

Working in the Creative Economy: the spatial dynamics of employment risk for musicians in Toronto

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Despite the prevalence of literature concerning creativity, Florida's 'creative class' and culturally driven strategies for economic development, most of the research has been conducted at the national or city-region scale. Moreover, there is a lack of research which studies the nature of employment within specific cultural industries. Several critics, including Markusen and King (2003) and Lloyd (2006), have highlighted the need to examine the micro-geographies and employment experiences of the individuals who constitute the creative class. This paper addresses these gaps by providing an analysis of the working lives of musicians in Toronto. It examines the employment risks faced by musicians, the reasons why musicians endure immense personal and economic hardships to express their creativity and the coping strategies musicians employ to mediate risks. This paper also explores the ways in which neighborhood spaces, including music stores, coffee shops and educational institutions, are used by musicians as sites of networking and creative inspiration. Finally, this paper offers a gendered perspective on employment within the creative field as it demonstrates how female musicians experience employment and risk differently from their male counterparts and how gender influences the effectiveness of coping strategies such as networking and accessibility to public spaces.