

## *The Story and the Data*

### *Using Narrative Policy Framework to Analyze Creative Economy Reports*

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**ABSTRACT:** Creative economies are touted as engines for economic prosperity and social good in cities. The wide applicability and inclusive definition of what counts in creative economies means that conceptual definitions are not universal. Studies on the promise of the creative economy have emerged, however, analyses of these reports and their policy value are scarce. We explore five creative economy reports, applying the Narrative Policy Framework, a novel analytic lens for comparing policy documents according to “setting,” “characters,” “plot,” and “moral of the story.” Key contributions of this research center the ways that reports use rhetorical devices and empirical data to support claims and recommendations, forwarding policy learning and adaptation as tools for building and sustaining creative city branding. **KEYWORDS:** Economic development, creative enterprise, Narrative Policy Framework, creative economy, municipal cultural planning, urban policy. **DOI:** doi.org/artivate.10.2.146

## **Introduction**

The creative economy has become an engine for economic prosperity and social good in urban areas. A combination of research, policy, and practice surrounding cultural industries, city branding, cultural tourism, and the creative class has focused attention on the creative economy, making the concept a flexible tool for municipal policymakers to foster city building. One often-cited aspect of the creative economy is its reliance on entrepreneurship as a tool for innovation and economic development, and cities themselves are entrepreneurial in their collective effort

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to compete for development resources, attract jobs, and attract people. Municipal goals, like population growth and expanded economic prospects, put cities in competition with one another on local, national, and global scales, and they encourage entrepreneurial action (e.g., identifying and capitalizing on opportunity, capturing an audience, and building a recognizable brand identity).

Many cities and consulting entities have produced reports on the power and promise of the creative economy in terms of defining the scope of a local creative economy, measuring its economic output, creating a picture of the labor force, and contextualizing the value of artistic creativity. Creative economy reports, on a national or international stage, are used to make the case that a city is an economic engine, that the city welcomes significant international relationships and partnerships, or that the city is a place that fosters entrepreneurship and innovation. These reports are documents produced by a city to highlight the scope of the creative sector, and they are written by in-house municipal actors, for-profit companies, nonprofit research organizations, or academic scholars. The creative sector landscape includes a wide variety of actors and entities, including nonprofit arts and culture institutions, creative economy businesses, microenterprises and cultural producers, and numerous demand-side members of the vast and multifaceted field known as the creative economy. The reports discussed here focus on the producers of creative and cultural goods and services in the five cities under study and include both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors.

Despite the proliferation of creative economy reports, as well as scholarly and policy attention on the value and challenges of urban creative economic development strategies, there have been few attempts to analyze these reports and their inherent policy value. Cities with similar goals, including the goal of growing and sustaining the creative economy, might differ greatly in terms of their size, population, national legal context, or history, making it unwieldy to directly compare the *a priori* resources, ideologies, and other factors that might make them set and attempt to meet similar benchmarks. How then can we compare the motivations, justifications, and support for policy aims in disparate contexts? We seek to fill this gap by presenting a novel policy analytic framework, the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), to allow for such analysis.

The NPF, a recently developed policy theory, is employed to examine policy processes through the use of a structure that looks at the various components as well as the actors involved in a given case. We have selected this theory to analyze creative city reports produced in five cities in order to gain an understanding of the ways that NPF may be applied to the creative cities' contexts. While cultural policy tools may be widely disparate worldwide, looking at the components of these reports through the lens of NPF offers a new way to examine how cities position the creative economy, its producers, and its outputs in a new light. Policymakers, policy entrepreneurs, urban planners, creative economy businesses, and nonprofits arts managers all could benefit from a more nuanced analysis of the ways that the reports could be of benefit when making strategic decisions, positioning NPF as a potentially valuable tool for scholars and practitioners.

In order to apply this framework to a test case, we set out in analyzing the ways that creative

economy reports use evidence to make claims and recommendations. In short, we ask: How do creative economy reports construct an image of entrepreneurship in the arts and creative industries as an engine for economic development? This article examines five creative economy reports from cities in three continents (Austin, Adelaide, Chicago, London, and New York) that were published between 2012 and 2015. Despite these cities' diverse profiles of geographic, population, and national legal and policy systems, we show how they make and support claims about the value of the creative economy by applying the NPF to the cities' creative economy reports.

Each of these reports focuses on issues that have been examined by scholars across a variety of disciplines, including economic development, management and entrepreneurship, social capital, cultural economics, and policy development and implementation. A city may describe ways that they foster temporary arts events such as festivals and fairs, encourage the clustering of creative industries, and value the presence of members of the creative class—all of which can contribute both to the economic prosperity and the vitality of life in urban areas (Jackson et al., 2006). However, little analysis has considered the content and intended outcomes of these reports, specifically in light of understanding their cultural policy implications. The full scope of such reports is yet unknown, and we introduce these reports as an important tool for study in cultural policy and arts entrepreneurial research, particularly in the area of urban municipal entrepreneurship.

Key contributions of this article are introducing Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) for an initial analysis of city creative economy reports. Cities are inherently entrepreneurial and compete among one another at local, national, and global scales for notoriety, resources, and populations. Understanding how cities present the story and the data that represent their creative economies toward strategic ends will contribute to evaluating the structural underpinnings of the ways that cities are acting to mobilize their reputations, their resources, and their residents. These efforts are intended to forward the brand image of a municipality as a creative entrepreneurial locale.

## Theoretical Background

In 1950 less than one-third of the world's population was living in urban areas, in 2014 it had risen to more than fifty percent, and if the trend continues, in 2050 two-thirds of the world's population is projected to live in cities (United Nations, 2014). The study of the creative economy in urban areas is interdisciplinary and has been taken up by many academics, resulting in a plethora of studies on the so-called, 'creative city (Florida, 2002a, 2002b; Grodach, 2011; Markusen, 2006; Mulcahy, 2006; Throsby, 2001; Zukin, 2008). Cities may focus on the value that cultural amenities can provide, which can include anchor cultural institutions, heritage sites, arts districts, and other opportunities focused on the demand side of urban life (Nicodemus, 2013). This is distinct from the creative industries wherein policymakers wish to foster economic strength from options such as attracting creative workers, encouraging business development, and executing creative economy clusters including design districts and

buildings targeted to cultural entrepreneurs or even large-scale entities like recording studios or film production facilities (Goldberg-Miller et al., 2020).

Planning for the attraction and retention of the creative class plays a pivotal role in contemporary post-industrial economic revitalization plans and policymaking (Caust, 2003; Scott & Storper, 2015; Mitra, 2014). The public views artists in their communities as individuals who are working to make money but also as community assets who contribute to problem-solving, as collaborators, and as voices promoting community causes (Novak-Leonard and Skaggs, 2017). In attracting creatives, a city's revitalization strategy through arts and culture should not only focus on formal cultural offerings, but also on the types of informal arts and cultural opportunities which occur within immersive creative districts (Pappalepore et al., 2014; Richards & Raymond 2000). Instituting successful policy change by driving arts and cultural institutions requires the successful integration both of hard and soft factors (Sirkin et al., 2005) to promote sustainable creative districts (Evans, 2003) that feel "authentic" to creatives to sustain the "cool factor" of the city (Greenwald, 2012).

There are continuous debates about how creative city policies lead to sustainable urban revitalization and at the same time serve to address demand-side preferences of the art and culture consumers (Goldberg-Miller, 2018; Yeoman, 2017; Zimmerman, 2008). A feeling of co-creation and immersion may instill a sense of connection towards artists and cultural institutions, and this affinity may also be fostered by temporal urban art offerings (Choi & Burnes, 2013; Lee et al., 2011; Polo, 2015). However, creative city policies must recognize the local milieu and the amenities desired by creatives within a specific city (Beamish et al., 2003; Duxbury et al., 2016; Goodsell, 2013; Greenwald, 2012). Without such perspectives, creative economic policies may become a normative attempt to implement copy-and-paste strategies without incorporating the differentiation of the local creative class (Ratiu, 2013). Localized culture can drive and sustain needed urban development for creative revitalization (Soini & Birkeland, 2014). The sustainability of creative economic policies must strike a balance between two opposing forces: that of growth strategies, which can lead to untenable land speculation, and communal, identity-driven planning efforts, which can inhibit rapid change needed for the creative economy (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013). The power of contextually specific strategies and policies is that they can address local needs and mobilize local strengths.

### Regional Specificity in Creative Economies

Worldwide interest in the study and utilization of the creative economy has intensified (Wyszomirski, 2004). European studies focus on what is known as the "Cultural and Creative Industries" (CCIs), developed and approved by the European Union (KEA, 2006) and brought into the economic realm by the five principal UN organizations: UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, WIPO, and ITC (dos Santos Duisenberg, 2010). They found direct links between the creative economy and economic development, including GDP, growth and employment, and indirect links between growth and the fields of creativity and innovation, such as connections with the technology sector and regional development. Research has confirmed the very high rates of self-

employment and the predominant micro-size (smaller than three persons) of creative enterprises (Arezzo et al., 2009). The recommendation was that a region's strong and attractive cultural assets, including for-profit and nonprofit entities, could become the basis of a viable and economically healthy creative economy. Creative and critical thinking, and the appetite for taking risks and thinking entrepreneurially, may matter as much as technical skills and training (WIPO, 2014). Within CCIs, there is fundamental engagement in innovation: pursuing new untapped markets, developing product innovations, recognizing economic opportunity, or the pursuit of change (Roberts & Woods, 2012). This may lead to fostering creative mindsets in seeking to attract residents, workers, and corporations to specific cities.

This paper examines creative economy reports from cities within the countries of Australia, England, and the United States, all of which could leverage different opportunities toward these goals. In Australia, scholars have focused on exploring the economic power and efficacy of creative clusters (Wood & Dovey, 2014). Recognizing that the synergy among members of the creative class can lead to innovation and vitalization of neighborhoods, research has investigated the confluence of arts and culture with higher education (Bridgstock & Cunningham, 2015). While Australia has made a commitment to the creative economy as an economic development tool in the north of the country, little has been done to actualize these plans (Daniel et al., 2016). These authors assert that Australia suffers from a "relative policy vacuum" and call for action to leverage creative city building tools to harness the power of CCIs.

In England, discourse about the role of the creative economy includes developing an understanding of how workers in this sector impact economic development. Often employed as a policy tool for regenerating decrepit urban centers, the creative industries are viewed as having spillover effects for a city, providing a draw to workers from other sectors who wish to take up cultural amenities (Lee, 2014). The majority of the creative class in England is made up of freelance workers and micro-enterprises, neither of which have been studied sufficiently, making policy development for this facet of the sector a challenge (Mould et al., 2014). This trend may signal an environment of employment precarity for creatives, resulting in a decreased interest in attending educational programs that focus on the arts and culture fields (Comunian et al., 2014). Some studies suggest rethinking the efficacy of cultural policy development and implementation, with the caveat that a more balanced, bespoke set of policy interventions could prove most effective (Pratt 2010).

In the United States, more than ten percent of national GDP belongs to the creative industries, meaning that the segment ranks in size with the country's manufacturing sector (Oxford Economics 2014). To combat a lack of common definitions within the field and uneven quantitative analytical standards for measuring and defining data, Harris et al. (2013) call for a national standard for the analysis of the creative economy. The hardline delineation between the for-profit creative industries and the nonprofit sector in the United States has resulted in efforts to aggregate the two in order to produce data that reflects the economic strength of these combined areas (Americans for the Arts, 2017). While there may be a differentiation between the goals and structure of US economic development in general and the value of the cultural economy specifically, these can be seen as complimentary areas (Hudson, 2008; Wyszomirski

## Measuring and Reporting on the Creative Economy

Despite differences in national goals, definitions, and strategies toward creative economy development, there are significant efforts to systematize reporting on the impact of creative economies in cities. The regional economic contribution of the creative sector generally is measured by totaling the revenue of larger arts organizations, associated expenditures by patrons, and multiplier effects (Americans for the Arts, 2017; Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). This may underestimate the contributions of artists to a regional economy due to high rates of self-employment and direct export activity since artists' work enhances the design, production, and marketing of products and services in other sectors and because artists induce innovation on the part of suppliers (Markusen & Schrock, 2006). Florida points to the interaction between the economic processes and the cultural characteristics of a city (2002a; 2002b), whereby the cultural capital accumulated by the urban creative class initiates new, innovative, and meaningful forms.

The relationship between the creative sector and urban growth has been criticized, partly because of the inadequate concepts, definitions, and data used (Markusen, 2006). The spatial distribution of creatives seems to be more a function of semi-autonomous personal migration decisions, local nurturing of artists in dedicated spaces and organizations, and the locus of artist-employing firms. Pratt (2008) advocates taking a policy perspective that aggregates the role of the creative industries in the areas of production, consumption, and service provision, as this will provide a more balanced perspective on the role of cultural outputs in urban areas.

Creative economy reports are used to market an urban area to the world. Urban advocates, often called *policy boosters*, take up ideas representative of their city as solutions to urban challenges (McCann, 2013). They tout their municipality as the great hope for mastering these conundrums and, in so doing, compete with others for attention (Peck, 2011; Peck, 2012). Positioning one's city as creative can make a difference in realizing the image policy boosters are hoping to attain (Goldberg-Miller, 2017). Customized strategies are shared globally via technology and worldwide communication (Kingdon, 2011). This creative economy rationale incorporates economic growth as a goal for cities, putting forward the tool of arts and culture, as well as innovation, as a solution to the challenges of attracting residents, tourists, and businesses, resulting in a stronger tax base.

Studies and reports on creative economy interventions have been commissioned by foundations, municipal governments, and private entities that have called upon renowned researchers, prominent think tanks, and state and private-sector partners to support structures for studies and reports on the creative economy. The involvement of the state in authoring creative economy reports, which occurs often in Europe and Australia, would appear to be because of the state's strong role in city planning, strategic development, and the existence of a welfare state and/or social market economy (Jones & Nfa, 2002). Countries with a more liberal market-oriented profile, including the United States, draw upon private sector partners, like

consulting firms and think tanks, that view the investigation of best practices and improvement of the quality of life for citizens as a key component of their leadership role to analyze and understand a city's sectors.

The five reports analyzed here examine successes and challenges in other cities, then they go on to cover a combination of images and identities from the arts and cultural field, which are combined with socio-economic indicators such as job creation and work force, production and trade figures, financial indicators (including turnover), and investment indicators. These elements are positioned within a geographical background on a neighborhood, municipal, or regional level. The reports assess authentic creative assets—including festivals and fairs, creative and cultural districts, the cultural built environment, branding initiatives, anchor cultural institutions, and artists' live/work environments—by looking at the cultural ecosystem within their urban setting (Goldberg-Miller, 2017). They are able to evaluate hard factors, including the cultural built environment as well as soft factors, such as the access to entertainment and the arts amenities that bolster the cool factor of a city (Goldberg-Miller & Heimlich, 2016). One of the results of this process can be the unification of the private, public, and non-profit thought leaders in the city by providing them with the common goal of incorporating creativity and innovation as a tool for city building.

## Methods

### The Narrative Policy Framework

The Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) asserts that policy narratives contain strategies embedded within the discourse, designed to influence the policy beliefs of targeted advocacy coalitions. This theory is based upon long-established policy theory called Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), which was formulated to deal with “wicked problems” such as extreme poverty, contested land use, or pollution issues in which there are multiple actors, goal conflicts, or technical disputes (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). The assumptions in ACF include the premise that policymaking occurs in a subsystem among policy specialists (Sabatier et al., 1999). ACF describes the ways that beliefs can be impacted and changed through policy-oriented learning, which are influenced by these policy specialists. ACF uses testable theory as a core concept.

Utilizing the powerful structure of the ACF as its base, NPF serves to focus attention on another aspect of policymaking and policy take-up (Jones & McBeth, 2010). NPF advocates integrating the narrative of the policy process into an investigation that has analytic power (Shanahan et al., 2011). Proponents of NPF acknowledge that “subjective and often ‘nonrational’ elements are the keystones to understanding public policy,” pointing to narratives as essential building blocks for the comprehension of public policy (Shanahan et al., 2011, p. 538). While this framework has gained wide attention in the last decade, it has rarely been employed in analyzing cultural policy. A powerful tool in examining how narratives influence the process of policymaking (Shanahan et al., 2018), our research focuses on creative economy

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reports as secondary, non-experimental sources of data.

We use the reports' data figures and tables, in addition to the narrative portions of the documents, to gain a wider perspective on the objects of study. We seek to identify and analyze such subjective aspects of creative economy reports through a coding process with the intent of showing how rhetorical structures and empirical evidence are used to link claims in creative industry policy documents. While the results of this study are not generalizable to all cultural policy or all creative economy reports, the analysis provides a roadmap for further study of the efficacy and applicability of NPF to the analysis of cultural policy documents, particularly across documents that come from contexts that are difficult to compare on the basis of their geographic region, legislative and policy framework, population, or economic size. As scholars seek to employ emergent theories and frameworks, they may use the NPF as a tool towards gaining a deeper understanding of creative economy reporting, an often-utilized municipal cultural policy intervention.

### Data & Analytic Strategy

We use the NPF lens to structure a qualitative coding framework for creative economy reports. In our analysis, we attend to the kinds of data that are used in report narratives and to the core concepts that narratives structure within the reports. After we present these findings, we will discuss how the data, core concepts, and narratives point toward particular policy recommendations.

We developed a coding scheme to count and detail the entrepreneurial narratives and use of data that reports employ in order to tout their resources and opportunities as creative cities. We provide an appendix for a full list of codes and operationalization or source of information needed for coding process. The specific codes for this analysis were generated to fit the NPF more generally and to code for aspects of creative economy reports specifically. There were two distinct areas that we coded for in the reports. First, we coded for characteristics of "the story," that is, narrative elements that tell the story of the creative economy in line with the NPF. These are measured in four ways: setting, characters (with subsections for a narrative's hero and villain), plot, and the outcomes or moral (with a subsection for specific policy recommendations).

Second, the remaining focus of the coding scheme is on the data. Data-focused codes seek to identify the types of empirical data used as evidence to promote a city's creative economy. We measure the data of reports using the following codes: proportion of report pages dedicated to a data appendix, number of tables, number of figures, number of interview quotes (not quoted material from other reports, articles, or news sources), references to other cities, and references to other creative economy reports.

In order to assure empirical rigor in applying the NPF to creative economy reports, both authors coded each report. In collaborative coding projects such as this one, it is imperative to come to high levels of agreement on what evidence must be present to support coding decisions. Application of narrative codes requires strong textual evidence, so researchers must come to a



consensus by identifying supporting quotes direct from the text of reports in order to justify coding decisions. Based on this procedure, we came to consensus on each measure through two rounds of reconciliation. However, we dropped two codes from the analysis based on what we believe to be unclear definitions of codes (“social good” and “dark sides” of creative economies). Though these topics are of interest to the authors, we did not find reliable textual evidence to support their inclusion as a focal area of analysis in these creative economy reports.

We coded and analyzed five studies of the urban creative economy: *The Economic Impact of the Creative Sector*, Austin, Texas, USA (2012); *Measuring Chicago’s (Artistically) Creative Economy*, Chicago, Illinois, USA (2014); *Creative City Index Adelaide*, Adelaide, Australia (2014); *Creative New York*, New York, New York, USA (2015); and *The Creative Industries in London*, London, England (October 2015). These were selected based upon their similar publication dates as well as their urban foci and global geographic variation. The municipal contexts of each report differ greatly; the cities differ in terms of their population, histories, national context and legal structures, and in the size and character of their creative economies. Despite the differences in the five cities, their diversity means that some types of policy analysis would not be useful as a comparative analytic tool. However, through the framework we establish in this paper, we show that NPF can be fruitfully applied to policy documents, such as creative economy reports, as a way to understand how arguments are made and supported by evidence toward stated goals.

## Findings

Each of the five creative economy reports makes claims about the assets and needs of the city, supporting their claims with evidence in narrative form and/or with data about their city. At times they refer to other cities’ creative assets through narration and comparative quantitative data as a strategy for telling their own story. Both the story and the data are aimed at identifying policy recommendations and for promoting the promise of the city’s creative economy. Just as a good story relies on narrative tools to construct the story, so too do these reports. While our coding suggests that some rely primarily on narrative elements to point to the policy recommendations and the moral of the story, coding also reveals that other reports rely more heavily on data to serve as the signpost toward the moral and recommended outcomes. While we do not address the value, either positive or negative, of using narrative rhetoric or data-driven evidence in reports, we show that these two types of evidence are each mobilized toward describing and making arguments about the creative economy, allowing for comparison between cities’ strategic use of each type of evidence in their reports.

### The Story

Our first coding category for rhetorical devices is the setting, which we defined as the framing issue that the city identifies as the most salient factor for instigating the report. Each of the five reports we analyzed established the setting of the story within the first five pages of the report.

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Each, perhaps unsurprisingly, set their story within the context of their city’s creative economy. However, the specific framing of the creative economy varied by city, with two emergent themes: the promise of the creative economy and measuring the creative economy.

In Austin’s report, the setting is the booming creative sector, with the report saying, “The role of the creative sector in Austin’s economy has grown substantially, accounting in 2010 for just over \$4.35 billion in economic activity (about one-third more than the revised baseline figure for 2005), over \$71 million in City tax revenues, and almost 49,000 jobs” (TXP, 2012, p.1). New York’s setting was similar to Austin’s, as its focus was on the for-profit and non-profit creative industries and those creative workers who are employed outside of the creative industries. London’s setting honed in on its promise and position as a global cultural city, saying, “It is not just famous for its museums, galleries, heritage and monuments but also for the dynamism and diversity of its commercial creative industries: the artists, businesses, entrepreneurs, writers, venue owners, festival organisers and retailers who make the city such an economically successful and exciting place to live” (Togni, 2015, p. 2).

The reports from Adelaide and Chicago focused on issues of measurement, with Adelaide framing their report around the city’s initiative to take the “creative pulse” of the city through a study of the city in comparison to its global peer cities, and Chicago’s work to “acknowledge the nuances in the evolving theoretical issues around measuring the creative economy generally, while making a best pragmatic attempt to identify reliable, replicable indicators that can inform an understanding of, and conversations about, Chicago’s creative economy more specifically” (Novak-Leonard, 2014, p. 4).

Next, we attended to the characters of the report. Within this category, we narrowed the focus to heroes and villains as rhetorical narrative strategies (table 1). Note that we segment the analyzed data into tables 1–3 to present The Story, The Data, and The Reception (respectively) as exemplars for how to analyze documents according to the NPF. Future uses of this framework may find it more useful to present all analyses in one table for ease of comparing across policy document cases.

**Table 1.** The Story–Heroes and Villains

City	Austin	Adelaide	Chicago	London	New York
<b>Hero</b>	Creative Workforce	City’s Willingness to Adapt	Creative Workforce	Creative Workforce	Creative Workforce
<b>Villain</b>	Paradox of city market growth and lagging job growth	Geographic isolation	Ambiguity in defining and measuring the creative workforce	Proximity to Europe, the most competitive global tourism market	Rising rents and shortage of space push out creatives

Within the NPF, characters do not have to be human actors, rather coding for this theme

requires researchers to identify forces, people, or situations that serve as assets or problems within the city's goal to foster a vibrant creative economy. Four of the cities share the same narrative hero: the creative workforce. In Austin, Chicago, London, and New York, reports identify the cities' greatest strengths as their creatives, artists, and employers. Austin's report boasts the promise of their city's creative workers, "Austin's future continues to depend on a highly capable workforce, innovation, and entrepreneurship, clusters in knowledge industries, the presence of a world-class research university and other institutions of higher learning, and strong community institutions. This mix of assets prompted *The Atlantic* to recently rank the Austin area second among US regions on its index of 'well-being,' third in opportunities for recent college graduates, and eighth 'most resilient' city (TXP, 2012, p. 2). Other reports compare their proportion of creative workers to other cities (Chicago, New York) and tout the relatively high wages of creative industry workers in their cities (London). Adelaide stands apart from the other four reports in this regard. The report identifies Adelaide's willingness to examine itself and undergo the process of comparison to other cities. Heroes, it seems, are a key rhetorical device for positioning and promoting a city as a place that is equipped to meet the challenges of creating and maintaining a creative economy.

In opposition to the reports' heroes are their narrative villains, those challenges against which the reports will ultimately pose policy recommendations or outcomes. While the hero in the majority of these five reports was the same (the city's creative workforce), each of the cities reported a different villain. Austin's villain is the paradox of city market growth and lagging job growth in the creative sector. Despite high-visibility cultural and creative events like SXSW and Austin's live music industry, "job growth remains below the historic trend, and many of the new jobs created recently are relatively low-paying. As a result, economic development continues to be a high priority" (TXP, 2012, p. 2). New York's villain is similar to Austin's as rising rents and shortage of space negatively impact the creative workforce despite continued economic growth. Adelaide's villain is its geographic isolation, which the report identifies as contributing to an "insufficient critical mass and scaling up will inevitably remain a problem. The small population and vast area that South Australia covers means resources are always stretched and infrastructure costs take up a greater proportion of expenditures. Being isolated means people are more likely to leave than to come and so the city feels less like a global hub" (Landry et al., 2014, p. 5). London's villain is the opposite of Adelaide's. Its biggest villain is mainland Europe, which the report identifies as the most competitive tourism market in the world. Chicago's villain is ambiguity and a lack of cohesive definitions of the creative workforce, and the report forwards measurement problems as an issue for galvanizing and supporting the creative economy. The comparison of similar heroes and disparate villains within these reports shows a strength of the NPF for analyzing policy documents, showing how different villains or problems are approached given the particular settings and heroes that inhabit a city.

Once the setting and characters were identified, we coded for the plot. Put simply, this category is meant to identify what happened in the report. Each report focused on the city's potential for developing or maintaining the creative economy. Thematically, we coded 100% of the reports as focusing on both entrepreneurship (through narrative text describing

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entrepreneurial action in the city's creative sector or through providing measurement strategies for collecting data on entrepreneurial workers in the creative sector) and on economic development. Austin's plot is an elaboration of the city's creative sector growth. The plot of Adelaide's report is in the city's results when compared to other peer cities; the city was rated as "good" and is noted to be "shifting positively" with an "awareness of the need to adapt to changing conditions" (Landry et al., 2014, p. 3). The plots of Chicago and London's reports both center the data and presentation of quantitative facts as the key happening in their reports. Centering data in the narrative in this way makes it clear that the story *is* the data for these cities. However, while Chicago's report centers the plot of the city in comparison to other peer cities in the United States, London focuses inward, plotting the narrative through repeated variations on maps and tables, reading much like a legal evidentiary brief that details the minutia of the city's creative economy.

Lastly, the plot of New York's report is the story of agglomeration and collaboration. The report positions New York as a creative economy magnet, saying, "The economic impact of all this innovation and growth is enormous. As creative workers multiply and experiment and their companies grow, they spend more on support services and suppliers. This benefits thousands of ancillary businesses across the city, including lumber, equipment, and catering companies, as well as manufacturers producing everything from clothing to furniture. New York's creative industries are also the single biggest draw for tourists, and thus a critical catalyst for growth in the city's hospitality sector" (Forman, 2015, p. 8). In sum, the plot of the reports is the key narrative structure for linking the setting and the characters toward making the case that will ultimately be addressed in the outcomes or moral of the story.

The final rhetorical strategy we coded for was the outcomes or the moral of the story. Following identification of the setting, characters, and plot, the outcome is the call to action which should, in our study, clearly establish the link between entrepreneurial action, artists, and the creative economy to bolster municipal economic development. This section may also outline specific policy recommendations meant to use the city's particular setting and hero to address the issues posed by the villain, thereby addressing the moral of the story. Austin's outcome was to recognize the engine of growth. Their paradox—creative sector growth and the creative labor market not expanding—leads to a message of keeping an eye on what is generating the growth and making sure that it is supported by policy aimed at the creative economy. The report states: "As Austin looks to its economic development future, creativity is a fundamental comparative advantage—the goal is to identify the key investments, policies, and regulatory changes that can support the infrastructure necessary for sustainability and growth" (TXP, 2012, p. 22). For Adelaide, the moral is: if you want to be a creative hub, you have to foster the creative city. If you are isolated, you must know that you need to attract creatives. It is not an issue of intrinsic assets; they have to develop assets through policy learning and adaptation. Chicago's outcome is to see where you are as a city in comparison to other cities using standardized measurements. The moral of London's report is underlining the creative competitiveness by casting it as an engine city rather than an arts city.

Lastly, New York's outcome is that cultural policy is the only thing that can put the brakes

on the unfettered growth and high rents that are pushing their creative workforce to move to less expensive cities. Their story's moral speaks to the opportunity costs of maintaining global creative status. "After an unprecedented investment in cultural capital projects and a strong emphasis on promoting tourism during the Bloomberg administration, Mayor de Blasio is taking steps to ensure that opportunities to produce and consume culture in New York are broadly shared and that working artists and creative professionals can afford to live and work here. But there is a lot more to be done. To that end, we propose more than 20 steps that the de Blasio administration can take to address and ultimately overcome the chief obstacles documented in this report" (Forman, 2015, p. 53).

## The Data

Just as the reports use narrative elements as evidence to support their recommendations, they rely on other kinds of data to support their claims. Three of the five reports have data appendix sections, and of these reports, the proportion of the report made up of the data section varies widely. Of Austin's report pages, 55% are part of data appendixes, 21% of the London report pages are part of an appendix, and 13% of the Chicago report pages are part of an appendix. The appendixes are primarily made up of additional figures and tables, though each report uses tabular numerical data and figures to represent their findings. As is apparent in table 2, London uses tables and figures most frequently and Adelaide least frequently, though Adelaide's ratio of using tables (0.19) and figures (0.06) is the same as the New York report (0.18) and the Austin report (0.06), respectively (table 2).

**Table 2.** Numerical Data from Creative Cities Reports

	Austin	Adelaide	Chicago	London	New York
<b>Number of Pages</b>	65	16	39	80	68
<b>Data appendix pages</b>	36	0	5	17	0
<b>Tables</b>	23	3	0	80	12
<b>Figures</b>	4	1	18	35	22
<b>Other cities listed in the report</b>	11	11	10	1	21
<b>References</b>	1	0	28	46	110

In addition to numerical data presented in tables and figures, the reports each rely on some categories of qualitative data or commonly referenced qualitative information that is not part of a narrative construction of evidence. Each report referenced other cities to place the focal city within an array of aspirational or peer municipalities. Table 1 shows the frequency with which each city used this referential strategy, with London only referring to one city at the low end, Austin, Adelaide, and Chicago each referencing around 10 other cities, and New York

referencing the most at 21 cities. Reports used municipal references in different ways. For example, while London's reference to San Francisco was only in passing, Adelaide structured much of their report as a comparison of the city to their identified city peers: Helsinki, Bilbao, and Ghent. Their engagement with these three cities served to place the ways in which their creative economy is doing well and the areas where they require significant growth. Their comparisons are divided into sections (e.g., openness, tolerance, accessibility, and participation; talent development and learning landscape; strategic agility and vision) and compare Adelaide to the other three cities with quantitative measures meant to score each city and qualitative descriptions of each city's strengths and weaknesses compared to Adelaide. As an example, the report claims that Adelaide scores a 49% on strategic leadership, agility, and vision, which is lower when compared to Bilbao (77%), Ghent (60%), and Helsinki (65.39%). Each comparison score also includes a short explanation of why the cities score the way they do, and Adelaide's score is elaborated upon in five paragraphs.

Three of the five reports also rely on heavy use of citations from other creative city reports, policy literature, and academic literature to support their claims and recommendations. Adelaide does not cite any other literature, and Austin only cites one other source, but each of the other reports relies on referencing others in the field to make their claims. Perhaps unsurprisingly, two of the reports cite Richard Florida, and every report mentions another creative city report (though Adelaide mentions another report, they do not cite it in footnotes, endnotes, or a references section). Two reports also rely on interview data, though their use is in no way comparable. While the Austin report is partially constructed based on stakeholder interviews, they only use one direct quote from a participant in their report. New York quotes nearly 50 individuals in their report (mostly executive-level arts organization managers) to help build their narrative and support their claims.

### The Author and the Reception

Though not presented as evidence within the framework of the story or the data, we also coded information about each report's author and the reception of the report in terms of citations on Google Scholar, elaborated in table 3. In addition to the evidence that matters for telling the narrative and supporting the arguments of creative city reports, the storyteller matters as well. All reports, except for Austin, list the individual author(s) who conducted the research and wrote the reports, but the "storyteller" we identify as most relevant within the NPF is the organizational storyteller and their relationship to the story and the city. Whether the storyteller is a municipal insider, a hired problem solver from the outside, or a non-governmental entity, it has an important impact on how the story is told and what kind of evidence is mobilized in support of their report's claims. Reception of the reports is measured roughly using Google Scholar citations. We use this measure because it is an external measure that is easily accessible. This is not a perfect tool and is arguably inappropriate for understanding the reception of the reports in their municipal contexts, as the primary audience for creative economy reports are not scholars. However, we include this measure as an initial indication of potentially meaningful

ways of assessing data about reception of policy documents.

**Table 3.** Creative Economy Report Organizational Authors and Citations on Google Scholar

	<b>Austin</b>	<b>Adelaide</b>	<b>Chicago</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>New York</b>
<b>Organization Responsible for Report</b>	TXP, Inc.	COMEDIA	The Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago	GLA Economics (Greater London Authority)	Center for an Urban Future
<b>Type of organization</b>	Consulting	Consulting	Academic	Municipal	Think Tank
<b>Google Scholar Citations</b>	3	1	3	3	10

## Discussion

There are numerous reasons cities prepare creative economy reports: to gather the data, measure the creative sector, create a picture of the labor force, or understand artistic creativity through an analytical framework. Exogenous and endogenous shocks often are the sparks that motivate the creation of analytical reports and studies. Financial challenges, changes in neighborhood composition, and the exodus of creatives from a city due to escalating urban cost of living, rising density, and a dearth of affordable creative spaces are all factors leading to the call for analysis. Some cities may produce these creative sector profiles to inspire the acceptance of this arena as an economic engine, encouraging policymakers to compete on the international stage as a creative force. Factors such as the fostering of innovation, the development and continuation of significant relationships and partnerships on international levels, and the question of sustaining demand for the outputs of the creative economy all are of concern and have led to the research and publication of creative city reports.

How do creative economy reports construct an image of entrepreneurship in the arts and creative industries as an engine for economic development? Centering the city as the boundary that surrounds the creative economy is a rhetorical tool that cities cultivate and deploy toward strategic entrepreneurial ends as they compete for resources on a regional, national, and international scale. This rhetorical tool is mobilized in a variety of ways, but it is most legibly codified in rhetorical narrative devices and through the use of empirical facts. In short, our findings support the idea that, in these reports, cities make the case that entrepreneurial action, artists, the creative economy, and economic development are linked through strategic deployment of “the story” and “the data.”

This article mobilizes the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) to examine how creative city reports use rhetorical devices and empirical data to establish a link between entrepreneurship, artists, creative economies, and municipal economic development. We find that narrative rhetorical devices structure a clear path for analyzing the structure of cities’ arguments for their potential to attract and maintain an entrepreneurial creative sector, the evidence supporting their arguments, and the policy recommendations or outcomes and implications to take from

the reports. Despite variation in the local contexts of the cities, each one uses a combination of narration and empirical data to make and support claims about their creative economy, the potential and promises for entrepreneurial action within the creative sector, and in supporting any policy recommendations or conclusions. Adelaide and New York weave together the story and the data quite adeptly. Adelaide's comparative percentage scores against other peer cities (and elaborated information about scoring effectively) use a novel measurement tool to frame specific recommendations for developing new opportunities as a creative city while identifying areas of strength. New York's report does not segment out the data into an appendix section separate from the report narrative, rather it combines a relatively large number of tables, figures, quotes with interviewees, and references to other creative sector publications to create a comprehensive account of the challenges and promises of the city's creative economy.

Three of five reports elaborated policy recommendations (Austin, Adelaide, New York), while the two reports whose story was the presentation of the data itself (Chicago, London) did not offer any specific policy recommendations. Relatedly, this divide in the reports also maps onto the reports' organizational authorship. While the Austin, Adelaide, and New York reports were written by consulting firms (Austin, Adelaide) and a think tank (New York), Chicago's report was written by an academic research center, and London's report was written by a division of the city's municipal government. This structure does affect the story and the degree to which their report connects entrepreneurship, artists, and the creative sector to municipal economic development. The reports that use narrative structure and conclude with policy recommendations mobilize evidence and end on clear outcomes, while the reports that rely primarily on data, and which do not make policy recommendations, leave the data to tell the story. Without directives stemming from an elaboration on the data, these reports rely on presenting a clear account of the facts as the key strategy for drawing conclusions about the creative economy in the report's municipal context.

## **Conclusion**

Our key contribution, in the case of entrepreneurship in the creative economy, provides an empirical example of how NPF can be a tool for linking data, core concepts, and narrative toward policy recommendations. Ongoing critiques of research in the creative sector cite measurement as a challenge for the field. Our study illuminates one strategy for systematically analyzing policy documents, reports, and other sector-specific literature in a way that allows for flexible coding and attention to both rhetorical evidence and empirical evidence. This study is not meant to empirically generalize all cities or all creative reports, and it is not a comparative case study, rather it is meant to serve as an inductive beginning for applying NPF to cultural policy and incorporating the literature on narrative in entrepreneurship to the municipal level, thus bringing additional connection between levels of analysis that are, at times, difficult to unite.

Though each city relies on contextually specific accounts and evidence, the analytic tools of NPF and the coding scheme allows us to compare how claims are made and supported toward



policy goals. Together with initiatives (including policy learning and adaptation, the development of more manageable methods of data gathering and evaluation, and the sharing of knowledge on a global basis), this knowledge can empower policymakers, the creative industries, and the cultural community. Based upon the explicit challenges presented, the data gathered, and the policy argumentation provided, the assumption of the reports is that one can tackle the problems in an efficient, practical way. However, clear strategies based upon policy learning are essential in ensuring that the reports provide worthwhile content. Involving powerful multi-sector stakeholders in the creation and dissemination of the reports, together with the provision of actionable cultural policy solutions, will ensure that the reports are not shelved and ignored. Future research should begin considering how the context within which a report is created affects its use of evidence and its impact on policy decisions. For example, it may examine how the commissioning agency or report author impacts the framing of that narrative's heroes and villains.

Future research also may examine how cities use creative economy reports and related documents to frame the social good and so-called "dark side" of the creative economy as well as the city's associated economic development. Unless the focus on creative cities' options also includes the public-good side of this conversation, there is a danger that any interventions may be tied to the private sector with exogenous economic shocks as a threat to sustainability. Leveraging the popularity, power, and prestige of creative city policy options that are promulgated by policy boosters is an attractive concept, one that has a wide appeal to policy entrepreneurs, policymakers, and the public. A focus on brand building in cities may obfuscate the true nature of growing an arts and culture base within an urban environment.

It is a limitation of the current study that we were unable to develop a coding framework for these concepts, and future efforts should work toward establishing theoretically motivated empirical codes that would measure these concepts. It is important to find reliable ways to operationalize and code these types of important textual evidence toward scholarly analysis and practitioner utility. The Narrative Policy Framework can be employed in conjunction with other theories popular in cultural policy creation—such as Multiple Streams, Rational Choice, or Network Theory—as a way to enhance the understanding of the efficacy of policy interventions. Fieldwork using epistemic communities of stakeholders, including members of the creative class as well as the numerous demand-side users of cultural outputs, could lead to a richer cache of data (Jones & Radaelli, 2015).

Numerous cities worldwide have utilized creative class strategies to revitalize their urban cores (McCann, 2007). Public good, social benefit, and the creative economy all are areas that can be integrated into the economic development lexicon in order to address the plethora of challenges that exist in cities today. Regeneration must include attention to so-called "wicked problems", issues that are extremely difficult to resolve due to incompatible goals, factors in flux, or lack of information (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Addressing key concerns such as housing affordability, workforce development, service provision, and livability can increase the possibility of sustainability in the creative cities' movement.

For many, the arts are a matter of enlightenment or entertainment. That leads to the

perception that arts and culture are marginal in terms of economic contribution and should therefore be confined to the realms of public intervention. This may explain to a large extent the lack of analytic tools available to measure the contribution of the cultural sector to the economy. Scholars need to investigate the policy subsystem within the creative economy—as well as that of the creatives themselves—in addition to urban actors concerned with creative economy interventions. Policymakers are motivated to form creative city coalitions, but the narrative could be a temporary one as other issues, such as the sustainability discussion, the idea of being a tech hub, an economic downturn, or the healthcare debate, all compete for their attention. The NPF and similar policy-analytic approaches can begin to do the work of examining how cities and other policymaking bodies use written documents to make claims and provide evidence in pursuit of new initiatives.

Policy development reflects a society, and at the same time it works to set the agenda for change. Understanding the setting, actors, plot, and preferred policy outcome of creative economy initiatives can provide a valuable roadmap for substantive change. Through the gathering and dissemination of relevant and meaningful data, combined with a compelling and clear cultural policy narrative, the creative sector and its advocates could succeed in raising the profile and showcasing the importance of the creative economy in the minds of the public and of leaders worldwide. The alignment of data, narrative, and policy strategies can offer an effective tool with which to leverage the power of the creative sector and continue to realize both its economic strength and its promise of public good.

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*Coding Appendix*

<b>Coding Category</b>	<b>Operationalization and Source of Code</b>
Report Title	Text as reported
Year Published	Text as reported
National Context	Text as reported
Setting (text/quote)	Specific quote(s) from reports
Setting Page Number	Page numbers where each setting quote could be found
Characters - Hero (text/quote)	Specific quote(s) from reports
Characters - Hero Page Number	Page numbers where each setting quote could be found
Characters - Villain (text/quote)	Specific quote(s) from reports
Characters - Villain Page Number	Page numbers where each setting quote could be found
Plot - what happened (text/quote)	Specific quote(s) from reports
Plot - what happened Page Number	Page numbers where each setting quote could be found
Outcomes/Moral - result of what happened (text/quote)	Specific quote(s) from reports
Outcomes/Moral - result of what happened Page Number	Page numbers where each setting quote could be found
Number of recommendations/policy implications	Count
Number of Pages	Count
Number of data appendix pages	Count
Number of Tables (tabled display of numerical data)	Count
Number of Figures (chart, graph, map, or infographic representing data)	Count
Number of Images (photograph or animation that conveys an idea but does not represent data)	Count
Number of Individuals Quoted	Count
Titles/Occupations/Roles of individuals quoted	List based on information given in report
Number of other cities listed in the report by name	Count
List of other cities listed in the report by name	Count
Mentions Richard Florida	Indicator variable (1=yes)
Number of references	Count
Cites any other Creative Cities/Creative Economy Report	Indicator variable (1=yes); taken from in-text or bibliographic citations
Author (Narrator; name)	Text as reported
Author Occupation (title)	Text as reported
Organization Responsible for Report (Narrator; name)	Text as reported

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Sector/Type of organization (e.g., academic, municipal, consulting)	Text as reported or obtain from online search
Funding for the report (funder)	Text as reported
Number of Citations on Google Scholar	Count; based on Google Scholar citation count at time of analysis
<b>What are they counting?</b>	
Focus on entrepreneurship? (1=yes)	Indicator variable (1=yes); based on content of report
Focus on economic development? (1=yes)	Indicator variable (1=yes); based on content of report