first period of rapid growth following in the late 1980s.<sup>31</sup> A 1987 media report indicated that a new studio construction project spearheaded by U.S. producer Stephen J. Cannell was contingent upon a long-term contract with Vancouver unions (Eng, 1987). Making explicit the company's requirement of a three-year contract, Cannell Studios threatened that without a contract, "We'll be out of here as fast as we came in" should currency exchange rates worsen or Los Angeles labour conditions improve. The demand was relatively new for IATSE, given that lower production volumes previously meant contracts were negotiated for individual pictures rather than on a long-term basis. Moreover, IATSE business agent George Chapman explained that given the high volume of production, the union was only able to negotiate on their Sunday off-days.

The allure of this boom in work attracted attention from industry unions in other parts of Canada. In 1988 the Toronto-based Association of Canadian Film Craftspeople (ACFC) opened a Vancouver office in an attempt to secure contracts, particularly on low-budget productions (Morgan, 1989a). The union struggled at first, facing stiff opposition from IATSE, and suffered executive board defections due to lack of work the union was

<sup>31</sup> Of particular importance to understanding the full context of labour issues facing the film industry in the 1980s, a broader understanding of the political environment of the time is useful. In 1983 the conservative Socred government proposed a series of legislative bills that would have cut the public service by 25 percent and severely limited the power of unions – which represented over 46 percent of the provinces workforce – across public and private sectors alike. The government began allowing non-union construction firms bid on public projects, most notably works associated with the 1986 World's Fair. Unions formed Operation Solidarity as an alliance to fight the proposed changes. 60,000 workers protested at a Socred convention and 100,000 participated in strike actions. A compromise was negotiated but tensions were firmly entrenched (Thompson, 1985).

In 1987 the Socred Government replaced the Labour Relations Board with the Industrial Relations Council while rewriting the Labour Code in the favour of employers. BC Federation of Labour affiliates boycotted the new Council until the next change of government. Given these tensions, it is clear how different film union activities were in their willingness (and ability) to access government on policy initiatives. At the same time, it is understandable why US producers would demand long-term contracts before making significant investments in the region.

attracting for its members. In fact, another Toronto union, the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET), opened a Vancouver office in the same period and beat the ACFC at securing its first contract in February 1989. A former ACFC business agent started NABET's Vancouver office and, by signing their first contract, sent a warning to the established West Cost unions that competition would be the industry norm in labour. The ACFC developed a sliding rate system to match production budgets and ratified the Canadian Production Agreement, allowing deferral investment schemes for some Canadian productions to offset wage costs. The ACFC finally secured its first feature contract in September 1989, but not before IATSE 891 decided not to raise its rates for the year, followed by an early-1990 decision to offer a fixed 12-hour-workday to producers of Canadian features (IATSE budget break.1990).

Amidst the increase in union competition from Toronto, the Western unions faced changes and growing pains of their own. For example, the Teamsters spun off Local 155 from its 13,000-member Western Canadian local. Local 155, as a unit specific for film, was protested by many members of the new unit as a means of silencing dissident film workers who had been prominent in the Teamsters for a Democratic Union movement. Through a smaller local, film workers would be limited to sending only one delegate to future Teamster conventions rather than the five delegates secured within the larger local (Casselton, 1988).

While Teamsters in Local 155 argued that splintering members into smaller locals went against trends toward consolidation in labour, both the BC branches of the Directors Guild of Canada (DGC) and the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) suggested they were considering “enhanced autonomy” from their national organizations (Stevenson, 1989). This move toward the freedom to negotiate contracts at a regional rather than national level would turn into a bitter internal dispute that has continued

to the present. In January 1990 IATSE Local 669 formed to represent Western Canadian cameramen, independent of the national predecessor, Local 667 (IATSE forms new local in the west.1990; Harvey, 1994). In fact, the drive toward local union autonomy became a defining feature of the BC film industry throughout the 1990s. Being able to compete for productions based on the freedom to cut wages or provide flexible contract conditions was increasingly important for unions at a time when, as IATSE business agent George Chapman pointed out, it was actually 20 percent more expensive to film in Vancouver than in Los Angeles.<sup>32</sup> Union rates were the only advantage to maintaining production in an otherwise costly city.

The changes in labour's structures and strategies became further evident as IATSE underwent a leadership change. Having witnessed tremendous growth in membership during his tenure as business agent, George Chapman left the position at the end of 1989. In previous years, the union made a transition toward departmental representation to ensure all members, regardless of their profession, held a voice in the union. The departmental structure also helped organize the over 4,000 members now part of the union (Caddell, 1999). In departing, Chapman pointed to the issues of growth facing the union as it increasingly came under the control of an elected council (Harvey, 1994; Morgan, 1989b). Such growth marked a period when the entrepreneurial nature of the union clashed somewhat with the interests of members. If not evident enough in Chapman's departure as business agent, in 1993 he was removed from his position as president out of fear that he was "getting too cozy with the producer ranks and not taking a hard enough line in contract

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<sup>32</sup> Chapman is referring to costs outside of labour expenses. This illustrates the importance producers place on labour costs; even when other expenses are higher, reduced labour costs can still save a production money. Some producers cite the fact that because of the public health care system in Canada their costs are reduced due to the lack of medical insurance that is part of US contracts. This also illustrates the importance producers place on labour stability. Some productions relocated to Vancouver because of tensions with American film unions in Los Angeles during this period.

negotiations," (Morgan, 1994). One commentator at the time considered the union membership's sentiments:

It's hard not to become greedy when Vancouver appears to be getting so much work and yet the workers see the dollars they're earning staying so low it's hard not to question why more of the money doesn't seem to be coming their way. But what they don't seem to realize or listen to when their union representatives tell them, is that no matter how much work Vancouver gets, this will always be a very volatile business, one where remaining cost-competitive is still the name of the game. All they have to do is look at what happened to Toronto when their unions got out of hand. (*ibid*)

Labour was clearly in a phase of redefining its position within the industry. But while the process might have been part of a period of growth and a necessary element to maintain effective functions, producers were left with a feeling of unease with the uncertainty around labour's directions.

In fact, within only months of IATSE 669 and Teamsters 155 coming into existence, they joined IATSE 891, the DGC and ACTRA in announcing the creation of a new council of unions. The council presented itself as a united front that would market labour to foreign producers and reduce apprehension through joint negotiations (Morgan, 1990). Perhaps more important, the council was also an attempt to coordinate regional rates while consolidating the Western unions' hold on the Vancouver market in the midst of competition from ACFC and NABET. The initial attempt at forming the council was, however, short-lived. Nonetheless, by the time local performers represented by ACTRA entered a period of conflict with the national union in 1994, the council became a fact of the BC film industry.

Pressures related to growth were not only being found within the unions. While uncertainty around labour jurisdictions and disputes were common issues across the industry as producers decided where to locate productions, industry representatives also began taking aim at the workers on set. For example, a 1989 report pointed out Vancouver workers' lack

of “set etiquette”. The report was written by a Simon Fraser University professor, paid for by Employment and Immigration Canada and BC’s Ministry of advanced Education and Job Training and commissioned by British Columbia’s Motion Picture Association. Of particular concern was the fact that workers’ manners were below industry standards. More work, the report recommended, was needed to train workers and teach them, among other pointers, not to talk on set too much (Sagi, 1989). Such complaints about the workers might be expected as the industry grew. The report also marked a transition away from informal union-organized training through apprentice-like seniority projects toward standardized industry-organized education. In one sense, the period of transition marked the institutionalization of training.

#### Stagnating wages and union discord

In the 1980s, France’s first encounter with cable television came with the promise that the new distribution method would support film production. When Canal+ went on air in 1984, its broadcast license obligated the company to fund, purchase and support set quotas of French films. But the launch of a new media system in support of the old met with early conflict. Cinema authors claimed to have been stripped of their rights within the new arrangement while executives of the new company claimed that all rights to films were included when acquired by the network (Canal plus . . . en savoir plus!1985). Other industry representatives, such as the president of the Federation of Film Distributors, declared the new “rules of the game,” explaining that those who take the financial risk will now hold authors’ rights (Pas de cable sans cinéma.1985). The distributors were establishing their force in the industry where exhibitors would control an increasingly consolidated media market.

While new production and distribution funding formulas were put into place, the situation of workers in the industry demonstrated increased signs of difficulty: wages reached a plateau while the number of intermittent workers relying on their social security benefits began to multiply.<sup>33</sup> By the 1990s, both industries in Paris and Vancouver showed clear signs of structural precarity. In Vancouver, less than 10 percent of workers in the film industry were full-time in 1991. Half were employed on a part-time basis and the remaining 40 percent worked on a freelance basis. Freelance annual earnings were \$15,330 while employees averaged \$11,560.<sup>34</sup> Although these are rough averages, it is apparent that only a small percentage of workers in the industry would be able to earn a living solely through work in the one sector. Despite a larger contingent of full-time employees by 2000, the industry still relied significantly on freelance (45 percent) and part-time (10 percent) labour. The earnings differences are more evident in these figures. Freelance workers earned an average of \$14,830 while regular employees averaged \$41,182, or 2.8 times that of freelancers.<sup>35</sup>

In Paris, technicians' wages slowed in growth through the 1980s and stagnated in the 1990s. When adjusted to account for inflation, wages fell between 1995 and 2000. Over this period the sector's employers dramatically changed the way they engaged individual workers, based on principles of flexibility and reduced costs. For example, in 1980, only 36 percent of intermittent workers experienced short periods of unemployment between contracts. More often, compensation would cover long periods of unemployment, averaging 247 days of the

<sup>33</sup> Unless otherwise specified, references to intermittent workers include workers in all French cultural industries covered by the special unemployment insurance program specific to the sector.

<sup>34</sup> The average earnings statistics for employees include both full-time and part-time employees, based on data available from Statistics Canada. The actual distribution of these funds will, in reality, be distributed in a much more uneven manner, based on hours worked.

<sup>35</sup> It is important to note here that very little data about workers in Canada's cultural sector exists. Census data is not specific enough to identify workers in either the film industry nor the overall cultural sector. The only data that exists is published by Statistic Canada in sporadic reports. There is no data available to indicate unemployment in the sector.

year. By 1985, 60 percent of intermittent workers were experiencing more frequent periods of short unemployment. By 1992, 90 percent of the sector's intermittent workers were experiencing such sporadic terms of employment with an increased average number of days collecting social insurance; by this point, the average period of compensation was 294 days accumulated throughout the year (Menger, 1997). Employers increasingly hired workers to cover the short segments of time for which their specific skills were required in the production process. This meant that some workers might be rehired for the same project at different points, but left to collect unemployment benefits – if eligible – when not needed. The state's unemployment benefits became a default subsidy to a sector's desire for reduced costs.

The actual result of such practices was the growth of a workforce whose situation can be described as precarious. The number of intermittent workers increased 144 percent over two decades, from 50,780 in 1980 to 68,744 in 1990 to 123,743 in 2000. Over the same period, the number of individuals who collected unemployment insurance from the regime specific to intermittent workers skyrocketed, from 7,989 in 1980 to 28,940 in 1990 and to approximately 60,000 in 2001. In 2001, 96,500 intermittent cultural workers were eligible to collect from this plan if needed. In 1991 the equivalent of €260-million was paid to the 41,038 individuals who received payments under the intermittent unemployment insurance regime specific to intermittent workers. This number rose to 96,500 individuals through the 1990s, who received €838-million annually by 2001 (2002/03). Put into perspective, a full 62 percent of eligible cultural workers collected unemployment insurance in 2001. Meanwhile, 16 percent of the workforce did not manage to work the number of hours required to be eligible for such compensation. But these figures only account for individuals who consider themselves cultural workers. According to French government figures, in 2001 there were

362,000 individuals who worked at least one paid hour in the industry, most of whom were engaged during summer months when production is at its highest levels (Amar & Koubi, 2004). While this larger figure is not necessarily representative of the number of people who consider the cultural sector as their primary source of employment, it highlights the significant casual labour requirements of the cultural sector. In fact, 15 percent of the total number of hours worked by intermittent workers in the sector were by this group of individuals who did not qualify for any social benefits.

Throughout this period the technicians, although performing a significant amount of work in the industry and actually increasing in the overall percentage of workers in the sector, lost their role as the institutional memory of film production. The roles of workers – even those of the director and key artistic personnel – were reduced to specialized skills that could be inserted into production when required. As Hozic (2001) has shown, the role of the producer increased significantly through the 1980s and 1990s as financing had to be secured from a variety of investors, many of whom were external to the actual film industry. Scripts are now written with a specific director and set of actors that serve as brand names likely to attract investment in the film project.

These labour trends did not occur in isolation, but were accompanied by significant changes in the actual financing of film industries in each location. In France, by the end of the 1980s the industry underwent a significant change in financing. Between 1987 and 1988 alone, the number of films with budgets over 20-million francs increased by 78 percent. Co-productions, or films financed by more than one country, represented 40 percent of these “mega-budgets” (1989). Smaller budget films were rapidly disappearing amidst an environment where financing independent features became increasingly difficult.

Over the same period, the state of production firms came to reflect the state of the workforce. By 2000, 70.5 percent of film-related firms in Paris had four employees or fewer; an additional 17.5 percent of firms employed between five to nine employees (Scott, 2000). Figures for British Columbia suggest a similar situation. Statistics for 1999-2000 indicate that the average film production firm had fewer than ten full-time employees, supplemented by equivalent numbers of freelancers. The small size of firms means that contract workers are brought on as required to work on individual projects. Workers generally divide their time between numerous work places, working for a number of contractors in any given year. As a result, in both cities there now exists a situation where small firms, consisting of a core set of staff numbering fewer than 10 employees, coordinate production work. This core is surrounded by workers facing varying degrees of precarity in their employment status. While some will have consistent work, reflecting their skill, experience and network resources, many others are much closer to the periphery of the industry, securing only seasonal work that often must be complemented with other employment or periods of unemployment.

### **New Responses From Labour**

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the changing role and structural context within which film workers find themselves have not been primary concerns of studies on the industry. Even less of a concern has been the worker reactions to these changes. These reactions, however, provide insight into the changing nature of the visual production industries and the manner by which their functions are increasingly integrated into the urban infrastructures and economies of contemporary cities. As I discussed in the previous chapter, cities are increasingly valued for their aesthetic or cultural productive capacities. The symbolic icons of cities are consumed through visual interaction with the urban landscape

through media consumption and tourism. And it is through consumption, I argued, that additional cultural capital is built around such symbols.

It would, however, be naïve to assume that such an economy has developed organically, as a self-contained system. It is for this reason that a study of employment trends is simply not sufficient. Rather, the reactions of the workforce allow for important understandings both regarding how the economic system develops, but also to understanding the manner by which social elements are intrinsically linked to the economic and cultural processes of a population. Indeed, a study of labour unions, while an important factor to this industry, is insufficient for understanding the larger attitudes and reactions of a workforce. The numerous individuals and outlooks within a body of labour are rarely entirely reflected by a union and, often, conflict with their official representation. For these reasons, in this final section I turn to an analysis of the workers' reactions to the structural changes in their industries. Drawing from published interviews, media reports and manifestos, I detail how the workers' conception of their labour developed in each city through the 1990s. I link these responses to the role of the city in the image economies in the chapter's conclusion.

### *Cultural labour in 1990s Paris*

Given the dramatic rise in the number of intermittent workers and the amount being paid out through their unemployment insurance program, increased pressure mounted from government and industry bodies to change the employment system. Union and industry representatives negotiate the benefits and administration of the unemployment system. Agreements are made by a majority vote of representatives on both sides. In the case of the

film industry, five unions represent workers in negotiations. Prior to the early 1990s, the five unions demonstrated solidarity at the bargaining table, sharing agreement on the plan. It was early in the decade, however, when the solidarity ended.

The difficulties facing workers came to a head in 1991 when the CGT and SRF unions refused to sign a newly negotiated unemployment scheme after three months of strikes and actions. Three other unions signed on to the reforms, effectively implementing the deal across the sector (Intermittents du spectacle: La victoire des syndicats.1991). Although a majority decision by votes cast the three signatory unions collectively represented only 10 percent of the industry workforce. With the fractured union positions and a general feeling of betrayal, a new spirit of resistance began to emerge amongst intermittent workers. Although in support of union positions, a movement of workers took shape that was independent of the unions. This movement's members defined a consciousness of their status and capacity as cultural workers.

While not necessarily unique at first consideration, this identification as cultural producers depended on the workers' recognition of their labour as integral to the system in a cognitive sense; not only were their actions set important, but the creative energy and self-coordination of their networks were an integral part of the industry's organization. Most important, this early recognition of creative potential came through interactions in a variety of actions, some political beyond the realm of individuals' professional activity.

#### *Cultural labour and the definition of taste*

Some of the earlier public declarations of the changing nature of cultural labour came in the early 1990s when social movements brought together cultural workers around a series of

media-oriented protests. For example, Canal déchaîné, a collective of artists and media workers, was founded during protests against the Gulf War in 1990. By 1992, when intermittent cultural workers went on strike to protect their social security benefits, Canal déchaîné had defined a conception of creative mental labour. In particular, they identified mental labourers as a distinct section of the workforce, specialized over the previous decade of rapid growth in the cultural production sector: “This new layer of ‘workers’ presents radical novelties in relation to the organization of intellectual labour in industrial societies; a novelty that we call mass intellectualism,” (Canal déchaîné, 1997). The collective is careful to warn that mass intellectualism is not unique to the entertainment sector, but a part of an increasingly large number of professions. But the “professions” are comprised of workers in the throes of constant reorganization by the directions of capital; given the lack of continuity in such work, individuals are forced to organize their own work conditions, compete with one another and, as a result, are left in a category of “precarious” labour. Despite the variety of professions and functions these precarious labourers of “mass intellectualism” perform, Canal déchaîné explains that communications workers create cultural products that help define and materialize identities, tastes, ways of life, imaginations and sensibilities for the sole purpose of consumption. As such, “mass intellectualism does not only produce the cultural product or merchandise, but also and simultaneously the public or consumer,” (Canal déchaîné, 1997). This is a continuously changing terrain in which the mental labourer is constantly producing the cultural product as well as the need to consume by defining the lifestyle of the consumer.

It is this recognition that has defined the movement of intermittent and precarious workers in Paris since the early 1990s. Canal déchaîné provides an example of cognitive workers merging their labour with a political outlook that spans further than the sector in

which they work. The collective further questions, “This double process of concentration/integration of cultural industries and of cultural colonization by the economic disrupts not only our professions, but also the publics, their forms of reception, the aesthetic norms of production, forms of distribution, etc. Can we thus limit our strategy to the defence of our professions?” (*ibid.*). As a result, Canal déchaîné defines its task as using the media and their creative capacities to break down distinctions between the intellectual and the popular; they make clear that in their roles as cultural workers, unless they are conscious of their contributions to the construction of consumption and taste, they will only be contributors to the “brain pollution” that constitutes commercial media.

Whether other intermittent workers shared Canal déchaîné’s intentions initially is not certain. In 1992, however, the workforce staged a significant demonstration of force by organizing a strike in response to the renegotiations of Annexes 8 and 10. The strike focused specifically on the Festival d’Avignon, a live theatre event,<sup>36</sup> where direct actions by workers forced the cancellation of various events. The strike was an important turning point in the industry’s history, particularly given the strategies employed by striking workers. By focusing on the Festival d’Avignon, the workers went beyond simply disrupting the regular functions of their workplaces. The festival is a prestigious cultural event in France’s cultural sector where productions of theatre are staged for hundreds-of-thousands of audience members over course of three weeks. Festivals, such as that of Avignon, not only showcase cultural works, but are also used to produce prestige that translates into cultural capital. The Festival d’Avignon signifies, in one sense, the elitist nature of cultural production. Scarpetta (2004) explains that the festival itself plays a role other than celebrating or exploring the culture of local inhabitants; it showcases elite cultural productions because the idea of attracting

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<sup>36</sup> Festival d’Avignon is a live theatre event. Because intermittent workers include more than only workers in the film industry the movement targeted an array of cultural events across the cultural sector.

international attention with “provincial culture” is somewhat absurd. But, according to Scarpetta, a crucial question rests on the dominant understanding of the cultural sector and the pending success of intermittent movements: “Who, in France, still supports a sufficiently strong conception of culture to justify that it provides a public service?” In other words, the challenge to intermittent workers is to justify that cultural labour is important beyond simply providing an economic benefit to a municipality hoping to increase its tourism. This is the challenge posed to intermittent workers in France who need public support, but also solidarity with the workers of “mass intellectualism” across other sectors. Through the 1990s the challenges of conceptualizing cultural labour were not necessarily clarified, but they became a focal point in the political struggles around the liberalization of markets and the transfer of cultural and employment policy from the state to the private sector.

The tension between market demands upon workers and their own desire to explore their creative interests came to define how many envisioned their role in relation to social security benefits, the workplace and their roles as activists. Through the 1990s workers began organizing outside of the confines of their unions. Instead, regional coordinations of workers began approaching issues facing the cultural workforce, but from outside the profession. Laurent Figuière from the *Coordination lyonnaise des professionnels du spectacle* explained in 1997 that as cultural workers, he and his colleagues “want to live their professions.” He explained, “In the movement, there is a subjective conscience, implicit in the practice of our professions, that manifests itself in the fact that we are conscious of the necessity to have a revenue – disconnected from salary – because we exist and produce for ourselves and for others, and not to live and work for an employer or for a finality that places us exterior [to our labour],” (Figuière, 2001). Figuière does not see full employment as a viable option in contemporary cultural production, if in any industry. It is difficult to

differentiate between employers and employees in many circumstances where the individual worker is responsible for coordinating their own work on an independent basis. There is no standard industry model. The task of organizing production falls on individual workers, based on their socio-economic networks of contacts and relationships. Moreover, he asserts, the cultural sector's organizational model is becoming common among other sectors as well. Nevertheless, it is within these new labour and production networks that the possibility for resistance may originate.

Intermittent workers mobilized in 1992 and 1996 to protect their social insurance plan and again in 2000 around the negotiations of their work contract. Three years later in 2003, one of the largest mobilizations of intermittent workers began, shutting down production in Paris as well as festivals across the country over an ongoing period to protest pending changes to their unemployment insurance plan. The organization of such activities increasingly took place outside the realm of union activities – and sometimes in direct opposition to union activities. The increasingly large scope of labour and potential workers' activity became a point of difference many workers came to harbour against union representatives in the 1990s.

The contract negotiations structure brought about significant division between labour groups in June 2002. In 1999, prior to the last round of negotiations, the *Mouvement des Entreprises de France* (MEDEF), a national business network and stakeholder in all unemployment insurance contract negotiations, announced its intentions to eliminate the "chronic deficit" maintained by the entertainment sector's unemployment program. Three unions (CFDT, CFTC and CGC) again ratified an agreement that doubled the required employee contributions to the program and made at least 10 percent of the current applicants ineligible for aid. The unions stated that they felt it was their job to make sure the

unemployment insurance system works at least for some of the industry's core workers. This position was at odds with that of other unions that argued too many workers would be dropped from the social safety net because of an agreement that does not address the underlying problems in the system. The reactions to this agreement were staggering. Union leaders publicly denounced each other and stated opposing intentions for reforming the public system.

Some of the discord between workers and unions can be understood in relation to the ways workers and unions conceptualized their labour and subsequent roles in negotiating agreements within the industry. Some workers wanted to be able to pursue their own creative interests while reducing the economic imperatives of working in their industry. They saw the unemployment scheme as a way of allowing them to do personal projects when not working on their regular jobs. Unions, however, were having difficulty defining their roles outside of traditional labour relations categories. For example, Anita Perez, a labour activist with the cultural worker's union SNTR-CGT, sees intermittent worker protests as the vehicle through which government and industry will be forced to provide full employment. "The objective of this struggle is to conserve our overall status as salaried workers. Our social rights – social security, professional training, retirement, etc. – are the rights of salaried workers,"(Perez, 1997). Within this, Perez sees the solution to the crisis of unemployment in government regulation of employment in the audio-visual sector. This position reflects an understanding of employee-employer-regulator relationships mirroring traditional models of production. Others, however, view such a model, as unfeasible, if not impossible. They argue that a traditional employment relationship is impossible and undesirable for the cultural sector.

The most vocal union opponents of changes to the unemployment regime, the Fédération CGT du spectacle, argued that the debates were about culture and the rights of individuals to be protected against industry's whim. Jean Voirin, Secretary General of the union, explained, "Culture is as important as water and electricity. . . . If we say that intermittents in the cultural sector are too expensive and that we must lower payments to the levels of contributions, then we must apply the same theory to health insurance: everyone who has cancer must not cost more than they have contributed! This is completely contrary to the philosophy of social protection of our country." Having been at the forefront of dealing with intermittent workers' issues in the cultural sector for decades, the CGT saw the new deal, signed by three unions representing 10 percent of the workforce, as an affront to its power in a democratic system of worker representation.

The primary union in favour of changing the cultural sector's unemployment regime sees its role as finding a solution to the program's deficit that will allow workers to continue in the industry. Danielle Rived, Secretary General of the Fédération Communication et Culture de la CFDT (FTILAC), explains that the system must provide incentives for people to work more: "How is there a profession in which one earns more when they work less?" The solution to this riddle is, according to Rived, a system that puts responsibility upon employers not to take advantage of the system and provide individuals the opportunity to work. Moreover, Rived argues, unemployment funds are increasingly replacing national public support for culture. Governments must be pressured to increase support for culture, which will, in return, provide true professions in the industry. "Today we are seeing the destruction of the profession," says Rived. "If we want to be efficient, especially at the European level, there must be a true profession," (Mieszala, 2002/03).

By 2002 language used by SNTR-CGT unionists had changed somewhat from Perez's 1997 comments. Secretary General Denis Gravouil explained in an interview that production times were reduced and workdays are compressed, while salaries had fallen. Firms such as France 3, a national public broadcaster, have computerized human resource systems that prevent workers from accumulating 140 consecutive work days to avoid mandatory engagement through an ongoing contract required by law after achieving such a length. "It's a true precarious management system that is found at the heart of the public service," (Mieszala, 2002/03) Meanwhile, many workers find it impossible to even achieve the required number of hours to claim unemployment insurance due to unpaid work around contracts. Even though a technician might work an entire month, including meetings, preparations and on-set activities, a contract might only engage the individual for five paid days. Gravouil rejects any notion that it is the union's responsibility to govern how individuals might access the industry and accompanying benefits. He calls other unions' attempts to "clean up" the system unacceptable: "This is really a Stalinist method of giving some unionist the right to choose who has the right and who doesn't to benefit from our system," (23).

Gravouil rejected the argument that social security debates have anything to do with professionalization within the sector. He argues that individuals have professions, but these professions are divided by class lines. "On one side there is the elite – those who head their trades, who are needed and who are paid well; on the other side, there are the 'small hands' – the vast majority of people who are accounted for in precarity. To simplify, it's a profession in which there is no more middle class," (Mieszala, 2002/03). Gravouil's scope is widened to assess blame on larger sector structures, explaining that financial decisions are made by producers who, in turn, work under pressures from distributors who ultimately control the

cash flow. Technicians, as below-the-line workers, happen to be at the final receiving ends of economic imperatives in the industry.

While condemning the changes to the unemployment system Stéphane Pozderec, General Representative of SNTPCT, argued that the new agreements were responsible for the “de-professionalization” and the precarization of employment in the sector. “This policy supports an apparatus of initial training for young people that then puts them into an employment market that is saturated and in which, by any means, they are not able to stay.” Government policies only exacerbate the problem by allowing public funding for film projects shot in other countries. As a result, there are no longer “French films”, but only “French initiative” films that don’t employ French workers. Pozderec’s sentiments were echoed by Denys Foqueray of the French Union of Interpretive Artists. He points out that most actors do not simply enter a job market, but are actually part of a “family” of professionals. They rely on unemployment insurance when a key coordinator, such as a director, retires and the actors lose their ability to rebuild a professional network. The same is true for technicians, where a department head relies on a team of people. Yet in theatre, most technicians always work for the same company on a seemingly permanent basis, but on intermittent contracts. Thus, they earn the titles “permittents” or “intermanents.” As a result, Forqueray rejects arguments that the unemployment system should be central to supporting culture. Rather, he argues, money should be provided directly to culture for audiovisual production and live performance.

### *Alternative Labour Formations*

Amidst French labour unions' debates over social insurance reform and various contracts, actual workers in the entertainment sector boosted their own mobilizing efforts. This mobilization was largely the result of a growing discontent between unions and workers within the industry and an increasingly active and politicized cultural workforce. Leading into contract negotiations and a strike in 1999, a group of 30 intermittent workers who were not members of a union, formed their own action committee to voice their concerns (Caradec & Conter, 2000). The committee surveyed 700 intermittent workers and gained observer status in negotiations, given that unions did not view their activities as a threat to their jurisdiction. The association soon had 450 members. Although organizers felt they had to play "the usual union game," they believed their presence in negotiations forced both sides to participate with the intention of securing an agreement.

When the new social insurance package was signed in June 2003, workers went on strike to protest against a regime that doubled their mandatory contributions to the system, while reducing their ability to access unemployment insurance. Beginning on 8 July, to coincide with the opening of the Festival d'Avignon<sup>37</sup>, workers effectively shut down the French audio-visual sector through sporadic strikes, disrupted live theatre performances, blocked contractor film production trucks and cancelled festivals across the country (Caradec, 2003). It was during these protests that key developments in the workers' movement occurred.

In late June and early July, workers began to organize outside the realm of their unions and under the category of "intermittent and precarious" workers. A group of workers started the Coordination des Intermittents et Précaires d'Ile de France (CIP-IDF) to

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<sup>37</sup> The Festival d'Avignon was a focal point in worker struggles in 1992 and again in 2003 in part because of the cultural prestige the event holds and its reliance on multiple classifications of cultural workers to operate.

organize protests, research issues and provide a common point of contact for workers in the industry. The establishment of the CIP-IDF marked a re-classification of workers' recognition of their labour in the market system. Workers began to define themselves by the way they were employed (intermittent and precarious) and by a geographic region (Metropolitan Paris) rather than by their sector or industry. As such, the workers recognized that their conditions of employment aligned closely with workers in industries reliant on de-skilled, "flexible" labour arrangements. As such, they noted in public statements, beginning after an occupation of French daily newspaper *Le Monde*'s offices, "That which we are defending, we are defending for everyone," (Coordination des Intermittents et Précaires d'Ile de France, 2003).

In a text read by Olivier Derousseau during Jean-Luc Godard's press conference at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival, the intermittent workers explained how they conceptualized their struggle in relation to other workers: "Since June 2003, we have called ourselves intermittent and precarious workers rather than artists and technicians. Why? Because our practices cannot be named according to these sometimes antagonistic divisions and categories. We are a coordination," (Derousseau, 2004). As such, Derousseau points to the fact that precarious employment and intermittent work are phenomena that extend far beyond the cultural industries and touch people in a multitude of different sectors. More important, however, is that the intermittent film workers recognized that in order to succeed in achieving their own objectives, they would have to broaden their base of action. No longer would it be sufficient to mobilize based on the type of work performed. Rather, intermittent workers were proposing a project based on mobilizing around the organization of labour in the market economy.

Following government approval of the new agreement on social insurance for intermittent workers on 7 August 2003, workers and unions opposing the agreement started a series of protests that further paralyzed the cultural sector (Drouhaud, 2003). The CGT-spectacle union leafleted cinema patrons leaving their shows at cinemas in the Opera district of Paris. The union was now calling for a strike at all places of work in the industry, making a link to the cinema itself as a place of production. Around the same time, the Collectif Bellaciao, a French-Italian leftist political activist group, interrupted a film premier at the Gaumont cinemas near the Paris Opera. While occupying the theatre, members of the collective provided audience members with background on the intermittent workers' strike. The Collective was already concerned with issues around cinema, having started a project called "For another cinema" in April 2003. Planned as part of the 2003 European Social Forum, the Collectif Bellaciao organized public cinema exhibitions showcasing non-commercial productions. The Collective identified "neo-liberal globalization" as a key threat to creators and workers and became a signatory to statements and co-organizer of actions taken by intermittent cultural workers in the months following the 2003 strike.

In October 2003, the CIP-IDF organized a week of action at the cinemas and in the studios of Paris' cultural industries. Under the name "Black screens for culture," intermittent workers visited three multiplex cinemas in Paris, wrapped ticket booths in plastic and allowed audiences free access to films for part of the day (Villevet & Bobeau, 2003). Groups of intermittent workers raided live television broadcasts. One included a broadcast from the famous Moulin Rouge club, where protesters managed to broadcast a tape for one minute asking spectators to "Turn off your televisions." At the end of the week, a group of intermittent workers interrupted the live broadcast of the top-rated reality television show *Star Academy*, unfurling a banner across the stage reading "Turn off your televisions" and

providing a commentary on the situation of intermittent workers. In December, groups of protestors interrupted two live news broadcasts of public station France 2 and private station Canal+ where representatives read statements about the state of intermittent work in the country. Over the first few days of 2004, French intermittent workers occupied the French Academy of the Arts in Rome with the help of Italian activists facing similar struggles in their own local context. In February 2004, intermittent workers were front and centre at the French film awards, the César, where award presenters and recipients used their air time to denounce the social security changes in the sector and to call for government action (Leclerc, 2004). In addition to these actions workers occupied the offices of the French Ministry of Culture, UNIDEC (the administrative agency for unemployment insurance), MEDEF and even CFTD, the primary union supporting the new social security agreement. Additional protests attracted media attention in front of prominent monuments that symbolize Parisian and French identity, such as the Arc de Triomphe. Organizers identified the need to infuse celebration into the international Labour Day while drawing attention to the precarious nature of employment—thus putting forth a new “mayday” call for the contemporary worker. In their protests, intermittent workers used sites of cultural production – in the studio, in government policy offices and on the streets of their mythologized, tourist-oriented city – to leverage their concerns and attract public attention. While Paris’ labour protests are unique in their magnitude, the structural crunch of the film industry was putting Vancouver workers under similar pressures.

### *Labour formations and the Vancouver film industry*

While the 1990s was a decade of mobilization in the French industry that resulted in widespread strikes and protests between 2000 and 2004, the Vancouver film workers were experiencing their own changes in labour relations. As mentioned in the previous section, the Vancouver industry was witnessing union competition as ACFC and NABET established offices in Vancouver. Meanwhile, the original labour heavyweight, IATSE 891 was experiencing growth issues as membership worked toward a more democratic form of union representation, occasionally conflicting with the organization's traditionally entrepreneurial role. Although the Vancouver labour situation did not mirror the unrest in the French film sector, there were significant labour conflicts that marked the importance of labour's role in the spatial distribution of film production. As well, a new movement of collective, independent cinema was emerging amongst a small group of young filmmakers in the city. By the end of the 1990s, the city had not only witnessed significant change in the relations between unions and their workers, but there also existed a local film production movement that was largely in opposition to the dominant service productions.

Given the new market competition amongst unions, a renewed B.C. and Yukon Joint Council of Film Unions emerged in 1994 (Morgan, 1994). The new council, comprised of the two IATSE locals and Teamsters local 155, proposed a one-stop bargaining shop for the visual production industry. One common contract would provide simplified agreements with producers. There was significant reason for interest in such an organization; while producers had recently established an association to address their collective concerns, the new labour union upstarts now posed potential threats to the original industry unions. This would be their competitive advantage over ACFC and NABET. The Council would attempt to get exclusive jurisdiction over certain types of work.

While 1994 marked a productive year for British Columbia's industry with 87 productions spending \$350 million in the province, labour disruptions were also becoming more evident. The British Columbia Labour Relations Board was dealing with numerous industry disputes arising from workplace and union jurisdiction conflicts. The provincial wing of the national actors' union ACTRA had broken away, forming the Union of British Columbia Performers. The point of conflict between the two organizations hinged on the provincial body's desire to negotiate contracts independent from the national organization. Later in 1995, the B.C. Labour Relations Board began hearings regarding the B.C. & Yukon Council of Film Unions' proposal to act as the sole bargaining union in the film industry, creating further unease on the side of producers. Many producers, particularly those of lower-budget productions, had benefited from union competition in previous years. The Council was established with the objective of providing standardized contracts, industry stability and firm control of its jurisdiction in the industry's operations. This arrangement brought about fears by other labour organizations that such a council would threaten their viability. Some producers feared that standardized contracts would provide less flexibility (Edwards, 1995). With this dispute and increasingly unpredictable worker actions on set, American producers moved out of the city, lead by a boycott of Vancouver by Paramount.

In late 1994, the BC branch of the Canadian Film and Television Production Association held a one-day conference devoted to labour issues, bringing together all parties (Morgan, 1995b). By this point, the industry was in a significant downturn and blame was being focused on unions. Yet while some conflicts, such as that between the UBCP and ACTRA, focused on union jurisdiction, much of labour's discontent had more to do with the uneasy relationship between unions and their membership. Public statements by union leaders pointed out that they could do little if their membership did not support their

actions. IATSE 891 president Don Ramsden highlighted that union conflicts had more to do with “ideology” than with money: “at the end of the day, they [members] are the ones who have to decide whether they want to continue to attract the major studios to Vancouver or draw a line in the sand as to the kind of working conditions they are willing to work under. The majors do not represent the bulk of our work here. They are a big chunk of our work, but not all of it,” (Morgan, 1995c, p. 4). Unions were, in fact, recognized by some industry representatives as doing the best they could with an otherwise stubborn membership. One producer addressed the lack of flexibility amongst workers as a key point of frustration for many in the industry: “Crews don’t understand,” he expressed, “they think [the slowdown in studio production coming to Vancouver] is just a lull. Despite what union administrators have told their membership, most crews are still not listening,” (*ibid*).

Unions and workers weren’t the only source of industry uncertainty in Vancouver. Residents of the city were increasingly hostile to the disruption caused by activity in the city while others saw the industry as a potential source of quick cash. The potential for disgruntled and greedy residents driving the industry away was a concern for local industry stakeholders. In October 1995 the B.C. and Yukon Council of Film Unions teamed up with the B.C. Film Commission in a public education project, aimed at fostering acceptance of the industry’s activities. In announcing the production of a 90-second trailer for theatres asking for public cooperation, the two organizations expressed their hope for “mutual respect and cooperation” by the public for an industry providing “increased job opportunities, an environmentally friendly industry and all those millions of dollars that roll into the province,” (Morgan, 1995a, p. 12).

More of the industry’s future was clarified following a December 1995 BC Labour Relations Board (LRB) ruling allowing the B.C. and Yukon Council of Film Unions to

negotiate a new master agreement. A collective agreement was close to completion in mid-January 1996. The ruling gave exclusivity to the BCYCFU for feature films with below-the-line labour costs over \$4 million and work for some U.S. networks. The LRB determined that the exclusive nature of the arrangement would have little impact on other unions given their lack of significant presence in the jurisdiction. In responding to the decision, Don Ramsden, IATSE 891 president, commented, "It's been worth all our efforts. All of us, we're in the business of making movies. We're not in the business of labor relations," (Edwards, 1996b, p. 1). In addition to securing union jurisdiction, the LRB viewed the decision as having the potential to establish stability within the industry. The LRB ruling explained, "the degree to which a film producer can forecast production costs with reliability plays a significant role in the location decision. The actual costs determines the producers' preparedness to return to B.C. for future productions in an industry characterized by highly mobile capital," (*ibid*).

Given the efforts to solve labour disputes and streamline industry processes, the boycott of Vancouver by various U.S. studios ended in autumn 1996 and filming returned. The return was largely due to satisfaction with the labour stability. One producer expressed his satisfaction with the Vancouver industry at the time in saying, "there is a very good labor climate here in Vancouver. It's a well working one-stop shop. There is no nit-picking here (compared to other jurisdictions). It's not like everyone works with a rule book in their back pocket," (Edwards, 1996a).

The decision to grant the BCYCFU a monopoly on supplying labour to a bulk of productions did not end the competition in the union market. The ACFC maintained broadcast work and continued legal challenges against the BCYCFU jurisdiction. The ACFC maintained that it offered flexibility to producers, stating: "Bring us your budgets and we'll

put a deal together," (Edwards, 1996c, p. 21). In 1998 the ACFC merged with the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP), Canada's largest media and communications union. In announcing its merger, the ACFC claimed IATSE and the Teamsters were testing their strength by attempting to steal productions away. The merger did not signal the decline of the ACFC. Remaining as a regional branch of the CEP, the union found a niche in low-cost productions. The BCYCFU, in turn, tried to establish a low-budget master agreement to compete against the ACFC, but the move was declined by the three member unions' membership. In return, the individual unions began making claims on ACFC productions on a case-by-case basis (Edwards, 1998).

The examples of union and membership divergence on accommodating foreign production at any price in Vancouver have not been prominent. Nor have disagreements between unions and membership resulted in new forms of extra-union organizing, as has happened in Paris. Nonetheless, these examples provide some evidence of the tenuous relationship unions have had with the film industry as promoters and administrators of the industry's presence in Vancouver as well as representatives of a membership with increasing expectations for democratic accountability. Vancouver workers cannot rely solely on the cultural status or indigenous industry of their city to attract production back to their city after a labour disruption in the same way Paris workers might. They still hold the position as pioneers of organizing a remote production process for Hollywood studios and maintain versatility in attracting production back, when possible.

Foreign-based production, however, remains tenuous and unions have maintained their entrepreneurial approach to working with the industry. There are two examples of the continued approach toward cooperation in the sector. First, the 2002 establishment of the Motion Picture Production Industry Association of British Columbia (MPPIABC).

Membership includes representation from unions, government, studios, producers, services and equipment suppliers for the purpose of speaking “with one voice” about issues of common concern to the interests of the province’s film industry. The organization’s activities include public education campaigns about the industry’s economic and cultural presence, government lobbying and trade missions to attract production to the province.

The second example of labour unions’ cooperative approach to the industry in the founding in April 2004 of the Vancouver-based company New City Entertainment created by the New City Group as a distribution company. New City Entertainment would provide a distribution channel for B.C. films, thus establishing the infrastructure required by indigenous producers seeking funding and exhibition of their work. Such a company would also aim to diversify the market away from its singular focus on Hollywood-based productions. The firm received a \$100,000 investment from Teamsters Local 155, thus putting labour in a financial stakeholder position in the industry, beyond its traditional role of encouraging production and managing labour relations.

While the labour unions in British Columbia remain instrumental to the development and maintenance of the province’s film industry, this is not to say that the workforce speaks with a single voice of approval. The indigenous production sector remains weak with little opportunity for exhibiting the sporadic work produced by local filmmakers. Labour costs remain a deciding factor for many US producers. Despite union efforts to manage the workforce, tension still exists between some workers and creative directors on set. As Spaner (2003) remarks, at times some Vancouver crew members have been known to wear shirts on set reading “I don’t give a fuck,” and continued on the back: “how you do it in L.A.,” (197).

Although the service industry was the prominent face of film in Vancouver, Spaner (2003) has documented the rise of what he calls the “West Coast Wave”. Comprised of

students from the University of British Columbia's graduate program in Film Studies, the leaders of Vancouver independent film through the 1990s emerged from the school's 1989 cohort of students. The group's work was characterized by its collective nature from the outset. After their first year in school, student John Pozer coordinated his colleagues and filmed his first film, *The Grocer's Daughter*, that summer as his Masters project. Through the project, students self-taught themselves many basics in film production and most went on to careers in filmmaking.

Films made by members of the so-called West Coast Wave have a number of unique characteristics. First, most of the films use Vancouver as a setting. Whether by way of Bruce Sweeney's distinctly set-in-Vancouver films or Lynne Stopkewich's made-in-Vancouver but placeless settings, these directors use their environment as an integral part of their filmmaking. Second, their stories are banal in one sense, but fundamentally challenge their audiences' perceptions of their environment. This comes through uncomfortable subject matter, such as Stopkewich's exploration of necrophilia in *Kissed*, Mina Shum's discussion of Vancouver Chinese family dynamics in *Double Happiness* or Sweeney's scathing assessment of contemporary consumption in films such as *Dirty*. Finally, the films are dependent upon a collective participation by both above-the-line and below-the-line labourers. These directors maintain a core group of actors and technicians with whom they work from project-to-project, many still based on relationships established in school. All participation is based on concession labour rates established to support indigenous film production. Each film and their crews are exceptions in the service-oriented industry driving the Vancouver film industry. Although these filmmakers benefit from the infrastructure present in their city and the technical expertise available, given their subject matter, content and the dominant trends

in the industry, it is difficult to assess whether they are able to make films because of or in spite of the Vancouver industry's corporate model.

### **Mobilization and the current of production in contemporary cityscapes**

In discussing the notion of professions in the contemporary city, Baudouin (2004) argues that cities are becoming increasingly important regulators of the flows of capital in a market system increasingly reliant on the flexibility and speed of electronic transactions. The film and visual industries are prime examples, among many others, of this trend. Corsani and Lazzarato point to the process of establishing flexible regimes of accumulation under both neo-liberal and neo-socialist governments: "manufacture a deficit and use the populations as the variable of adjustment,"(Corsani & Lazzarato, 2004). The flexibility achieved, however, is the means by which the intermittent workers launch their campaign. While flexibility is the key point of oppression against labourers, Corsani and Lazzarato argue that it is also the weak point of capitalism and, thus, the most appropriate point of attack. By taking back control of their mobility, the intermittent movement does not question the relationship between employment and unemployment, but demonstrates the nature of contemporary, systemic, flexible unemployment. What differentiates the city in visual industries is the fact that the visual cityscape of given locations now plays as important a function as the productive capacities within each city for the purpose of material production of goods and services. Within this, workers are coming under pressure to provide "flexible" services in the form of their labour and self-coordinating functions. As Baudouin points out, however, the precarious nature of employment in this system may, in fact, be a motivating factor behind a new form of labour organizing; that is, labour movements are becoming inter-professional and inter-territorial (44). This might be true, in part, as witnessed in the Paris intermittent

workers attempting to categorize their labour in relation to other precarious workers in the services industries. Yet the assertion also highlights tensions that exist between the local and global in regard to inter-territorial movements. In particular, as Pendakur has pointed out (Pendakur, 1998) workforces are often competing against each other to attract production to their locales. As such, inter-territorial encounters between labourers are often on a competitive basis rather than a cooperative basis, at least in an international context.

It is on the basis of flexibility or, more appropriately, precarity, that intermittent workers in Paris began defining their actions. Taking action, for example, in the form of a strike was not as simple as withdrawing labour. For many workers, the workplace could not be defined easily or with any clarity and, despite being covered by a collective agreement, resembled the situation of self-employed workers, dependent on their own networks of industry colleagues. These networks often spanned across their urban location and their places of work consistently changed, depending on the project on which they were engaged. Thus, the conception of cultural labour being developed through the 1990s leant itself to a new understanding of how the workers might enact a movement within the cultural and urban environments in which they worked. Indeed, as the city itself and specific architectural and cultural symbols became the sites of consumption as well as production of cultural capital, they must also be the locations of resistance by the mobilized movement of workers.

As I mentioned at the outset, the actions taken by Parisian workers differed significantly from those taken by Vancouver workers. In Vancouver, workers organized and self-regulated. The unions discourage agitating and workers keep in line so not to be blacklisted by a producer. Nonetheless, the rise of entrepreneurial labour is based on the similar notions of contemporary production. The labour unions that initially approached foreign producers and lobbied government for an attractive policy framework identified the

possibility of establishing a role for themselves and their geographic location within an increasingly fragmented production system. Moreover, the workers identified and promoted the aesthetic qualities of their urban environments along with the physical infrastructure available to the industry. In this example it becomes apparent that neither cultural, social nor economic infrastructure are sufficient in themselves for attracting the type of post-Fordist production that characterizes the image industries. The actions by Vancouver workers over the period of study indicates that they identified such factors within their labour potential as well as the social and aesthetic circumstances of their environment, and marketed these qualities accordingly.

Both sets of cultural workers demonstrate the blurring of categorical lines around production and consumption by way of their increasing awareness that the valorization of post-Fordist economies are part of the same process. The development of audiences based on taste further valorizes the aesthetic object, reinforcing the symbolic capital for further exploitation. As a result, the production of a product is only part of a larger process that must account for the production of an audience. The audience's consumption, through visual media as well as transitory experience through tourism, are equally crucial to maintaining economic advantage. Moreover, it is precisely because of this understanding of their industry that workers have developed mobilization strategies that extend beyond their own labour sectors in order to build solidarity along the lines of economic and cultural structure. Workers can attack these points of valorization, as have French workers, or reinforce them as did the entrepreneurial unions in Vancouver. Regardless of the outcome and the divergent histories of the two industries, both sets of actions are premised on the same sets of principles behind contemporary immaterial, cultural production.

In concluding, these concepts of labour and the valorization of cultural capital have not been limited to the workforce. It is precisely because of the required participation of audiences in the valorization process that communities around the film production process have taken grasp of the same concepts and leveraged them for advantage or in opposition to the industry. This has often come as a surprise to the industry itself, and demonstrated the full consequences of an economy based so heavily on cultural capital. This is the subject of the following chapter.

Using evidence from the labour movements in Paris and Vancouver's film industries, this chapter demonstrates the manner in which workers appropriated and used cultural capital within their respective locations to advance their own perceived interests. In Paris, this came in response to the increasing striation of work, exacerbated by recent attempts to reduce unemployment insurance benefits to workers. The workers' use of cultural capital represented acts of resistance and conflict against dominant economic and cultural systems. In Vancouver, workers built the film industry by laying claim to the cultural capital represented in their region's natural landscapes and marketing this symbolic capital to producers from Hollywood. In building their industry, these workers also built the cultural capital within their jurisdiction by increasing the levels of training and instituting a culture of filmmaking with the industry and the city in general. This included regulated norms of behaviour within the industry as well as the promotion of public offices and various educational institutions that assumed the role of training and facilitating the public to participate in the visual production industry. As a result of these actions, we have two case studies that represent similar understandings of cultural capital in each location, but very different means of acting upon this capital with, ultimately, differing results from the point of view of workers. The entrepreneurial labour represented in the action of the Vancouver

workers mirrors the processes behind the emergence of the entrepreneurial city, as outlined in Chapter 3. Workers in Paris refused to allow the cultural norms mask their own struggles for fair compensation within their cultural system. In essence, they refused to accept the invisible role workers had come to assume within the routines of the cultural industry.

## Chapter 5

## Cities Collide: Meaning, practice and resistance in the global film city's neighbourhoods

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When film crews move into a neighbourhood and line the streets with large white studio trucks their presence is noticeable, even if only for one day. Some residents might view such activity with excitement; Goldsmith and O'Regan (2005) suggest the film industry turns some cities into "stargates." Based on Foucault's concept of the heterotopia, stargates are the physical locations and activities that attract and through which celebrities pass as well as the processes through which ideas and spaces are "transformed into any other, real or imagined," (64). As such, the film industry can be a means by which local populations reimagine their urban spaces. For an aspiring global city, a stargate might be the connection a location has to the glamour and prestige of the global film industry.

Yet the notion of the city or studio as a heterotopia is also problematic, given the conflicting uses and understandings of space within populations. When film crews inconvenienced residents in Paris' tony 16th *arrondissement* in October 1989, their concerns

ended up on the agenda of a municipal council meeting. Although it is unusual for these complaints to be the subject of such formal proceedings, similar complaints were on the agenda again in June 2002, when a neighbourhood council wanted to know why the city continued to authorize film permits against local residents' wishes. Such concerns are by no means unique to Paris. Vancouver's daily newspaper reported on residents' complaints about filming in their neighbourhoods in September 2005, noting that over 150 complaints were made to the city about filming in the previous year. Many of the complaints came from upscale neighbourhoods where a large portion of the city's location work takes place. Residents on some streets of the city's richest areas began placing signs on their lawns reading "Burned out", referencing the industry term for locations where residents are tired and frustrated by the presence of film activity. And in both Paris and Vancouver, residents' concerns were overwhelmingly the same: filming in their neighbourhoods impacted the availability of parking.

Whether the availability of parking should constitute the focus of a study's attention is debatable. Yet the example suggests that location shooting can intrude on communities when the economic activity of the film industry punctures the private lives and routines of individuals. Residents and business owners voiced similar concerns in both cities over the years, pointing to the inconvenience and loss of income many residents face when film crews move onto their street. Indeed, Benjamin's early observations of film seem particularly prescient of the industry today: "The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology [ . . . ] The painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web," (233). The irony of the statement is, of course, that Benjamin made his observations in the 1930s with specific regard to the studio that

attempted to recreate reality on sets, not in the external world of everyday life. Today the logics of media industries, including marketing, audience, database, labour and production management techniques are woven into the fabric of the urban environment. The camera does not penetrate reality so much as it is the lived reality for millions of people on a daily basis. From the location shoot of the film industry and the city's representation in a variety of media materials to the gaze of security cameras throughout cities, the camera defines and constrains urban activities in a number of ways.

The previous two chapters have examined the manner by which the film industries, their locations of production and their labour components have been subjected to the economic imperatives of a market-driven model of production and consumption. In particular, I have highlighted the manner in which cultural capital is the focus of the activities of many groups. Film commissions, municipal governments, companies and labour groups have all engaged in activities to enhance the recognition and perceived value of cultural capital in their given territories of operation. These same groups have also undertaken efforts to appropriate cultural capital for their own economic benefit. Each of these groups has undertaken specific activities in attempts to manage cultural capital. Municipalities have established bylaws that regulate how image production industries may operate within their jurisdiction. Film commissions have catalogued locations for ease of managing a searchable index of visual "looks". Labour groups, in the case of Vancouver, have promoted their region's look to a global industry while managing labour resources to facilitate the industry's operations. Workers in Paris have hijacked cultural events in a stark display of struggle within the cultural sector.

All the examples of cultural capital's use studied in previous chapters have illustrated differences in larger social patterns of communication and how that communication has

taken place within and through space. In the example of Paris, the history of cinema can be viewed as a means of preserving the mystique of the city through storytelling. In other words, cinema has played a part in the ritual communication in the lives of the Parisian residents who watched the films produced in their city and adopted the stories told as their own. This, in turn, has bolstered the city's cultural capital by depicting a set of social practices and order through the symbolic capital represented in these artefacts. The appropriation of cultural capital by a consolidated, global media industry has meant that recent Hollywood productions use the symbolic capital of the city while stripping away the lived experiences of the city's residents. Many films set in Paris are now the equivalent of the rude tourist who only wants to see the famous landmarks and has little interest in understanding the daily life of the city's population. The stories told in these films are no longer part of a ritual form of communication. Rather, the stories serve a functional purpose of appealing to the broadest cross-section of a global audience in order to bring in the highest financial return. This takes on a much more transmission-based use of film.

In Vancouver, the film industry developed precisely because the workers wanted to continue working in their trained professions. As such, the industry has a functional purpose as a source of economic development. While political and business groups have tried to take Vancouver's reputation to that of a global city, the film industry has not developed the city's reputation. The industry has, however, brought economic resources that have contributed to the city's luxury sector as well as training of a workforce in the cultural sector. There is now a trained workforce caught between the functional task of making Hollywood films and the desire to create their own projects. Again, this represents a tension between the transmission and ritual models of communication.

The tension between ritual and transmission forms of communication in each of the cities underscores other phenomena that link communication to spatial practices. The standardization of space through searchable databases of locations, the stripping of identifiable symbols from places, the enactment of bylaws controlling the use of space in the city and the ordering of labour within image production industries in efforts to consolidate creative control in the hand of a few individuals all represent the striation of spaces and practices. Such striation serves to alienate individuals from their neighbourhoods, their crafts and their shared history. In effect, the striation of a society's places, stories and means of communication marks the creation of what Lefebvre calls abstract spaces. Homogeneity becomes the goal as spaces are standardized for a global industry's production and consumption functions.

In the previous chapter, however, I outlined how labour movements in the each of Paris and Vancouver have had uneasy relationships with their respective image production industries. Each of the two labour movements has found ways of appropriating cultural capital and using it for their own purposes. Some of these purposes have been in support of the dominant economic model, as in the case of Vancouver's industry, while others have been in opposition to such a hegemonic structure, as in the case of Paris. Within both cities, there are examples of cultural workers attempting to tell their own stories and to reclaim the lived spaces of daily life in their work.

This chapter expands the discussion one step further to demonstrate how the recognition of cultural capital has extended beyond the confines of the image production industries and into the lives of residents in the cities where such industries operate. In some instances, this represents a response to the homogenizing tendencies of the film industry. While the construction of abstract space has homogeneity as its goal, Lefebvre asserts that

this goal can never be fully realized. This is because a population will never fully acquiesce to a dominant system of organization. This is the dynamic tension that underlies hegemonic processes; complete domination of one system never occurs because of the contestation by individuals and communities within such a system. It is important to recognize this process within a critical perspective for a couple of reasons. First, it reminds us that resistance is a part of any system and society and thus provides hope for a great number of populations who feel alienated and discouraged by their place in relation to a dominant system. Second, this tension within hegemonic systems reminds us to look for points of resistance in unexpected places – the places that society has often written off as powerless and incapable of organization.

The two case studies of Paris and Vancouver each offer a number of examples of resistance around the reappropriation of cultural capital and attempts to reassert ritual forms of communication within absolute spaces. In the first example, I examine how the intermittent movement of French cultural workers has overflowed into other parts of society so to empower unskilled and undocumented workers of the service industries in France, while continuing to use cultural capital in its struggle. Through alliances with the cultural workers under the banner of “precarity,” workers have found a manner of collective resistance that recalls alliances between skilled and unskilled, employed and unemployed and organized and unorganized workers of earlier syndicalist movements.

The second example in Vancouver demonstrates an alternative means of mobilization, but still around the notion of cultural capital and the reclamation of the means of communication in non-abstracted spaces. In this instance, drug addicts, prostitutes and homeless people in the city’s most disadvantaged neighbourhood organized and took action against the city’s film industry. At the same time, a number of film projects have attempted

to use the medium for social analysis and empowerment while getting out a message about the needs and hopes of an often invisible and forgotten community.

### **Paris and the Precarity Movement**

As noted in the previous chapter, French cultural workers began defining their status by the terms “intermittent” and “precarious” rather than calling themselves artists or technicians. This was an important turning point in their movement because it expanded the potential for their action and alliances beyond the confines of their professions and industry. Instead, they recognized that their status was similar to unskilled and under-employed workers; they all face deskilling in the workplace, a diminishing job market, employment uncertainty and diminishing public social safety protection. Precarity became an appropriate word to describe a class of workers who might be best defined as the “precariat.” The notion of precarity is also an important response to discussion about flexibility in the workforce. More often than not, flexibility is to the advantage of the employer and leaves the workers in a more precarious position. As a result, precarity describes the instability of employment for many contract and unskilled workers, the housing situation of many individuals and the lack of social assistance available for those without adequate work.

During the cultural strikes in July 2003, intermittent workers formed the *Coordination des Intermittents et Precaires d'Ile de France* (CIP-IDF) to fight against the government’s efforts to reduce social assistance programs as well as to address the larger structural conditions that lead to precarity in society. The activists participating in this movement are largely from the cultural sector. Their activities, however, go beyond the scope of their own contract negotiations. Instead, they use their skills to coordinate with workers across Europe as well as across sectors within France. In one sense, this group is not unique. Other groups such as

*Agir ensemble contre le chômage* have existed since the early-1990s for the purpose of coordinating a collective voice calling on government to address chronic unemployment. Many of these groups, CIP-IDF included, have roots in labour activism, often originating from union membership that desires more action on particular issues. Sometimes, as is the case with CIP-IDF, these groups form in opposition to official union policy.

Since its formation, CIP-IDF has focused its efforts on calling for the continuation of social insurance schemes that allow workers security between employment periods, with particular attention to the case of cultural workers. Throughout, however, CIP-IDF members have leaned their support to a number of different movements addressing other elements of precarity in Paris, particularly in relation to other unemployment insurance regimes. It is on the point of social security programs that CIP-IDF sees its position as being different from that of unions; CIP-IDF activists view an important role for themselves in advocating for the security of individuals outside of their jobs while unions would say “it is necessary to fight for true jobs and we’ll see about the rest afterward,” (Corsani & Lazzarato, 2004). The organization reminds activists that there are approximately 300,000 individuals in Paris alone who fall into the category of precarity because of their work and housing status. Precarity activists cite part-time and temporary workforce statistics to claim that 29.2 percent of the French workforce could be understood as precarious in 2000 (Foti, 2004). Given these figures, intermittent cultural workers recognize the potential for a labour movement that extends far beyond their own workplace and even beyond the very notion of work. Their fight is for social security, whether within the workforce or not.

To this end, CIP-IDF members have supported other worker struggles, including worker strikes at McDonalds and Virgin Megastore locations. Weekly meetings organized by CIP-IDF activists allow individuals a forum to gather and share experiences and information

about applying for unemployment insurance, understanding social security rules and challenging unfavourable decisions by government agencies. A listserv allows for information, news updates and calls for support to be distributed. Regular workshops offer opportunities to learn more detail about unemployment insurance regimes and resistance techniques. CIP-IDF activists maintain links with academics who, in turn, have conducted research used to highlight the situation of precarious workers in France. Throughout, activists have documented their actions online, in academic journals and magazines, in videos, through photography and various art projects.

CIP-IDF activists have also participated in the EuroMayDay celebrations, as part of the annual May Day activities. EuroMayDay is a festival organized by precarity workers across Europe, originating in Milan in 2001. While using the traditional May Day name for the first day of May the event plays on the meaning of “mayday” as a distress call. As such, organizers argue that the day must bring attention to the distress faced by precarious workers. At the same time, the event attempts to infuse May Day with a sense of fun and celebration of creativity as opposed to the tradition of sombre union marches in the streets that otherwise mark the day. To underscore the difference between the EuroMayDay event in Paris and the traditional union-organized activities, precarity activists held their event in the Montmartre area of Paris – far from the traditional May Day parade route.<sup>38</sup> Participants replaced the traditional picket signs of labour-organized parades with colourful floats and public art displays ranging from musicians and acrobats to fire throwers.

In many ways, the knowledge of media systems these activists have is powerful and part of the social and cultural capital these individuals possess. That they are attempting to

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<sup>38</sup> Parade and protest routes in Paris signify the event’s political and class basis. Labour and progressive political protests are generally held on the eastern side of the city while conservative parades and protests are held on the west side in high-class neighbourhoods. Other work addresses the significance of protest locations in more detail(Agulhon, 1998).

extend their concerns to unskilled and unemployed workers across the service sector is notable. In stating that “The precariat is to postindustrialism as the proletariat was to industrialism,” there is recognition of similarities between contemporary precarity movements—at least in Europe—and the effort of the early syndicalists in France as well as the Industrial Workers of the World in North America to organize unskilled workers regardless of race in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Foti, 2004, p. 27). Perhaps most prominent in the similarities, apart from the broad organizing focus of contemporary movements and the historical IWW, is the manner of collective action required by both. Isolated strikes and demonstrations are no longer sufficient in modes of action where labour is deskilled and replacement workers are available from a large pool of unemployed individuals. Recent writing on labour in North America suggests that both labour unions and those who study the unions might have something to learn from these discussions. Kimeldorf (1999) highlights that craft-defined workers are able to maintain “reserve power” or the ability to threaten action to achieve results. Unskilled workers, however, are easily replaceable by employers and must organize on a larger scale. Moreover, they must actualize their “situational power” on a regular basis through strategic timing of direct action in large numbers (p. 16). Tait (2005) is direct in her critique of the North American labour movement for ignoring and actively excluding the working poor and unemployed from the labour union movement. If precarity becomes the focal point of organizing that will renew workers’ movements, whether in communication-based work or otherwise, then the activities of French cultural workers warrant attention.

Particular to the cultural workers’ actions is an understanding that cultural capital is a key point of conflict in contemporary post-industrial systems of production and that cities are both key points of production and consumption in cultural and service sectors. By

extending their cultural and economic literacy to workers in other sectors as well as unemployed workers, cultural workers are attempting to develop a class-consciousness built around precarity. Crucial to this, these activists are providing the tools to workers to understand the cultural and economic contexts in which they work and to appropriate the cultural capital in order to fight for their demands.

### *Alternative conceptions of cultural critique*

While cultural workers have developed a coordinated response to the overall economic conditions of their work, the precarious movement is not the only example of ways the media sector and the city have been used as a site of conflict around social issues in France. Prior to the 1990s cracks in the façade of Paris' image and traditional cinematic themes began to show. The mid-1980s saw the birth of a new cinema in Paris depicting populations that were deemed to be particularly un-French, or at least under the radar of what France's population consisted. Condron (1997) points to feminist and *cinéma beur* movements that challenged the mainstream male-dominated French industry. Feminist filmmakers, including Agnès Varda and Yannick Bellon challenged conventional storylines by making females and female perspectives the subjects of films in the 1970s and 1980s. Likewise, *cinéma beur* is comprised of films by individuals or communities of North African origins (219). Cinema produced by and about immigrants and immigrant communities revealed an entirely new perspective on the city of Paris. For the first time, the stories of individuals who were not "French" in the traditional national and cultural sense were being depicted. These immigrant communities are generally located around the fringes of cities in the suburban areas. Through these films, the new reality of French society was beginning to make its way into

public discourse and the results of the previous decades of French urban planning and immigration issues were becoming apparent.

Of particular note, Thomas Gilou's 1986 comedy *Black Mic-Mac* was one of the first films to bring the African immigrant population of the city into focus. The film's storyline follows a community of African immigrants, about to be evicted from their housing units in the northern area of Paris, as they enlist the services of a magician from home to visit and deal with the opaque Parisian bureaucracy. Gilou became one of the first filmmakers to bring some of the city's immigrant community to the film screen. In this regard, Gilou used film to unfold a space in the city to examine the lives of an otherwise ignored population.

Despite the emergence of new filmmakers investigating the social reality of French society, tension continued to develop between the urban core and periphery of Paris through the following decade. This tension around the nature of the city and its inhabitants' understanding of social divisions, is demonstrated in the public discourse around Mathieu Kassovitz's *Hate*, released in 1994. Inspired by the death of a young African immigrant in police custody, *Hate* explored how a young person might wake up one morning and, by the end of the day, be dead. *Hate*'s debut sparked a national discussion about social tensions in the country and the film was received more in the vein of a documentary than a dramatic work. Shot in black and white, Kassovitz suggested that the lack of colour allowed him to worry less about the overall setting of the film, particularly given the small budget available to him, while also giving the film a more realist aesthetic. He did not attempt to set the film in the most destitute-looking location he could find, but actually chose a location that was in a reasonable state, but where tempers among young residents were sensitive. For many, the film depicted a foreign place, despite the fact that the events were close to the reality experienced by many French youth. The suburban setting was unique on the French

cinematic screen and Kassovitz underlined the feelings of alienation felt by many suburban youth from the centre of French life, particularly in the city of Paris.

Nonetheless, the film is not about the city as a location as much as it is about the social contexts of individuals on a day-to-day basis. Although the film contains the contradictions of life for young people in the suburb compared with the city, Kassovitz preferred to think of his film as being a drama about the problems with the police system: “It’s a very wrought fiction, not a report on the ‘life of the projects,’” (Remy, 1995 p. 44). The dramatic genre, however, mixed with a realist aesthetic established a situation in which the film itself became emblematic of the social issues facing the country. The film became recommended viewing for many public servants as a way of developing an understanding of social tensions between suburban youth and police. In this regard, the film was often regarded as a documentary as much as a work of fiction. But in this Kassovitz presented an otherwise enfolded portion of the French society’s social unrest and outlined the spatial delineations between populations based on race and class. As Konstantarakos explains, *Hate* was the first of a series of films known as *cinema de banlieue* in the mid- to late-1990s, setting their action in the suburbs of Paris (Konstantarakos, 1999). Indeed, the author continues, this series of films served to re-imagine Paris through the suburbs (161). Kassovitz’s critique of the police system is underpinned with a backdrop of a system of oppression and segregation, regulated by spatial segregation.

Race and class-based stories were not the only points of urban and social commentary touched on by French film. Appearing the same year as *Hate*, another film brought a new perspective on the nature of urban life. *Chacun cherche son chat* (1995) was Cédric Klapisch’s investigation of life in the Marais neighbourhood of Paris, which was undergoing significant gentrification in the mid-1990s. The storyline consists of one

woman's discovery of her neighbourhood's community networks that emerged to help her find her lost cat. Loneliness and belonging are central themes explored through a light-hearted treatment. The film was influenced by Klapisch's earlier work in documentaries, which encouraged him to show the world as it is. In fact, the film was shot in the neighbourhood, using a number of residents in the cast and as extras. Street people in the film are not actors, but regular fixtures from the area. Klapisch found this use of locals to be an interesting commentary on life in the city. The street people commented to him that when they work on the street they have to be actors, putting on a certain persona to fit the street scene. As a result, the "reality" of a location is that any street already constitutes a mixture of characters, each developed by individuals within their daily lives. Moreover, the film itself is based on a scenario that happened to a friend of Klapisch. The main cast was comprised mostly of people from the neighbourhood who were largely unrecognized from previous films. This was done in an attempt to demonstrate how much the nature of a place depends on the individuals who inhabit the space. Throughout the film, demolition of old buildings in the neighbourhood provide a backdrop for the production. Although the buildings are changing, the individuals in the community are the ones feeling the impact; artists move away due to rising costs and a trendy new population takes over.

Both *Hate* and *Chacun cherche son chat* are examples of films that challenge the dominant cultural representations of Paris and attempt to assert an understanding of the setting that is intrinsically tied to the lives of its inhabitants. The two films reappropriate spaces within the city for the purpose of articulating stories of the inhabitants that otherwise go untold. In this regard, both films attempt to assert a notion of place to the lived experience of many residents in the urban landscape. Otherwise stated, the two films work against the abstraction of space by incorporating elements of ritual communication. Each

film attempts to engage an actual community of viewers in an examination of their lived experiences in the city. This is evident in the neighbourhood-oriented storytelling in the case of *Chacun cherche son chat* and the social analysis of *Hate*. Both films resist the striation and homogenization of the clichéd cityscape that would characterize a film made for the purpose of attracting a large audience, whether at the domestic box office or on a global level. Overall, both films demonstrate an alternative use and examination of the city by understanding the city as being constituted by the lives of its inhabitants. Any storytelling within this environment engages these residents in the context of their daily lives and can be used for developing discussion about their shared experiences. Given that such filmmaking is not the norm, then this use of the media verges on rebellious in one sense and mirrors the experience of at least one neighbourhood in Vancouver.

### **Vancouver and image production**

Two recent works, one academic (Gasher, 2002) and one more popular (Spaner, 2003) have set about documenting the history of Vancouver's film industry. Both pay significant attention to the region's service industry, government film policy and the significance of the industry's overall presence to the province's economy. Each discuss the presence of indigenous industries in Vancouver and outlines the manner in which the city has been used both as a stand-in, masked to varying degrees, as well as the location of Vancouver-set films. The city is featured as itself in very few films prior to the mid-1990s when a group of independent filmmakers emerged. Film is a medium not commonly used to tell the story of the city, whether in the example of Vancouver or other places in Canada. As Vancouver actor Tom Scholte explains, "Just the act of making a film is inherently political because we

live in a state of cultural occupation. So making a Canadian film is like an act of resistance," (quoted in Spaner, p. 205).

If making a Canadian film is like an act of resistance, then the various uses of the medium within the city of Vancouver serve as interesting examples of alternatives to the dominant global system of film production. The period of development that spans that last five years of my period of study provides a unique case study of film in Vancouver. Vancouver's Downtown Eastside provides a particularly compelling example of the use of film by local residents in ways that allow them the opportunity to explore their own interpretations of spaces within the city. As such, the example of film in this neighbourhood provides a useful empirical example in support of a phenomenological model of communication based on Lefebvre's notion of the "spatial body" implicated in the production of space. This is in sharp opposition to the logic of visualization that abstracts spaces from the lived experiences of their residents and that otherwise dominates contemporary understandings of commercial visual communication, particularly in relation to the city.

#### *Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and the image industry*

In the summer of 2002 the Vancouver film industry found itself in one of its most significant public relations predicaments in years. The 17 August daily paper reported that Vancouver prostitutes and drug addicts were demanding compensation for lost profits due to film activity as well as for being shot as extras where otherwise professional actors would have been hired. The world took notice. Newspapers and trade publications reported on the incident around the world. What was most startling about the announcement was the way

the demands were framed; by asking for lost income and wages for acting as extras the street people of Vancouver were only asking for the same privileges offered to business owners, residents and actors in the city's mainstream society.

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, with just over 16,000 residents, is one of Canada's lowest income neighbourhoods with one of the developed world's most significant drug addiction and HIV infection rates (Buxton, 2003). The neighbourhood represents a dramatic opposition to the global city image coveted by the city and province's political and business leadership. With 4,700 users of illicit drugs, the ten-block neighbourhood records up to 300 drug overdoses annually. Approximately 90 percent of the drug user population is infected with Hepatitis C. But while the residents of the Downtown Eastside are often voiceless in the city's media and public discussions, there is a very strong sense of community in the area.

The Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) – the organization to launch the call for producers to respect the community – is one of the neighbourhood's organizations that works on the front lines of social and economic justice issues related to drug use. In operation since 1998, VANDU includes over 1,500 members. It is recognized for its unique work in drawing links between drug use, sex work, social inequality, mental health and public policy. VANDU takes a unique approach to working with drug users: rather than focusing on a client-service relationship, it helps to build capacity within the community of drug users to enable individuals to live healthily and to implement their own harm-reduction programs.

Through a variety of high-profile events, VANDU succeeded in bringing public attention to drug addiction problems in the city, while humanizing the issue. For example, a 2000 protest featured 2,000 crosses planted in a neighbourhood park, representing the victims of drug overdoses in the previous decade. A subsequent action brought attention to

a municipal moratorium on funding new drug programs by carrying a coffin into city council chambers during a meeting. VANDU's public message asserts the basic humans rights of individuals in the community, drug users or otherwise, and their basic desire to be treated with respect and dignity.

#### *Urban form, street life and cultural capital*

Although the Downtown Eastside remained marginalized by Vancouver's political and economic elite throughout much of the past three decades, the area nonetheless plays an important role in the city's audio-visual industry. The neighbourhood's urban environment consists of a mix of architectural styles ranging from 1890s modernity through to contemporary designs. The brick building facades, graffiti, narrow alleyways, garbage dumpsters and wooden power poles lend an inner-city aesthetic to the neighbourhood typical of many North American cities. The neighbourhood's street life, comprised of binners, drug addicts and prostitutes further lends a particular urban "look" to the area. Located adjacent to the city's Chinatown, port and downtown, the neighbourhood is an ideal setting for numerous film and television productions. The British Columbia Film Commission features numerous images from the neighbourhood in its database of potential locations. In fact, a number of the neighbourhood's community organizations receive a significant portion of their operating funds from film companies that make donations for the use of the neighbourhood.

As with many neighbourhoods in Vancouver, most uses of the Downtown Eastside are for stand-ins meant to represent American cities. Despite the regular film shoots in the neighbourhood, stories of local residents are rarely the subject of such activity. This is

generally not a major issue in the neighbourhood. The audio-visual industry and the city's residents generally cohabit Vancouver's streets without significant conflict. There are, however, times when neighbourhoods are classified as "burned out" by the city's film office. In such instances, neighbours are often tired of audio-visual production disrupting their neighbourhood and have complained to the city. The city's film office maintains a list of such neighbourhoods and restricts film activity in the areas through its permit process. Nonetheless, resentment has also developed toward the industry amongst some Downtown Eastside residents.

#### *Vancouver and the international image industry*

The appropriation of space through homogenization is precisely what was at issue when a number of residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside announced in 2002 their intentions to disrupt film production in their neighbourhood. For the neighbourhood to stand in, particular perspectives are required: shots must be close enough to exclude features that might be recognizable on a wider basis (whether this be Vancouver's unique neon facades or mountain backdrop) but with enough perspective to allow for a sense of the urbanity of the location. The use of the Downtown Eastside in this fashion requires a process similar to what many other cities go through in an effort to attract foreign productions: movement from absolute space and a knowledge of the environment and individual cognition toward abstraction where homogeneity is the objective. The visual image of the location is given precedence over other characteristics of the location.

This prioritization of the visual is evident in particular examples of Vancouver's municipal policy governing the film industry. For example, caterers on set may be required

to hide food they are preparing or serving, out of respect for homeless people who might live around the location. As the Vancouver Film Office explains to in its film guidelines:

The placement of catering and craft service facilities is a sensitive issue in some areas of Vancouver, especially in neighbourhoods where poverty and homelessness are prevalent. There are some areas in which catering must not be visible to the public. Cast and crew may be required to cover their food when walking from the catering facilities to an eating area.

While foods might not be visible, there are no restrictions on scents from the meal services.

Overall, a conflicted relationship exists between the film industry and residents of this inner-city neighbourhood. The street life in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside has provided somewhat of a value-added to many productions. Some residents are cleared off the streets during filming, many others are often allowed to remain in the background, providing the inner-city "feel" directors are looking for. It is cheaper to allow homeless individuals to sleep on the curb or a prostitute to continue business than it is to pay an actor union rates to try and achieve the same look.

As noted at the outset of this chapter, some cities see the presence of the film industry within their jurisdiction as a sort of "stargate" through which the city's image is transformed (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). This understanding of the industry is particularly pertinent in the example of Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside. In the past, Vancouver industry and labour groups undertook public education campaigns hoping to reduce neighbourhood hostility to location shoots. Other public comments indicate industry frustration with inflated prices and demands by residents for the use of homes and businesses in films. More important to the discussion in this example, Vancouver's Downtown Eastside residents did not identify with film industry promises of economic advantage or the attraction of having the industry's glamour present in their neighbourhood. Rather, they saw an industry taking advantage of the area's vulnerable population.

The way VANDU organized a response to the industry's presence is important because it highlights the particular recognition of the relationship the industry has with its physical locations of production. In fact, the very same notions of cultural capital discussed in the previous chapter are relevant to VANDU's actions. Despite their status as the country's most destitute neighbourhood, residents of the Downtown Eastside recognized the cultural capital their presence and activities provided to the streets of their city. Indeed, their very presence provided part of the city with the authenticity and "look" desired by many producers searching for the quintessential North American inner city.

As already outlined extensively, Vancouver's film industry is a high-profile sector within the city's business and cultural realms. The government provides upwards of \$200-million in annual subsidies for the sector's activities. Industry groups, in return, estimated their economic expenditures within the province at \$1.23 billion for 2005. By categorizing their activities in an economic context – as workers and displaced residents – Downtown Eastside residents drew far more attention to their concerns than they most often receive. Some media were scornful of the action while many others treated the event with bemused curiosity. Regardless of the coverage, the event highlighted residents' heightened understanding of the industry's relationship to the urban cityscape and the role cultural capital plays in a given location's production status.

As far as an outcome goes for this example, VANDU's protest came to an abrupt stop. Only a few days after issuing the letter, VANDU retracted their threat and issued an apology to the BC Film Commission, promising not to disrupt production. It turns out, VANDU coordinators were on holidays in the final days of August when the letter went out. The communication had not been appropriately vetted and, retractions claimed, was the product of young members of the organization who might have acted too quickly. Industry

liaisons invited these individuals to meetings with the city's film office at which they were informed about the role of the film industry in the city and the importance of neighbour's good-will to productions. But this ending does not diminish the overall importance of the confrontation. In fact, the residents' recognition of their relationship to the film industry may actually demonstrate an acute sense of conflict between their identities and the economic production around them.

### **Searching for a voice in the global city**

This example acts as a point of departure for a larger discussion of the conflict between local inhabitants of global cities and the transient film productions that make use of local spaces. An ordering of the city takes place as part of making it more hospitable to the international film industry. Part of this includes the rules established, both officially through the city's by-laws and unofficially through standard practices by production companies, as to how the space will be used and residents treated when they encounter such activities in their daily routines. Other levels of ordering or striation also occur around labour in the industry as tasks are specialized and union contracts rule who may work in particular positions. Further, as spaces are recorded and catalogued in databases, such as that maintained by the BC Film Commission, a level of spatial abstraction is added to the cityspace as individual locations are decontextualized from their actual place and are referenced only on the basis of particular visual characteristics. Such abstraction is reinforced in a real sense as productions locate in a given area, displacing residents for a period of time.

As a result, the striation of space lends itself to an understanding of abstract space, as Lefebvre explains, wherein the conception of space "uncritically takes the instrumental as a given," (285). Abstract space maintains homogeneity as its goal, much in the same way that

Deleuze and Guattari suggest homogeneity as the extreme result of striation. And it is the relationship between abstract and striated space that highlights the contradictions within the location production industry that strives for realism through the use of real places for an aesthetic of authenticity, yet at the same time acts in a way that alienates the local inhabitants from the places – and often even the places from themselves, whenever one city substitutes another.<sup>39</sup> In linking the spatial practices that can be described within the categories laid out by Lefebvre and Deleuze and Guattari with a conceptual framework closer to the field of communication, as discussed in Chapter 2, James Carey provides a particularly useful approach to types of human interaction.

#### *Ritual and transmission perspectives of communication*

Carey's description of transmission and ritual perspectives of communication is particularly useful in understanding the relations between local populations, transnational production and contemporary urban environments. The predominant film industry model uses places of production in an instrumental manner, in the same way the transmission conception of communication places the direction of messages across space as its primary task. The film industry is, in fact, one element of the larger transmission function of the contemporary communication industries. Location production is one example of the industry's focus on

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<sup>39</sup> Further illustrating the point of spatial abstraction and conflict between local residents and visiting production firms, another interesting example arose in summer 2006. As I finished writing this chapter, the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver opened an exhibit entitled *Production Postings* by artist Christian Kliegel. The exhibit arranged hundreds of small plastic signs displaying neon arrows and single words or alpha-numeric codes. Such signs are used in the film industry to direct cast and crews to production sites in the city. Gallery curator Jenifer Papararo explained to one local newspaper, "I think it's a viable and very interesting representation of Vancouver and in particular Vancouver's relationship to the film industry. This is how most people in this city would come across the film industry here: we don't really see the stars." Industry representatives disagreed, however. Some location managers, recognizing signs from their production, requested that the gallery return the items. A firm that rents such signs to production companies called police demanding the return of such "stolen property."

time-space compression; dispersed production offers reduced costs and is made possible by faster communication linkages. Products of such activities do little to further any local objectives in the places of production apart from a particular breed of economic development agenda. Rather, the products fit a standard requirement to attract specific audiences for the transnational market.

By comparison, many local communities within the actual sites of production see little benefit from such activities occurring in their vicinity. Despite industry arguments that job creation and location fees provide communities with economic development opportunities, the actual benefits are, as discussed in previous chapters, often conflicted for both workers in the industry and third-party stakeholders. This lack of benefit is further compounded in the case of the film industry where its significant cultural role controls the types of stories and voices shared on a wider basis. In the case of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, the city's population that is most often voiceless took an opportunity to give voice to its concerns through an industry that may, in fact, perpetuate the alienation of individuals from the means of cultural expression.

The actual point of conflict in this instance is the lack of development of a communication system that may provide stability, socialization and cohesion of a community within a defined space over time. In other words, what Carey defines as ritual communication is precisely what is absent from filming within such a community. Given the dominance of the film service industry in Vancouver, this situation is not unique to the Downtown Eastside, although this community finds itself marginalized in many additional ways. Overall, the lack of access to storytelling and various means of expression through media such as film and in spaces of the city makes it difficult for communities to actualize what Carey explains as the "symbolic order that operates to provide not information, but

confirmation, not to alter attitudes or change minds but to represent an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing and fragile social process," (19). Indeed, the symbolic order is important to local communities, just as it is for transnational image production industries. It is the local symbolic order, however, that is often absent – if not gutted – from transnational productions. The symbolic orders of the various perspectives come into direct competition.

As noted in Chapter 2, however, the predominant presence of symbolic or ritual conceptions of communication within a given community or society does not negate the presence of the other. Rather, by reversing our examination of the dominant transmission view of communication functions, we might use such a hegemonic understanding as a backdrop to the ritual actions of a community in the daily lives of its members. Otherwise stated, the daily activities of community members actively constitute what sense of a community is present through ritualistic actions and encounters. These take place alongside and often in spite of the dominant transmission conceptions of communication present within a capitalist society. It is, as a result, this area of consideration to which I now take the discussion.

#### *Film, city and the ritual model of communication*

Understanding that ritual and transmission forms of communication often exist alongside each other is important in developing an understanding of resistance and social transformation. Some recent work on the Vancouver film industry, for example, has argued that despite some producers' involvement in the service industry, they would like to be able to make indigenous films, based on their own ideas (Tinic, 2005). Likewise, as demonstrated

in French worker resistance movements, many industry technicians and artists employ their talents off the set in developing their own projects, often as part of larger social and political movements. In many ways, the personal projects made by communities and collectives of workers can be understood as containing elements of a ritual form of communication. Through experimentation and the exploration of ideas, individuals are able to engage in activities that work to foster the “ongoing and fragile social process” present within a spatially and temporally defined community.

There is a danger, however, in understanding the relationship between mainstream and experimental film as symbiotic. There are, of course, many instances in which individuals’ skills are developed in one realm of activity and, ultimately, benefit their activity in the other. But rather than understanding the relationships between service industries and independent creators as mutually beneficial, it is important to acknowledge the larger hegemonic process that creates a tension between the transmission and ritual processes of communication. For example, the carnivalesque activities that constitute the ritual of street life, such as in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside neighbourhood, are the very functions appropriated by the service industry for productions operating in the transmission conception of communication activity. It is useful to understand this relation within the concepts of striated and smooth space or, as Marks (2002) suggests, media that attempts to enfold or unfold information. That is, the lines of striation, whether in the ordering of visual perception or the linear corners of buildings around which individuals stand unseen, enfold or conceal information from the viewer. Other media, however, may work to unfold information, such as in the case of independent media, as Marks explains, which attempts to expose actions that officials might otherwise try to conceal. In the example of the Downtown Eastside, the social and economic problems as well as the populations itself are

the objects of concealment in much mainstream discussion. They remain concealed in much of the film industry's activities when their sole function is to recreate the generic North American inner-city – or to be displaced altogether when no longer required.

That such activities might be enfolded by a dominant social power highlights one of the internal contradictions to the system as well as one of the points of potential resistance, or a seed of tension that creates challenge within the hegemonic apparatus. For many communities, to assert a sense of place within a socio-economic environment that otherwise prescribes placelessness in the areas where production takes place is a step toward focusing attention on local priorities. This is precisely what members of VANDU attempted in their 2002 action against the film industry. Such an action, however, is only part of a larger social process taking place within such a community. In fact, the use of film, within the enfolding contours of the urban scene, has become a new means of expression within Vancouver communities. Three recent film projects, each employing different means of production and storytelling, have brought light to some of the issues facing residents of the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. Each of the films has, in turn, unfolded an aspect of urban life for audiences at a time when mainstream dialogue would rather leave such issues unexposed and unexplored.

### The documentary eye on a community

In 2003, two new film projects further developed the use of Vancouver as a setting, both turning attention to the lives of individuals living within the conditions of poverty and addiction in the Downtown Eastside. The most prominent of the two projects was the documentary *Fix: The Story of an Addicted City* (2002), directed by Nettie Wild. Following the

theft of video cassettes from her car in the Downtown Eastside, Wild confronted her city's drug use first-hand as she searched dumpsters and alleyways in the hope the cassettes had been discarded. This experience convinced her of the need to make a film based on the neighbourhood. Filmed between 2000 and 2002, *Fix* profiles VANDU executive director Ann Livingston and VANDU member Dean Wilson as their organization pressured Vancouver's municipal government to address issues of addiction in the city. Their efforts were aimed at creating a safe injection site. Calling for a harm reduction strategy, their message found a receptive audience with then-mayor Phillip Owen – a politician described in media reports about the documentary as both a patrician and a conservative. The film profiles a two year process that saw a harm reduction strategy approved by the city, including a taskforce to study the establishment of a safe injection site. Beyond the political struggles in the film, Wild also looks at the lives of her subjects; she profiles the tension between fellow activists and partners Livingston and Wilson and the development of Owen's position in favour of a comprehensive harm reduction strategy.

In the opening scenes of *Fix*, viewers are introduced to Dean Wilson as he brushes his teeth and shoots up to start his day before heading out to a VANDU protest at a city council meeting. At the meeting, protestors carrying a coffin force their way into the council chambers to read a statement to council members. This scene also ties together the threads of the film's three primary subjects – Livingston, Wilson and Owen – and their advocacy over the following two years to obtain a safe injection site for the city. Following the trail of meetings between VANDU, municipal politicians, community members and police as well as the street activities of addicts and police, the film profiles the often tense relationships between a community of drug users and mainstream society, each struggling with addiction as well as a general lack of recognition in the wider society. As one individual explains at a

VANDU drop-in center, “When I first came here I saw a sign on the door that said ‘Addicts are people too’. That made me feel good.” VANDU’s overriding message that addicts are humans makes for a tense ongoing dialogue in the film. Although the film concludes with city council’s unanimous support for the harm reduction strategy, closing notes inform the viewer that opponents in Owen’s own party forced him out, ensuring he would not be able to run for re-election. An ensuing change in municipal government saw Vancouver’s new mayor institute the country’s first safe injection site.

What makes *Fix* remarkable are not simply the actions profiled in the film. Rather, the film itself became part of the city’s political debate over harm reduction strategies for addicts. By profiling the individuals’ personal struggles, Wild managed to demonstrate the humanity of the individuals struggling for recognition in the city without sentimentalizing or patronizing their efforts. Likewise, her lens on Owen as mayor provided a striking perspective on the political challenges in addressing poverty and addiction issues. Forgoing a farewell dinner as he left office, Owen instead held a \$100-a-seat screening of *Fix* in support of helping the film get theatrical release. In fact, with the resulting \$140,000 proceeds, Wild took the film on a 30-city tour across Canada, igniting a national debate on whether drug addiction in Canadian cities should be understood as a legal problem or a health problem.

Wild’s film was not remarkable simply for its content. Rather, the manner by which the film forced a national discussion of drug use makes this project unique. Wild saw the importance of developing an understanding of an urban issue through film and then becoming a personal advocate for the project, ensuring it would be seen by a larger audience. She explained:

We didn’t want *Fix* to play only in rep cinemas or on TV. We wanted it side by side with big stuff. I make films for people to see. You wheedle your way into the hearts and minds of an extraordinary community like this one, you don’t then go: ‘Oh well, too bad, the Canadian distribution scene is tough, I’ll let it play on TV once.’ It’s an

unwritten social contract that something must happen with the film – people must see it. (Onstad, 2003)

The relationships forged in the making of the film brought about a personal responsibility Wild felt toward the subjects of her work. Wild declines credit for influencing the outcome of the subsequent municipal election. Her film is not a special entity unto itself, but rather part of the community and the movement that arose from the actions of her film's subjects. "Were we responsible for changing the election outcome? Probably not, but there's a lasting legacy for the film that I'm proud of," Explained Wild. "We're part of the fabric." (Onstad, 2003).

#### From documentary to drama

As Wild was finishing her cross-Canada tour of *Fix*, another Vancouver filmmaker was preparing to debut his film. *On the Corner* is Nathaniel Geary's 2003 feature length debut. Although a drama, Geary drew from his experience as an employee of a government-funded shelter in the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. In his film work, Geary attempts to fuse the visual medium of film with a larger cognitive experience of life in the Downtown Eastside – essentially his mental map – basing characters and scenarios on composites of real individuals, and a material experience with the physical nature of survival in a life of addiction.

The film is a story about 16-year-old Randy, an Aboriginal youth who arrives from his reserve to the Downtown Eastside to find his sister Angel, a drug addict and prostitute. Randy is soon drawn into the survival mode of life on the streets as he grapples with addiction to the neighbourhood's drug of choice, crack cocaine. Meanwhile, Angel is compelled to clean up her life after a friend goes missing while turning a trick. But Angel's

hopes to return home with her brother are compromised by Randy's spiraling addiction. The personal life of the community is contrasted against the harsh edges of the urban form, exemplifying the tension between smooth spaces of choice and the unforgiving striation of Vancouver's periphery.

The film is decidedly based in Vancouver. Not only does the city play itself, but characters are firmly rooted in the city, describing movement, locations and experiences that are indicative of close knowledge of the city's physical environment. A scene featuring Cliffie, the addict-boyfriend of Angel's friend Stacey, in the couple's bedroom shows the landmark Pigeon Park outside the window, trolley buses passing and sirens filling the background noise. Floyd, the senior binner who attempts to take Randy under his wing, takes his bottles to the United We Can depot, a collectively-run return depot for the neighbourhood's binners. Characters walk the streets at Hastings and Main, an intersection infamous as the centre of the Downtown Eastside. The materiality of the characters' experience is closely aligned with social know-how of survival, navigating relationships, grudges and conflicts in the labyrinth of the city's streets and alleys as part of daily existence.

As with *Fix*, the life of the film was closely connected with the lives of the people in the neighbourhood where production took place. Shot in October 2002, two months following VANDU's internationally-reported conflict with producers in the neighbourhood, *On the Corner* took a decidedly unique approach to working in the area. Not only did producers hire VANDU activist and *Fix* protagonist Dean Wilson to act as a community liaison, but they also hired locals as extras in the film whenever possible. Professional actors work on reduced pay rates, a standard practice for indigenous productions, but they also ate with crew and extras at meals – something generally avoided in the industry. Indeed, when national industry publication *Playback* asked whether the VANDU threat to disrupt film

production would impact *On the Corner*, producer Mark Stephenson replied “This is a show about the people of the area, for the people of the area,” he explains. “To the best of our ability, we will be low impact,”(Edwards, 2002).

*On the Corner* received accolades in its film festival tour and theatrical screenings for its compassionate look at the lives of individuals in the Downtown Eastside who are most often left voiceless. The film put Geary into a category of filmmakers industry magazine *Playback* called the “Pacific New Wave” characterized by their “use of local settings in a story, in sharp contrast to how Hollywood uses B.C. as a backdrop in service productions,” (Edwards, 2004). Film critic David Spaner called the film the “best Vancouver film in years,” comparing its feel to the “same grit as the 1970s New York films,” while Geary’s experience working in the neighbourhood gave the film “authenticity,” (Spaner, 2004). Most reviewers reported that the film held the neighbourhood in a sympathetic eye and treated its residents with respect during filming. In this regard, the film contributed to an understanding of the Downtown Eastside that does not abstract the space of the neighbourhood, but attempts to portray how one story in the neighbourhood might carry out on a day-to-day basis.

Nonetheless, both *On the Corner* as well as *Fix* leave questions as to whether or not anything is accomplished to actually empower the individuals within the communities to be able to express their own stories and experiences. Both of these examples, one as a documentary, the other as a real-life-inspired drama, depict stories otherwise overlooked by Vancouver’s commercial film industry. Yet neither film directly empowers the communities depicted to actually speak for themselves. Both are depictions by individuals external or, at best, peripheral to the Downtown Eastside community. Because of this, whether the films represent sufficient examples of ritual communication, including the reassertion of absolute

and smooth conceptions of space, remains debatable. As a result, I turn to a third example of film's presence as a medium of storytelling in Vancouver.

### Voices in the city and new means of storytelling

The *Our City, Our Voices* project emerged in 2004 as a means of providing a group of citizens from the downtown Eastside the opportunity to tell the story of their experiences in the city in their own voices. The project demonstrates a distinctly different means of using film within the urban context as a tool for social development. Two short films emerged from the project, funded by the City of Vancouver and the National Film Board of Canada. Coordinated by the City of Vancouver's Aboriginal Social Planner and filmmaker, Kamala Todd, the *Our City, Our Voices* project attempted to reassert the practices of storytelling into the urban experience of Aboriginal residents in the Downtown Eastside. The filmmaking portion of the project involved six adults who were trained to use film through a series of workshops. This was, in fact, the second phase of the workshop. In the first part, called "storyscapes", the project reintroduced the importance of storytelling as a means of transmission of information between generations amongst Aboriginal people. In a very significant way, the project aimed to reintroduce ritual concepts of communication as a way of helping a population rediscover and develop a voice within public dialogue.

As noted above, the project received funding from two public sources. In this regard, *Our Cities, Our Voices* did not originate from the community in the same way as some of the self-financed projects of the *beure* movement of France in the 1980s and 1990s. This project, however, engaged a community where a significant portion of the population was

dealing with addiction and recovery, poverty and racism. The two films made in the program are evidence of the importance placed on the project by its participants.

The first film, entitled *Follow the Eagle*, profiles members of the Elders Program, at the Aboriginal Front Door Society. The program helps Aboriginal elders recover after dealing with issues of addiction, emotional trauma and social exclusion and allows them to regain positions of responsibility in their communities. This is done through a program of healing circles and, then, rediscovery of traditional knowledge. The program helps to reclaim the traditional social organization lost in recent generations of Aboriginal societies. Program coordinators and participants are profiled in the film, discussing their personal histories and involvement with the Elders Program, interspersed with shots from the program meetings and the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. The film's title comes from the notion that elders, like eagles, have white heads; they see things from a unique perspective in the world and offer leadership. As program facilitator Aline LaFlamme explains in the film, "They have to lead the way. It's the eyes of the elders that can see a long way."

The second film, *Slowpitch*, provides a somewhat surprising profile of the community's everyday life via the neighbourhood's softball league. Told primarily through the eyes of neighbourhood resident Brian Arrance, the film explores how the softball league provides a means of social support for a large community of people in the Downtown Eastside. Although seemingly banal in understanding what makes a particular community unique, the film demonstrates the important role such an activity plays within the community. Indeed, the very nature of the film's topic demonstrates the unique voice the overall project provided to some neighbourhood residents.

Both of the films in the *Our City, Our Voices* project provide unique windows into the lives of residents in the Downtown Eastside. In contrast to *Fix* and *On the Corner*, the *Our*

*City, Our Voices* films were created by the very individuals living in the community. Far from depicting insurmountable problems or social dysfunction, the two films illustrate a strong, supportive community and a strong element of social capital, often assumed to be absent from such neighbourhoods. Rather than pointing to the problems of the area, the films told by the neighbourhood's residents celebrate the positive aspects of their community and the hope for positive change over the longer term. Both films emerged from a collaborative process of community discussion and consultation; the filmmakers acted as directors and sound and camera operators. The film offers an example of filmmaking that is an alternative to the traditional structures of the industry.

At another level, the three film projects outlined above – *Fix*, *On the Corner* and *Our City, Our Voices* – illustrate the importance of communities having the opportunity and ability to express themselves through various media and, in particular, through film. Rather than relying entirely upon a transmission model of communication, these examples each attempted to situate a particular community within a place and time. Where the tendency of the mainstream film industry is to striate labour and space into controllable, conforming segments, these films provide alternative labour models, in some instances employing residents from the communities in the making of the films. Rather than abstracting the spaces of production for the purpose of making locations interchangeable, these films each ground their very premise on the stories of people located in real places. These places, in turn, contain the imagined spaces of the very residents who inhabit them on a daily basis.

### **Reading the city; Living the city**

The two examples of Paris and Vancouver provide very different examples of how two different locations are lived and imagined through film. Likewise, each city provides

competing examples of how film might depict varying populations of the city and, in turn, how film as a production process as well as a cultural practice might be a part of the lived experience of each place. In particular, the above examples highlight the competing nature of local and transnational models of film production, particularly as such activities may conflict with local populations. The homogenizing nature of transnational production is a point of conflict in both cities and continues as the competition for production within the transnational sector increases. The factors of cultural capital and labour flexibility discussed in the previous two chapters are instrumental to this and inherently involve social conflict and control of symbolic interpretation.

In this chapter I have attempted to demonstrate how the theoretical notions of space and communication, borrowing the smooth and striated, abstract and absolute, and ritual and transmission, might establish a bridge between the political economic discussions of the previous two chapters with a socio-cultural reading of the cities and their industries. Moreover, by examining the competing uses of film in each location there is an argument to be made in favour of understanding some uses of cinema as a means of reappropriating space and the right to representation that challenge the logic of visualization prevalent in contemporary society. Drawing on Lefebvre's notion of phenomenological experience, the presence of the "spatial body" in space and as a construction of space implicates individuals within the visual production industries in ways that extend beyond the parameters of producers or audiences. The individual's presence within space and their mutual constitution of those spaces is intrinsic to developing a notion of absolute space and ritual modes of communication that offer an alternative to the striated, abstract means of transmission models of industry communication prevalent in the contemporary global film industry. While some authors (Tinic, 2005) argue that the transnational image industry has given rise

to the ability of local indigenous voices through film, the above examples suggest that this is not a natural outcome of transnational production. Rather, the ways visual production is structured in relation to space and labour and the ways the visual perspective is constructed are points of conflict. Individual involvement and interpretation of these activities are the basis upon which the relationships between visual production and the urban environment might be understood.

I applied this theory in an analysis of film and social movements in both Paris and Vancouver. In Paris, movements of immigrant, feminist and neighbourhood styles of narrative reinterpreted the notion of Frenchness through the medium of film which, otherwise, is viewed from a dominant position as an element in reinforcing traditional notions of "Frenchness". In Vancouver, residents not only used their own understanding of cultural capital to challenge the film industry, but took part in alternative uses of film, being documented by other filmmakers and documenting their own experiences in other instances. These examples underline the potential impact of film within communities when used for the purpose of storytelling and engaging in dialogue, ultimately for the purposes of generating empathy and understanding. This takes the potential uses and impacts of the cultural uses of film, particularly in a ritualistic sense of its cultural integration, to a new level of understanding.

## Conclusion

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In the previous chapters I have demonstrated how the cultural capital in the two cities of Paris and Vancouver has been developed and is the subject of conflicts of meaning and economic tension. Cultural capital, I have asserted, is a crucial concept for understanding the contemporary economies of cities that host any significant form of visual production or consumption. The cultural capital of a city is represented in and obscured by the symbolic capital associated with a given place. Using Bourdieu's conception of these terms, symbolic capital is "unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence, as authority exerting an effect of (mis)recognition," (245). This leads to the appearance of normalized systems of cultural production and trade without any notion of the historical economic and social constructions that constitute such systems. Moreover, because cultural goods can be appropriated materially and symbolically, they are artefacts in the exchange and accumulation of both economic and symbolic capital. Bourdieu further asserts that cultural capital "exists as symbolically and materially active, effective capital only insofar as it is appropriated by agents and implemented and invested as a weapon and a stake in the struggles which go on

in the fields of cultural production," (247). These struggles extend into social classes where success is marked by individuals' mastery of objectified and embodied capital.

In the case of visual production, the objectified forms of cultural capital are often much larger than singular artefacts that can be possessed exclusively by one individual. Rather, in these instances cultural capital consists of places, often in the form of a city or a part thereof. In addition, a complex set of social practices and economic systems mediates individual and group interaction with these spaces in the form of the media and how individuals use media artefacts in their daily lives. As a result, it is important to include an understanding of space and communication in a discussion of cultural capital.

To this end, I developed a connection between cultural capital and various notions of space and communication. Lefebvre's definition of abstract and absolute spaces makes a solid link between spatial experience and visual culture; the privilege accorded to the visual sense in modern culture brought about a concern with the representation of space, while the maintenance of spaces of representation, or spaces where political activity and debate should occur, diminished. As a result of these processes, space becomes abstracted. Rather than space being an experienced creation, those who have mastered the control of cultural capital in a society increasingly prescribe spatial meaning. Homogeneity of meaning is the result of spatial abstraction.

In using Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of smooth and striated spaces, we can further identify ways in which space is abstracted. For example, signifiers are stripped from local spaces to accommodate film crews, thus creating smooth spaces with few identifiable characteristics. Locations are striated through their documentation in film industry databases, referenced by generic terms and descriptors, describing their potential as settings in films.

The type of communication that is dominant within a society aids the process of spatial abstraction. As Carey explains, transmission forms of communication rely on instrumental means of sending messages. Messages are broadcast through media to large audiences. There is little or no meaningful interaction between senders and receivers outside of opinion polling, audience ratings and, occasionally, larger-scale audience responses to media items. Transmission forms of communication thus lend themselves to the abstraction of space.

There are alternatives to these forms of spatial experience and communication. Lefebvre proposes absolute space as a relationship between cognition and the material environment. This is in line with Arendt's notion that it is within the individual's mind, or the storehouse of memory, that space exists where individuals can make sense of their lived experience in the world. In Lefebvre's work there is an implied complexity in this relationship wherein the individual subject constitutes one's self as a material body, in relationship to the material world. As such, the natural world and the individual are mutually constitutive, meaning that space is inscribed with meaning through individual interaction with others and the world in which they find themselves. There cannot be one prescribed meaning of a particular place in this conception of space. As such, absolute space proposes a multiplicity of meanings, constituted through meaningful human interaction within these spaces.

The meaningful human interaction that values community and stability is what Carey has in mind in his understanding of ritual forms of communication. Communal values are represented through durable practices and structures, creating a symbolic order that preserves community over time. Ritual forms of communication that do exist in contemporary societies are bound to be in tension with the dominant transmission forms of

communication. This is demonstrated in the tension around the Hollywood film's intrusion in local neighbourhoods for the purpose of filming and, in the process, appropriating, abstracting and disrupting the symbolic order of that community. The same can be said for the film's exhibition when it takes the place of indigenous productions at the box office or on the prime time television time slot.

Such tensions are further apparent in a return to Deleuze and Guattari's smooth and striated spaces. In a visual sense, smooth and striated spaces can be understood in terms of the viewer's perspective (or the distance of the medium of representation through which they are watching) in relation to the perceived phenomenon. The nature of the space can change depending on the viewer's perspective. Smooth space can lend itself to creativity given the lack of constraints ordering activity within such an area. The individual structures such a space based on their perception. In this regard, the dynamic movement between smooth and striated spaces can be liberating for individuals given the potential for creation and discovery. Indeed, within a highly striated system or perspective, smooth spaces can be discovered within the enfolded layers of striated space.

The concepts of smoothness and striation hold further value beyond spatial constructs. For example, the ordering of tasks and professions, limiting creativity and freedom of the workers within such a system can striate labour. Finances can striate a process by setting conditions on the creation of cultural products through processes and financial imperatives. Likewise, artists can find creative freedom within a smooth space such as a studio where their creative labour has few striating constraints. These spaces can be found within the enfolded sections of highly striated spaces and industries, such as within the structured precarity of the cultural industries. Periods of unemployment, at least when

supported by an unemployment insurance scheme, can provide the smoothness labour requires to meet its creative potential.

The research objective of this dissertation has been to look behind the symbolic capital of the two cities of Paris and Vancouver to discover how the systems of cultural and economic capital within the cities' image production sectors operates. In doing so, I have employed a political economic analysis that attempts to bridge over to cultural analysis of the cities and their cinematic industries. I propose that both political economic and cultural analyses are stronger and mutually informing. Moreover, this analysis employs communication, labour and spatial concepts, given the interconnectedness of social agency, cultural production and consumption and the contemporary constitution and experience of urban spaces.

I have demonstrated the manner by which the cultural capital in each of Paris and Vancouver is the object over which competing interests struggle for control. Industry and government agencies have invested in promoting the symbolic capital of each city for the purposes of attracting image production activities related to the film industry. In Paris this has been in response to international competition for location production; despite being one of the world's most visited and recognized cities, Paris was being re-created on sets and streets alike in other countries while the city was also missing out on a variety of other productions that could be set in the city. Worker activity has also been part of this process. In the case of Paris, workers found themselves increasingly marginalized in the creative process of filmmaking, while being forced into precarious work situations. But amidst this striated work environment, workers used the opportunities afforded by the cultural unemployment insurance system to pursue their own creative and political interests. As such, many workers came to feel that amidst a lack of actual cultural funding, the unemployment

insurance system became a default cultural funding body. With threats to this system, workers understood the weak points of the cultural production and consumption process; they targeted their actions against the very places of cultural production that, in turn, were the same places of cultural consumption. By disrupting live broadcasts, performances and national landmarks the workers disrupted the consumption activities that, in contemporary society, valorize the objectified forms of cultural capital.

Vancouver workers also identified the elements of cultural capital in their locale and used this understanding to attract productive activity to their city. Some of this early work was done to encourage government to enact policy to further develop the industry while other activity encouraged industry investment in the city's film activities. In the end, Vancouver developed what might be understood as an entrepreneurial labour model, where labour unions play an important role in developing policy, attracting production and coordinating labour resources. At times, union activity has even been in opposition to what their members perceived as their best interest; the unions argued that their members' interests were represented in the interests of the industry itself.

Recognition of the importance of cultural capital is evident in the actions of residents impacted by film industry activities in each location as well. In Paris, recognition of the city's cultural status is evident in the municipal discussions about how the industry should be managed. Given how much of the city's economy relies on international travel and image production activities, this should come as no surprise. It is beneath discussions of the city's management of national symbols that a more interesting terrain of cultural contestation is happening. Cultural workers have extended their resources and actions beyond their own sector in an effort to reach out to unskilled and unemployed workers across the service sector, where precarious work is most prominent. Meanwhile, movements of alternative

filmmaking have challenged society by unfolding forgotten and ignored segments of society.

These movements have caused extensive concern and tension precisely because they have challenged one of the greatest elements of France's cultural capital – the very notion of Frenchness that is mythologized in the country's national identity.

Vancouver has experienced similar movements, but from unexpected places. A movement of drug addicts, prostitutes and homeless people challenged the film industry's appropriation of their city spaces and their own representations in film production. Their threats to disrupt film activity in their neighbourhood attracted international attention precisely because they targeted the industry's most vulnerable point – the symbolic capital and underlying cultural capital that allowed for the city's international reputation as being able to stand in for "any city". It would be expected that residents in the city's high-income neighbourhood are able to launch campaigns that force the city to limit film production in their neighbourhoods. That residents in the city's most disadvantaged and ignored neighbourhood would be able to launch such significant attention to their conditions and the conflict with a global industry is remarkable. The incident illustrates the degree to which visual production and the requisite camera are part of urban life in many of the world's cities. This recognition allows an opportunity for residents to appropriate the representation of spaces for the purpose of establishing spaces of representation. In doing this, residents are able to combat the abstracting tendencies of the global image production industry.

The types of film projects developed in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and Paris' immigrant communities are also examples of alternative discourses within the film industry and attempts to reinstitute notions of ritual communication amidst an industry based upon transmission models of communication. The media artefacts produced out of these communities attempt to draw attention to the communities while establishing stability within

an otherwise precarious existence. They serve to resist the abstracting tendencies of the global industry's presence in their communities while allowing for a means of expression. In the case of the *Our City, Our Voices* project, the project is, in one sense, simply for the sake of expression.

Communication and space are intrinsically linked within the contemporary cultural industries. The spatialization of communication activities is minimally explored within the field of communication. Moreover, given the phenomenological approach to understanding space and communication in this dissertation, there is an important body of research to be expanded upon in regard to the role of labour in defining spaces and the communicative activities that constitute these spaces in contemporary society. By recognizing the agency within the media industries and productive activities, there is a rebalancing of analysis to complement work done on consumption within the field. Communication offers an appropriate venue for exploring the relationships between spatial, political economic and cultural areas, given its history of interdisciplinary work. In addition, given the studies of media industries from within the field of geography, there remains complementary research and theorization required within communication to integrate the lessons learned across fields of study.

### **Closing thoughts on the city, memory and the role of visual representation**

In conclusion, I would like to offer some thoughts on the theoretical aspects of film in relation to memory, human experience and the contemporary urban context touched upon in my theoretical discussions in Chapter 2. These thoughts offer some direction for future research, but also attempt to conclude some threads of thought from the theoretical discussion that deserve further consideration. Finally, they attempt to link this work to

potential for *praxis* in the field of communication to move the experience of this research beyond the written page and into a culture of collective storytelling that infuses a sense of the ritual into daily life.

The types of society that the practices of ritual communication would support are largely made obsolete in the modern world. Nora argues that memory in modern society often takes the form of storage mechanisms external to the human mind. Places with monuments replace the ritualistic practices of maintaining collective memory. Examples of the externalized memory include monuments visited by tourists or archives and databases used by researchers. History, as a social process that “. . . binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things,” (633) is lost in a modern society marked more often by temporal ruptures than continuity and by specialization rather than larger perspectives of interrelations. History, moreover, is problematized because, as Arendt points out, modernity brings about doubt and questioning whether there can be an objective, external world into which we come into being. Instead, the dialectic present in Arendt’s thought proposes that individual experience is comprised by the collision of perception with thought and memory in the human mind. Space is comprised both within the human mind as well as in the material world. It is through communication with other humans that stability is achieved within human societies and common meaning is agreed upon. At the same time, it is because of the fact that memory is open to reinterpretation through the re-examination of history in the form of archives that doubt persists and ritual forms of communication are stripped of their power.

Given the potential for reinterpreting and perhaps better understanding history, it has become an obsession of modern societies to maintain archives that are all encompassing. This is also the case with film, for example, in the city of Paris where the *Forum des Images*

maintains a collection of all films that have depicted Paris in some way throughout the history of the medium. It is also for the purpose (among others) of documenting the city in its various stages that the City of Paris facilitates the production of film in its territorial jurisdiction through policy incentives.

The modern obsession with archives has lead to the phenomenon of archives and museums to bring historical collections to life. As Virilio (2002) points out in his discussion of European cities, we now have museums for everything: “Little by little, the difference between the contemporary living-space and the sites of the archaeological past would fade. Modern Europe would take on a discreetly funeral character,” (53). The contemporary Western city in a tourism-oriented society is the cultural cemetery to which travelers visit to linger with the remains of a society to which they are foreign. The rationalization of knowledge and cultural preservation brings us to a point at which our cities are cultural graveyards.

As a result, contemporary society is left with a state wherein memory is rarely experienced through ritual practices, such as storytelling, but “only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs,” (636). This tension is witnessed, for example, in Paris where the ideal upheld for film is that of a cultural practice: film celebrates and reproduces the very notion of what it means to be French, at least insofar as cultural policy suggests. That French film policy focused so incessantly on cinema-going as a cultural practice indicates the hint of ritualistic understandings of communication maintaining stability over time underpinned national cultural policy for so long. When this failed, both in the face of challenges to the notion of what French nationalism meant as well as the globalizing media markets, policy shifted gears in the mid-1990s. The medium itself became a means of conveying the idea of “French” to the French population as well as an international audience who might, in turn,

visit the country, further lending credence to the cultural capital on which the French myth depends. Guidebooks arose that provided visitors with convenient tours and reference pages of locations throughout the city featured in various films. Such processes, however, came to rely on the transmission model of communication more than the ritual model and has been accelerated as the Hollywood film industry has arrived in the city. Throughout, however, projects such as the city's *Forum des Images* sought to maintain the functions of the ritual model of communication in the best way modernity has demonstrated for preserving knowledge; the city established a visual archive of Paris preserving the very films the city hosted over the medium's life.

Vancouver, meanwhile, appears to have moved in opposite directions, at least upon first glance. The city that became the international industry model for developing a film and television service industry typifies the material manifestation of the economic logic of an industry undergoing ownership consolidation and media convergence over the three-and-a-half decades of study. The camera, not to mention the apparatus of equipment that is part of the location shoot, is commonplace in the city and recognized as part of the social, economic and cultural life of the city. At the same time as the city's film industry was developing, Vancouver was also cultivating its image as a global city – a place where the rich and famous go to play. At the same time, the availability of equipment and training offered by the industry's presence in the city provided the basis for alternative movements seeking to use film in decidedly different ways. Although the cost of filming in the city has made it difficult for most indigenous productions to work in the city, there are still undercurrents of activity. The city's alternative film production often attempted to find ways of examining social phenomena in the very locations where production was taking place.

New film movements that attempt to use the medium for storytelling and addressing social issues are, perhaps, the means of developing the vestiges of the medium's ritual potential. The empowerment of marginalized groups is an important and powerful use of the medium. For such a process to work, however, the traditional industry logic of the medium must be replaced by a new sensibility around the practices of storytelling within a community. Neighbourhood cinema that is not produced for exhibition at the box office, but for use in communities is a possible step in this direction. In essence, the lessons of this research project are to be found in the creative potential demonstrated by the unemployed cultural workers in Paris and the addicts in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The use of the smooth spaces to be found within the enfolded layers of striation, the occupation of spaces of representation and the insertion of ritual into our lives represent the potential for an alternative politic and practice. It is through these actions that the functions of society can be understood beyond the symbolic capital with which we are so familiar.

### Glossary of Acronyms

- ACFC – Association of Canadian Film Craftspeople, originally a Toronto-based union that moved into BC during the 1990s.
- ACTRA – Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists, the union representing Canadian film, television and radio actors.
- BCFIA – British Columbia Film Industry Association, an industry organization that includes an array of film-based businesses and unions.
- BCYCFU – B.C. & Yukon Council of Film Unions, a working alliance of BC unions that collectively negotiate collective agreements with producers.
- CFDT – Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail, one of five national trade unions in France.
- CFTC – Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens, one of five national trade unions in France.
- CGC – Confédération Française de l'Encadrement - Confédération Générale des Cadres, also abbreviated as CFE-CGC; one of five national trade unions in France that only represents skilled, professional workers.
- CGT – Confédération générale du travail, one of five national trade unions in France.
- CIP-IDF – Coordination des Intermittents et Précaires d'Ile de France, a group comprised largely of cultural workers in response to government, employer and union attacks on social security programs in 2003.
- CNC – Centre National de la Cinématographie, France's public agency responsible for cinema policy and funding.
- DGC – Directors Guild of Canada, the union representing directors in Canada.
- IATSE – International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, a union that represents the largest proportion of film and television workers in Canada and the United States.
- MEDEF – Mouvement des Entreprises de France, the national employers' agency in France that negotiates collective agreements on their members' behalf.
- NABET – National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, a Toronto-based union that moved into BC during the 1990s (no longer exists).
- SRF – Société des réalisateurs de films, A French association of directors that works to protect artistic freedom and the development of cinema.
- VANDU – Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, a group of drug users in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside that runs health and support programs for drug addicts and lobbies for government support of harm reduction strategies.

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