Growth alternatives and the creative economy:

A literature review

BRISTOL+BATH
CREATIVE R+D

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Contents

Highlights

- The creative economy is celebrated as a high growth sector and operates under mechanisms of neoliberal markets and capitalist accumulation that create unhealthy work contexts and increase vulnerability of the sector. As evidenced in the Covid-19 pandemic, when growth stalled the sector became more precarious.

- The language of neoliberal, capitalist economy sees growth as the only option, whereas many propose decentring growth or being growth agnostic would better support healthier and more flourishing societies.

- 'Capitalocentric' language is pervasive and powerful because it has come to appear natural and common sense. It creates subjectivities premised on individual self-interest, competition, and transactional and instrumental relations and values.

- Experimentation with alternatives (sometimes called Nowtopias or prefigurative politics) and finding new vocabularies to talk about social and economic practices help to decentre capitalism and highlight alternative forms of value and relationality.

- Looking at the micro social helps draw attention to values and relations that exceed the economic and see through its strong hold over us as a dominant 'strong' theory.

- There are emergent ways of 'we thinking' that move away from individualism towards care, relationality, intentional togetherness that create different priorities and examine strategies for successful collectivities.

- Alternatives are often explored at local or small scale through autonomous and disparate communities – finding ways to scale and connect diverse groups remains pertinent.

- Questions remain around whose responsibility it is to enact wider change. Who should be the activists in this space? And what role does the state and local decision-makers have?

- How much can the creative economy be expected to change given its interdependency with wider economic contexts and its local to global interactions, and is it fair to celebrate it as a harbinger of alternative futures, when its alternative behaviours may be necessitated by precarity rather than choice? Is it a lot to expect of a sector largely comprised of SMEs and freelance individuals?

- Evidence of alternatives in the creative sector demonstrate creative communities and workers privileging care, common spaces, and cultural access, non-hierarchical and non-competitive ways of organising, and supporting different forms of value outside the economic.

Introduction

This literature review forms part of work conducted in the Alternatives at Scale cross-cutting fellowship for the Bristol + Bath Creative R + D (hereafter B+B R+D) AHRC Cluster Programme.[1] The research aims to identify opportunities for change and dialogue within the creative sector in the South West UK and contribute to academic research to better understand the multi-scale and multi-dimensional nature of responding to and achieving socio-ecological transitions. This literature review provides the academic context to the ideas and ethos being developed in B+B R+D and the Creative Economies Lab, UWE, across a number of its activities to drive forward a more inclusive, sustainable and fair creative sector in the Bristol and Bath region.[2]

This review is a broad-brush review of academic literatures containing ideas and lessons that might inform what a more inclusive, sustainable and values-led creative sector would look like. It can be read with or without the endnotes; the endnotes provide references and additional conceptual detail. The review is not peer reviewed – it is exploratory and aims to situate current thinking about alternative business and economic models taking place within a sub-section of creative economy work into wider debates.[3] It asks to what extent creative economy research is already engaged with such debates, where thinking might be aligned, and what questions and tensions are raised for future creative economy research and practice to address.

Rationale

The creative sector is currently couched within UK national policy as a key driver of innovation and growth, notably for its positive 'spillover' into other industries.[4] The creative sector encompasses a broad number of subsectors (as defined by the DCMS[5]) from cultural to digital, software publishing to heritage, museums to computer games. Nationally, it is celebrated through notions of regional clustering and through funding directed at regional development. Measures of success are focused on financial returns such as further investment, intellectual property, products reaching the market, job creation, business start-ups, spin-outs, scale-ups and buy outs by large corporations. As such, the primary language of the creative sector is that of capital (wealth) accumulation for private enterprises and through contributions to gross domestic product (GDP), the measure of national productivity in the economy. This is in contrast with practice-led and academic understandings of creative and cultural work as often community-embedded and involving forms of unpaid 'playbour' (playful labour), passionate or affective labour that has a wide range of social and cultural impacts.[6]

Getting the economy growing again is a central narrative coming out of the Coronavirus pandemic and associated lockdown. The creative economy is viewed as a high-growth area, outgrowing and contributing more to UK GDP than other sectors (primarily through creative technologies), while at the same time being one of the biggest losers in the pandemic (its live/performance elements). Cultural commentators have long-criticised the envelopment of cultural 'goods' within the neoliberal capitalist logic of the creative economy enacted through policy and funding. The vulnerability and precarity of a sector consisting often of small businesses and freelancers operating in an inconsistent, unequal and competitive market for low pay and limited rights are well documented in research and implicitly understood by those who work within it.[7]

Attempts to move away from primarily economically driven notions of business success, regional development and industry advancement vary from ideas around greening technologies and production, the triple or quadruple bottom line, to more radical shifts away from current patterns of commodification, commercialisation and consumerism. Key principles in alternative economies agendas lead to the question of whether the economic growth of the creative sector as it stands reflects an environment that fosters 'human and ecological flourishing,' 'meaningful' or 'socially useful' work, and redistributive or sustainable prosperity that enables everyone to increase their happiness, wellbeing and quality of life.[8] This report therefore explores what alternatives exist that might better support this.

Problematising neoliberal, capitalist growth agendas

Although many of us working in or with the cultural and creative sectors know that the current model is not working for many individuals, businesses or regions, seldom do we examine the logics of the economy that underpin the precarious and inequitable conditions it creates within these sectors. This section deconstructs some of the mechanisms, myths and language that make the current economic status quo so pervasive and strong. Deconstructing the economy reveals it to be a historical moment, influenced by political and profit interests rather than governed by natural, universal laws.[9]

Since the 1950s we have seen 'The Great Acceleration' of population growth, urbanisation and use of natural resources that have created disastrous environmental impacts right across the globe: species loss, desertification, climate instability, rising carbon.[10] This acceleration has been accompanied by a global economic system based on neoliberal capitalist growth. Capitalism is understood as a 'social relation predicated on the production of commodities and the emergence and organisation of a market society around this relationship'.[11] This system requires us, in the words of Liz Ziedler from the Centre for Thriving Places, to ask 'are we consuming and producing more this year than we did last year?'[12] This system removes State (country-level) intervention into global markets of capital through deregulation, due to the belief that this best enables growth to happen.

One of the promises of growth is that, through rising global capital understood at national level as GDP, it enables increasing prosperity for everyone, reducing the gap between wealth and poverty (as seen with the rise of the middle class in industrialising countries). Yet this is a failed project in many ways. Research shows that past a certain point national-level and individual-level wealth does not increase health and happiness, and through capitalist modes of production and consumption, competition, globalisation and privatisation, the discrepancy between the rich minority and the poor majority increases.[13]

The current system is premised on debt-based credit creation (e.g. governments borrow from private banks to fund public coffers, and businesses borrow money in order to expand) which means that while growth is happening a stable economy is maintained because repayments can be made. Since investments (in the stock market, in businesses) are most likely to be made during periods of growth, when growth falters this increases the instability; the system is inherently vulnerable to shocks. In fact, many countries' economies in the global North have been stagnating since the 1970s and experiments using economic models show that government spending would stabilise the economy without leading to or needing growth (known as steady-state economics).[14]

Another myth of growth is that through innovation and efficiencies, the economy can be decoupled from natural resource extraction and carbon creation.[15] Innovation happens through investment in technologies, labour and material efficiencies that reduce the people, energy and materials required to create the same product. The savings can be invested into further innovation or to buy up competition to drive further growth. Efficiencies through technological acceleration continue apace and there are some who place hope in the automating of social and workplace processes to transform the current capitalist status quo, bringing the future of work itself into question and associated relations of employer and employee, producers and consumers.[16] While there is not the space in this review to discuss this strand of thinking in detail, it will be returned to at the end of the report, specifically in relation to digital alternative economies.

It is generally agreed that even with increasing efficiencies and decreasing global population, to correct the abuses of dirty fuel, polluting and resource extraction already carried out would require far greater levels of carbon reduction within shorter timeframes than global climate agreements between governments currently commit to.[17] Like national economic measures such as GDP, these national carbon reduction measures do not include externalisation processes. The global flows of capital, waste, pollution, production and consumption are not accounted for in growth agendas, or if they are, they unfairly favour those 'more developed' countries who have already been through industrialisation. Service-based economies in the Global North can leave out the costs of their supply chains and their waste exports via a process of externalisation.

Some of the biggest critiques of capitalism relate to processes of alienation and enclosure. Originating with Marxism, the idea of alienation refers to a worker's separation and loss of control over the means of production.[18] Privatisation of the means of production, the imperative for competition between producers, and the need for efficiencies that drive factory models of production, and organisational structures that reward shareholders not workers, mean that workers do not have autonomy to make decisions over what, when, how and for what purpose they produce, as well as the balance between production and leisure; 'workers sell their labour power and produce commodities for others and subsequently become separated from the outcomes of their endeavours'.[19] In this line of thinking, conversely, control over production means that workers are more aware of all the relations and processes that go into making something, and therefore the potential ecological impacts of it, as well as having greater sense of achievement and meaningfulness attached to what they do. More meaningful work is also referred to as 'socially useful' work in the literature.[20] Enclosure, the creeping private ownership of previously shared, public or natural spaces, things and people – such as modes of production - is central to alienation, as workers must sell their labour power on the market, creating competition for profit that leads to overexploitation, dispossession, dislocation and even slavery.[21]

An essay by geographer, Doreen Massey, helps us understand how processes that can be so damaging – even violent – have come to saturate not just the way we understand the economy but all aspects of society and experience.[22] Massey unpacks growth narratives and looks at what makes them so pervasive and seemingly common sense. She illustrates how economic language creates identities and subjectivities that translate previously different forms of value into economic ones. Simple examples of this are the way that passengers and students become customers, when public transport is privatised, and in the neoliberal profit-driven university.

The way that language shapes the way we understand good and bad forms of value is demonstrated in a discussion about investment versus speculation and expenditure, with anything private being understood as investment and anything from the public purse (from taxation) understood negatively as expenditure and contributing to debt. Investment is also understood as anything that finances the creation and production of things (and so creates value) whereas the primary means of wealth accumulation currently, in the neoliberal capitalist model, is done through speculation where an asset (an already existing thing) is invested in and held until it can be sold for a profit. This form of investment actually extracts value rather than creates it and limits the extent to which everything else can create value, for example in the case of property speculation which pushes up housing prices.[23]

This type of economic language which drives our understanding of value is based on a belief in 'rational man' as fundamentally driven by self-interest and instrumentality.[24] The use of such language to describe all our behaviour and experiences is distinctly 'capitalocentric'.[25] Capitalocentric is a term used by Gibson-Graham – the original proponents of diverse economies – who seek to reposition the centrality of the capitalist model as just the tip of the iceberg of a much more diverse set of economic and social practices. Due to the seeming naturalness and common-sense quality of ecomomic language these are mostly made invisible or viewed without value.[26] Figure 1 shows how the vast range of other practices in which people are engaged in in order to make a living are 'below the water line'. Gibson-Graham's iceberg economy allows us to think about a much wider range of social relations as having a role in economic practices, such as trust, care, sharing, cooperation, coercion, self-exploitation, distributive justice and stewardship. It gives both positive and negative examples, both current and historical, to show how our current understandings are historically contingent and not based on universal truths.

ENTERPRISE	LABOR	PROPERTY	TRANSACTIONS	FINANCE
CAPITALIST Family firm Private unincorporated firm Public company Multinational	**WAGE** Salaried Unionised Non-union Part-time Contingent	**PRIVATE** Individually owned Collectively owned	**MARKET** Naturally protected Free Artificially protected Monopolized Regulated Niche	**MAINSTREAM MARKET** Private banks Insurance firms Financial services Derivatives
ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST State owned Environmentally Responsible Socially Responsible Non-profit	**WAGE** Self-employed Co-operative Indentured Reciprocal labor In-kind Work for welfare	**PRIVATE** State-owned Customary (clan) land Community land trusts Indigenous knowledge	**MARKET** Fair & direct trade Alternative currencies Underground market Barter Co-op exchange Community supported Agriculture, fishing etc	**MAINSTREAM MARKET** State banks Co-op banks Credit unions Govt. sponsored lending Community based financial institutions Micro-finance Loan sharks
NON-CAPITALIST Worker co-ops Sole proprietorships Community Enterprise Feudal enterprise Slave enterprise	**UNPAID** House work Family care Volunteer Neighbourhood Work Self-provisioning Slave labor	**OPEN ACCESS** Atmosphere Water Open ocean Ecosystem services Outer space	**NON-MARKET** Household sharing Gift giving State allocations/ Appropriations Hunting, fishing Gleaning, gathering, Sacrifice Theft, piracy, Poaching	**NON-MARKET** Sweat equity Rotating, credit funds Family lending Donations Interest-free loans Community supported business

Figure 1: Based on Gibson-Graham's iceberg economy (2014)

While implicit critique of capitalism exists within the work of Gibson-Graham, they are more concerned to acknowledge and make visible the diverse economies that exist. Capitalist and growth-based economic practices sit alongside others. Alternative economies happen at the same time and they choose to focus their energy on drawing attention to the alternatives. Through doing this they highlight the value and importance of alternatives, and to make them more visible and thinkable, and therefore more credible and realistic options, through creating more appropriate (non-capitalocentric) language to describe them. In doing so, they also remind us that value is more broadly relational rather than only transactional.[27]

While it is easy to critique capitalism, it is more difficult to operate entirely outside of it. It might be better to look for the cracks and fissures in growth narratives as opportunities to do things differently, as advocated by postcapitalists. In her book proposing doughnut economies, Kate Raworth is similarly 'growth agnostic'.[28] Doughnut economics (Figure 2) prioritise that the economy functions in a way that supports social equality and wellbeing and does not exceed environmental limits, accepting that some growth can be helpful and healthy (which is also evident in thriving creative ecologies).
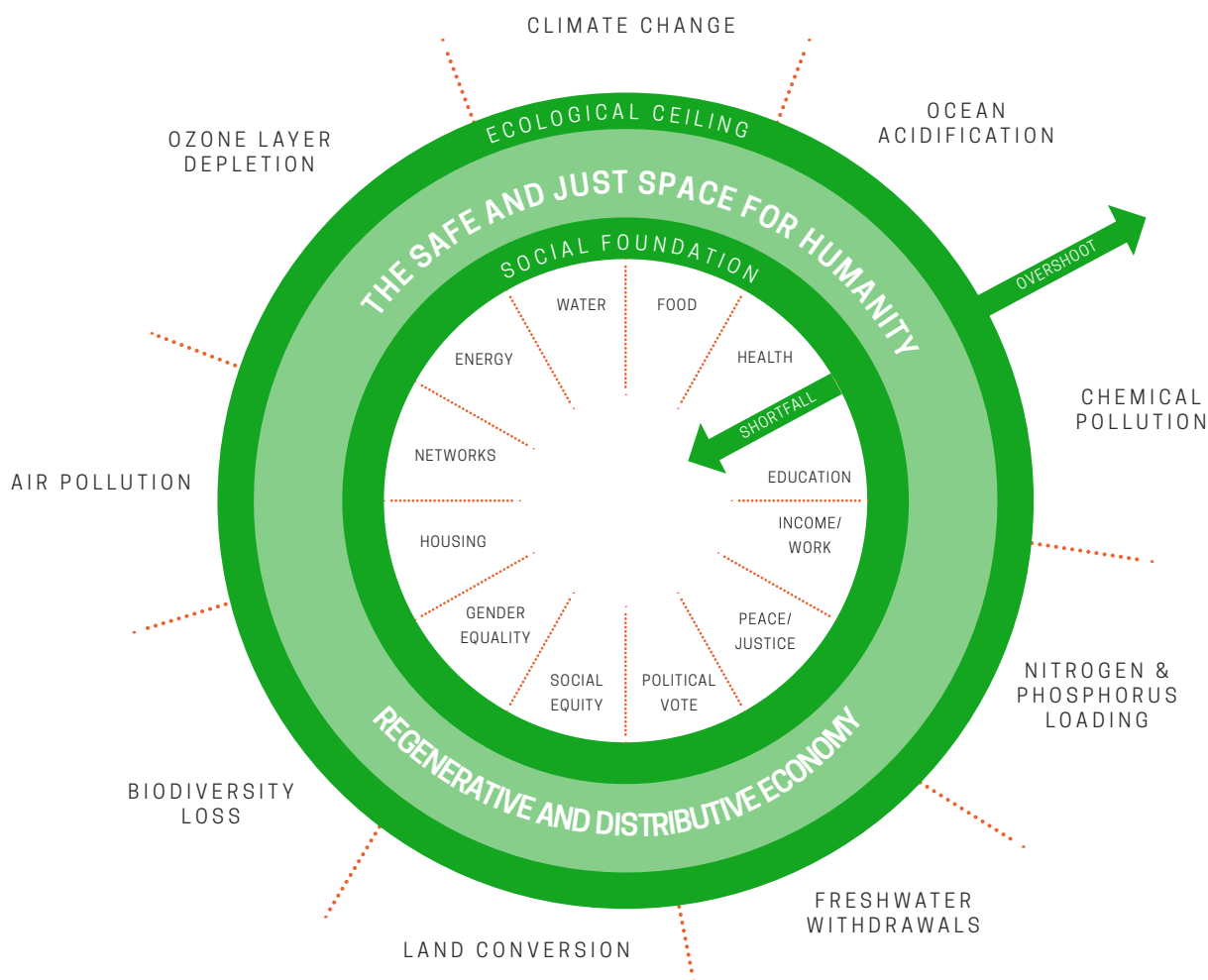
Figure 2: The safe and just space for humanity exists inside the ring doughnut, with social and ecological limits it should not exceed. Based on Raworth (2017)

Raworth's book draws particular attention to the power of visuals to help create new common-sense narratives and norms, showing how much of the logic of capitalist thinking is embedded and seeded in simple diagrams and charts, particularly the bell curve, that economists learn early on from textbooks and that are easily grasped by policy-makers. It is through the creation of new visual repertoires that the common sense logic of previously held economic principles unravels (see Figure 3).

Seven Ways to Think:	From Twentieth-Century Economics		To Twenty-First-Century Economics
1. Change the Goal		GDP	the Doughnut
2. See the Big Picture		self-contained market	embedded economy
3. Nurture Human Nature		rational economic man	social adaptable humans
4. Get Savvy with Systems		mechanical equilibrium	dynamic complexity
5. Design to Distribute		growth will even it up again	distributive by design
6. Create to Regenerate		growth will clean it up again	regenerative by design
7. Be Agnostic about Growth		growth addicted	growth agnostic

Figure 3: Raworth redraws the common-sense diagrams of economic thinking that dictate current policy to incorporate complexity and that which it excludes. Taken from Raworth (2017)

This section has demonstrated a developing desire to rethink the logic, language and visual representations of the capitalist economic model to unsettle it from its status quo centrality. This call has been answered in multiple sets of literature and the next section pulls out three key themes that operate across many of these literatures as a starting point to articulate a set of values for enacting a more inclusive, fair and sustainable creative economy.

What are the alternatives?

There is a great deal of academic and popular writing that is worth exploration when considering what we can learn from theoretical debates and examples of alternatives in action. This review encompasses literatures on degrowth, post-growth, post capitalism, alternative and community economies, moral economy, diverse economies, doughnut economy, the commons, prefigurative politics, solidarity and sharing economies, the sovereignty movement, and sustainable prosperity. It does not focus on green and inclusive growth, the circular economy, sustainable development, resilience, and accelerationism. These latter literatures stay largely within a 'capitalocentric' way of thinking which views efficiencies and technofixes as the primary response to current societal and environmental problems. They make important contributions to thinking about fairer, more inclusive and sustainable futures for the creative sector, but this review focuses on transformative rather than adaptive alternatives.

Research literature on alternatives is not completely uniform and ranges from a complete rejection of economic growth to something more 'growth agnostic,' from moving outside of or beyond capitalist structures altogether as the only possible solution, to operating 'within the cracks' of capitalist systems to experiment with and imagine alternatives.[29] Theorised at the macro-economic end of the spectrum – only coalitions of governments can affect the transformations needed – to the community or individual-level – eco-communities, living off-grid, cooperatives, community gardens – and latterly to digital (and therefore global) opportunities in the form of the sharing and solidarity economies.

They all question a particular type of financial activity contained within the notion of economic growth, the extent to which it should continue unabated or is even necessary, and how alternatives might be developed that more effectively deliver human and environmental prosperity or flourishing at sustainable levels. They differ in terms of the geographical and temporal scales in which they envisage change is possible and in how they articulate what the task is, how big it is, and who is primarily responsible. Implicit in much of this research and popular literature is the idea of dematerialising (to live with less) through 'sufficiency' and subsistence – being able to live within your means and autonomously. The desire to make private spaces and knowledge public again as 'commons' is also central across these movements. The commons, or commoning – the ongoing act of creating commons – enables many of the values at the core of alternatives including connectivity and interdependence, cooperation and sharing, sufficiency and care, and wellbeing and the 'common good' (see Figure 4).

Case studies are understandably more common at the community and individual level, only sometimes incorporating a regional lens. The Occupy social movement is a much-cited example of global alternatives in action. When it comes to case studies there is not always a clear distinction between the different theoretical frameworks described above. They are used in different ways and in different combinations to describe and analyse alternatives in action. For the purpose of this review, it is helpful to navigate a path through this literature using key themes and motifs that surface across them.

The following sections will explore: the role of autonomous communities, the scales at which they operate and how they interact 'outside' of their autonomy; what types of alternatives are sought and how they are worked towards, as blue prints, nowtopias and emergent experiments; and, attempts to shift the language of experience away from individualistic, capitalocentric self-interest to one of collectivities, care and other explorations of 'we' thinking. Collectively, these themes help us begin to build a set of values and ways to put them into action for a fairer, more inclusive and sustainable creative economy.

CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS

NOURISHING COMMUNITY

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

OBSERVING & REFLECTING

ACADEMIC RESEARCH & WRITING

QUESTIONING & DECONSTRUCTING

RETHINKING SOCIETY

IMAGINING & CONSTRUCTING

LEARNING & DISCUSSING

ADVOCATING

CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM

WORK

CARE

CONVIVIALITY

INCLUSIVITY

FEMINISM

SOCIAL JUSTICE

DIVERSITY

ACTING POLITICAL

ORGANIZING

RESISTING

MEANINGFUL WORK

LIVING DEGROWTH

SOVEREIGNTY

HORIZONTALITY

HARMONY

ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY

AUTONOMY

HAPPINESS

WELL BEING

COMMON GOOD

COOPERATION

FOSTERING WELL-BEING

FACING CONFLICTS

BEING SELF-AWARE

MOVING AROUND DIFFERENTLY

SOURCING/EATING FOOD ETHICALLY

BEING VULNERABLE

UNVEILING THE SELF

BEING MINDFUL

SHARING

CREATING ALTERNATIVES

DIY

REJECTING SELF-PROMOTION

ENJOYING THE BODY

BEING CREATIVE

CONSUMING LESS/ CONSCIOUSLY

PRODUCING CO-OP

Figure 4: Based on Brossman and Islar (2020). This synthesis of enactments or dispositions for degrowth shows different scales of action.

Autonomy, scale and 'the outside'

There is a lot of thinking and imagining being done about what kinds of alternatives are possible but how do these translate into examples, practices and behaviours? Case studies often focus on autonomous communities operating at a fairly local scale. In the social movement framework, the concept of autonomy is used at a collective level, to describe groups governed by self-established rules, self-determination, and self-regulating practices.[30] These groups might be cohousing, an eco-community, a worker cooperative, an activist network, or a community farm, to name a few examples. They chose to function as a group to escape, or in rejection of, the status quo economic system.

Due to their autonomy and their desire to operate outside of the current dominant systems, whether that be housing or food production, they may or may not have an interest to scale or in any political or activist intention to contribute to broader change. Autonomy can also make these groups exclusive, with some social movements being accused of being overwhelmingly middle class and white.[31] People living in poverty, with few choices facing them, arguably find it more difficult to experiment with alternatives or separate themselves from dominant economic systems.[32] Alternatively, it is the young, precarious and digitally-enabled that have been viewed as dominating the sharing and solidarity economy.[33] Autonomous communities have also been accused of being too local, too insular, and too parochial, as harking back to some previous time, such as 'back to the land' fantasies or primitivism.[34]

Increasingly, how groups scale by networking, cultivating a global sense of connection and solidarity through disparate projects, is being researched. A different spatial literacy is proposed to think about how autonomous groups scale-up and contribute to broader change – through diffuse and horizontal connections, peer-to-peer and collaborative networks, in on and offline spaces.[35] There are efforts to map the different scales that alternatives are best enacted (see Table 1).

KEY COMPONENTS	EXAMPLES	SPATIAL ARTICULATION
Dematerialization of production and consumption	Product sharing and leasing schemes, maintenance services/integrated product service systems, extended product lifecycles (including reuse)	New inter firm networks through servicization, decrease in natural resource consumption
Sufficiency oriented lifestyle	Sustainable tourism, slow food, new forms of housing/ co-habitation schemes	Mobility patterns and related environmental impacts, changes in production organization (see next point)
Re-regionalization of production systems	Regional sourcing in manufacturing firms, local/regional value chains in agriculture and food industry	Regional capital accumulation, less resource intensive transportation
Cooperative, non-profit oriented business strategies	Social business/solidarity economy, cooperatives, community initiatives, 'hybrid organisations'	Employment opportunities, emergence of local trust-based networks and other non market co-operations, profits immediately reinvested locally
Sustainability oriented economic, innovation and energy policies	Regional green innovation and cluster initiatives, national transition strategies (eg Germany's 'Energiewende')	Newly emerging markets and production systems, global diffusion of innovations
Global and regional distributive justice/pro-poor growth	Micro-credits, clean development, mechanisms	Resources and capital allocation
Use of alternative wealth indicators (Beyond GDP)	OECD better life initiative (2011), index of sustainable economics Welfare - ISEW (daily and Cobb, 1989)	Incorporation of spatial externalities
Financial system	Tax incentives, cooperative banks, alternative currencies, sustainability related performances indicators	Local/regional value chains of financial products, closer link to real economy.

Table 1: Based on Kreuger (2018). This table draws on key components of alternatives (specifically degrowth) to demonstrate examples and the scale of their enactment.
It is based on work by leading degrowth thinkers and on Tim Jackson's work on sustainable prosperity and Gibson-Graham's community economies.

When thinking about the scale at which alternatives can be enacted, both the State and issues of responsibility arise. One of the drivers of autonomous communities is 'being the change you wish to see.' Critics point out, however, that this does not move away from individualistic capitalist thinking because it still reproduces the narrative that we need to take responsibility for existing problems ourselves.[36] Current narratives of 'sharing cities,' that have become more prominent post-pandemic, can even be viewed as naturalising societal and ecological crises internal to a capitalist economic system: 'rather than enabling a self-determination of new systems of provision based on shared values, resilient communities might actually be seen as burdened with more responsibility for collective well-being, "without gaining power".'[37] When the language of resilience is aligned with alternatives, we must anticipate and accept the current economic system's instability: creative workers must always be prepared for and able to adapt to the next pandemic or crash.[38]

This type of thinking also closes off the opportunity for, and critique of, State intervention. The role of the State in alternatives is of course a political question, and is also tangled in Marxist legacies. Examples of previous failed socialist national projects provide a powerful narrative with which to shut down neoliberal alternatives, despite an increase in socialist governments and large support for remnants of socialism in the UK such as the NHS.[39] When the State is viewed as a 'mega-machine' that alternatives must be for or against, it is less helpful than when we ask what sort of State, how does it block and how does it encourage and support alternatives.[40] Critics note that discussions about transforming agents are surprisingly absent in the literature and there have been few accounts of the size and role of the State (and associated organisations like the police) in how alternatives are enacted.[41]

When thinking about alternatives in action, one of the challenges is how to operate autonomously from the prevailing system (in order to 'be the change you want to see' without being obstructed by structural barriers from the outside) yet still be able to speak back to and influence that system. How much are autonomous groups enacting alternatives responsible for affecting wider change through activism? Are their attempts to practise alternatives a political project in and of itself? These questions are addressed in the next section.

Prefiguring alternatives: blueprints, nowtopias and emergent experiments

Ordinarily, at national and governing scales, visioning the future has been described as a form of anticipatory politics. This includes preparing for future emergencies and national threats such as epidemics and terrorism. This type of 'futuring' is about preserving the status quo of the present moment against a dangerous future.[42] Prefigurative politics, by contrast, is about experimenting and trying things out to create a future that we do not yet know; the primary characteristics of prefigurative politics are continued experimentation with doing things differently.[43] Prefiguring is increasingly being used as a theoretical framing for understanding examples of alternatives. Similarly, degrowth and prefigurative politics in action have been referred to as 'nowtopian'. Nowtopias work under a similar principle that instead of having a blueprint of a future utopia that is worked towards - the classic blueprint is the communist utopian future that requires forming a political party to affect widescale change – prefigurative politics is about bringing diverse groups together around related goals to create change at the scale of lived experience through experimentation and learning.[44] Utopias and nowtopias represent different forms of solidarity and ways of understanding the change that is needed, with the former being a more homogenous form of solidarity (essentially, workers) and the latter more embracing of difference and heterogeneity, argued by its proponents to bring the local and global together.[45] This is big P politics versus a more ethically-oriented little p politics.

These forms of prefiguring – of experimenting and working out what works and does not through doing – are primarily understood as happening in the autonomous groups described in the previous section. But where are the other spaces where prefiguration can happen? Given the scope of the B+B R+D programme, another way to think about this is to ask: what role can academics and cultural organisations play in this prefiguring? What types of nowtopias can we create or support? Can we be the agents of change by helping to make visible alternatives and make them credible and knowable through experimentation?

To return to Gibson-Graham, they describe the dominancy of capitalocentric ways of thinking as a "strong theory".[46] Academics (and others) use the powerful and common-sense language and theories about the economy to organise events – as the object of their studies – into understandable and seemingly predictable trajectories. Even as they critique the logic of the economy, they give power to it and strengthen its hold as the only way of seeing and explaining things, limiting the space given to alternative language, frameworks and possibilities.

In the creative and cultural sectors, something similar can be found in the way that economic strong theory has structured the cultural sector on market principles, so that the dominant system gains 'symbolic capital from each strategy document, mission statement and five-year plan produced by arts organisations' and solidifies as common sense that they should be run as businesses.[47] In addition, academics who work closely with creative and cultural sectors through knowledge exchange and research and development funding programmes become 'expert intermediaries' occupying a

space as 'active agents in making the creative economy "known"… and translating discourses for and with policy-makers'.[48] The option to make known alternatives is clearly there, although the language and evidence required to make a persuasive case in this context continues to be debated and developed.[49]

While much academic thinking has tended to work on a 'hermeneutics of suspicion', looking to unveil the forces operating beneath the object of study – strengthening already strong theories – other approaches are gaining traction, including a hermeneutics of trust, taking a stance of 'critical vulnerability' or 'affirmative critique'.[50] These modes of analyses are echoed by renewed interest in the politics and practices of hope. Hope, and care (which is returned to in the next section), are intertwined and, according to creative industries researcher, Jonathon Gross, cultural opportunities that privilege care give individuals and communities the chance to narrate their lives and feel that their actions matter, thus connecting little and big p/Politics in the form of 'cultural democracy'.[51] Hopeful academic practices, however, are challenging when academic critique is usually infused with negativity and scepticism.[52]

As we can see then, academics and other commentators have 'some choice as to what threads of interpretation to pull on in the making of a story about "large issues": This involves a political choice to enact a revolution of sorts'.[53] From this perspective, academics become activists, having an ethical imperative to create new narratives and imaginings of the economy that help make other worlds become possible as they are made tangible and recognisable in the present, and so more able to be constructed in the future.[54]

The next section will look at some of the language and framings used to structure and analyse these new worlds, primarily through a focus on the micro-social (as opposed to the macro-structural scale of classical economics), solidarity, relationality and interdependency evident in recent articulations of 'we' thinking and care literatures.

The shift (back?) to 'we' thinking

One form of alternative economy that has gained interest in academic writing about creative economies is the moral economy.[55] The moral economy concept 'refers to the embeddedness of market economies in relational infrastructures held together by shared values and beliefs about justice and about what constitutes good, fair, moral and appropriate life and conduct, while also specifying the rights and responsibilities of individuals within communities and in market exchange'.[56] Moral duty is part of the rationality of market economies.[57] It privileges 'abstract principles, formal rules, impersonal duties and deliberative justice to sanction relational conduct'.[58] As such, academics Alacovska and Bissonette claim it remains an abstract model of "creative justice" that is detached and normative because it has not been tested in situated, real-world contexts.

They instead view the moral economy alongside and in contrast to an ethics of care approach.[59] An ethics of care approach 'concentrates on the specificities of practices, virtues and feelings (kindness, empathy, compassion) as these arise from concrete life situations that are themselves infused in relational infrastructures and local webs of interdependencies.'[60] In the ethics of care research, there are different spheres of care that are defined, in terms of intimacy (primarily family), mutuality (friends, colleagues, neighbours) and solidarity (community, artistic scenes, national culture). Care requires suspending self-interest in order to be attentive to the needs of others and taking an ethical form of responsibility outside of prescribed versions of duty or obligation. Alacovska and Bissonette stress that this does not mean that care is wholly altruistic or incompatible with other forms of relationality that are more transactional: helping others is often helping yourself.

An aspect of Gibson-Graham's work on diverse economies is the building of a community of academics and activists researching what they call 'community economies'. The thinking behind community economies extends the concept of care, borrowing from the environmental humanities to encompass a more ecological and more-than-human way of understanding an ethics of care that recognises the interconnectivity of everything, at a multispecies level:

> 'Community' is evoked in the active sense of negotiating being-in-common as a multispecies, human and non-human community, a 'we' that includes all of those with whom human livelihoods are interdependent and interrelated.[61]

Taking this holistic view of the economy to understand it as part of a web of socio-ecological relations is one way to begin to undo some of the more damaging externalisation processes that occur through the practices that dominant economic language enables because of its lack of accounting of/for the non-human.

The long-standing literature on the Commons is relevant here, as a way that public and green-blue spaces can be reclaimed from processes of enclosure, so that such spaces are freed from instrumental use for the capitalist profit of private individuals or companies to become shared spaces where relations of solidarity and multispecies care can be fostered.[62] One of the major aims of studying alternative economies is to find ways to 'maintain and expand the commons.'[63]

The Commons and other alternative forms of economy require sharing and being with each other in ways that focus on collectivity and togetherness, counter to individualist capitalist projects of consumerism and private wealth accumulation.[64] Jarvis explores this idea, first outlining two forms of collectivity understood as an intentional community (or tribe, which are explicit negotiations between a household or other group who know each other) and a shared conception of 'we' arising in the absence of personal interaction, akin to the solidarity sphere of care outlined by Alacovska and Bissonette, and often associated with relatively intangible assets like clean air or local heritage.[65]

Jarvis goes on to describe three types of togetherness of which 'intentional togetherness' is the most helpful for understanding collective action in the pursuit of alternative economies.[66] 'Intentional togetherness' is about integrated social and economic space – a form of commoning. She argues that locally situated, intentional communities have opportunities for meaningful interaction, mutuality and sharing that are not possible in virtual or dispersed networks of sharing. But this does not happen in some easy way through happenstance of proximity but requires ongoing negotiations and practices to build solidarity.

Thinking in terms of 'intentional togetherness' allows us to look at sharing as more than individual transactions of mutual exchange to 'we' thinking that has more ethical and purposeful intent. Practices of ritual, shared work, learning, being and doing as a group requiring behavioural changes, facilitation, affiliation-building such as establishing mutual belief, group goals and joint action enable 'we-intentions' to shape communities.[67] In a similar vein, Ostrom's theory of the Commons articulates how commons are built successfully around factors including: clear boundaries; rules and local conditions; collective choice arrangements; monitoring and graduated sanctions; conflict resolution mechanisms; and minimal recognition of rights to organise.[68]

Practice-based approaches in organisational studies are also helpful for understanding the relations and negotiations between individuals, groups and settings for affecting change.[69] Practices in this context are understood as a combination of sayings, doings and relating(s), which mean they are more than people's actions, but also what they say and think to describe, interpret, explain, orient, and justify the action, as well as relate to each other, their environment and objects in it. Practices are made possible through interdependent practice architectures - bundles of cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements. Organisations change when ideas take hold and are acted upon, which happens through a process of situated dilemmas and decision-making, through struggles, conflicts, encounters and resistance. Individuals in organisations are not simply beholden to institutional practices, narratives and beliefs but are also advocates and carriers of ideas for change, which requires them to foster connections and mobilise resources.

These attempts to develop and understand 'we' thinking draw attention to 'the ongoing, everyday dynamics and power struggles through which social orders are produced, sustained, broken down, extended spatially, and transformed temporally'.[70] All of this work reflects an effort to create frameworks and language that moves away from individualistic, 'I' thinking that underpins the logics of the neoliberal market economy. It operates in the micro-dynamics of social relations, highlighting how economic exchanges are only one form of interaction that humans have with each other and with the world.

These efforts all have a particular focus on exploring everyday practices played out through micro-social relations. For Jarvis, social phenomenology offers a way of examining the micro-social relations and ethical aspects of how we live together and resist neoliberal processes of consumerism and 'growth-mania'; Alacovska and Bissonette highlight how ethics of care are founded on the micro-social; Gibson-Graham propose working with thick description and thin theory (instead of economic strong theory) that includes 'the nuances, affects, multiple codes of meaning, silences, jokes, parodies, and so on, that accompany them... a microscopic gaze can, for example, be turned to the project of appreciating the diversity of economic practices and "rescuing" them from discursive annihilation by mainstream economic thought'.[71]

In the context of creative economies, mainstream economic thought provides 'seductive' and 'deceptive' narratives about creative individuality, entrepreneurship, self-promotion and freedom that 'blinds us to the multiplicity of seemingly 'unimportant', mundane, practical, affective and relational considerations—i.e., of community, kinship and neighbourhood—that underpin creative work'.[72] These 'post-wage' or 'working for free' activities are often viewed as 'delusional and aspirational rather than self-affirming and life-enhancing', a narrative that reinforces the idea that security (and wellbeing) is only achieved through waged (and so economically transactional) labour.[73] The final section moves to look at these hidden aspects and relations in creative work, alongside efforts to organise differently and prefigure alternatives to the precarity and exploitation underpinning the creative economy.

Making alternative economies visible in the creative sectors

Across the cultural, arts, creative and digital sectors, alternatives have always operated around the margins or in their origins.[74] Case studies of alternatives in the broader literature are more common at the community level, whereas creative economies on the other hand primarily operate as a policy construct at the regional, city or national level through clustering initiatives like B+B R+D and programmes in the UK like City of Culture. Despite considerable work highlighting and critiquing the precarity and inequality entrenched in current versions of the neoliberal creative economy, theories and case studies of alternatives are not as easy to find – we see references in passing to how alternatives 'are beginning to emerge'[75] – and due to the mismatch in scale, it is not always straightforward to apply lessons from other contexts.

Examples of alternatives are highly influenced by the ideas discussed in the sections above. There is also much to be learned from existing practices in creative and cultural sectors as well as new experiments with nowtopias. Cultural ecologies research shows how creatives often work across commercial, public and voluntary sectors, motivated by a range of values exceeding the economic; lifestyle creatives have been written about in a derogative manner but also represent a desire for work-life balance, self-fulfilment, meaningful work, and practices outside of conventional economic structures (although this can also rely on income streams originating outside of creative endeavours); artists collectives demonstrate long-standing interests in the commons and cooperative working models.[76]

Research bringing alternative and creative economies together to date has largely focused on overarching analyses, suggesting we need to socialise growth, thinking about making the sector more equal, while questioning the assumption that the creative economy is clean and ecologically benign (with special reference to creative technology), and that the cultural imagination and radical impetus of much creative activity can be foregrounded as a place to find alternatives.[77] There is also a segment of work on cultural policy seeking to include culture as a fourth pillar of sustainable development and emerging work on cultural democracy that reorientate economic drivers towards prosperity, the 'common good' and 'the good life'.[78]

Questions also arise about the capacity of the creative sector to operate within alternatives when it cannot be decoupled from wider growth contexts. Although the creative economy is flagged by the UK government as a growth sector, 'the wider economy on which its success arguably depends is stagnant and non-growing'.[79] We might question how the creative economy can create a form of decoupled growth, where businesses and economies grow but material consumption, ecological damage and natural resource use does not.[80]

There are some key papers that work to bring these ideas into the same space. Common ground exists in the belief that creative sectors offer a space to imagine such alternatives, and examples such as creative cooperatives and cultural commons are, indeed, emerging. Research on cultural and creative co-ops, non-profits, and different kinds of sharing or social economy have also begun to emerge.[81] Others have identified how located artistic communities of different kinds have developed approaches to resilience which are not centred on market principles, and which are attentive to ties, reciprocities and acts of care that 'performatively resist neoliberal tendencies'.[82]

Case studies of alternatives look at the organising principles of autonomous creative communities. Examples include Italian theatres transformed into cultural commons and creative workers cooperatives.[83] These share non-hierarchical (horizontal) decision-making structures. But the papers demonstrate how their success is still subject to external processes including local governance and global markets. For example, cultural worker cooperatives do remove some risk and individualisation through creating environments of care, support and activism. But cooperative members were still subject to the power dynamics of capitalist markets that can put downward pressure on pay rates, demand free work and set impossible deadlines. The coop created additional demands on time like activist activities, which added to existing pressure and vulnerability. However: 'individual cultural workers getting together to start a co-operative that is commonly owned by all of them… is an act of resistance and a refusal to accept that one person's success depends on another's failure'.[84]

Mutuality and care have also been illustrated in a marginal rural community of musicians in Canada through the way that they help each other out, looking after each other's children or lending instruments, and stepping in when competing band members are sick.[85] They also have a sense of responsibility for preserving the cultural traditions of their community, such as singing in the native language and putting on folk festivals, highlighting how they are motivated by non-economic values, that also support their economic activity.

An increasingly significant and inescapable aspect of creative work, as well as alternative movements, is the everyday nature of online practices and networks. In research about the creative sector, this is characterised as unpaid self-promotion which is a form of affective labour and in alternative movements there is scepticism about the extent to which solidarity can truly be achieved across virtual networks and the extent to which they can remain autonomous from the capitalist structures of the internet.[86] A growing body of work declares that ceding online space and new technologies to techno-fix narratives and those that want to further capitalist agendas is 'defeatest at best, dangerous at worst' and provides examples of creatives involved in technological sovereignty initiatives, of regions creatively using technology to build open and equitable alternative currencies, and highlighting the social and technological interdependencies of urban sharing platforms that prefigure more just and sustainable futures.[87] Such technologies can be a lifeline to those with access challenges and have potential to make alternative spaces more inclusive. Creative technologies are a double-edged sword in writing about more equitable futures in the creative sector.

There is a growing body of work that celebrates where alternatives are working (and why they might not be) and explores alternative values and measures of success within creative communities. This begins to do some of the work of making visible alternatives and finding the vocabulary to make alternatives credible and viable as future opportunities and nowtopias to be experimented with currently. This work is dispersed and uses different language and framings. Alacovska reasons that this is because it tends to be empirical by-products of research that has a focus on traditional work and economic framings.[88] It could

usefully be pulled together into a critical mass where comparison across case studies is more easily achieved in order to share lessons and support 'their accessible mainstreaming into the broader social and economic landscape' which remains a challenge.[89]

Bringing together these examples of creative alternative economies highlight how creative workers as 'idealised neoliberal subjects do actively challenge conventional capitalist ideas of what "success" looks like', using their business practices to address social and environmental problems.[90] When we better understand exactly how this is happening, we can make important policy interventions, rethinking 'the kinds of start-up incentives, business support and reward structures available to the creatively self-employed'.[91] We must also, however, be aware of the difference between choice and necessity. The creative policy language of resilience enforces creatives pursue mixed economy practices, mixing waged and unwaged, creative and other forms of labour under the pretences of responsibilisation.[92] The current capitalist system is also the reason for a lot of alternative economic practices undertaken by creatives – barter, self-provisioning, sharing, thrift, downshifting are a matter of survival – and so we should be careful to celebrate the creative sectors as harbingers of future alternative economies because inequalities exist in such strategies.[93]

Recap/How to take this all forwards?

This review has set out some of the main lines of thinking shaping current research on alternatives to the status quo neoliberal capitalist economy, its associated work practices and ways of valuing. It has identified some of the main problems of the current systems – not least its damaging processes of exploitation, precarity, and exclusion in the creative sectors – and demonstrated the ways in which its language is a powerful way of shaping our society and experience through a 'capitalocentric' lens. It considered the dominance of growth in narratives of how the economy remains stable, reduces inequality and raises levels of happiness and health. It busted some of the myths underpinning these narratives, while acknowledging that some forms of growth are helpful, especially in the creative sectors, and we might be better to be 'growth agnostic', decentring growth and understanding growth outside of current capitalist processes.

The review identifies how alternatives are often enacted by autonomous communities and explored the opportunities to scale and influence the 'outside' of such communities, as well as where responsibility lies for influencing and being activists within the wider status quo economic and political systems. It proposed a way that academics and creative organisations can work to support and make visible alternative spaces and ways of doing the economy and work by understanding research as an active construction of knowledge where there is an ethical imperative to celebrate and give space to alternatives, creating new vocabulary and frameworks which does not strengthen the 'strong theory' of the capitalist economy. One way this is happening is in efforts to articulate new forms of 'we' thinking that moves away from individualistic, rationalist values of self-interest and competition associated with capitalism. These include ethics of care, intentional togetherness, and a focus on analysing the micro-social as a way of understanding the way humans' function in a relational way with each other that exceeds (but also interacts with) economic activity.

The final section looked at how these debates are surfacing within work on creative and cultural industries and what examples exist. It proposed that efforts to bring this research together would support our ability to influence and affect change at wider scales, although it was also noted how the creative sectors cannot operate alone in enacting alternatives, given their interdependence with the wider economy and society. While it is recognised that a multi-scale and multi-dimensional approach would be needed to achieve anything like what is envisaged by alternative economies activists and scholars, this also makes the challenge greater to identify where the opportunities for change lie. A starting point is to make the choice to bring 'marginalized, hidden and alternative economic activities to light in order to make them more real and more credible as objects of policy and activism'.[94] But when developing thinking about how to enact alternatives, it might also be dangerous to assume this would look the same everywhere, and it will be important to consider 'what these ideas might mean to people in particular contexts'.[95]

Finally, everything must be laced with realism and pragmatism to work towards something that feels relevant within a contemporary context and avoids a romanticism of harking back that is sometimes associated with some communities and research exploring alternatives. This also includes the impact of technology going forward and how it will impact the economy and work practices; this is explored in the post-work and acceleration literature, sometimes viewed as a fix to current situation, but also attracting critique, and is worth further consideration.

When thinking about how to take forward these ideas, it might be useful to think in terms of which principles or values – and the behaviours that accompany them – would support a more fair, inclusive and sustainable creative economy in the future (see Figure 5). We can ask questions about how we do support work and product development (in the creative sectors) and research (in creative sectors, in universities, and in funded knowledge exchange and R&D programmes that bring them together) that:

- Redistributes wealth, knowledge, opportunity and rights (e.g. through open sourcing and other forms of creative commons, non-hierarchical structures, value creation outside of production growth or IP, community embeddedness, and keeping supply chains local and fair)
- That is carbon neutral and regenerative
- Creates meaningful, socially useful and non-exploitative work for everyone
- Reorientates social relations towards creating commons
- Organises in ways that fosters a sense of interconnectedness, belonging, care and mutual responsibility
- Links to other local economies (e.g. technological sovereignty initiatives like community-owned internet, green banks and investors, alternative currencies, and uses digital and platform economies in positive ways so that they do not become another form of exploitation) . This might better help us build and benefit from the 'alternative milieu' in Bristol and Bath.[96]

Further work on how alternative economies intersect with other movements like environmental and social justice would also support our understanding of micro-relations within Bristol and Bath's alternative milieu and how to link with global movements which support equitable relations with the global South. This will also help us understand the cultural ecology of Bristol and Bath and how creative sectors generate value in the foundational economy and are completely dependent on it in return as part of wider regional development goals.[97]
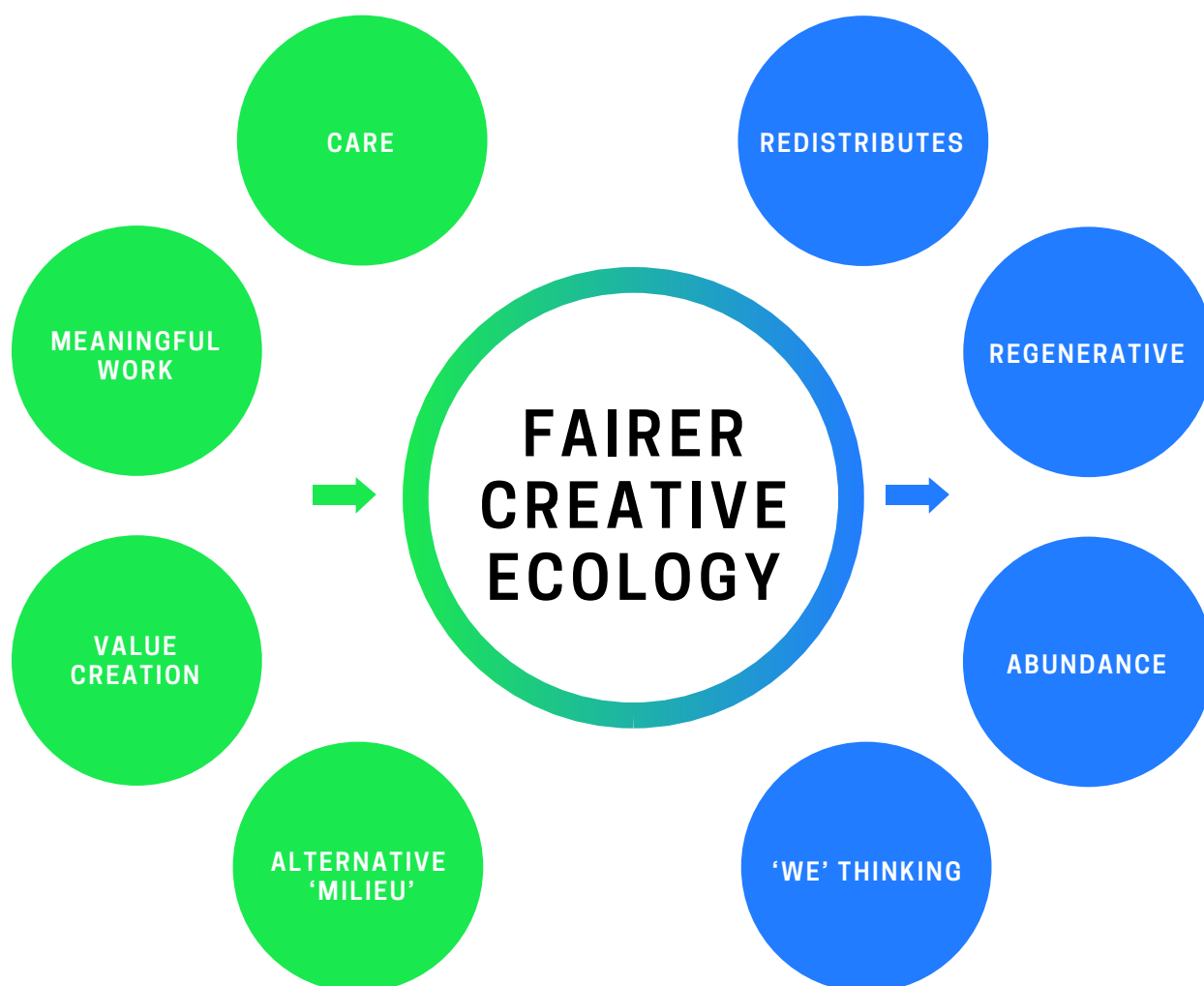
Figure 5. What would a fairer, more inclusive and ecological creative sector look like?

This review will hopefully inspire others to look out for and support more examples of creative communities, businesses and workers doing things differently, and to more carefully think about the relationships that exist within these contexts, also finding new vocabularies and frameworks to strengthen the possibility of scaling and mainstreaming some of these ideas, and as a way to speak back to policy in powerful ways to influence interventions in the creative economy.[98]

Endnotes

[1] bristolbathcreative.org Award number: AH/S002936/1

[2] creativeeconomies.co.uk. This work feeds into an ongoing programme of work with the creative sector and regional decision-makers in the UKRI-funded My World programme (led by Bristol University). See: myworld-creates.com

[3] Thank you to team members Alice Quigley, Amy Mifsud and Melissa Blackburn for their thoughtful feedback.

[4] See Greer (2021) and Moreton (2021)

[5] See the DCMS categories at gov.uk.

[6] See Alacovska (2021), Sandoval (2018) and Singh (2019)

[7] See Genders (2021)

[8] See Gross (2021), Jackson (2017) and Lange et al (2022)

[9] See any number of writings by Gibson-Graham, Massey (2013) for a focus on vocabularies of the economy and Greer (2021) for how this plays out in cultural policy.

[10] See Raworth (2017).

[11] In Chatterton and Pusey (2020) p.31

[12] Liz made this comment in a Hopeful Futures seminar event hosted by B+B R+D . The full discussion can be viewed on the Watershed's Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbP2rruaw4Ot8GXmP904v0zM3hb_LHwlU

[13] See Jackson (2017)

[14] This is elaborated on in much more detail in Jackson (2017).

[15] Jackson (2017) uses current statistics to illustrate the impossibility of decoupling. Lange et al. (2022) describe this type of thinking as ecological modernisation. They argue that despite efforts in the last decade towards efficiency, resource consumption continued to rise, and can even result in a rebound effect, where consumption (and therefore production) increases as financial savings lead to additional purchases.

[16] Mason (2015) heralds IT as having revolutionary potential to reshape work, production and value and an economy based on markets. Borzaga et al. (2019) give a review of the potential of the social and sharing economy to reshape the future of work.

[17] Again, Jackson provides a detailed and rigorous analysis here, but the protests and activism linked to G7 and COP 26 also evidences this to be commonly-held knowledge: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-59165781

[18] See Vergara-Camus (2019)

[19] Chatterton & Pusey (2020) p.32

[20] Chatterton and Pusey (2020) describe 'socially useful forms of production' as distinct from the commodification processes of capitalist production, and as including 'reciprocity, barter markets, and cooperative organisational forms, as well as complementary currencies and household and community-based activities' p.32. Broader conceptions of socially useful work might still involve an economic exchange but would have social and environmental goals above profit-driven goals and would reconnect the worker to others and to their environment. Singh (2019) suggests that ecological restoration work is a potential venue for human labour beyond alienated wage labour.

[21] Gibson Graham (2014)

[22] See Massey (2013). This essay was published as part of After Neoliberalism: The Kilburn Manifesto, published in Soundings, a journal for the new left, with editors Stuart Hall,

Massey and Michael Rustin – all prominent figures in cultural thinking. The publication critiqued the new global and political order of the mega rich elites of finance capitalism and resultant widening inequality. While acknowledging that old forms of welfare state have not worked, it claims that the principles of redistribution, egalitarianism, collective provision, democratic accountability and participation, the right to education and healthcare remain valid and must be at the heart of any alternative; it is a question of finding new ways in which they can be institutionalised and expressed.

[23] Although debt is actually the norm in neoliberal capitalist economies it is also viewed as a bad thing when it is useful to frame it in that way, for example, in the justification of austerity policies. In contrast, Rasillo (2020) discusses how in alternative economies (such as local currencies) social debt is viewed as positive because you are generating (alternative modes of) consumption.

[24] This is best demonstrated in conceptualisations of homo economicus.

[25] Gibson-Graham (1996)

[26] Gibson-Graham (2014). As academics, underlying their diverse economies approach is an embracing of the performative aspect to knowledge. Understanding academics as active creators of knowledge instils a new kind of responsibility on the types of knowledge being produced, creating an ethical imperative in the question of: What kind of world do we want to participate in building? They ask: 'What if we were to accept that the goal of theory is not to extend knowledge by confirming what we already know, that the world is a place of domination and oppression? What if we asked theory instead to help us see openings, to provide a space of freedom and possibility?' (2014, p.7). They have reached out from academia to community contexts to create a network of researchers and activities seeking to celebrate and explore what works and what does not in a multitude of global examples of alternative economic practices. Increasingly this work considers the more-than-human aspects, more fully encompassed by community economies: communityeconomies.org .

[27] Jonathon Gross discussed this, as part of a wider discussion to historicise and understand the success of GDP as an indicator of prosperity, in his presentation for a seminar series called Pathways Beyond Economic Growth in October 2020. See pathwaysbeyondeconomicgrowth.wordpress.com.

[28] Raworth (2017)

[29] Raworth (2017), Vergara-Camus (2019), Jones (2019).

[30] Zaimakis (2018) p.98

[31] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/19/extinction-rebellion-white-faces-diversity
https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/extinction-rebellion-were-activists-mostly-middle-class-southerners-qb6n5j0d8

[32] Gearey and Ravenscroft (2019)

[33] Gearey and Ravenscroft (2019) points out that emphasising the young, precarious, often digitally enabled nowtopias of sharing and platform economies – as archetypical agents of counterculture – risks missing the 'plethora of ordinary, pedestrian, unrecognized alternative economic practices burgeoning in unrecognized corners… pragmatic responses to generating environmentally sensitive ways of being which exist

in the everyday' p.453.

34 Gibson-Graham (2008) suggest that 'rather than treating the local as naturally inward-looking and parochial, we might engage in ethical projects of extending the local imagination to what is outside' p.10. Rasillo (2020) recognises our tendency to romanticise or condemn alternatives as a form of primitivism. In her memoir of her time working in the digital start-up boom in San Francisco, Anna Wiener (2020), discusses the shift that happened in tech workers as they became increasingly disengaged from their work and began to seek more meaningful, social, and hands-on experiences, inspired by socialist thinking but almost entirely co-opted by tech conglomerates or reconfigured through the start-up way of seeing the world so that it transformed into apps. 'Back to the land' fantasies were apparently prevalent among tech workers at the height of the boom.

35 Chatterton and Pusey (2020)

36 Jeffrey and Dyson (2021)

37 Peck & Tickell (2002) p. 386 in Santala and McGuirk (2022).

38 This is well outlined in Greer (2021) who claims that resilience thinking's appeal to complexity displaces accountability and politics and anticipates and accepts the routine instability of the market: 'resilience means culture workers must always be preparing for the next unavoidable crash... Through such rhetoric, the structuring of the arts and culture sector on market principles shifts from being understood as the outcome of historically and culturally located policy choices to become an immutable background feature of existence, the consequences of which we can only manage rather than attempt to change. Such fatalism works to pre-emptively foreclose the possibilities of political action and neutralise critical enquiry into the consequences of neoliberal approaches to financial regulation and crisis response'. P.231

39 Zanoni (2020)

40 Demaria et al. (2019)

41 Zoellick, J.C. & Bisht, A. (2018)

42 Jeffrey and Dyson (2021).

43 See Jeffrey and Dyson (2021), Santala and McGuirk (2022) and Zanoni (2020)

44 Jeffrey and Dyson (2021), Zaimakis (2018), Zanoni (2020)

45 Zanoni (2020)

46 Gibson-Graham (2014)

47 Greer (2021) and Alexander (2018) p. 34 in Greer (2021) p.233

48 Gibson (2015) p.476, Moreton (2021)

49 See the wide range of literature on cultural value.

50 "Hermeneutics of trust" (Ricoeur1977), "critical vulnerability", "critical affectivities" and "affirmative critique" are identified as analyses more open to alternatives in Alacovska & Bissonnette (2021) p.137.

51 Gross (2021)

52 Gibson-Graham (2008) point out that academics 'are trained to be discerning, detached and critical so that we can penetrate the veil of common understanding and expose the root causes and bottom lines that govern the phenomenal world. This academic stance means that most theorizing is tinged with scepticism and negativity, not a particularly

nurturing environment for hopeful, inchoate experiments.' p.6

[53] Gibson-Graham 2014 p.151

[54] Gibson-Graham 2008

[55] See Banks (2006) and (2017).

[56] Alacovska and Bissonette 2021 p. 137 citing Sayer 2000

[57] Greer (2021)

[58] Alacovska and Bissonette (2021) p. 138

[59] Alacovska and Bissonette (2021). The ethics of care approach originated in feminist and gender studies to account for the considerable domestic labour primarily carried out by women that is not accounted for in economic models.

[60] Alacovska and Bissonette (2021) p. 138

[61] Gibson-Graham et al (2016) p.6

[62] Interest in green (parks, woodland, countryside etc.) and blue (coast, rivers, canals etc.) space has increased since the pandemic, especially in relation to wellbeing and health benefits. See Dobson (2021).

[63] Gibson-Graham (2008) p. 623.

[64] Jarvis (2017) also distinguishes between simultaneous and sequential sharing. An example of simultaneous sharing would be open access to a public park (enjoyment is dependent on being in the park there and then), whereas goods that are recycled between one use/person and another demonstrate sequential sharing. The paper is critical of virtual sharing platforms, suggesting they do not reduce material consumption.

[65] Jarvis (2017)

[66] The other two modes of togetherness are 'Living togetherness' which is about proximity and 'close-knit' relations that might be described as 'neighbourliness' yet this is a superficial and fragile form of togetherness, more often only requiring that 'people desire the impression of togetherness' (Frei, 1998: 177 in Jarvis 2017 p. 267). 'Thrown togetherness' refers to the way that people move around from place to place and bump up against each other in fleeting encounters and have to rub along with strangers, where it is necessary to be convivial and perform a type of civic solidarity.

[67] Jarvis (2017).

[68] Ostrom (1990/2012) p. 90, as outlined in Borchi (2018)

[69] Krueger et al (2018); Brossman and Islar (2020)

[70] Turker and Murphy (2021) p.52

[71] Gibson-Graham (2014) pp.148-149

[72] Alacovska and Bissonnette (2021) p.136, drawing on Banks (2006).

[73] Alacovska (2021) p.4

[74] For example, tech start-ups in San Francisco often had origins centred around horizontal organisational structures and egalitarian principles.

[75] Banks (2018) p.371

[76] See Holden (2015) on ecological approaches to cultural work. Herslund (2012) provides a review of creative lifestyle businesses. Artist collectives are not new but they have gained traction again in times of neoliberal capitalism and austerity. Cooperating together for collective gain, collectives often share space and may be politically motivated, also operating a non-hierarchical decision-making structure. Hujatnika and Zainsjah (2020)

suggest that there are two types of artistic collectivism of the old and new order. The former comes together to support individual artist production. The second seeks to intervene in the formation of a local art world and its structures, and engages in regular public art activities. Collectives often set up artist run spaces or co-operatives and 'pay more attention to the relational dimension and to the satisfaction of members,' having a focus on social goals and catering to local communities rather than using the collective to strengthen their position with the commercial art world (Blessi et al 2011 p.148).

[77] Banks (2018)

[78] Duxbury, Kangas, and De Beukelaer (2017) p. 224 outline four ways that cultural policy can contribute to sustainable development as a fourth pillar alongside economic, social and environmental goals: protecting indigenous cultures and cultural practices; greening cultural organisations; using arts to raise awareness of environmental issues; by fostering global ecological citizenship. Sustainable development is a problematic term for many advocates of alternatives because it arguably retains economic growth as central to development rather than decentring it. See Wilson et al (2020) on rethinking growth in the creative economy and Barker (2019) on the democratic potential of cultural development.

[79] Banks (2018) p.369

[80] Oakley and Ward (2018)

[81] See Alacovska (2021), Alacovska and Bissonette (2021), Banks (2018), Borchi (2018), and Sandoval (2017).

[82] Greer (2021) p.235

[83] Borchi's (2018) paper explores the notion of cultural commons via two Italian theatres that were occupied by groups of artists. The groups operated with non-hierarchical (horizontal) decision making structures such as theme-based round tables, a general council, and co-written statutes. Ultimately one was successful and one was not based on the buy in of the local council.

[84] Sandoval (2018) p.126

[85] Alacovska and Bissonette 2021

[86] Alacovska (2021) and Singh (2019) discuss affective labour. Ossewaarde and Reijers (2017) describe the digital commons as an illusion.

[87] See Lynch (2019), Rasillo (2020) p.182, Santala and McGuirk (2022)

[88] Alacovska (2021)

[89] Luckman (2018) p.324. Gibson-Graham have created a bibliography of community economies as a similar endeavour: https://www.communityeconomies.org/

[90] Luckman (2018) p.313

[91] Luckman (2018) p.324

[92] Greer (2021)

[93] Alacovska (2021). Singh (2019) also points out the difference between voluntary frugality and frugality as a social condition.

[94] Gibson Graham (2008) p.1

[95] Oakley & Ward (2018) p.5

[96] Longhurst (2013) in Rasillo (2020)

[97] Lange et al (2022). Also see: https://foundationaleconomy.com/

[98] In the Creative Economies Lab, UWE, this review will feed into ongoing work with creative businesses and regional decision-makers, as well as third sector and environmental groups, to continue exploring how we can support and foster a fair, inclusive and sustainable creative sector. Through the My World Programme we will be looking at alternative metrics to evidence success and value in the creative sectors in the Bristol and Bath region, as well as different ways to visualise and communicate alternatives to increase awareness of, capacity for, and perceptions of the achievability of alternatives. See: https://myworld-creates.com/

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