Nesting the Spectacle: A Study of Toronto's New Opera House, an Architecture that Averts Being Iconic

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Abstract

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The Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, Toronto's first purpose-built opera facility, was constructed in the early 2000s as part of a substantial investment in the city's cultural infrastructure that brought about a short-lived period of developing cultural buildings, commonly known as Toronto's Cultural Renaissance. For developing the opera facility, the Canadian Opera Company pursued a strategy that marked a distinction from the approach of many of its local and international rivals. Instead of commissioning celebrity architects for a spectacular iconic design — a strategy that, by the end of the twentieth century, had become part of a prevalent trend of developing cultural buildings all around the world — the Opera Company strove to build a humble-looking structure, designed by a Toronto-based architectural firm. Against the backdrop of Toronto's Cultural Renaissance developments, which involved the construction of a few world-class urban icons in the city, this research explores the reasons behind the Opera Company's distinct approach. While critical studies concerned with positioning architecture in its socio-political context often concentrate on interrogating cases of iconic buildings, especially since such architectural products are generally considered the most likely outcome of conditions of neoliberal globalization, this work contends that iconic architecture is not the only manifestation of the appropriation of architecture by the powerful. By borrowing from Bourdieu's theory of practice, it points to the implicit nature of architecture's complicity in processes of power and explores alternative pathways through which architecture can retain capitalist interests in urban space. The research emphasizes the importance of investigating architectural products that are considered banal and ordinary, especially since such cases have often remained at the margins of critical examination.

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I also acknowledge the support of my research participants, who took the time to share with me their inside views and opinions about the development of Toronto's new opera house. Particularly I salute the architects in the Diamond Schmitt firm who discussed their work openly and passionately.

This work is conducted at a time when the outbreak of a worldwide pandemic has made the world less of an inspiring place. In addition, during the past few years, numerous global-scale political debacles have severely — and sometimes tragically — affected the lives of many Iranians regardless of where they live. In this precarious time, I was blessed to have the support and encouragement from my wonderful family and friends. I wish to thank my loving mother and father and my dear sister for their unconditional support. I also thank Rapti, Maz, Jessica, Jasmine and Sep for inspiration and unreserved help and for their friendship when it was most needed, and finally, I thank Narges for her love and support, realizing this project was not possible without her presence in my life.

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1. CHAPTER ONE | INTRODUCTION

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, owing to a significant public-private investment in Toronto's cultural infrastructure — commonly known as Toronto's Cultural Renaissance — a few iconic cultural buildings sprang up in downtown Toronto. The buildings, which more than anything bore the fame of their internationally renowned architects, quickly became the centre of attention for local, national and international media, and the processes of decision making around their development became the topic of heated debate in mainstream, specialized and academic publications. Amid the craze for the celebrity architects and their iconic designs, what remained out of the spotlight was the story of those cultural facilities that, despite being part of the same infrastructure program, never claimed an iconic status in the global competition for urban spectacle. This research contends that such rather modest structures provide rich opportunities for investigating the phenomenon of iconic architecture from new perspectives.

Against the backdrop of Toronto's Cultural Renaissance, this research investigates the process of planning, design and execution of the first purposely built opera house in Toronto by the Canadian Opera Company (COC hereafter). It contends that the Opera Company's approach toward this development marks a divergence from the dominant trend of the time, when the prominence of the "Bilbao effect" narrative (Ponzini, 2010) convinced urban decision-makers that iconic architecture was a winning ticket in developing significant public projects, especially since it had a great capacity to attract media attention and external investments (also see Evans, 2003; McNeill, 2000). Indeed, the COC's rivals, the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) and the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), pursued this strategy with enthusiasm and hired two of the most renowned celebrity architects to develop spectacular facilities. However, the COC, despite benefiting from the infrastructure investment at a comparable level, was content with a much less exuberant edifice. By exploring various factors that contributed to the COC's divergent path, this work raises new questions about the phenomenon of iconic architecture.

From the standpoint of urban political economy, iconic architecture is often understood as the extension of place branding strategies (Evans, 2003; Zukin, 1995), through which local powers seek to establish a competitive edge in the course of an intensifying global "inter-urban competition" (Harvey, 1989, p. 11) for resources and jobs. From a broader perspective, this topic is frequently discussed in relation to the hegemonic forces of contemporary capitalism. For example, the representational capacities of iconic buildings are claimed to promote and maintain the cultural — and ideological — values of consumerism (Sklair, 2017) and neoliberalism (D. Spencer, 2016). Some argue that iconic buildings symbolize the domination of the contemporary

powerful (Jencks, 2006; Kaika & Thielen, 2006), whom Sklair (2017), more explicitly has identified as the "transnational capitalist class." In addition, a broad spectrum of studies in this area discusses the production of iconic buildings in relation to various manifestations of globalization, for example, the globalization of architectural markets (McNeill, 2009), the rise of mass tourism (McNeill, 2009; Wang, 2020), the electronic revolution (Sklair, 2017), and the mass circulation of image on the Internet (Nastasi, 2020). While this work benefits from the studies mentioned above ("urban political economy" studies hereafter), it problematizes them on two grounds. First, it shows that over-concentrating on eye-catching iconic cases has led the studies to lose sight of the broader relevance of architecture as a cultural field; and secondly, it challenges the global frames through which the urban political economy studies often perceive the issue of iconic architecture. Subsequently, to address the shortcomings of urban political economy studies, this work borrows from Bourdieu's theory of practice and utilizes his conceptions of habitus and field, which enable it to have a more intimate view of the issue.

Two Challenges

As some scholars have previously noted (Jones, 2009; Lieto, 2020), since the majority of research projects around the issue of iconic architecture tend to concentrate on cases of iconic buildings and/or celebrity architects, studies in this area have often remained confined within a small and rather elitist fraction of architectural practices, which never presents a true picture of the broader field of the architectural profession (Stevens, 1996). Therefore, it is not surprising to see that although these studies genuinely foreground the influence of political and economic powers in the production and exploitation of iconic buildings, they repeatedly fail to recognize

the same relationship in its broader form. In fact, the over concentration of urban political economy studies on the issue of iconic architecture often causes them to overlook the fact that it is architecture, in general — rather than a specific type of architecture — that has always been reliant on political-economic forces that commission it (Dovey, 1999; Gutman, 1992; Jones, 2009).

Assigning the production of iconic buildings to the hegemonic forces of contemporary capitalism, although not wrong, is naive, since it obscures the view to the more fundamental ways in which architecture embodies economic and social functions (Grubbauer, 2014; Jones, 2009; Lieto, 2020) and implies that other types of architectural products are exonerated from complicity in processes of power[1]. Therefore, a debatable issue about the urban political economy studies is their lack of attention to the broader field of architecture, and particularly to the social function of architecture as a cultural arena, which, as Dovey (2005) contends, is the source of architecture's "deepest power" (Dovey, 2005, p. 291). It is through its cultural capacities that architecture is most effectively appropriated by the powerful, especially since the

[1] Here it is important to acknowledge that the body of work around the issue of iconic architecture is itself among the rare attempts for incorporating political-economic factors in theorizing architectural matters; especially since such topics are often at the disinterest of studies conducted within architectural fields, such as architectural history or architectural geography, which are more interested in the representational aspects of the built environment and often focus on semiotic, semantic, and aesthetic characteristics of architecture (Frampton, 1991; Jones, 2009; Lees, 2001).

nature of this contribution is often implicit and "silent" (Dovey, 2005, p. 283).

Another deficiency that this work seeks to address arises from global models through which the issue of iconic architecture is often understood and theorized. In the urban political economy studies, typically, iconic architecture is considered a "globalized phenomenon" (Sklair, 2017), produced by macro-scale forces such as the culture-ideology of neoliberalism (Jencks, 2006; D. Spencer, 2016), and consumerism (Sklair, 2010), or the unfolding of globalization in its different forms and across various spaces (e.g., McNeill, 2009; Nastasi, 2020; Wang, 2020). However, through a case study, this work illustrates that this synoptic vision of the urban political economy studies is prone to contradiction; because, first, it usually fails to account for complexities that operate across various other scales, and second, it tends to omit the influence of human agency in the process.

Inspired by the works of geographers who emphasize the embeddedness and the groundedness of the global phenomena (e.g., Massey, 1991, 2004), this work concentrates on understanding the "mutual constitution of global and local" (Massey, 2004, p. 7) and seeks new approaches that can allow studying the issue through a more intimate view of local factors and considering the influence of actors along the process.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge a few previous attempts that transcend the limitations mentioned above. Particularly, some scholars, inspired by the newly emerged trend of "cultural political economy" (see Ribera-Fumaz, 2009), which assumes more central roles for cultural forms in the course of political-economic projects, have focused on exploring different

channels through which cultural specifications of architecture serve to make political economy projects socially meaningful. Examples are Jones' analysis (2009) of the field of architecture, where he explains the role of this field in "providing a culturalised frame within which economic transformation is embedded" (Jones, 2009, p. 2519) and Grubbauer's study of (2014) more banal forms of architecture, such as glass office towers, which help to anchor certain "imaginaries" in the course of broader political economy projects. Moreover, Patterson (2015), studying AGO's and ROM's iconic developments in Toronto, explores how those iconic structures are involved in an ongoing struggle over forging the city's place identity. He illustrates how the process of design and execution of iconic facilities function as "social performances" through which the society imbues meaning into the built environment (Patterson, 2019). The project at hand hopes to contribute to this trend in the literature, which, in parallel to accounting for political-economic context, interrogates the social function of architecture as a cultural field. By investigating the case of the COC, which hardly fits within the global paradigms of urban political economy studies, this work aims to learn more about the challenges raised above, and subsequently, it seeks more robust frameworks for understanding the case.

The Case

Although Toronto's Cultural Renaissance program aligns neatly with the requirements of hard-branding strategies (Jenkins, 2005), the COC's approach in developing the opera house — which was a subordinate project in the Cultural Renaissance scheme — hardly fits into this paradigm, especially since the opera house's modest architecture leaves little space for image-based marketing activities. In addition, the COC's aversion to developing an iconic facility

transpires not only at a time that this strategy had become an up-and-coming development trend all around the world and particularly among cultural organizations (Patterson, 2015), also at a place that was the intersection of most of those forces that were frequently claimed to be the main drivers of iconic projects. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, Toronto was increasingly participating in the global economy, and with a history of more than two decades of neoliberal restructuring, it was paving the path to become a global city. The Cultural Renaissance program itself was part of the city's endeavours along this path. Besides, this program only became feasible with the substantial contribution of transnational capitalists, whom Sklair (2017) identifies as simultaneously being the main drivers and primary beneficiaries of the spread of iconic buildings. Despite the circumstances, which seemed to be particularly fertile for producing iconic buildings — to which cases of ROM, AGO, and OCAD can attest — the COC's directors remained extremely reluctant to collaborate with celebrity architects or consider an iconic design for the development of Toronto's new opera house. This inconsistency becomes a starting point for investigating various reasons that contributed to the COC's distinct approach. Why and how was the Opera Company's path different from other competitor organizations? Is the case of Toronto's opera house a counterexample to the assumptions presented in the urban political economy studies?

The COC's divergence from the prevalent trend of the time is hardly explicable by referring to political economy models, which are the most common frameworks in studies developed around the issue of iconic architecture. In fact, investigating the case of the opera house requires transcending the boundaries of the previous studies in this area and viewing the phenomenon of

iconic architecture from new standpoints. As a non-iconic case study, the case of opera house helps this project to avoid the common missteps that some scholars in this field have previously warned about (e.g., Lieto, 2020). For example, instead of becoming fixated with the ostentatious presence of celebrity architects or being dazzled by the spectacle of their iconic designs, this project investigates the role of other agents in the process and assesses the broader function of architecture as a cultural field.

The case of the opera house helps to reveal the fragility of the urban political economy assumptions that frequently assign the production of iconic buildings to the hegemonic forces of contemporary capitalism, which, on the side, imply that other architectural products are less subject to this relationship. Investigating this case illustrates that a counter position to iconic architecture does not necessarily violate the capitalist interest. By mapping the constellation of local, regional and global forces, this work indicates that the same forces behind the production of iconic buildings are also capable of creating more banal architectural products. It contends that iconic buildings are not the only channel through which architecture is exploited by the powerful. Rather it is architecture, in general, that has always retained the interest of the political and economic powers that commission it, a relationship that is best constructed — and simultaneously obscured — through architecture's cultural specifications. In the case of the opera house, the architects, by utilizing a specialized and technical language, leaning toward professionalism, and adopting a politically progressive gesture, sought to achieve the same goals that their celebrity counterparts did by promoting the aesthetic and symbolic relevance of their designs.

Outline

This project is structured into five chapters. The following chapter, Chapter Two, reviews the literature on which the discussions and analysis in this work are developed. The first section in Chapter Two reviews the different reasons behind the worldwide enthusiasm for place-oriented and culture-themed urban developments. It points to the convergences between the spheres of culture and economy in the postmodern era and discusses the rise of neoliberalism and urban entrepreneurialism as the major forces behind the popularity of such trends in contemporary urban planning. Subsequently, the second section concentrates on the phenomenon of iconic architecture, which is often understood as a part of the same universal trend toward place-oriented development. It reviews different streams of study in this area, which typically benefit from political economy approaches in their analysis. However, by highlighting various shortcomings of the political economy approaches, it indicates the necessity of incorporating the cultural specification of architecture in the equation and introduces Bourdieu's *theory of practice* as a complementary framework for investigating architecture as a cultural field.

Chapter Three discusses different research methods that are utilized during different phases of conducting this project. By reviewing methodological literature, it seeks to address various concerns that might arise in the context of this fieldwork.

Chapter Four focuses on investigating the case of the research. It studies the case from at least two standpoints. First, it presents a broader view of the social, political and economic relations in the context of which Toronto's Cultural Renaissance transpires and discusses why

and how iconic architecture was boldly utilized in the course of this program. However, explaining the case of the opera house through the theoretical lenses offered in the urban political economy literature brings on moments of inconsistency — and even contradiction — which indicate the shortcoming of political economy approaches in understanding this case. Therefore, by utilizing Bourdieu's conception of *field* and *habitus*, the chapter tries to achieve a more robust framework for explaining the case. It revisits the development of the opera house by considering the dynamics of two cultural fields whose members were among the most influential actors in directing the development: The field of music and performance arts and the field of professional architecture. The chapter illustrates how the specific dynamics of these cultural fields led the COC to take a path that is markedly different from its competitors.

Eventually, Chapter Five draws some conclusions based on various discussions presented in this work and sketches the pathways ahead for expanding the project in the future.

2. CHAPTER TWO | LITERATURE REVIEW

The growing popularity of culture-oriented planning practices and the proliferation of iconic buildings in different cities across the globe are not unrelated or incompatible matters. Rather, both trends are often understood as the extension of cities' entrepreneurial endeavours for cultivating bases of uniqueness and advantage in the course of a global competition for resources and jobs (Harvey, 1989). This chapter discusses these both topics and reviews the essential literature for understanding each trend; however, for the sake of clarity, each topic is presented in a separate section.

2.1. Part 1

2.1.1. Economic Value of Culture

Toronto is not the only city that has witnessed the reorientation of its planning strategies toward culture- and place-based developments. By the end of the twentieth century, there was a fierce competition among many cities to brand themselves as centres of culture and art. In the US alone, more than a hundred and fifty museums were built in the two years between 1998 to 2000 (Zukin, 2001). This desire for culture has attracted the attention of many scholars across various fields (Evans, 2003; Harvey, 2007; Scott, 1997, 2014; Zukin, 1995), who have consistently pointed to the convergence between the spheres of culture and economy as the basis for understanding the ascension of culture in city-making practices.

As it is commonly known, during the second half of the twentieth century, social and economic relationships in capitalist societies underwent major restructuring, with the most vivid manifestation being the transition from Fordist regimes of capitalist production and accumulation — often characterized by its emphasis on standardization and mass-manufacturing — to a new flexible model that primarily rests on "differentiated and fragmented consumer cultures" (Scott, 1997, p. 326). It is in this context that culture and cultural outputs became the critical elements of productive strategy, and promptly, their economic value increased (Scott, 1997).

Harvey (1990) explains this phenomenon by highlighting the importance of qualities such as "volatility," "instantaneity," "disposability," and "ephemerality" (Harvey, 1990) for the capitalist

mode of production. He argues that, in the era of consumerism, the production of such qualities helps the capitalist to accelerate the pace of consumption and, consequently, reduces the turn-over time of one cycle of production. Volatility and ephemerality are produced by "frequent manipulation of tastes and opinions" (Harvey, 1990; p. 287), which is achieved either by mastering the market or through saturating it; both these strategies require the constant construction of new sign systems and imageries, which make the capitalist production more dependent on cultural activities.

In another articulation, Harvey (2007) draws on the notion of "monopoly rent" to illustrate how cultural forms have become central to the capitalist endeavours for establishing new sources of monopoly privilege. The monopoly privilege rests on qualities such as uniqueness, authenticity, and particularity. Exclusive control over unique or non-replicable items enables the capitalist to extract monopoly rent. These items could encompass anything from land, resources and locations to commodities and services. Sustaining individual or class monopoly privileges are at the foundation of capitalism. However, owing to the rapid expansion of economic globalization and the advancement of technology, particularly in communication and transportation, some traditional sources of monopoly power — e.g., proximity to a market— have been weakened, if not totally diminished. As one source of monopoly power diminishes, capital attempts to find — or assemble — other means through which it can continue extracting monopoly rent. Imposing patent and copy-right regulations or centralizing capital through the establishment of alliances that dominate the market — similar to what happens in the automobile industry — are instances of such attempts. By the same logic, claims of distinctive and non-

replicable cultural attributes are also understood as other instances of capitalist endeavours for maintaining the monopoly power (Harvey, 2009).

While the logic of capital accumulation provides a basis for understanding the confluence of culture and economy, it is still important to recognize other historical and political forces across different localities and scales that might have contributed to this phenomenon. As an example, Harvey (1990) points to the crisis of over-accumulation in the 1970s, when the high inflation rates eroded the confidence in the virtue of money, both as a stashing means and as the representation of value itself; as a result, significant streams of capital were diverted toward other ends, including art and cultural markets. In another instance, Zukin (1995) explains how the financial boom during most of the 1980s and simultaneously increasing attention to art and cultural markets brought about a collective view that associated art and culture with financial prosperity.

The growing economic importance of culture and cultural products soon gained traction in city-making realms, and culture became "more and more the business of cities" (Zukin, 1995, p. 3). However, the surge of the economic value of culture was only one component of the complex and multi-layered geometry that has linked culture and city in the postmodern era. This geometry has a lot to do with the role of cities in shaping — and at the same time bearing the consequences of — the general restructuring in social and political spaces of capitalist societies during the second half of the twentieth century.

2.1.2. Neoliberalism

The turn of cities toward culture- and place-oriented developments takes place against the backdrop of broader restructurings in political and economic relations all around the world, which are often discussed under the rubric of neoliberalism. Cities are at the centre of neoliberalization processes, both as the facilitators of neoliberal restructuring programs and, at the same time, the primary bearers of the consequences (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). On an urban scale, the restructuring is best demonstrated in the reorientation of urban governance strategies from managerial approaches of the post-World War II era to entrepreneurial approaches after the 1970s (Harvey, 1989). This section briefly reviews the issues of neoliberalism and urban entrepreneurialism and shows how these two forces have increasingly pushed cities to become active agents of economic development projects.

Among contemporary thinkers, there seems to be a general consensus about neoliberalism as an ideological project. This ideology celebrates the redeeming power of market rationality and believes that competitive and unregulated markets with minimal state interventions are the optimal framework for economic development; at the same time, this ideology profoundly contempts different types of collective strategy and particularly the Keynesian welfarist policies, remnants of political economy regimes of the Fordist era (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Since the 1970s, the neoliberal ideology has been increasingly dominating political and economic spaces all around the world, to the extent that many consider neoliberalism as a type of hegemonic discourse (e.g., Harvey, 2007). This ideology first attained prominence as a strategic response to the sustained global recessions at the end of the 1960s and most of the 1970s, driven from the destabilization of Fordist modes of capitalist accumulation

and the exhaustion of Keynesian welfare policies. In a context of widespread unemployment, soaring inflation rates, accelerated deindustrialization, and various instances of states' fiscal crisis, neoliberal ideology was mobilized to justify the dismantling of existing political economy relations, particularly the Keynesian regimes which were widely deployed in capitalist societies after the World Wars (Harvey, 2007). It helped to inspire and impose the restructuring of institutional and political frameworks in order to extend market disciplines, promote entrepreneurial freedoms and foster competition and innovation. Neoliberalism became the dominant political and ideological framework of capitalist production (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2007), and soon, with the help of international institutions that regulated global finance and trade — such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, or the World Trade Organization— its dominance was extended globally; privatization, state-downsizing, austerity financing, monetary schemes that facilitated free trade, and other practices that marked the beginning of neoliberalization processes became common programs in almost every country in the world (Harvey, 2007).

While the ideology of neoliberalism seems to draw on only one core principle, constituted of a belief in market rationality and assuming that market forces operate regardless of the context in which they are unleashed and according to immutable laws, in practice, the processes of neoliberalization have proven to be "neither monolithic in form nor universal in effect" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 384). In fact, it is essential to differentiate between the ideology of neoliberalism, and the ways in which processes of neoliberalization unfold on the ground. Brenner and Theodore (2002) argue that the dynamics of what they call the "actually existing

neoliberalism" are often complex, multi-scalar, polycentric, and contradictory, and at the same time, their institutional imposition, as well as their socio-political consequences, are uneven across different geographies and spatial scales. They emphasize the importance of the context in shaping the dynamics of emerging neoliberal projects, and highlight the "path dependant" character and the "embeddedness" of neoliberal processes. In other words, the inherited elements of a site, such as institutional frameworks, regulatory landscape, political dynamics, and power geometries are determinative factors in how the emerging neoliberal landscape will be shaped.

While the processes of neoliberalization transpire across all spatial scales, the intensity of these procedures is most evident at the urban scale (Brenner & Theodore, 2002), especially since in the era of globalization and nation-state's downfall, urban places have become the key actors of political-economic coordination. In fact, cities, not only as sites in which the restructuring projects unfold, but also as "incubators" (Brenner & Theodore, 2002) for producing new political and ideological schemes that maintain the dominance of neoliberalism, have a central role in actualizing the processes of neoliberalization. The rise of neoliberal ideology at an urban scale finds its reflection in the reorientation of attitudes in urban governance from managerial approaches of the post-war era to urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989). However, this does not mean that urban entrepreneurialism is simply the local manifestation of neoliberal restructuring; rather, what links these two phenomena is the dynamics of a global competition among cities for resources and jobs. While the expansion of neoliberal programs significantly intensifies and extends the dynamics of this "inter-urban competition" (Harvey, 1989), the disciplinary forces of competition propel cities toward adopting more entrepreneurial roles (Peck

& Tickell, 2002).

2.1.3. Inter-Urban Competition & Urban Entrepreneurialism

During the 1960s and 1970s, when uncertainties and periodic urban crises had created the climate for the emergence of new approaches in urban governance, the prevalence of neoliberal ideology and the appearance of a general consensus about benevolent effects of entrepreneurialism prompted the idea that cities by taking more entrepreneurial stances in the course of economic developments could better foster local growth and would create higher levels of employment opportunities. Cities, which were caught in the framework of a global "inter-urban competition" (Harvey, 1989) for resources and jobs, began to undertake more entrepreneurial roles and became "active agents" of political-economic developments (Harvey, 1989, p. 5). As a result, managerial approaches of the Keynesian era, which primarily emphasized the local provision of service and facilities, were toned down to give way to entrepreneurial strategies, which typically rested on public-private partnerships around speculative activities (Harvey, 1989).

The *inter-urban competition* is understood to operate in a zero-sum framework (Harvey, 1989), and since no city can afford non-involvement in a zero-sum race for resources and jobs, even the most progressive urban alliances will eventually find themselves riding the train of entrepreneurialism despite its polarizing consequences (Harvey, 1989). Cities' persistent participation — either voluntary or coerced — in this competition and their occasional success will serve to intensify the competition even further (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Establishing a

competitive edge in the course of this race requires cities to facilitate restructuring developments and undertake programs that eventually accelerate the pace of neoliberalization. Meanwhile, processes of neoliberalization exert a significant influence on shaping the dynamics of the *inter-urban competition* and exposing cities to the competition's "coercive forces" (Harvey, 1989, p. 15; see also Peck & Tickell, 2002).

Despite the close relationship between entrepreneurial urban governance and neoliberal capitalism, analyzing the activities of urban governances strictly according to the logic of capitalist accumulation — as if urban governances are immediately captive to capitalist interests — is not entirely accurate (Harvey, 1989). One crucial consideration here is the centrality of the rhetoric of innovation and creativity in entrepreneurialism(Jessop & Sum, 2000), where it is up to each entrepreneur to determine — and speculate — its own distinctive path, because, in entrepreneurialism, no predetermined path can guarantee winning. This characteristic is one of the main reasons that make entrepreneurialism a desirable means for capital accumulation. By encouraging exploration and enabling the examination of various social, political and entrepreneurial approaches, entrepreneurialism creates a "lawless caprice" (Harvey, 1989, p. 15) of numerous endeavours, which helps capitalism discover new forms and pathways of accumulation (Harvey, 1989). The importance of the *lawless caprice* sufficiently explains why considering entrepreneurialism a ready-to-use prescriptive approach is not a precise analogy. Instead, what reconciles entrepreneurialism with the requirements of capitalist accumulation is the *coercive force* of competition that obliges each entrepreneur to aligns itself with certain requirements. Here it is important to note that the *coercive force* of competition is only imposed

after the action is taken by the entrepreneurs, and therefore it does not disrupt the speculative nature of entrepreneurial activities, or in other words, it does not contradict with the unpredictability of the *lawless caprice* (Harvey, 1989)

Entrepreneurial urban alliances are often constituted of the agglomeration of a diverse set of forces deployed by various actors with unalike and even contradictory agendas (Harvey, 1989); particularly, on a metropolitan scale, these alliances are rarely constituted of any homogeneous body of actors. Merchants, industrialists, financiers, institutions, political parties, and alike, all can play a role in alliances[2]. Governments also often take facilitative or coordinative roles, albeit in some cases, they might take leadership roles as well (Harvey, 1989).

Entrepreneurial approaches in urban governance are often characterized by three typical attributes (Harvey, 1989): public-private partnership, tendency toward speculative activities, and emphasis on the political economy of place. Public-private partnership is at the centre of urban entrepreneurialism. Through this partnership, different actors, including the state powers, various civil society organizations, and the private sector, come together to perform a kind of local boosterism in order to attract external sources of capital, foster new investments and create new sources of employment in their region (Harvey, 1989). Nonetheless, in this partnership, it is often the case that the public sector entirely or to a great extent assumes the risk — particularly at the

[2] Understanding the complex social and political procedures that connects these various actors, and the way their heterogeneous forces interact with each other requires further studies about formation of political coalitions and class alliances (as Harvey, 1989 suggests) which falls beyond the mandates of this work.

local level rather than the national — while the private sector claims its share only when it comes to the profit. Beside the high speculative nature of activities that public-private partnerships are often shaped around, the degree of risk aversion by the private sector is what distinguishes contemporary urban entrepreneurialism from the paradigms of urban governance in the earlier decades (Harvey, 1989)[3].

Another prominent element of contemporary urban entrepreneurialism is its emphasis on the political economy of place rather than territory, which was the focus of managerial approaches of the earlier decades. During the past few decades, the ascendance of localities and places has been subject of prolonged discussions (e.g., Cresswell, 2015; Massey, 1991, 2004). From a political economy standpoint, Harvey (1989) relates this phenomenon to the weakening of national states' power in controlling transnational money flows, as a result of which, today, negotiations for attracting funds and investments are held more directly between local powers and international financiers. This situation obliges local powers to constantly strive to maximize their regions' attractiveness for capitalist developments. As a result, there has been a stronger emphasis on developments with stronger localized capacities; and sectors like heritage industries and cultural industries— which often develop strong localized roots (Scott, 1997) — and urban features like signature architecture and festivals have become the constitutive elements of urban entrepreneurial initiatives in many places (Harvey, 1989).

2.1.4. Urban Entrepreneurialism & Culture

With the turn of cities toward entrepreneurial activities (Harvey,1989), and simultaneously

[3] For example, civic boosterism in the 1960s and 1970s.

the rise of the economic value of culture and cultural outputs in the postmodern era (Harvey, 2009; Scott, 1997), culture became a major focus of cities' entrepreneurial endeavours. Characterizing the ways in which art and culture are perceived and utilized in urban planning, this work identifies two thematic trends. The first trend perceives culture primarily as an inventory for advancing the cities' place-marketing agenda, while the second trend fixates on the growth and profitability of industries involved in the production of semantic and symbolic content. Undeniably, these two trends overlap in some respects; moreover, some studies might draw on a hybrid of both themes. Therefore, it is more accurate to also acknowledge a spectrum of literature and practices that bridges the two thematic ends.

Culture and Place marketing

Claims to culture in urban planning could be understood as part of the cities' entrepreneurial endeavours in the course of a global competition for resources and jobs (Harvey, 1989), which forces the cities to constantly seek measures of uniqueness and distinction in order to establish a kind of localized competitive advantage. Urban entrepreneurial alliances that once were captivated with heritage, entertainment, spectacle and festivals are increasingly considering culture as an instrument of their place-marketing initiatives (Pratt, 2011). Especially in times of economic decline, cultural developments, which require relatively less governmental support, seem more appealing to urban authorities (Zukin, 1995). The building of museums and cultural centres and the undertaking of art and design summits are an extension of hard-branding strategies, which seek not only to lure the tourists but also to bring the middle class back to the cities, if not as tax-paying residents, at least as consumer visitors (Eisinger, 2000). More

recently, the goal of attracting a certain section of professional classes has also become a target of cultural developments, in the hope that the presence of the specialized professionals will revitalize the city's economy (Florida, 2002a). Of course, as many have mentioned, these high-earning residents will primarily contribute to a form of urban regeneration that celebrates the quality of place (Pratt, 2011). The instrumental approach of place-marketing strategies toward culture has been subject of much criticism. Rather than benefiting culture or empowering culture producers, these strategies are primarily designed to encourage tourism and consumption (Evans, 2003; Zukin, 1995). They transform the disorganized reality of older neighbourhoods into organized, predictable, sanitized, and safe but "authentic" (Zukin, 2010) spaces that let the middle class experience the excitement of the "riskless risk" (Hannigan, 1998, p. 71). The capacity of culture to symbolize who belongs to specific places helps to maintain a sense of law and order, keep the poor and under-class out and make the public spaces more exclusive for the use the ones with enough disposable income to spend in urban venues and cultural festivals (Zukin, 1995). In regards to the issues of gentrification and displacement, art- and culture-themed developments are understood to be the key triggers and have become the topic of intense discussions (e.g., Ley, 2003)). Besides, these developments have proven to be more "regressive" than "progressive" (Pratt, 2011, p. 125) when it comes to the distribution of public resources.

Despite the criticism, urban cultural developments could still yield spaces for progressive action (Harvey, 2009). In their endeavours for fostering virtues of distinction, uniqueness, originality, and creativity, local initiatives behind cultural developments have to tolerate some degrees of differentiation, support some levels of divergence, and maintain some forms of

uncontrollable spaces; such spaces have the potential for cultivating practices that transgress the paradigms of their hosting structures (Harvey, 2009). For example, (McLean, 2014) shows how a group of feminist artists during an art festival in Toronto sought various ways to challenge the frameworks of the urban policies that had initiated the festival in the first place and push against gentrification processes that they found themselves complicit in.

Empowering Cultural Industries

Along with the rise of the economic value of culture in the postmodern era (Harvey, 2009), the number of manufacturing and service establishments involved in producing semiotic contents and symbolic value has been growing rapidly. By the end of the twentieth century, in more than a few cases, the pace of growth in such industries eminently surpassed the economy's general rate of growth (Scott, 1997). Many heralded the emergence of a new economy — often regarded as the "creative economy" (Pratt, 1997) — and a new sector in productive industries which is often regarded as "cultural industries" or "creative industries" (Scott, 1997; Zukin, 1995). [4]The *Cultural industries* as a new and profitable source of employment and revenue grabbed the attention of urban decision makers. Particularly in North American cities, where the general waves of deindustrialization had eroded the economic base in urban areas, empowering the new cultural sector became the hinge point of urban interventions (Scott, 1997).

Here, it is also important to note that in many cases, while the planning strategies are oriented

[4] Although the innumerability and diversity of the activities associated with cultural industries and its entanglement with other productive streams make it impossible to reach a general consensus about the borders of this new sector (Scott, 1997).

toward the production of culture, the ultimate focus of the intervention projects remains (sometimes implicitly) identical to the ones discussed in the first section: place-marketing, encouraging consumption and attracting tourism (Mommaas, 2004). For example, Catungal et al. (2009) illustrate how place-making tricks are mobilized in the course of development projects that claim to boost the concentration of creative industries in Liberty Village in Toronto. Rantisi and Leslie (2006) discuss a similar case in Montreal. Such initiatives are indeed prone to the criticism discussed in the previous section, particularly in regards to the issues of displacement and gentrification.

The issue of iconic architecture, which is the focus of this research, is almost always discussed under the paradigms of the first trend of literature mentioned here. The productive aspects of architecture — e.g., architectural markets — or employment and labour issues hardly have been the interest of researchers in urban planning or urban geography. The next part discusses the issue of iconic architecture and architecture in more detail.

2.2. Part 2

2.2.1. Iconic Architecture

The production of spectacular and iconic architecture is often understood as a part of the universal trend in city-making that privileges art, culture, and entertainment as instruments of place marketing and urban regeneration. During the past few decades, along with the transformation in the nature of consumer products, which today, in addition to traditional items — such as fashion or food — encompass the consumption of experiences, entertainment, identities (Evans, 2003) and spaces (Sklair, 2017), marketing strategies have also transcended its traditional boundries and and have increasingly permeated into other areas, notably into the realms of city-making (Evans, 2003). Besides, during the past few decades, the urban material landscape has increasingly taken the place of other cultural means as the primary source of cities' visual representation — particularly photography and cinema (Zukin, 1995). As a result, the urban built environment has become the focus of attention of marketing activities and has given rise to what Evans (2003) recognizes as "hard branding" strategies. The increasing interest in iconic architecture can be understood as a subset of *hard-branding* strategies, which aim to push cities' material landscape into the spheres of image-based advertisement:

> Hard branding the city through cultural flagship and festival has created a form of karaoke architecture where it is not important how well you can sing, but that you do it with verve and gusto. (Evans 2003, p. 417)

By aestheticizing cities' built environment, urban actors hope to further capitalize on the

collective consumption of experience and entertainment in cities. Harvey (2009) describes this process as "Disneyfication" of urban space, which includes the marketing of places through standardization and symbolization of landscapes and the provision of simulated experience in a fetishized environments that, despite mimicking the reality, are highly organized, ordered, clean, predictable, safe, and therefore ideal for consumption activities (Harvey, 2009). The ultimate goal is to promote the city as a desirable destination for the "visitor class" (Eisinger, 2000), including tourists, middle-class with enough disposable income to spend in urban festivals and sports events, professional attendees to conventions, and consumers of art and entertainment. In such context, the importance of city's built environment has continuously escalated.

The proliferation of iconic architecture resonates with the prevalence of neoliberal approaches in urban governance and the rise of urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989). In the context of a zero-sum global urban competition for resources (Harvey, 1989), iconic buildings help cities become more recognizable for the purpose of commerce, tourism, investment (Sklair, 2017). Some of the most prominent global have considered iconic architecture a prime strategy of urban intervention (Sklair, 2005). Particularly, post-industrial cities that struggle with the challenges of urban decay have frequently deployed this strategy as a viable solution to revitalize their declining urban spaces. Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao is probably the most prominent of such attempts. "Bilbao effect" refers to the "success story" (Ponzini, 2010) of mobilizing spectacular architecture as a catalyst for economic development, urban regeneration, and city-branding. Although this simplistic narrative, which frames Frank Gehry's spectacular design at the centre of all planning attainments, has been previously disputed on different grounds (e.g.,

Ponzini, 2010), in the early 2000s, it dominated the public discourse about urban regeneration and had a tremendous effect on urban decision-makers, who since then have been trying to imitate Bilbao's success in other contexts.

What is iconic architecture?

Despite the frequent use of the terms *iconic architecture* and *iconic building* in academic, professional and mainstream publications, these terms have been rarely articulated with precision (Sklair, 2017). Different studies in this area might adopt from a variety of other terms, such as *starchitecture (star-architecture)*, *signature architecture* or *celebrity architecture,* which, although point to more or less the same issue, might offer slightly different orientations or differ in some elements. To retain the originality of the works that are cited here and to facilitate manoeuvring between different perspectives that each study implies, this work occasionally slips between these different vocabularies; nevertheless, it remains mostly loyal to Sklair's articulation of iconic architecture (2017).

Sklair and Gherardi (2012) delineate "iconic architecture" as a building or space that not only has distinctive symbolic and aesthetic significance, but is also famous. This fame or reputation — the iconic meaning — is something to be constructed socially; therefore, it necessarily would find different scales of reception. While some icons enjoy global reputations, some might be known only at national or local levels (Sklair, 2017). Similarly, icons in specific fields, for example those of professional architects, might remain relatively unknown to the general public.

Iconic architecture is closely linked to the phenomenon of celebrity architects. In fact,

without the collaboration of celebrity architects, achieving an iconic status is sometimes impossible. Indeed, in some cases, iconic meaning transcends the actual building or space and becomes ascribed to celebrity architects. An example is Frank Gehry, whose buildings are not always iconic because of their aesthetic or spectacular significance; rather in many cases, it is the architect's reputation that grants iconic meaning to the building (Sklair, 2017).

Iconic architecture is a "truly globalized business" (Sklair, 2017, p. 43). Not only does economic globalization mobilize different commercial potentials that encourage the production of iconic buildings but the realization of such buildings has become possible only through the capacities that "generic globalization" provides (Sklair, 2017). As an example, Sklair (2017) discusses the importance of the electronic revolution and the advancement of computer-aided-design (CAD) technologies, without which the design and construction of many contemporary icons, such as the Sydney Opera house, would not have been possible (Sklair, 2010). In another study, Nastasi (2020) explains how the production of spectacular architecture is intertwined with the circulation and repetition of photographic images on a global scale, which is only actualized by the advancement of information technology and the emergence of World Wide Web. In another example, Wang (2020) discusses different ways iconic architecture and mass-tourism are in tight relationship, and in fact, he describes them as "two sides of one coin" (Wang, 2020, p. 321).

The representational and the symbolic dimensions of iconic architecture are understood to be serving the interest of the capitalist class. Jencks (2006) explains that with the decline of

traditional sources of power — particularly state and religion — whose dominance were often manifested in monumental structures, iconic architecture became the representation of the dominance of the contemporary powerful class, i.e., the capitalist class. Along the same lines, Spencer (2016) deploys the theory of folds and patterning to illustrate how the aesthetic, semiotic, and symbolic elements of iconic buildings are expressive of cultural and ideological values of neoliberalism, which is the blue-print for contemporary capitalist developments[5].

Who builds Icons?

Many authors have previously discussed how at different moments in history, political and economic powers have mobilized various types of architecture to exert their power and maintain their interest in society (e.g., Bentmann & Muller, 1992; Dovey, 1999; see also the following section). Recently, iconic architecture has become at the centre of attention of such inquiries, which explore different ways iconic architecture serve the goals of those who commission it. For example, Ponzini (2014) reveals how incorporating celebrity architects can help urban boosters and developers to facilitate or fast-track bureaucratic and political procedures. Patterson (2015), in another example, illustrates that public institutions, by planning and constructing iconic buildings, acquire and maintain legitimacy and often enhance their political status. Moreover, Iconic architecture has a significant influence in stimulating consumer behaviours and promoting the "cultural-ideology of consumerism" (2010). While the benefits of such trait are immediately evident in cases of shopping malls, hotels or boutiques, which are spaces built for consumer

[5] Nevertheless, the author finds it difficult to agree with Spencer's conception of neoliberalism itself.

activities, it also makes iconic architecture a persuasive treatment for buildings with other functions, for example, cultural buildings, museums, and performance facilities. Iconic architecture can help art and cultural organizations transform their more or less public spaces into spaces of consumption (Sklair, 2010). Cultural organizations, which, as a result of the prevalence of neoliberal strategies, have been forced to reduce their reliance on public support and find new sources of income, are increasingly interested in capitalizing on consumer behaviours and therefore, they are eager to mobilize iconic architecture as a booster of their — newly adopted — entrepreneurial roles. Indeed, such organizations are proven to be among the primary patrons of iconic buildings (Patterson, 2012, 2015).

In general, however, some (Jones, 2009; Sklair, 2017) argue that iconic architecture in the era of capitalist globalization is one way of making broader political and economic projects socially meaningful, and In this process, numerous actors, across multiple scales, could be involved. Although some actors, such as urban boosters, place marketers, and tourism industries seem to be the obvious beneficiaries of the proliferation of iconic buildings, the actual network of actors and agents is immensely broader and more complex. This study attempts to dive into the labyrinthine network of the drivers of iconic architectural projects.

While nobody can claim that a unique pattern of actors is responsible for producing iconic buildings in every context, understanding iconic architecture as a global phenomenon has opened up space for a universal framing of the issue. In this regard, Sklair (2005) argues that the primary drivers of iconic architecture are the same as the main drivers of contemporary capitalist

globalization, whom he introduces as the "transnational capitalist class" (hereafter TCC). Sklair (2005) portrays the TCC as constituted by four fractions: the owners and operators of transnational corporations (corporate fraction), globalizing politicians and bureaucrats (state fraction), globalizing professionals (technical fraction), merchants, media and advertising agents (consumerist fraction). He argues that iconic architecture is a major instrument for maintaining the TCC's interest in cities' built environment, for example, by promoting the culture-ideology of consumerism (Sklair, 2010). Chapter Four will illustrate that by the turn of the millennium in Toronto, the four fractions of the TCC were at full gear to re-brand the city as a global cultural capital. They pursued this goal through a significant investment in the city's cultural infrastructure. However, in contrast to Sklair's claim, the TCC did not exhibit a consistent approach in mobilizing iconic buildings in the course of this development. This inconsistency becomes an entry point for learning more about the phenomena of iconic architecture and the social function of architecture in general.

2.2.2. Architecture

Investigating the phenomenon of iconic architecture requires us also to discuss the profession of architecture as a field of production of culture; especially since some scholars have previously warned about the over-concentration of studies in this area on the cases of iconic buildings without considering the broader social function of the architectural practice as a whole (Jones, 2009; Lieto, 2020). The following section gives a more comprehensive view of the practice of architecture. It discusses the role of this practice in political and economic projects and reflects

on the function of the architectural profession as a cultural arena.

Architecture is the practice of "framing the habitat of everyday life, both literally and discursively" (Dovey, 2005, p. 291), which leaves this profession with almost no zone of neutrality (Dovey, 2005). Relative to other cultural practices, the architectural practice is considered to be "the least autonomous" (Frampton, 1991, p. 17):

> The hypothetical autonomy of any given practice is relatively delimited by the sociocultural context in which this practice unfolds. That this societal limitation is apparently greater in architecture than any other art suggests that we should distinguish precisely between the province of architecture and the province of art. It is necessary to note that, unlike all other forms of so-called fine art, architecture mixes with that which the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl identified as the 'life-world,' and it is this irreducible condition that sets obvious limits on the autonomy of the field (Frampton, 1991, p. 18).

The fact that architects, for practising their job, are always dependant on commissions that they receive from the economically powerful distinguishes this group from many other cultural producers. While a writer without a publisher can still write or a painter without an order can still paint, architects can practice only after — and upon — their clients' patronage (Dovey, 1999; Gutman, 1992; Jones, 2009). As Dovey (1999) clearly puts, "the architectur[al] practice exists only in alliance with those who control land and resources" (p. 183).

Although within the field of architecture — e.g., architecture theory or history— the profession's relationship with sources of power and capital is seldom addressed explicitly (Jones, 2009), some — often from other fields of study — have attempted to explore varying ways that those in power can exploit the representational aspects of architecture as a resource. Bentmann

and Muller (1992) are presumably the first to systematically discuss the hegemonic function of architecture in capitalist society in their book "Villa as a Hegemonic Project," published in 1971. In the context of 16th-century northern Italy, Bentmann and Muller explain how a renowned architect helped to mobilize the symbolic and aesthetic means of architecture to retain the interest of a specific class in the society and illustrate how a building type — villa — preserved, reproduced and strengthened the society's class structures and divisions. Since then, other scholars have extended this vision and examined how different architectural styles could function as instruments of maintaining the social order. For example, Dovey (1999) illustrates how the Nazis in Hitler's era deployed the symbolic potentials of monumental neoclassic architecture to legitimatize tyranny; He also explains how power hierarchies were signified through the spatial design of Germany's public and governmental buildings. Moreover, the extensive body of literature developed around the issue of iconic architecture (see the previous section) could be understood as the extension of the same line of inquiry that focuses on the exploitation of more contemporary forms of architectural practice.

Despite different attempts to challenge the asocial conceptions of architecture and foreground the political and economic forces behind this practice, still — particularly among those who frame the issue from political-economic standpoints — few have examined the specifics of the architectural practice as a cultural field (Jones, 2009). However, it is often through the function of the architectural practice as a field of cultural production that it is most effectively appropriated by the powerful, which is why the cultural specifics of this practice are understood to be the source of its "deepest power" (Dovey, 2005, p. 291). Dovey (1999, 2010) explains the

issue by distinguishing between what he calls the "noisy complicity" and the "silent complicity" of architecture.

Architecture frames the habitat of everyday life, and buildings necessarily enable or constrain spatial practices, actions and experiences (Dovey, 2010). For example, the control over access to a bedroom might enable certain behaviours, such as resting or intimate sexual behaviours, while an open plan constraints such acts but liberates other experiences. In addition, architecture has the potential to form a representational world, through which certain forms of identity and place are maintained or authorized (Dovey, 2010). Such issues, which often become the topic of interest in political-economic studies, all indicate the complicity of architecture in maintaining the social order, but a complicity that is not silent, i.e. a "noisy complicity."

When structures become embedded in the frameworks of everyday life, they function more effectively while they become less contestable. Architecture helps to diffuse structures and representations of social practice into everyday life — i.e. noisy complicity — and still, it has the capacity to regard itself as neutral and objective. This illusion of neutrality is the foundation of what Dovey (2005, 2010) understands as architecture's "deepest power" (Dovey, 2005, p. 291), the "silent complicity" of architecture:

> Like the frame of a painting or the binding of a book, architecture is mostly cast as necessary yet neutral to the life within. This relegation of built form to the unquestioned frame is its silent complicity. (Dovey, 2005, p. 291)

Along with studies developed in political economy spheres (e.g., Ponzini, 2010, 2014; Sklair, 2017), this work aims to explore links between the practice of architecture and sources of power

and capital (the *noisy complicity*), at the same time, it seeks to unveil various forms of deception that are at work to obfuscate the view to such links, or in other words, interrogate the *silent complicity* of architecture. Various factors are involved in generating the *silent complicity* of architecture. The nature of place and built environment as the taken-for-granted frame of everyday life (Dovey, 2010) and the specifics of the architectural practice as a field of production of culture — including the fact that architects are "inextricably enmeshed in practices of symbolic domination" (Dovey, 2010, p. 38) — are among the major constituents of the *silent complicity*. Taking the practice of culture producers for granted and assuming that cultural actors operate from a completely neutral stance are understood to be the most effective way to disguise the complicity of cultural actors and imbue their work with a sense of legitimacy (Dovey, 2005; Jones, 2009; Stevens, 1996).

As mentioned above, within the field of architecture, the profession's relationship with sources of power and capital is rarely discussed explicitly. Instead, different issues are often recast into architectural discourses, which are predominantly built on aesthetic- and semiotic-oriented rhetorics. Framing the role of architects as artists who are only responsible for producing aesthetically and socially meaningful forms helps cultural actors in this field — e.g., architects — to distance themselves from accusations of complicity; also, it diverts attention from the significant influence of political and economic forces in shaping the architectural practice. Elaborating on this issue, many (Jones, 2009; Dovey, 2005; Stevens, 1996) refer to the works of Pierre Bourdieu, who investigates the operation of power in cultural spheres.

2.2.3. The Theory of Practice

Although Bourdieu in his writings does not directly discuss the issues of architecture and built environment, others (e.g., Dovey, 1999, 2005, 2010; Jones, 2009; Stevens, 1996) have developed his theoretical frameworks in this area. These scholars have particularly deployed Bourdieu's conceptions of *habitus* and *field* and consistently emphasize the importance of conceptualizing architecture as a *field* rather than a profession, as the latter often leads to "value-laden discussions that obscure more than they reveal" (Jones, 2009, p. 2522).

Field

The conception of *field* allows discussing the operation of power within a given social space and, simultaneously, it captures how a social space is connected to or detached from other spaces (Jones, 2009). For Bourdieu, society is constructed of various overlapping *fields,* such as the *field* of education or the *field* of religions and the like. He articulates the notion of *field* as a "veritable social universe where, in accordance with particular laws, there accumulates a particular form of capital and where relations of force of a particular type are exerted" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 27). To him, the *field* of social practice is like a game board where agents are positioned with certain forces available and resources at stake in any given moment (Dovey 2005). His conception implies two aspects: first, a battlefield, i.e. the *field* is a site of struggle, where agents compete to control resources; and second, *field* as a place in which forces operate on its members. Therefore, in a *field*, while members exert forces proportionate to the status and capital they possess, the dynamics of the *field* also shape and condition the values and practices

of those who are engaged within that social space (Jones, 2009; Stevens, 1996).

Here, it is essential to mention that Bourdieu's understanding of capital has a broader meaning than the general conception, which often perceives capital as an economic matter. Bourdieu in his work defines various forms of capital, including economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). In his later works, he also develops the notion of symbolic capital that could involve anything, including any form of capital mentioned above. In each *field,* a particular type of capital is accumulated, which sometimes might be only valuable among the members of that specific social space. The value of the *fields'* specific capital depends on the state of the whole, and is subject to devaluation or revaluation as the state of the *field* changes.

Understanding architecture as a *field* means to think of the architectural community as the occupants of a social space, structured by relations between them and by the amount and type of capital possessed by them. Every individual who can produce an effect in a *field* is considered within that *field*. Therefore, the *field* of architecture comprises, for example, architects, critics, academicians, historians, builders, clients, financial institutions, and those parts of the state that are concerned with construction (Stevens, 1996). The position of members depends on the amount of capital and resources that each control, therefore, their status is always a relational matter and can not be defined in absolute terms.

Habitus

The conception of *field* is linked with another central concept in Bourdieu's work: the notion of "habitus" (e.g., Bourdieu, 1990). *Habitus* is constituted of a set of dispositions that incline

agents to act or react in certain ways. Such dispositions shape practices and perceptions that deem to be "regular" without being formally governed or coordinated (Painter, 2000). Hillier and Rooksby (2005) describe it as "a sense of one's (and other's) place and role in the world of one's lived environment" (p. 21). If the *field* is a board game, *habitus* is the product of a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 66). Within each *field*, dominant values, practices and tastes are to be learnt, internalized and embodied by individual agents, who have a feel for the game, and in turn, those agents will maintain the boundaries of the *field* and further reproduce those values. Therefore, practices in a *field* do not arise simply from rational calculations, nor are they the outcome of a top-down implementation of broader forces; rather, they become subject to the operation of embodied dispositions that constitute a *habitus* within a particular *field*. *Habitus* in Bourdieu's words (1990) is defined as:

> a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations [...]. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor (p. 53).

Sayer (2005) develops the concept of *habitus* further to theorize the notion of "class."[6] He considers *habitus* a subjective experience that is "deeply embodied at the level of unarticulated feelings and emotions" (Sayer, 2005). While some might argue that decisions informed by *habitus* might not be fully conscious — such as how this concept has evolved in psychology (e.g., Stam, 2009) — theorists in social science often reject reducing the dispositions derived from a *habitus* to mere conditioning. Sayer uses the example of traffic light and argues that while

[6] Bourdieu himself often uses this concept to address issues related to social class.

drivers become habituated to stop at the red light, their reaction is still a "conscious deliberation" (Sayer, 2005); they stop because they see the point of doing so. Although some conditioning might be involved in this process, it is important to acknowledge that *habitus* generates "meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions" (Bourdieu & Nice, 2010, p. 170).

Autonomy

Each *field* enjoys a certain level of "autonomy" from other *fields*. If *field* is a board game, *autonomy* is the capacity of those within the *field* to establish the "rules of the game" (Jones, 2009, p. 2522). *Autonomy* is not a total rejection of other *fields;* neither does it means that a *field* is completely free from constraints. A *field* always exists in a broader social context and might overlap with other fields whose forces might condition it. Particularly Bourdieu's conception of "heteronomy" (1993) tries to capture how the field's internal forces could adopt the logic of superior fields. This issue finds importance especially in understanding how cultural fields are affected by the laws of the fields that encompass them, especially fields of power, politics, class relation and the like (e.g., Bourdieu, 1993). In fact, *heteronomy* and *autonomy* are two opposite sides within a field, where the former represent the influence of the superior field on the field's internal rules and logic, and the latter represent forces that often work in opposition to the effect of the superior field. However, scholars who conceptualize the architectural practice as a cultural field have shown that even the autonomy in the field of architecture could be implicitly at the service of political and economic powers — which are external to the field.

Autonomy rests on the *field*'s capacity to translate the external forces and values into the

field's own internal logic. It is, in fact, the *fields'* ability to recast and refract (Jones, 2009). The *fields' autonomy* — or as Dovey (2005) puts, the illusion of autonomy — creates the sense that the *fields'* specific capital, which is most valuable within the *field*, is not instrumentally reducible to the external ones. This, in turn, maintains the sense that what is consecrated by the *field* is worth "playing" for (Jones, 2009).

Architecture, like other cultural *fields*, is a "reflexive field" (Jones, 2009) with technical language and specialized rhetorics and vocabularies that enable its members to discuss architectural objects in isolation from other kinds of objects. The specialized language helps to consolidate the *fields'* internal rules and rationality. Therefore the *field of* architecture has the capacity to translate the external imperatives to internal values and practices and maintain a sense of *autonomy*. *Autonomy* helps to recast the "symbiotic" relationship (Jones, 2009) between architecture and sources of power and capital into distinct sets of architectural values and practices. It pushes the political-economy questions to the background and enables architects to avoid such challenges by emphasizing their role as — for example — artists who are primarily engaged in production of aesthetically or socially meaningful forms (Jones, 2009).

Critical studies have consistently called for stripping architecture from the illusion of *autonomy* (e.g., Dovey, 1999, 2005; Frampton, 1991). However, discussing manifestations of architecture's *autonomy*, those studies often content with challenging architecture's celebration of itself as an art arena or questioning architects' emphasis on aesthetic and semiotic aspects of their work. On this point, the best example is the collection of studies developed around the topic of

iconic architecture, which were discussed in the previous section. This work, however, argues that aesthetic and semiotic aspects of architecture are not the only means for maintaining a sense of *autonomy*. By conducting a case study, it shows that manoeuvring around technicalities of architectural design and signifying the functional aspects of architectural projects can also create the illusion of *autonomy*, which not only helps the architects to exonerate themselves from accusations of complicity it also provides their clients with enough legitimacy to justify their political economy projects — i.e. *silent complicity* of architecture.

As discussed, iconic architecture is frequently understood to be an instrument of retaining the interest of the contemporary dominant class (Sklair, 2005), especially since its aesthetic and semantic measures serve to promote the culture-ideology of consumerism (Sklair, 2010) and neoliberalism (D. Spencer, 2016). This conception might raise the idea that a counter position to the trend of iconic architecture would be in violation of the capitalist interest. By investigating the development of an architecturally significant project in Toronto, which seems to be an antithetical case to the trend of iconic architecture, this work explores the extent to which this argument might be valid. In order to explore various interests at stake, it undertakes a form of *field* analysis. It aims to account simultaneously the interest of political and economic powers and different aspects of the complicity of architecture that often remain unexplored due to the disinterest of the architectural discussions (Dovey, 2005).

3. CHAPTER THREE | METHODOLOGY

3.1. A Reflection

During the past few decades, influenced by the critiques of feminist and post-structuralist scholars, human geography has been retreating from doctrines of scientific objectivity and "god trick" epistemology (Haraway, 1988), and instead, it has embraced the idea of partiality of knowledge (Haraway, 1988). In this process, the roles of both researcher and research participants have been revisited, and as a result, today, urban geographers increasingly recognize their subjectivity in the production of knowledge (Trauger & Fluri, 2014). Approaches like self-reflexivity have prevailed in the academic arena as a way to remain ethical and responsible to society. However, self-reflexivity is not an approach without limits or challenges. In fact, self-reflexivity without a broader agenda not only becomes extravagant and "meaningless," (Kobayashi, 2003) but also endangers researchers to slip into the spheres of self-indulgence (Kobayashi, 2003). Keeping this threat in mind, following, I present a brief introduction of myself as an architectural practitioner in order to show how my background relates me to this

research project and how it informs the path to develop the work; and simultaneously, I discuss the complexities and contradictions that arise out of this subjectivity.

Since graduating from architectural school, I have been practising as a designer in different occupations, most of them closely tied to the construction industry. As a practitioner, my everyday life is saturated with the recurrence of a series of contrasting sceneries. As part of my work, each day, I am mandated to coordinate the consumption of an enormous amount of material while simultaneously sending loads of demolition residue to land fields. On construction sites, it is not rare to meet workers, some of whom are from the least advantaged of society and barely able to negotiate the least of their rights — e.g., non-literate or non-status migrants; and on the other hand, catching up with clients often involves dealing with prosperous individuals, affluent families, and the so-called elites. Architectural professionals are themselves among the extremely overworked and underpaid labourers, and unsurprisingly, they are among the least organized workforce (Jessel, 2018); and still, in organizing professional gatherings around design competitions and splendid presentation sessions, the architectural community could be considered one of the most active communities. Standing at a juncture as such and exposure to a juxtaposition of contrasting sceneries, which I could hardly comprehend their relationship as a whole, spurred me to learn more about the frameworks of my profession; especially since the architecture school — which is barely interested in discussing the social function of architecture — had little taught me about how the profession relates me to the broader society. Therefore, my primary motivation to conduct this research was a personal enthusiasm to comprehend a broader view of the apparatuses, in which I had a part myself. In this work, I seek to understand

how architecture works in its different roles as an industry, a professional field and a site of cultural production. I question how these roles are related to each other and to their surrounding.

Unfortunately, the profession of architecture is rarely receptive toward critical questioning, especially when such questions come from architecture practitioners or students, who are expected to be always passionate about their field of work. In an architecture studio — either academic or professional — expressions of dissatisfaction or discomfort are often associated with the inability to grasp the essence of architecture or failure to be inspired by something that everyone else is passionate about — not having a *feel for the game*, as Bourdieu would have put it. In other words, dissatisfaction and criticism could cost one to be alienated from the field of architecture itself (Adjustments Agency, 2019). Fortunately, during my time at architecture school and later in my career, I was received as a competent practitioner. A couple of design awards helped me to build up my confidence, take my discomfort with the profession more seriously and develop a critical manner toward the frameworks of the practice. In fact, ironically, my primary source of confidence were rooted in the same structures of which I was critical. Without the satisfactory performance within those structures, my initial steps toward critical skepticism would never have ensued. This irony shapes an ambiguous aspect of my subjectivity as a researcher.[7]

To step beyond mere abstraction, in this work, I adopt the framework of a case study and

[7] Along the course of this research a strong feeling of alienation from the field of professional architecture grew in and around me. Discussing how and why such feelings are shaped are beyond the purpose of this research, but it is an interesting topic for future investigations.

focus on investigating the development of a contemporary place-based urban development in Toronto. Despite having a more or less clear objective — that of investigating the role of cultural actors in directing urban developments — my path to select an appropriate case study was hardly straightforward. After a few unsuccessful attempts in the province of Quebec — which were cause mostly due to language restrictions — I decided to expand my area of investigation to the English-speaking regions of Canada. In 2019, I moved to Toronto and started learning more about the city and studying its urban history. This was almost[8] my first encounter with Toronto, both as a researcher and a resident. I narrowed down the scope of my navigation for selecting the case through a few rounds of archival research, which will be elaborated in the next section.

In the current work, the necessary information for selecting and investigating the case is gathered through several rounds of archival research and interviewing. In addition, inspired by studies conducted under the rubric of *cultural-political-economy* (Jones, 2009), which allow discourse-based approaches to be incorporated in investigating various political-economic projects, this work adopts a discursive approach to analyze the data. In what follows, some theoretical and practical aspects of recruiting each of these methods are discussed.

3.2. Archival research

Simultaneous with studying Toronto's urban history, I conducted an initial round of archival research to familiarize myself with the most recent developments in the city, particularly the ones with a cultural theme. The review focused on official publications dating from the 1990s to 2018 and included reports, plans and proposals conducted by different levels of the Canadian

[8] Previously, I had experienced the city from a touristic point of view.

government and their affiliated organizations. The extent of the review was later narrowed down to the Cultural Renaissance development, and eventually, three of the subset projects executed by the AGO, ROM and COC were selected as the cases of this research. Since the two cases of AGO and ROM were extensively discussed in Matt Patterson's works (2012, 2015, 2019), in this study, I primarily concentrated on the third case, the COC's new opera house. By conducting a second round of archival research, which concentrated on the main-stream newspapers and major periodicals, I aimed to catch up with the project's story, lay down its time-line, and identify its critical actors. Accessed through the Factiva database, I consistently reviewed every article about the opera house — over 240 articles — dated between 2000 to 2007, in the following publications:

Local publications: *Toronto Star, Toronto Life, The Toronto Sun, Daily Commercial News and Construction Record*

National and International publications: *Globe and Mail, The Canadian Press, National Post, The Wall Street Journal, Canada News Wire.*

Throughout the research, I learned about the long history of the organization's endeavour to build an Opera house, dating back to the 1970s. To get a better picture of this history, I had to expand the scope of the archival review. I used an ad-hoc searching method to trace the critical moments of COC's journey since that time. This increased the number of reviewed articles to over 320 articles.

Furthermore, by extending the domain of the archival review to more specialized types of

publications, I tried to understand the vantage point of selected communities — engaged in specific cultural fields — and evaluated their influence in directing the public discourse and shaping the development. This third round of the archival research reviewed two groups of specialized media, which frequently reported on the developments of COC's new opera house. The first group consisted of certain music and performing art publications, such as *Opera Canada*, *Opera*, and *Dancing Times*, and the other included architecture and design publications, such as *The Canadian Architect*, *Canadian interior* and *Azure*. These publications were identified and accessed through various specialized databases; for instance, I selected the architectural articles by using "Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals" or "Design and applied arts index (DAAI)" and accessed most of those through different ProQuest platforms. In addition, since some Canadian architecture critics frequently published their reviews in mainstream publications, such as *The Globe and Mail*, I included those articles as part of the specialized architectural data as well.

During each stage of the archival research, I collected a list of individuals who were related in any way to the COC's development and had the potential to provide insights into the processes of planning, design and execution of the project. The list included the actors who were directly involved in the process, such as members of the COC's administration and staff, certain directors and elected officials at the city of Toronto and the Ontario government, financial patrons and philanthropists, contractors and professionals who were commissioned to contribute to the project, and other individuals who might have influenced the process indirectly, such as the members of a certain campaign that opposed some of the organization's decisions. This list was

my primary source for selecting the participants for interviewing in the next stage.

3.3. Interview

Based on the information collected through different phases of archival research, I conducted a series of in-depth interviews with influential actors. It is important to note that the beginning of the interviewing phase did not mean that the archival work had ended; instead, these two methods complemented each other along the way, and in fact, it was the back and forth between the two that helped me verify the validity of the information, or grasp the importance of each part (McDowell, 2010).

Qualitative or in-depth interviewing is probably the most widely employed method for conducting interpretive research (Bryman, 2004). Like other qualitative methods, in-depth interviewing aims for a profound understanding of issues. It prioritizes depth and details over coverage and breadth and provides adequate space for the expression of emotions and probing of meaning. Such qualities not only distinguish in-depth interviewing from other qualitative methods, but make it a crucial tool for investigating complex social processes and contradictory experiences (McDowell, 2010). In-depth interviewing focuses on respondents' point of view rather than on researchers' presumptions and projections— which is the case in more quantitative methodologies (Bryman, 2004). In fact, in conducting an in-depth interview, the goal is to understand how the participants grasp the issue and how they frame the events. Realizing this goal requires a flexible framework that allows the researcher to follow the respondent's leads and explore unforeseen paths that might come up during the interview (Bryman, 2004).

Depending on the research agenda, the form of in-depth interviewing could vary. The researcher can choose from an array of approaches, ranging from semi-structured to unstructured formats. While semi-structured interviewing follows a series of specific questions, an unstructured interview resembles a casual conversation. In either case, remaining open and flexible is more important than being loyal to the form of the interview (Bryman, 2004). In this regard, considering some practical tips, like posing open-ended questions, varying the order of questions, or following up new leads, could be helpful (Bryman, 2004).

Thanks to the work of feminist and post-structuralist critics in the past few decades, today, interviewing is no longer considered an objective method of research; instead, it is primarily understood as a form of social encounter, which means that the extension of existing social constructions could persist in an interview space (McDowell, 2010). In other words, interviewing can be charged with different social complexities, including the issues of gender, class, race, and power dynamics (McDowell, 2010). In the context of the current fieldwork, which entails investigating the performance of some high-rank directors, influential technocrats and prosperous professionals, the issue of power seems to require more attention and particularly discussing the dynamics of power between the researcher and participants merit more elaboration.

While the dynamics of power in each fieldwork is specific and requires its particular elaboration and discussions, some scholars have argued that interviewing powerful participants (or elites) entails specific challenges and dilemmas that are often underrepresented in

methodological literature (e.g., Bradshaw, 2001; Kezar, 2003), especially since the culture of "studying up" has never prevailed in the academic environment (Kezar, 2003; see also Trauger & Fluri, 2014). Interviewing elites is most commonly associated with three major problems: the issue of access, the issue of dissemination, and the manipulation of information by the participants (e.g., Bradshaw, 2001; Oglesby, 2010). However, in regards to addressing these challenges, the methodological literature is far from being consistent. In fact, solutions and recommendations offered in this literature often rest on researchers' personal preference rather than any concrete framework, to the extent that some even argue that wavering of ethical conducts might be legitimate for investigating elites (G. Spencer, 1982). Facing such ambiguity, this work tends to turn toward a post-structuralist reading of the issue proposed by Katherine Smith (2006).

Smith (2006) elaborates on the issue by problematizing the methodological literature on two grounds. Despite acknowledging the challenges raised above, Smith objects to the claim that such challenges are specific to elite interviewing. Instead, by reviewing different examples, she illustrates that such dynamics could persist in other research projects with participants who are not necessarily identified as elites (see Smith, 2006). In addition, Smith argues that categorizing the participants into two clear groups of elite and non-elites — which relies on a structuralist conception of the notion of power — not only conceals the differences within the groups of participants but also ignores the extent of diversity of research experience in different contexts. This is why she advises that researchers adopt a more nuanced approach to power dynamics in the course of interviewing:

> [...], what is missing from much of the available interview guidance is a consideration of the complexity of power relations within the process of interviewing as a whole, combined with a full acknowledgement of the impossibility of knowing the outcomes of particular approaches in advance. (Smith, 2006, p. 649)

Interviewing in this work

Interviewing in this work was gravely affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since early 2020, The Canadian Opera Company — the main subject of this investigation — started cancelling all its programs and went into a semi-closed status. As a result, contacting the organization and its directors and staff became quite difficult, and after a while, almost impossible. Throughout the year 2020, my emails and phone calls to the company were only responded to by weeks of delay. Although everyone was expecting that by 2021 the company's public relations might improve, time proved the opposite, and in 2021, without any notice, my only correspondent at the company stopped responding to my emails. Similarly, despite several attempts to contact the Joan Baillie Archives — the organization's archive — I never received any reply. Unofficially I was informed that there might have been no archivists employed at the time in the company. The organization never put me in touch with any of its board members or directors. From a long list of potential participants — which I had sent as part of my request package to the organization — I was provided with only one individual's contact information. This individual was contracted to manage the development while the opera house was under construction, and although her contribution was informative in many ways, it never gave me any insight into the company's internal relations. As well, my requests for reaching out to opera composers or artists remained unanswered. Whether the organization's aversion to participating

in this research was the consequence of pandemic restrictions or it was the company's general approach to public relations remains a question for future investigation.

As with the case of the Opera Company, my requests to philanthropists' organizations also went unanswered. However, in the case of the philanthropists, the problem of accessing elites (Smith, 2006) might be more of an issue since the influence of pandemic restriction on such organizations was modest compared to what organizations like the Opera Company experienced.

The participants most responsive to my requests were from Diamond Schmitt Architects — the firm in charge of designing Toronto's opera house. I talked to two principal architects in this firm, who eagerly responded to my call and provided me with valuable information. To compensate for the lack of contribution from the other parties, I had to rely more on archival materials. In addition, since at the time of conducting the research some of the key actors were deceased, relying on archival material became an almost unavoidable approach. Therefore, in many cases, I tried to understand the position of certain actors through their interactions with the media. In some instances, this approach also helped me to represent a more firsthand account of some actors since I could quote them more directly through their previous interviews with the press.

4. CHAPTER FOUR | THE CASE

By the turn of the millennium, art and culture became increasingly central to Toronto's planning schemes. The city experienced a surge of public expenditures in such areas, and particularly, between 2002 to 2007, through a substantial investment in Toronto's cultural infrastructure, several cultural venues were constructed in the city. Since Iconic architecture was a bold theme in some of the developments realized in this period, this research considers three comparable cases of Royal Ontario Museum (hereafter ROM), Art Gallery of Ontario (hereafter AGO), and Canadian Opera Company (hereafter COC) and what they suggest about the phenomenon of iconic architecture. Although these three organizations were funded under the same program and benefited from public support more or less to the same extent, regarding their approach toward iconic architecture, they did not follow a consistent strategy. While the ROM and AGO enthusiastically followed the trend of iconic architecture — which was an up-and-coming trend in developing major public buildings around the world — the COC remained utterly reluctant to collaborate with celebrity architects or build an iconic building. By focusing

on the case of the COC, this chapter poses new questions about the phenomena of iconic architecture and aims to learn more about the broader function of architecture as a cultural field.

Outline

The chapter is structured into three main sections. The first section concisely introduces each case of development, and by highlighting the differences between the cases it poses the research questions. The second section investigates the constellation of forces in the context of which the developments transpire. By reviewing Toronto's urban history of the late twentieth century, it presents a brief picture of the social, political and economic affairs in the region and discusses the emphasis within planning strategies on art and culture by the end of the century. It concentrates on a significant investment in Toronto's cultural infrastructure, commonly known as the Cultural Renaissance program, and, by introducing various objectives of the investment, it explores how and why iconic architecture was boldly utilized in the course of this program.

The COC's aversion to developing an iconic building seems to be hardly explicable through the theoretical lens offered by urban political economy studies. The third section highlights different inconsistencies that will surface when studying the case of the COC through urban political economy approaches; and subsequently, it tries to transcend the limits of previous studies by investigating the case from more intimate standpoints. By adopting Bourdieu's framework of *habitus* and *field*, the third section explores how the agency exercised by various actors across various social spaces shapes the COC's trajectory and how this development transpires at the interplay of multiple *fields*.

4.1. Three Development Projects in Toronto

4.1.1. ROM and AGO

The new extension to the ROM is a sharply angled structure, wrapped with an aluminium and glass facade and juxtaposed to the northern wing of the Victorian brown-stone building, which has been home to the ROM for several decades. Among the public, the new extension has become famous as "the crystal," (e.g., Ross, 2006) referring to the building's unusual quartz-like form, which more than anything is a reminder of the specific style of its internationally renowned architect, Daniel Libeskind. Over the past three decades, Libeskind, by replicating peculiar architectural elements in his designs, particularly in his work for museums and cultural institutions, has successfully established a kind of trademark architectural style for his firm. The Royal Ontario Museum is undeniably one piece of Libeskind's trademark portfolio (Figure. 1 and 2).

Figure. 1. Royal Ontario Museum

Note. Photo by author, July 2021

Figure. 2. Libeskind's trademark designs

Note. from the left, the Denver Art Museum, the Dresden Museum of Military History, London Metropolitan University, adopted from Libeskind studio, https://libeskind.com/

A few blocks toward the south, the AGO is another example of a building that is remembered with the name of its celebrity architect, Frank Gehry. The AGO's expansion comprises a timber structure, presumably a reminder of ancient Roman ships, covered with an undulating glass

facade hanging over Dundas street (Figure. 3). On the rear side — facing Grange park— the building has a more humble presence, as its opaque blue facade seems like an attempt to camouflage the structure against the sky (Figure. 4). Although the AGO's building is criticized for not delivering a sufficiently "Gehry-like" vibe (Conlogue, 2004), its wavy glazing facade still imitates the elements of Gehry's famous masterpieces, particularly the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao.

Figure. 3. Art Gallery of Ontario

Note. Photo by author, July 2021

Figure. 4. Art Gallery of Ontario (rear side)

Note. Photo by author, July 2021

Despite their mutual enthusiasm for collaborating with celebrity architects, the AGO and ROM were in fact pursuing quite distinctive agendas in the early years of the twenty-first century (Patterson, 2015). Just like every other cultural establishment in Toronto, both organizations were affected by the budget cutbacks of the 1990s; nevertheless, the AGO was able to sustain a stream of steadily increasing revenue over the decade. In addition, it had recently secured a generous donation, comprising the worth of $300 million in art collection plus an extra $70 million for constructing an extension to the museum's building to accommodate the new collection. This substantial donation along with the organization's prosperity for more than one decade made the AGO directors confident enough to consider even more ambitious plans and proceed with a comprehensive renovation and expansion scheme. However, the circumstances for the ROM were quite different. By the turn of the century, the Royal Museum was struggling with many fiscal and managerial difficulties. The low rate of visitors, the closure of one entire

section of the museum, and internal disputes among the curators and the directors, all indicated a vibe of crisis around the organization (Patterson, 2015). The ROM's directors, whose performance was under harsh criticism, were seeking a revolutionary agenda to satisfy public expectations and maintain their "legitimacy" (Patterson, 2015).

Regardless of the distinctive nature of challenges that each organization was facing, both organizations eventually deployed one common strategy: hiring a celebrity architect and undertaking an iconic architectural development. And yet, in executing their comparable projects, again, each organization pursued a different path. On the one hand, by holding a design competition, the ROM selected its architect through a more or less transparent approach. Libeskind's striking design could successfully draw public and media attention and sparked considerable excitement around the project; however, by the start of the construction, various revisions to the initial design and several occasions of budget overruns reduced the project's popularity. A particularly low moment of popularity came when the second phase of the project, comprised of a condominium tower that was expected to compensate for part of the construction costs, was revealed and caused severe friction between the museum and the local residents. This second phase was later ceased entirely to defuse the opposition; however, neither the ROM nor Libeskind could re-gain the popularity and respect they had at the beginning of the project (Patterson, 2015).

On the other hand, the AGO followed an almost opposite trajectory. During the initial phases, the directors decided to keep the expansion project an internal secret. However, by the time of

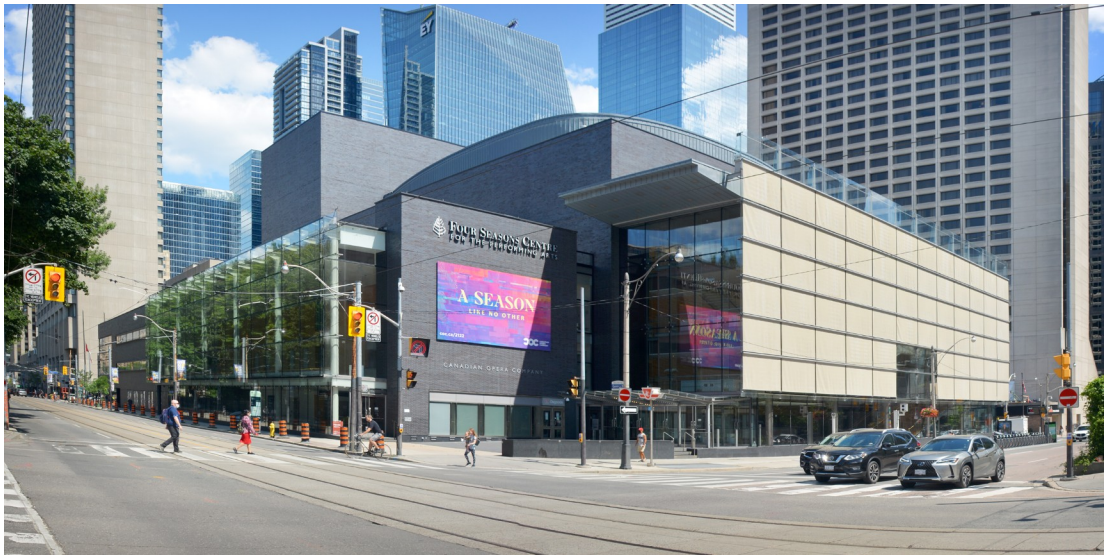
the official announcement of the Culture Renaissance investment, concerns grew about the organization's plan, especially since the AGO had a controversial history with neighbouring residents. The public pressure eventually made the organization reveal its plan. With the collaboration of Gehry's firm, the AGO held several public consultation sessions to address the concerns. The sessions proved to be productive, and based on those meetings, Gehry's team made some revisions to the initial schemes to better fit the design into the local context. The collaboration between the community and the organization was widely applauded, and by the end of the construction, the project was universally and locally acclaimed (e.g., Hume, 2008; Ouroussoff, 2008). Although some would argue that Gehry's design for the AGO "turn[ed] out not to look much like him" (Kennicott, 2008), various architectural critics respected his attitude in prioritizing the context over his "personal ego" (Rochon, 2008).

4.1.2. COC

Within a ten-minute walking distance from the AGO, Toronto's new opera house is built on a former parking lot at the corner of University Avenue and Queen street. Unlike the other two museums, the COC's new facility can be easily overlooked against the background of downtown skyscrapers. Its un-tinted glass curtain walls shy away from having any presence on the street, and its modest grey brick facade could barely attract the spectators' attention (Figure. 5). In fact, modesty is the opera house's distinctive trait among the Cultural Renaissance developments, and sometimes this trait has become a source of controversy and backlash. Since the start of the development, the Opera Company faced harsh criticism from people who deemed the building to

be too "ordinary" or "too modest to be marvellous" (Hume, 2006b). The contestants blamed the new facility for presenting an "uninspired" design (Hume, 2002), compared it with shopping malls and hockey halls (Dickson, 2002), and even mocked it by calling it a "no-frills hall" (Hume, 2002).

Figure. 5. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts



Note. Photo by author, July 2021

Without asserting any judgement about the architectural merits or shortcomings of Toronto's new opera house, what is clear about this structure is that it is far from what one might consider an urban icon or signature architecture. In fact, the main developer of this structure, the COC, never intended to participate in the worldwide competition for constructing spectacular iconic masterpieces. The Opera Company's directors, unlike their counterparts in the AGO and ROM, never considered the strategy of iconic architecture a viable solution, and therefore they were extremely reluctant to collaborate with celebrity architects — an issue that was most clearly

demonstrated in the controversies over incorporating Frank Gehry and will be discussed further in this chapter.

Opera is the art of spectacle; thus, a spectacular design for an opera facility is not an inconceivable idea. The Sydney Opera House is probably the most obvious case in point. Besides, since the early 2000s, several opera houses have been proposed and built around the world, many exhibiting a signature design from a celebrity architect. For example, concurrent with the inauguration of the COC's facility, Valencia opened the doors to its new opera house, designed by Santiago Calatrava. Zaha Hadid also designed a facility in Guangzhou, China, and won another commission in Dubai[9] (see Figure. 6).Yet, in contrast to this trend in iconic opera houses, the COC hired the "Diamond Schmitt Architects," a Toronto-based firm, which, as much as it is known for its sustainable approaches, contextual concerns, and function-oriented designs, is recognized to have a neutral aesthetic taste (e.g., Polo & French, 2016). In an interview, Larry Richard, the former dean of the architecture school at the University of Toronto, introduces Jack Diamond as an architect who prioritizes the "urban fabric" over "landmark" and emphasizes his determination "to have his buildings "be good citizens" by "knitting into the context of the surrounding streets" (Martin, 2003). The COC's choice of architect was, in fact, an indication of its lack of interest in iconic architecture.

[9] Another facility was opened in Oslo, right on the city's harbourfront, as one would say it sought to replicate the Sydney Opera House's vibe. Around the same time, Norman Foster got a commission in Dallas for designing a brand new opera facility, which eventually opened in 2009.

Figure. 6. Opera houses around the world

Note. Two opera facility developed concurrently with the Four Seasons Centre in Toronto.
Left: Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia, designed by Santiago Calatrava and opened in 2006. Adopted from *The futuristic looking Queen Sofia Palace of the Arts* [Photograph], by Mark Henley (2008), ARTstor, (https://library-artstor-org.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/asset/APANOSIG_10313576673), JSTOR Licensed.
Right: Guangzhou Opera House, designed by Zaha Hadid and opened in 2010. Adopted from unspecified title[Photograph], by wyliepoon (2012), Flicker, (https://www.flickr.com/photos/9911655@N08/8487658529), CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

4.1.3. Research Questions

The COC's disinterest in iconic architecture transpired at a time when developing iconic buildings had become a prevalent trend all across the globe, and Toronto was no exception — e.g., cases of AGO, ROM and Ontario College of Art and Design. The worldwide prevalence of iconic buildings was notably manifested in the rise of *Bilbao effect* narratives or in architectural events such as the Pritzker Prize awards (both topics will be discussed further in this chapter). Therefore, the COC's approach in developing the opera house not only was at odds with the strategy of its local rivals — ROM and AGO — but also seemed like a divergence from the predominant trend of developing major cultural buildings at the time. Here, the key questions that this work seeks to answer are as the following:

1- Why was iconic architecture utilized in the course of Toronto's Cultural Renaissance, and how did it resonate with the requirement of this program?

2- In a context so fertile for producing iconic buildings — to which the cases of AGO and ROM can attest — what did discourage the COC from following this prevalent trend of the time?

3- The enthusiasm for iconic architecture in the cases of AGO and ROM on the one hand and the hesitancy of the COC toward this trend on the other present two distanced orientations toward the development of a significant public building. How were these distinct strategies accommodated under one common program?

4.2. Structures

Investigating the context in which Toronto's Cultural Renaissance transpired, this section first reviews Toronto's urban history of the late twentieth century to presents a brief picture of the key social, political and economic trends in the region and discusses different factors that gave rise to a greater interest in art and culture by the end of the century. It then concentrates on the dynamics of the Cultural Renaissance program, and by discussing its various objectives, explores how and why iconic architecture featured centrally in the Cultural Renaissance developments.

4.2.1. Post-Industrial Toronto

Toronto's post-industrial history is a scene of dramatic transition and transformation. During the second half of the twentieth century, almost every aspect of urban life, from social and political dynamics to the city's built environment, was drastically altered. Drawing on the works of Toronto historians (e.g., Boudreau et al., 2009; Careless, 1984; Caulfield, 1994, 2010; Relph, 2014), this section presents a concise picture of transformation, which marks the city's urban history in the late twentieth century.

Toward a Global Economy

In the second half of the twentieth century, Toronto, like many other industrial cities in the Global North, was hit by the general waves of deindustrialization. Nevertheless, in many respects, Toronto's experience of deindustrialization was different from other North American cities, particularly in that, despite the decline in manufacturing, Toronto was able to avoid

plunging into an economic crisis such as what happened in Detroit. This was thanks to the strength of the city's non-manufacturing sectors (Caulfield, 1994, 2010; Relph, 2014). In fact, regardless of the large share of manufacturing in the city's economic profile, Toronto had never become primarily an industrial city. The financial and corporate activities of the pre-industrial time had remained important throughout the industrial era. For instance, during the manufacturing peak decades — between the 1910s and 1940s — Toronto's service sector still accounted for more than one-third of the employment (Caulfield, 1994, 2010). With the loss of manufacturing jobs, employment in white-collar positions started to grow. Deindustrialization was accompanied by the re-emergence of the service sector, which helped the city reclaim its role as a service centre.

Not only did Toronto avoid the widespread crisis that was often brought on by deindustrialization, but it also experienced a period of economic flourish and growth, and soon, by surpassing its rival city, Montreal, it became Canada's financial and corporate heart. Toronto's economic growth was primarily an outcome of the city's increasing participation in processes of economic globalization (Relph, 2014). Indeed, similar to the experience of other global cities, globalization in Toronto led to the escalation of inequalities, the expansion of the wealth gap, and the bifurcation of job markets. Toronto's post-industrial economy was bisected into two distinct — but related — segments: one was comprised of the "prestigious realms" (Caulfield, 2010) of corporate management, finance, media, technology, culture industry and the like, while a second emerged in service sectors with low-wage and part-time jobs — e.g., cleaning and security services in restaurants and hotels — and labourers who were mostly immigrant and

hardly unionized, and basically it served the fortunate occupants of the first segment (Caulfield, 2010).

The bifurcation of the economy severely affected the city's socio-spatial landscape and intensified the polarization among wealthy and low-income neighbourhoods. While the number of low-income and disadvantaged neighbourhoods — especially in fringe areas — substantially increased, the share of middle-income neighbourhoods shrank (Hulchanski, 2007).

Diversity

The transition to a new global economy was not possible without the concentration of an extensive labour market, amassed through numerous waves of immigration. The influx of immigrants during the second half of the twentieth century was another major force that drastically altered the city's social and cultural construction. Although immigration was not a new phenomenon in Toronto, some elements differentiated the immigration patterns after the 1960s from the experience of the earlier decades. Historically and compared to cities like New York or Chicago, Toronto was hardly a welcoming destination for immigrants with non-European origins. Part of the issue was rooted in Canadian immigration policies, which were discriminatory based on race, ethnicity and nationality, and favoured white protestant immigrants with British origins (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002). But, with the liberalization of the immigration policies in the 1960s and 1970s, immigration trends totally reversed. Whereas before the 1960s, over 90% of arriving immigrants were of European origin, in the 1990s, this share plummeted to 20%. Instead, the rate of immigration from other parts of the world increased and those

considered "visible minorities" (McIsaac, 2003) constituted the majority of the arriving population to Toronto (McIsaac, 2003). Over the following decades, the new immigration pattern brought a significant shift in the city's demography. Toronto, which throughout most of its history was known as a traditional white protestant city, became the city with the highest rate of ethnic diversity in the world (Murdie, 2008).

Since the 1970s, various initiatives have tried to adapt the city to this transformation. Different programs and plans were introduced to redefine Toronto's place identity based on the merits of diversity and multiculturalism. Still, the new identity has proven to be vulnerable to different threats, such as policing, racialized poverty, and the commodification of multiculturalism (Boudreau et al., 2009). The fact that multiculturalism has become a prevalent marketing strategy to promote the city in global markets and, at the same time, a popular slogan for the political parties to rally around makes it difficult to truly assess the inclusion of the visible minorities in the contemporary city. What is clear is that Toronto's new identity is still fragile, and the city is still "divided geographically and socio-economically along class and racialized lines" (Boudreau et al., 2009, p. 98).

Governance

One of the most celebrated moments in Toronto's urban history is the victory of the citizen's groups — led by the renowned urban-activist Jane Jacob — to prevent the construction of an expressway that would pass through one of the city's inner neighbourhoods. This iconic moment represents the rise of a popular local movement in Toronto during the 1960s and 1970s,

commonly known as the "reformist movement" (e.g., Caulfield, 1994). The *reformist movement* contested the post-war trends of city making in Toronto and brought a period of progressive reform and course-correction in planning and urbanism. Although it was not an entirely cohesive campaign (Caulfield, 1994), the movement could effectively nudge the city's agenda toward the left and put more emphasis on some socialist-inspired principles such as affordable housing. It could replace the approaches of the urban renewal era, which were often comprised of aggressive urban interventions, with strategies that prioritized the protection of neighbourhoods and the conservation of traditional urban forms (Caulfield, 1994).

Nevertheless, Toronto's progressive epoch did not last long. By the 1980s, the waves of neoliberalism reached the city and started shaking its reformist agenda. The Transition to a global economy prompted governments to adopt more market-based strategies; therefore, the welfarist strategies of the earlier decades — including the reformists' attainments — were gradually toned down and replaced with the rhetorics of the "competitive-city" (Boudreau et al., 2009). However, Toronto's reorientation toward neoliberalism in the 1980s would easily pale when compared to the aggressive restructuring that came about with the victory of the "Common Sense Revolution" in the succeeding decade.

In 1995 an "uncompromising neoliberal" (Boudreau et al., 2009, p.58) government won the provincial election in Ontario. Between 1995 to 2003, premier Mike Harris (and his successor Ernie Eves) reformulated the province's agenda toward a radical neoliberal model. As cities are the epicentres of neoliberalization processes (Brenner & Theodore, 2002), the restructuring most

severely impacted Toronto, where almost every aspect of urban life was altered (Boudreau et al., 2009). Harris's restructuring was comprised of both moments of "destruction" and "creation" (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Substantial cuts to the welfare state, public education and many other social services, the ceasing of public-housing programs, the elimination of environmental regulations and planning restrictions, and "frontal attack to the poor, the left, labour, etc." (Boudreau et al., 2009, p.58) were clear examples of *moments of destruction*. By contrast, market-reforms and the push for small-government rhetorics — ironically imposed through an interventionist attitude — as well as the consequent downloading of the fiscal burden to municipalities, and, most notably, the reformulation of the local governments and the amalgamation of the city of Toronto with its surrounding municipalities could be considered the *moments of creation* (Boudreau et al., 2009).

The amalgamation drastically altered the political landscape in the region. Harris' government represented a kind of "small-town conservatism" (Boudreau et al., 2009) and had its support base mostly in the rural and exurban areas with an often white and relatively wealthy population (Boudreau et al., 2009). It was repeatedly ignorant of urban issues that arose in Toronto and immensely uncomfortable with civic discourses — like diversity, multiculturalism, and other progressive initiatives — that often emerged within Toronto. The amalgamation helped dilute the more progressive voices within a wider political context and pushed the remnants of the reformist advocates outside the political scene, at least for a while (Boudreau et al., 2009).

Despite its negligence toward Toronto's problems, Harris' government was extremely

interested in the city's role as an international centre for capital accumulation, and it never stopped exploiting the city in that respect (Boudreau et al., 2009). However, before the end of the century, the rhetorics of competitiveness started to move away from dry business or managerial rationals (Kipfer & Keil, 2000). The business leaders were convinced that the economy's competitiveness was tightly linked to the competitiveness of the city. Fiscal strategies such as lowering costs or taxes no longer seemed sufficient for maintaining a strong economy, as the workforce had become increasingly mobile, and business leaders were afraid to lose their labour pool to other cities with better urban amenities. New measures such as quality of life, diversity, livability and creativity dominated the discussions around competitiveness (Boudreau et al., 2009; Kipfer & Keil, 2000). At the same time, Harris' neglect of Toronto started to backfire in many instances. The city's infrastructure, which was old and exhausted, was deteriorating, and the homelessness issue was acutely exacerbating. The confluence of such forces made the Ontario government reconsider its approach toward the city.

Cultural Turn

By the turn of the millennium, the urban leaders increasingly adopted the rhetorics of a "competitive city" (Kipfer & Keil, 2000) for a competitive economy. The investments started to flow back to the city, and new programs were introduced to enhance Toronto's infrastructure and amenities. One manifestation of this new attitude was in the cultural arena. Art and culture — along with other measures, such as heritage, diversity, and multiculturalism — became central in the city's development schemes. The new approach toward culture was informed primarily by two trends. One was the prevalence of creative city rhetorics and its consolidation with the

competitive city discussions; and the second was the increasing profitability of the cultural (or creative) industries, which had become a rapidly growing sector during the latter decades of the twentieth century (Scott, 1997).

The increasing demand for urban amenities and the quality-of-life measures and the shift of competitiveness discussions away from the dry managerial logics corresponded with the growing prominence of Richard Florida's doctrine of "creative city" (e.g., Florida, 2002b, 2002c). Florida was a self-marketing researcher who became extremely popular in city-making circles, especially after the publication of his best-seller, "The Rise of the Creative Class" (Florida, 2002a). In his book, Florida emphasizes the importance of attracting a specific segment of the professional class for those cities that desire a thriving economy. These professionals, whom Florida considers the primary carriers of creativity and terms "the creative class," are the key to the success of local and regional economic development, especially in high-technology sectors (Florida, 2002b), which is why his schemes for the creative city are primarily structured around one sole goal: attracting the *creative class* to the city. His emphasis on the provision of cultural amenities — along with other measures such as vibrant streetscapes or openness to diversity — is prompted by the same idea, as such measures resonate the best with the *creative-class* lifestyle. This conception of the creative city found a receptive audience, particularly in Toronto where Florida himself would eventually move to. His research was financed by a multi-million dollar province-funded research institution, and he was offered a Chair at the University of Toronto. In 2003, the City of Toronto's first cultural plan was heavily informed by Florida's doctrine (City of Toronto, 2003), which showed the popularity of his work among Toronto's

urbanists. Although an extensive body of literature has criticized Florida for co-opting cultural themes and "sugercoating" (Pratt, 2011) neoliberal projects (see also Catungal et al., 2009; McLean, 2014; Scott, 2014), the endorsement of the creative city idea by the city's technocrats, urban leaders and politicians played an influential role in reorienting the previously dismissive attitudes toward art and culture (Scott, 2014).

Secondly, during the last few decades of the twentieth century, the acceleration of production activities in industries that would later be labelled cultural (or creative) industries (Scott, 1997) prompted the governments in Canada to pay closer attention to this new and fast-paced growing sector. In 2003, the cultural industries accounted for the equivalent of 230,700 jobs in Ontario, which directly contributed more than $8.6 billion to the annual GDP (Ontario Ministry of Culture, 2002). The significant share of the cultural industries in the region's economy made it a non-negligible sector for governments. In addition, the fact that Toronto accommodated more than 80% of the employment in this sector (City of Toronto, 2003) played an important role in changing the governments' attitude toward the city.

Beyond these two major forces — the rise of cultural industries and the merging of the creative city doctrine with competitive city discourses — the change of attitude toward art and culture was also prompted by secondary forces whose contribution might have been less explicit. On a regional scale, the return of the middle class and urban elites from suburban areas to the city (e.g., see Caulfield, 1994), the tendency of Canadian capital to invest in the city's real estate market (Boudreau et al., 2009), and further "corporatization" of the urban landscape (Caulfield,

2010) were influential in increasing the demand for art and culture within the city. At the same time, on the municipal level, the emphasis on culture was an opportunity for marginalized progressive actors, who were pushed out of the political scene particularly after the amalgamation, to restore some of their lost authority, especially since these actors — many, the remnants of the reformist movement — were often active in the cultural arena and affiliated with some kind of art or cultural organization (Boudreau et al., 2009).

However, Toronto's art and culture at the beginning of the new century were hardly thriving. In fact, art and culture were among the main victims of more than two decades of neoliberal restructuring programs, which had become notably aggressive in the 1990s (Jenkins, 2009). The 1990s in Toronto had started with a deep recession; nevertheless, throughout the decade, the city was able to tread the path of a steady recovery, as a result of which, the region's economy grew by 40%. However, art and culture remained entirely excluded from this upward trajectory. Despite the economic growth, the tightening of the cultural budgets continued throughout the decade, and by the election of Harris' government, it reached an unprecedented margins (City of Toronto, 2001, 2003). A report shows that the amount of cash-flow in art and cultural sectors in 1996 (one year after the election of Harris' government) fell to a level lower than what it had been in 1987 (Toronto Arts Council, 1999). By the turn of the century, the city had fallen behind the competitors — particularly Montreal and Vancouver — in extracting its cultural assets (City of Toronto, 2003). Therefore, with the return of attention to Toronto and its cultural potential, every level of the Canadian government felt obliged to introduce new programs with the aim of revitalizing the city's art, culture and heritage.

At the municipal level, in 2000, the city council directed its newly established Cultural division to draft a cultural plan with two main goals: "to position Toronto as an international cultural capital, and to define the culture's role at the centre of the economic and social development of the city" (City of Toronto, 2003, p. 7). One year later, a discussion report was submitted to the council, which reviewed Toronto's potential for becoming a global cultural centre and a creative city. The report also mentioned the negative effect of the austerity strategies of the earlier decades and reflected on the financial struggles of many organizations in Toronto (City of Toronto, 2001). In 2002, Toronto's new official plan (the first official plan after the amalgamation) also affirmed that heritage, art and culture would play significant roles in future development schemes. And one year later, the council adopted Toronto's first cultural plan (City of Toronto, 2003).

With similar intentions, the federal and provincial governments also introduced new programs that ushered the city into a new phase of infrastructural investments and brought about a period of developing cultural amenities that is generally regarded as "Toronto's Cultural Renaissance." The Cultural Renaissance investments were intended to heighten the position of culture and transform the city into a world-class cultural hub (Jenkins, 2005). The following section discusses these investments in more detail.

4.2.2. Toronto’s Cultural Renaissance

With the return of attention to the city, the three levels of government mobilized to boost art and culture in Toronto. As part of this quest, in May 2002, the federal and provincial

governments mutually announced that they would contribute more than $230 million to enhance Toronto's cultural infrastructure. The investment, commonly dubbed the Cultural Renaissance, was intended to bolster Toronto's reputation as a global economic and cultural capital and promote Canada as a cutting-edge culturally rich society. It was also expected that the buildings constructed through this program would attract tourism dollars to the region.

The Culture Renaissance grants were allocated to seven cultural organizations (Table. 1): Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Canadian Opera Company (COC), Royal Conservatory of Music, National Ballet of Canada, Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art, and Roy Thomson Hall. Later, in the mainstream media, some other buildings that were constructed concurrently — for example, the expansion of the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD), which only received provincial funding, and the Toronto International Film Festival's (Tiff) new facility — were also considered as part of the cultural renaissance that was unfolding in Toronto.

Table. 1. The allocation of Culture Renaissance investments

	Public Grant (million CAD)	Total investment (million CAD)
Royal Ontario Museum (ROM)	60	150
Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)	48	178
Canadian Opera Company (COC)	56	150
National Ballet School	40	105
Royal Conservatory of Music	20	50
Ray Thomson Hall	4	24
George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art	5	15
TOTAL	233	672

Note. Adopted from Adams (2002)

To provides a detailed overview of the Culture Renaissance program, this section first explores various reasons that motivated each actor to contribute to the program. It contends that while branding potentials of culture and its positive effects on the tourism industry were the key drivers for the federal and provincial governments to contribute to this program, for the culture organizations, participating in the program was part of their quest for survival. Secondly, this section discusses different specifications of the Cultural Renaissance program and illustrates that although this unprecedented investment in the city's cultural infrastructure seemed like a reversal of the austerity approaches of the earlier decades, it was still in line with the processes of neoliberalization. The section concludes with a discussion about how iconic architecture resonated with the general goals of the Culture Renaissance program, and how it was utilized in the course of the program.

4.2.2.1. Motivations

Previously, Chapter two discussed the growing significance of the economic value of culture in the postmodern era (see also Harvey, 1990, 2009; Scott, 1997; Zukin, 1995). This burgeoning value was at the heart of the political struggles that brought about Toronto's Cultural Renaissance. In his 2002 annual message, David Tsubouchi, Ontario's Minister of Culture, mentioned that the cultural sector "directly contribute[d] more than $8.6 billion a year to Ontario's economy and generate[d] the equivalent of some 230,700 jobs" (Ontario Ministry of Culture, 2002). Similarly, the city of Toronto's first "cultural plan" (City of Toronto, 2003) emphasized the dollar value of culture:

> every dollar the City invests in its own cultural programs generates a combined direct and indirect economic impact of $2.20. In addition, every new dollar invested by the City in arts and culture grants will leverage approximately $4 in funding from other sources. (p. 43)

Despite their common fixation on the economic value of culture, the public actors had little in common when it came to the ways in which they approached culture or understood its function. The federal and the provincial governments, the main actors of the Culture Renaissance program, had different motivations for initiating this investment, and in the course of the program, each pursued a distinct agenda. While the provincial government sought to boost the tourism industry in the region, the federal had its eyes fixed on the marketing capacities of the investment and its potential for shaping the Canadian national identity (Jenkins, 2005). On certain occasions, these differences created moments of tension, which will be discussed further in this section.

Provincial Government

For the provincial government, boosting tourism markets was a primary motivation for contributing to the Culture Renaissance program (Jenkins, 2005). In fact, during the past two decades, Ontario has been increasingly mobilizing art and culture — along with heritage, sports and entertainment — as instruments for attracting tourism to the region. It is therefore no surprise to see that cultural affairs in Ontario have been frequently addressed in the same ministries that also oversee tourism: e.g., *Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation* in 2002[10]*; Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2010-2011;* and *Ministry of Heritage, sport, tourism and cultural industries,* at the current time. This durable relationship between culture and tourism will be better understood through reviewing the province's emphasis on its "cultural tourism" agenda (Ontario Arts Council, 2012; Ontario Ministry of Tourism, 2000).

Among different types of tourists, cultural tourists are probably the most attractive for every urban or regional business alliance. Compared to other types of tourists, cultural tourists tend to be more affluent, have a higher level of education, and spend more money in their destinations (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, 2009). A report conducted in 2012 indicates that while cultural tourists comprise one-fifth of the over-night visitors to Ontario, they account for two-fifth of all spending on lodging, one-third of the spending on food and beverages, and half of the spending on entertainment and recreation (Ontario Arts Council, 2012). Similarly, in 2000, the

[10] By dissolving the *Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation* in 2002, for the first time culture gets its own independent Ministry (Ministry of Culture); however, this independence does not last long, as in 2010 it again merges with the Ministry of Tourism.

government's report had indicated the significance of cultural tourists' expenditure in the region (overall CAD$2.8 billion in 1998)[11], which easily stood for twice that of other types of visitors' spending per trip (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, 2000). Recognizing the significant value of cultural tourism, the Ontario government has become increasingly interested in exploiting this source of external income.

In regards to the type of attractions that most effectively draws cultural tourists to Ontario, after heritage sites, which is the first on the list, visiting museums, galleries, and performances (e.g., concerts and plays) have been respectively the most popular activities for this group (Table. 2). While the exploitation of heritage sites might be constrained by different factors — e.g., the number of available sites in a region or the capacity of each site — the avenues for developing other cultural assets are wide open. However, as discussed in the previous section, during the 1980s and 1990s, art and culture in Ontario had endured serious setbacks (Toronto Arts Council, 1999). Different reports (e.g., City of Toronto, 2003) indicate that in this period Toronto tumbled behind its competitors in cultivating its cultural assets, especially since Montreal and Vancouver, the city's main rivals, had started substantial investments in this area. Unsurprisingly, by the end of the 1990s, the number of cultural visitors to Ontario significantly declined (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, 2000). This raised the alarm for the Ontario government to change its adverse approach toward art and culture.

Table. 2. The Art and Culture activities on Art and Culture trips in 2010

[11] This rate increases to CAD$4.8 billion in 2012 (Ontario Arts Council, 2012).

		Number of visitors	Percentage
	Arts and Culture Tourists	9.5 million	% 100
Activities	Historic sites	4.1 million	% 44
	Museums/art galleries	3.4 million	% 36
	Arts performances	3.3 million	% 34
	Festivals/fairs	2.1 million	% 22
	Zoos/aquariums/gardens	1.2 million	% 12

Note. Adopted from Ontario Arts Council (2012)

For the provincial government, Toronto is a gateway to the rest of Ontario. By drawing tourists (and preferably cultural tourists) to Toronto, the province seeks to disperse them eventually to the rest of Ontario, particularly to the Niagara region and Muskoka cottage reserves (Adams, 2002; Jenkins, 2009). The province's contribution to the Culture Renaissance program was motivated by the same impulse, since the program was an opportunity for drawing tourists — and preferably cultural tourists — to the region. This mentality was clearly manifested in the province's emphasis on introducing an art corridor in downtown Toronto, privileging major institutions over small-size organizations, and utilizing iconic architecture in its affiliated organizations — the ROM, AGO and OCAD; strategies that tend to be more attractive for the tourists (particularly the international tourists) rather than the residents or the artists. Besides, in several instances, the Ontario officials publicly demonstrated that their approach toward art and culture was primarily determined by the province's "culture tourism" agenda (Adams, 2002). In fact, the Ontario government, despite bragging about a broad spectrum of other reasons for

justifying its contribution — e.g., creating jobs, empowering culture producers, encouraging art and creativity and enhancing the quality of life (see Jenkins, 2005) — repeatedly proved that in practice it prioritizes the interest of tourism industry. The issue was most evident in two moments of tension between the federal and the provincial governments. In an instance, funding the National Ballet of Canada became a source of friction, as the institution's educational character, plus its location, which was far from the intended art-corridor, had made the organization an unattractive target for tourism initiatives (Jenkins, 2005). Another clash occurred over funding the Canadian Opera Company, which, similarly, did not match the province's "culture tourism" framework (Adams, 2002).

Federal Government

In contrast to the provincial government, the federal government had little interest in the touristic potentials of the Cultural Renaissance program. Supporting the "less tourist-sexy" (Jenkins, 2005, p.181) institutions, such as the Canadian Opera Company and the National Ballet School, could be considered a demonstration of this issue. Instead, the federal government was interested in the representational capacities of culture and its potential for shaping the Canadian national identity. Jenkins (2005) elaborates this by distinguishing between the government's nationwide goals and what was at stake in international realms.

On a national scale, the Cultural Renaissance program was an opportunity for maintaining a sense of national identity that was more progressive compared to the classic interpretations of nationalism, which tended to be more defensive, particularly toward the threat of the hegemony

of American pop culture[12]. Nationalism exercised through the Culture Renaissance program chimed better with the values of the contemporary Canadian societies, which celebrated the merits of diversity and multiculturalism; besides, it resonated with the requirements of Canada's participation in the globalized economy and international trades as it did not encourage the old-fashion "rabid flagwaving" (Jenkins, 2005, p. 181).

Considering the international realms, the federal government had its eyes fixed on the marketing potential of the program. The same way that cities would mobilize culture as a branding instrument, the federal government, by investing in culture — and particularly high-culture such as opera and ballet — and by forming a national identity upon that, sought to promote Canada as a cutting-edge culturally vibrant society (Jenkins, 2005). In the eyes of the federal government, the Canadians' success in cultural markets not only benefited the art and culture producers but also provided all other Canadian products across every other international market with a marketing niche and a stronger branding power.

The City of Toronto

Although the City of Toronto was not directly involved in the Culture Renaissance investment, it had much interest in its outcomes. The City was increasingly participating in a global economy, and therefore, it was necessarily concerned with branding itself as a global hub for culture and economy. At the same time, the City desired to promote the flourishing of its creative industries, and similar to the provincial government, it was keen to boost tourism in the region. On such grounds, for city leaders, the Cultural Renaissance investment was like a free

[12] Jenkins (2005) refers to Massey Report of 1951

ticket to capitalize on; however, in some elements, the program deviated from the City's approach toward art and culture.

The City of Toronto adopted its first cultural plan in 2003 as part of the endeavour to reconcile the urban agenda with the new rhetorics of "competitiveness" (Kipfer & Keil, 2002). The cultural plan was significantly inspired by Richard Florida's conception of the creative city, which emphasized the importance of attracting the "creative class" by investing in the city's leisure and lifestyle amenities — along with other social measures like openness and diversity. According to Florida, the creative class professionals are most attracted to "energetic and vibrant places" (Florida, 2002c, p. 749), qualities that, as he implies, are primarily grasped through a street-level experience of urban life. He celebrates the bustling street scenes with "cool" (Florida, 2002c) cafes, pubs and restaurants, lively outdoor dining, thriving street music and other forms of public art, dynamic nightlife, and other active recreational amenities. Florida finds a distinction between "high- and low- culture" (Florida, 2002b, p. 59), and it is the latter that becomes the focus of his creative city schemes. He promotes a kind of "bohemian" (Florida, 2002b) lifestyle as the key for drawing the creative professionals to the city, which eventually will help the city invigorate its economy.

The emphasis of the Cultural Renaissance program on flagship institutions and high-arts (e.g., opera and ballet) and its taste for iconic architecture were, in some ways, at odds with the ideals of Florida's creative city schemes, which celebrated a bohemian lifestyle, street arts, authentic architecture and the like[13]. Nevertheless, this divergence never obliged the municipal

[13] Although, in practice, both approaches could be understood as different forms of place

actors to oppose the Cultural Renaissance investment, especially since art and culture had endured wrenching setbacks during the 1980s and the 1990s, and Toronto had remained notably behind the competitors in exploiting its cultural assets (City of Toronto, 2003). In this context, the investment was generally regarded as an opportunity for rectifying the past, as it signalled a turn in the governments' — particularly the provincial government's — attitude toward art and culture, and, in a broader sense, toward Toronto. Therefore, despite some deviations from the creative city schemes, the Municipal actors and leaders cheered the investment and endorsed the construction of flagship buildings in the downtown. Moreover, the City calibrated its agenda to better accommodate the Cultural Renaissance developments; for example, in its first cultural plan, the City suggested to name 2006 — the opening year for most of the Culture renaissance buildings — as the "year of creativity" (City of Toronto, 2003, p. 14). The City also labelled University Avenue, where most of the Cultural Renaissance buildings were located, as the "Avenue of the Arts" (City of Toronto, 2003, p. 14).

Cultural Organizations

As discussed in the previous section, art and cultural organizations were among the main victims of the austerity strategies of the earlier decades in Ontario. Two decades of budget tightening, which was intensified by the election of the Harris government in 1995 (City of Toronto, 2001, 2003), had pushed cultural organizations into a state of crisis management and forced them to find other means to compensate for the lost income.

Throughout the decade, many of the organizations eventually managed to increase their self-

marketing strategies

generated income and balance their budgets through both intensifying their entrepreneurial activities and relying more on private resources — chiefly, philanthropists' donations. However, most organizations had to also reduce their expenditures by cutting their cultural activities and downsizing. Meanwhile, more than thirty organizations went bankrupt and completely disappeared from Toronto's cultural scene (Toronto Arts Council, 1999), an incident that clearly illustrates the scarcity of resources in the city and gives an idea of the context in which organizations had to compete for funding. It is in this context that Jenkins (2009) deems the participation of the organization in the Cultural Renaissance program as part of their broader quest for surviving: "a bid for survival," especially since the Cultural Renaissance grant could help the organizations with their fund-raising campaigns, and the eye-catching buildings had the potential for attracting more visitors and donors in the future.

4.2.2.2. Neoliberal Restructuring

Despite the general perception about Toronto's Cultural Renaissance that considers it an entire reversal of the government's attitude toward culture, in practice, this project proved to be in line with the processes of neoliberal restructuring that had started during the preceding decades. The program's neoliberal nature was most vividly manifested in its emphasis on public-private partnership and cultural entrepreneurialism; the issue was also evident in the pattern of resource distribution, which was highly uneven.

The distribution of the public grant through the culture renaissance program was institutionally and geographically uneven. This unprecedented investment was predominantly

allocated to the large-scale flagship organizations, whereas the small- and medium-sized organizations were entirely excluded from the process. Moreover, the investment was geographically concentrated in downtown Toronto, and particularly around a certain corridor. Among several organizations that had applied for the Culture Renaissance funding, only those clustered around University Avenue were considered for the grant, while the others were totally dismissed merely because of their location. In the controversial case of the National Ballet School, the school's location — with only 10-minute walking distance from University Avenue — became a source of friction between the federal and the provincial actors, and the school came close to being dropped out of the program entirely. The University corridor was later marketed as the "Avenue of the Arts" (City of Toronto, 2003).

The public-private partnership was another recurrent theme in the course of the Culture Renaissance program. The $233 million amount of the public grant only comprised %35 to %40 of the whole investment (Table. 1). The beneficiary organizations were mandated to collect the rest from private donors and through fundraising campaigns. In fact, the governments' grant was a form of a stimulant for absorbing the private contribution. However, the emphasis on public-private partnership was not limited to constructing a few edifices; rather, the city leaders had foreseen more long-term possibilities for initiating the program. For them, the Culture Renaissance buildings were themselves instruments for reducing the organizations' reliance on the public sector. The logic was that the buildings would help the organizations increase their self-generated income in different ways, for example by drawing more visitors, or by attracting more attention to the fundraising campaigns. This provided an adequate justification for reducing

the governments' support in the future while shifting the organization's burden onto the private sector.

Under this light, it is clear that the culture renaissance program was not a reversal of the neoliberal restructuring trends of the prior decades. Rather the shift in governments' attitude stemmed from the fact that the restructuring during the 1980s and 1990s were mostly an expression of the moment of "destruction" within the processes of neoliberalization (Brenner & Theodore, 2002), while the Culture Renaissance program was an instance of the moment of "creation" (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Therefore, it is more accurate to understand the Culture Renaissance program as a complement to the trends of cutbacks and austerity approaches of the late twentieth century, although the significance of the investment had the effect of masking over the full picture and falsely suggested a reversal of the previous trends (Jenkins, 2009).

The issue is also indicated in Jenkins' (2009) examination of the governments' expenditures on culture. Jenkins illustrates that, excluding the Culture Renaissance grant, the governments' budget for the operational expenditures of the organizations in the new millennium has consistently followed the declining trends of the 1990s. In particular, the recipients of the culture renaissance grant experienced a more severe drop in their budgets after the completion of their buildings. Besides, the higher maintenance costs of the new facilities — especially in cases of iconic buildings — have put the organizations under even more pressure. This does not mean that the organizations did not thrive after the Culture Renaissance; on the contrary, in the following years, the organizations mostly managed to increase their overall revenue despite their

loss in governmental support (Jenkins, 2009). This increase, however, was primarily the consequence of the higher contribution of the private sector, notably the philanthropists; and partially, it was thanks to intensification of organization's entrepreneurial activities, manifested in higher consumer spending on entrance fees, subscriptions, boutique merchandise, cafe and the like (Jenkins, 2009). After all, the outcome of the Culture Renaissance program were not much different from the austerity strategies of the earlier decades, which similarly sought to make art and culture organizations more self-sufficient.

What would be the consequence of the organization's increasing reliance on private resources and entrepreneurialism for art and culture or for the organizations themselves falls beyond the mandate of this work and remains a potential topic for future investigations. What this section sought to illustrate was that although the Culture Renaissance program presented a new attitude in the way governments treated art and culture, it was still very much in line with the processes of neoliberalization that had started in Toronto in the 1980s.

4.2.3. Why Building Iconic?

If Culture Renaissance was a form of neoliberal restructuring program, and if iconic architecture is a manifestation of neoliberal values (D. Spencer, 2016), then it is no surprise to see that iconic buildings were boldly utilized in the course of Toronto's Cultural Renaissance program. Of the three major beneficiaries of the investments — the ROM, AGO and COC — two pursued this strategy with relish and enthusiasm. Nevertheless, the popularity of iconic buildings was not limited to the Culture Renaissance program; the OCAD university — which

only received the provincial support — and the University of Toronto also collaborated with celebrity architects to build new facilities in their downtown campuses. Meanwhile, the COC's aversion to collaborating with celebrity architects was not without consequences; it became a source of serious frictions between different parties, and on several occasions, endangered the organization's involvement in the program. Where did this desire for iconic buildings come from, and how did it resonate with the requirements of the Culture Renaissance program are the questions that this section seeks to answer.

4.2.3.1. Dominance of a Global Trend

Utilizing iconic architecture as a form of the urban-intervention strategy was not a phenomenon specific to Toronto; instead, it was the extension of a global trend, which, as a consequence of the prevalence of "Bilbao effect" narratives (see Chapter 2), was at its peak in the early 2000s. Iconic architecture was at the centre of the *Bilbao effect* narratives. Almost all the attainments of various planning programs in Bilbao were attributed to the power of Frank Gehry's original design; this included Bilbao's enhanced economic performance and its triumph in regenerating a decaying urban area and in re-introducing a new image for the city. Although this simplistic narrative was later disputed on different grounds (e.g., Evans, 2003; Franklin, 2016; Ponzini, 2010), for years, the *Bilbao effect* remained popular in urban-planning spheres[14], and as a result, iconic architecture became the centre of attention of many urban decision makers. The competition for creating cultural venues — which, with the rise of the artistic mode of production in the second half of the twentieth century had become a common development

[14] It particularity dominated the discussions about urban regeneration.

strategy (Zukin, 2001) — got one level more challenging by another requirement, which was a signature design. All around the world, the city leaders strived to replicate the success of Bilbao by building their own versions of the Guggenheim museum. Particularly in post-industrial cities that faced the problems of deindustrialization and urban decay, the aspiration for this new trend of development was high. Many cities tried to anchor their culture-themed developments by commissioning celebrity architects and erecting iconic buildings. Some went as far as hiring Frank Gehry himself (e.g., Experience Music Project in Seattle) or tried to incorporate the Guggenheim brand in their projects (e.g., Rio, Shanghai, St Petersburg and Edinburgh, Liverpool, Berlin, Los-Vegas). While some endeavours might have been successful, the result in most cases was not as glorious as the case of Bilbao; and many initiatives even severely failed.[15]

The popularity of celebrity architects and the enthusiasm for their iconic projects were not limited to the urban-planning auras or exclusive to the *Bilbao-effect* admirers. This trend was also celebrated within the community of professional architects. One clear example was the fixation of the Pritzker Architecture Prize with celebrity architects, at least, during the early years of the current century. Pritzker Prize is an annual architectural event, modelled after the Nobel

[15] Examples are the Guggenheim museums in Berlin and Los-Vegas, which was closed after a few years. Sheffield National Museum of Popular Music in the UK ceased operating within a year; Milwaukee Art Museum designed by Santiago Calatrava, KIASMA Helsinki Museum of Contemporary Art, both had little success in attracting visitors; even Frank Gehry's design in Seattle, the Experience Music Project (currently, Museum of Pop Culture) massively failed to attract visitors — at least during the first few years after its opening (Franklin, 2016).

prize, and prestigious to the same extent. The list of the recipients of this award in the twentieth century ends with Renzo Piano, Norman Foster, and Rem Koolhaas, who received the award respectively in 1998, 1999, and 2000; in the following decade, the Pritzker institution follows the same trend and selects some of the most renowned celebrities, such as Zaha Hadid, Jean Nouvel, Herzog and De Merron, Richard Rogers and even Jorn Utzon (the designer of Sydney Opera House in the 1960s). While identifying a celebrity in the contemporary era might be more of an intuitive task, various studies, through methodological approaches, have previously indicated the celebrity status of the architects mentioned above and the iconic value of their designs (e.g., McNeill, 2009; Sklair, 2017).

The proliferation of iconic buildings is itself a global phenomenon that emerged in the last few decades of the twentieth century. Discussing some of the major forces behind this phenomenon, Chapter Two pointed to the rise of urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989), the prevalence of consumerism (Sklair, 2017) and neoliberalism (D. Spencer, 2016) as the dominant culture-ideology of capitalism societies, the globalization of architectural markets (McNeil, 2009), the rise of mass tourism (McNeill, 2009; Wang, 2020), the electronic revolution (Sklair, 2017), the invention of the World Wide Web and the mass circulation of image on the Internet (Nastasi, 2020). While in Toronto, the increasing enthusiasm for the iconic buildings and their celebrity designers were the outcome of the same global trends, in the course of the Culture Renaissance program, there were other contextual factors that spurred the demand for iconic buildings and facilitated the rise of this trend as a viable solution for developing cultural venues.

As discussed in the previous section, during the second half of the twentieth century, various aspects of urban life in Toronto drastically altered. This included the transition of the city's function to a centre of the global economy, changes in the demography and the political landscape, and the impact of the above factors on the city's social and cultural life. In fact, by the turn of the century, the urban life in Toronto was not comparable with what it had been a few decades earlier. However, despite the significant transformation in Toronto's social and cultural spaces, the city's built landscape was stuck in a doldrum, a consequence of the austerity strategies of the late twentieth century. Since the 1970s, other than a condominium boom led by the private sector, no major development impacted Toronto's physical landscape[16], and particularly the development of significant public buildings had experienced more than two decades of stagnation. The lack of development activity created an unbalance between Toronto's social and spatial space, what Patterson calls a "socio-spatial disjuncture" (2015, p.44). With the return of attention to the city, there was a great confusion about what should be built in Toronto, as the city lacked an adequate precedent for developing public projects. In fact, the closest precedents were the grandiose developments of the 1960s and 1970s, such as the CN Tower and the Rogers Centre. In a context devoid of a strong precedent, developing iconic architecture, which was an increasingly popular trend around the world and a celebrated model in certain disciplines — for example, in the fields of architecture, urban planning, and museology — could

[16] The Discussion specifically refers to the old city of Toronto, or the central areas in the current definition of the city. By contrast the peripheral areas and the suburbs have been relentlessly developing and expanding since the 1950s (see Relph, 2014).

easily dominate the urban discourse; especially since, in many respects, the grandiose projects of the 1960s and 1970s resonated with the characteristics of contemporary iconic buildings.[17] In an example, a local newspaper explains its expectations from the Culture Renaissance buildings by referring to the 1960s-70s developments, and underlining one instance of the characteristics that those developments had in common with more contemporary iconic buildings — a spectacular architecture:

> Toronto is at the point where it needs a spectacular iconic building or two that would make as big an impression on both residents and tourists as its mid-1960s city hall and its 1970s CN Tower. After a couple of decades of being considered a city in decline, Toronto needs to do something dramatic. It has a need to show off and prove it's a city the world can't ignore. ("It's Being Built. Will They Come?," 2004)

Soon in Toronto, the trend of developing iconic buildings was recognized as a viable development approach and dominated the urban discourse, particularly in the course of the Cultural Renaissance program; to the extent that those organizations that turned away from this trend faced harsh criticism and backlash[18]. Patterson (2015), in his dissertation — which investigates Toronto's Culture Renaissance — mentions the dominance of this trend and reflects on his own mindset at the start of his fieldwork:

> I, like many of the people I spoke to about my research, just seemed to assume that it was perfectly rational that if one could, one would build large, expensive, eye-catching buildings. (p.67)

[17] Even, few of the 1960s-70s buildings, such as the CN tower, could be considered an iconic construction.

[18] This topic will be discussed further in this chapter

Iconic architecture was boldly utilized in the developments that transpired in the early years of the current century in Toronto. Other than the Culture Renaissance participants, the OCAD university hired Will Alsop for adding an extension to its downtown campus and ended up with a striking spider-shape construction (Figure. 7). The University of Toronto signed a contract with Norman Foster for a new facility on University Avenue. Of the three major beneficiaries of the Culture Renaissance program, two collaborated with the celebrity architects; the AGO commissioned Frank Gehry, and ROM selected Daniel Libeskind through a design competition. There was also a campaign for nominating Gehry to design the opera house, but it eventually failed. The next section explains how iconic architecture resonated with the requirements of the Culture Renaissance program.

Figure. 7. OCAD University

Note. photo by author, July 2021

4.2.3.2. Icon & Culture Renaissance

Iconic architecture resonated with the requirements of the Culture Renaissance program and satisfied the expectation of different parties involved in this investment. This section discusses the interest of each actor in developing iconic buildings.

The Governments

The trend of developing iconic buildings resonated, more than anything, with the province's agenda for attracting cultural tourists. As Wang (2020) puts, Iconic architecture and tourism are "two sides of one coin" (p.321), and in practice, the two are understood to be inseparable, since tourists' attention is the vital force that imbues a building with the virtue of iconicity (Wang, 2020). A few years after the opening of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, it was claimed that the museum was responsible for attracting more than one million visitors to the city each year (Rybczynski, 2002). The experience of other cities with iconic buildings was similar and had proved that such buildings, typically, serve the needs of the city's visitors — rather than residents — and in most cases, they are visited by the tourists (Sklair, 2017). For example, today in Sydney, the area around the famous opera house is dominated with services like shopping, entertainment, and other amenities, to which tourists are the main clients (see Evans, 2003). Another manifestation of this strong relationship between tourism and iconic buildings is in Paris, where the municipality has been erecting iconic buildings around the metropolitan in order to encourage visitors to go beyond the usual touristic zones in the central city and explore other regions (Gravari-Barbas, 2020). In the case of Toronto's Culture Renaissance, as discussed in the

previous section, tourism was a top priority for the Ontario government. Considering the durable relationship between tourism and iconic architecture, it is not surprising to see that the Ontario government eagerly encouraged the trend of developing such architectures, and that it was the the province's affiliated organizations — the AGO, ROM and OCAD — that ended up with the most striking urban icons.

Iconic buildings are also powerful instruments of marketing and branding. Iconic architecture is understood to be a product of the permeation of marketing activities into the city-making realms and, particularly, an outcome of the increasing obsession of image-based advertising with the cities' built environment (Zukin, 1995; Evans, 2003). A clear manifestation of the branding power of an iconic building was exhibited in the course of the Summer Olympic Games in 2000, when the Sydney Opera House's glorious billows and curves became the backdrop of every news broadcast that was covering the games, and the postcard views of this structure adorned countless articles in various magazines, newspapers and electronic media all around the world. The endless spread of Opera House's images was only possible thanks to the potency of its architecture, whose visual elements were instantly identifiable and easily replicable through every type of medium and even merchandise. No matter how insignificant a souvenir would be — say if it is a coin or a pin — the opera house's curvy forms could be replicated on it while they remained immediately recognizable elements that represented simultaneously their birth city, their nation, and the Olympic Games (Figure. 9). Even the Olympic logo borrowed some elements from this architecture (Figure. 8). This quality of the Sydney Opera House is a crucial element of a successful iconic building in the contemporary world:

> [iconic building] can be shrunk to the size of a TV screen, or smaller, to a letterhead or stamp. This property [...] allows it to become a brand image (Jencks, 2005, p. 23).

The power of a successful iconic architecture like the Sydney Opera House is so effective that today it is conceivable for one to mistake the Australian flag, but failing to recognize the Opera House as a symbol of this country might become a bit of a surprise.

Figure. 8. Olympic Games and Sydney Opera House

Note. the 2000 Olympic games logo borrows some elements from the Sydney Opera House's architecture. Right: the 2000 Olympic games logo (© International Olympics Committee); Left: from *Opera House Sydney* [photograph], by Wendy Halet (2018), Flicker, (https://www.flickr.com/photos/wendihalet/31219701748/) CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Figure. 9. 2000 Olympic souvenirs

Note. sample of souvenir pins in the 2000 Olympic games, listed on e-bay for sale. Retrieved from e-bay, (https://e-bay.com/)

The same way the Sydney Opera House was capable of symbolizing a nation, Culture Renaissance iconic buildings in Toronto were opportunities for the federal government to solidify references to the Canadian national identity. Especially since — as discussed in the previous section — exercising nationalism upon cultural grounds would avert more primitive and problematic flag-waving exercises, and similarly, architecture was a harmless site for this practice. Besides, for the federal government, which aimed to brand Canada as a cutting-edge culturally vibrant society in international markets, the branding capacities of iconic buildings were the ideal instruments. If successful, the images of the Culture Renaissance buildings were apt to be dispersed quickly and endlessly all over the media — as it was the case with the Sydney Opera House or the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum — and could facilitate the dissemination of the news of a remarkable cultural renaissance in Toronto. The City of Toronto, along with all other

actors whose interests were tied to the economic growth of the city, would also benefit from this advertising. Toronto was increasingly participating in a global economy, and in order to draw a workforce and external investments, it needed to re-create its image as a diverse and vibrant city and was therefore eager to brand itself as a global cultural hub.

The Organizations

The aspiration of a *Bilbao effect* did not remain confined within the city-making or architecture spheres; rather, this narrative soon permeated into the cultural milieu and became a recurrent topic among art and culture directors, museum owners, and curators:

> You have to remember of course, that when we started [planning the AGO expansion] it was only 5 years after [the Guggenheim] Bilbao opened. And I had seen Bilbao and I had seen many of [Gehry's] other buildings and I loved them. (AGO Director as quoted in Patterson, 2015, p.115)

In the early 2000s, the competition for developing iconic buildings was as intense among cultural organizations as it was in city-making realms (Evans, 2003). In Toronto, like many other cities in the advanced capitalist societies, the dominance of the neoliberal approaches in urban governance had curtailed the public expenditures in art and culture, and as a result, cultural organizations were pushed toward alternative sources of revenue, which involved participating in entrepreneurial activities or leaning more on their philanthropist patrons. In this context, developing an iconic building could help the organizations in different ways. First, the marketing capacities of an icon could help to bolster the organization's brand and attract more public and media attention which in return not only would draw more visitors and increase the

organization's self-generated income, but also could help with the fundraising campaigns. Secondly, the building itself would become a source of revenue for the organizations, as iconic buildings often is a destination for architecture pilgrims or other cultural tourists who visit the facilities regardless of what is exhibited inside, rather due to their passion for architecture and curiosity for exploring the works of leading architects. Besides, as many scholars have previously indicated (Hannigan, 1998; Sklair, 2017), iconic architecture is a strong measure for encouraging consumer habits. At a time when art and culture organizations are increasingly relying on the revenue generated in their boutiques and dinners (Zukin, 1995), utilizing iconic architecture for stimulating consumer habits seems to have a reasonable justification, as it could increase the organizations' retail sales or help with their newly adopted entrepreneurial ventures. Today, the Culture Renaissance buildings are themselves clear examples of this point. For instance, the AGO not only has opened an espresso bar in Galleria Italia, one of the most picturesque and peculiar parts of Frank Gehry's design, but also rents out certain sections of this iconic facility for events, parties, and even wedding ceremonies and photo-shoots (10).

Figure. 10. A wedding ceremony in Galleria Italia at AGO

Note. From unspecified title [Photograph], by 5ive15ifteen (n.d.), AGO website, (https://ago.ca/gallery/hye-alexandra-michael), all rights reserved to AGO

Similar to many other cities in the global north, in Toronto, a bundle of reasons discussed above convinced both urban leaders and cultural actors that although iconic buildings were expensive to build and run, they were viable solutions for developing Toronto's cultural infrastructure.

4.3. Structuring Structures

While urban political economy studies might offer some explanation about why iconic architecture is frequently utilized in the course of major cultural urban interventions, they often fail to provide a robust explanation in regards to cases like the case of the COC, which, for various reasons, might have pursued approaches other than erecting an iconic edifice. In fact, from the standpoint of studies in this area, cases like the COC could only be viewed as anomalies realized under exceptional circumstances. This understanding stems from the way these studies typically perceive the issue of iconic architecture: a "globalized phenomena" (Sklair, 2017), produced by mega forces such as the hegemonic forces of neoliberalism (Jencks, 2006; D. Spencer, 2016), culture-ideology of consumerism (Sklair, 2017), or the unfolding of globalization in its different forms and within different spaces (e.g., McNeil, 2009; Nastasi, 2020; Wang, 2020). However, this research, inspired by the works of geographers who emphasize the "embeddedness" and "groundedness" of global phenomena (Massey, 1991, 2004), tends to concentrate on the mutual constitution of global and local, and therefore, it seeks different pathways that allow for studying the issue across other scales and through a more intimate view of actors and local spaces. This does not mean that the importance of global factors is dismissed here; rather, what this work seeks to avoid is "exonerating" the local (Massey, 2004) from complicity in the production of global matters.

The case of the COC helps to show that global models are not sufficient in understanding the

phenomena of iconic architecture, as they often fail to envision complexities that operate across various other scales. By discussing certain inconsistencies that will arise when analyzing the case through urban political economy approaches, this section illustrates the insufficiency of such theoretical lenses. Subsequently, to find an explanation, it adopts Bourdieu's frameworks of *field* and *habitus*, and by concentrating on the dynamics of specific social spaces that were the most influential in directing the COC's development, it shows how various forces that were emanated from multiple *fields* shaped the trajectory of the development.

4.3.1. Inconsistencies

A prevailing assumption in urban political economy studies attributes the phenomena of iconic architecture to the worldwide ascendancy of neoliberalism in the second half of the twentieth century (e.g., Evans, 2003; Harvey, 1989; Zukin, 1995). As discussed in chapter two, with the prevalence of neoliberal market-oriented strategies, the governmental support toward art and culture has gradually diminished; and as a result, cultural organizations are increasingly pushed to find alternative ways to cover their expenditures, from engaging in entrepreneurial activities to relying more on philanthropists' donations. In this context, iconic architecture, which is a prime tool for attracting public and media attention, is expected to help organizations draw more visitors and donations and boost their entrepreneurial efforts (Evans, 2003; Zukin, 1995).

Indeed, in the course of Toronto's Cultural Renaissance, the trajectory of the COC's local rivals, the AGO and ROM, corresponded with this model, and in fact, those cases are often understood through such political-economic frameworks (e.g., Jenkins, 2005; also see section

4.2). However, the case of the COC, which was never an exception to the process of neoliberalization that affected every art and culture organization in the city, seems to be inexplicable through using the same logic.

Although the COC was not a publicly funded organization — unlike AGO and ROM that were funded in part by the Ontario government — to sustain its activities, the company was heavily reliant on public subsidies, which it received from all three levels of the Canadian government and particularly from the federal through Canada Art Council (Schabas & Morey, 2000). However, in the late twentieth century, the COC, similar to its rivals was struck by the implementation of restructuring programs, and particularly by the slashing of public cultural budgets during the 1990s:

> Since 1995, the Canadian Opera Company has lost more than $1 million in operating grants from all levels of government. We have managed to balance budgets in the last two years only because of extraordinary personal generosity from individuals who are close to the company. I remain utterly confused by the failure of each level of government to really understand what their responsibility to the arts is. (Richard Bradshaw, as quoted in Toronto Arts Council, 1999)

In addition, as discussed in section 4.2.2.2, the Culture Renaissance program was itself a scheme for further implementation of neoliberal programs. The program was in fact an expedient tool for downloading the burden of the organization to the private sector or to the organizations themselves (Jenkins, 2009). The COC was on the road to becoming more self-sufficient, and it had to compete with other organizations for alternative sources of income, including philanthropist donations and visitor subscriptions. In such a context, where the COC shared so much in common with its local contenders, understanding its distinctive approach — developing

a building that was almost a counter-position to an icon — deserves further investigation.

Another instance of the inconsistency becomes evident by highlighting the notable contribution of transnational capitalists to the Cultural Renaissance investment. As Sklair (2005, 2010, 2017) argues, the "transnational capitalist class" (the TCC hereafter), the main drivers of contemporary capitalist globalization, are also the key players and the main beneficiaries of the proliferation of iconic buildings (Sklair, 2005, 2006, 2017; Sklair & Gherardi, 2012). Sklair theorizes this class in four distinct fractions: corporate, state, technical, and consumer. These fractions are interrelated in various ways, and members can be involved simultaneously in more than one fraction (Sklair, 2005). In the course of the Culture Renaissance investment, the extensive involvement of the TCC's corporate fraction — including the leaders and the owners of the transnational corporates — was plainly evident thanks to the fundraising galas and campaigns held by the organizations. Only through tracing the lead donations to each organization could there be indication of the extent of the presence and influence of the TCC in this program. In the case of the AGO, the lead donation came from Kenneth Roy Thomson, Canada's wealthiest citizen at the time, mostly known for his newspaper empire in North America (including the Globe and Mail and FP publications, and previously Times newspapers), although his wealth was in fact divided into various types of assets, encompassing oil, media, retail (including Hudson Bay Company), tourism and travel. Similarly, the ROM received its $30-million lead donation from Michael Lee-Chin, a Canadian-Jamaican billionaire and owner of a holding company with a diversified portfolio across different countries. For the COC, the largest donation came from Isadore Sharp, the owner of the Four Seasons Hotels, which is an

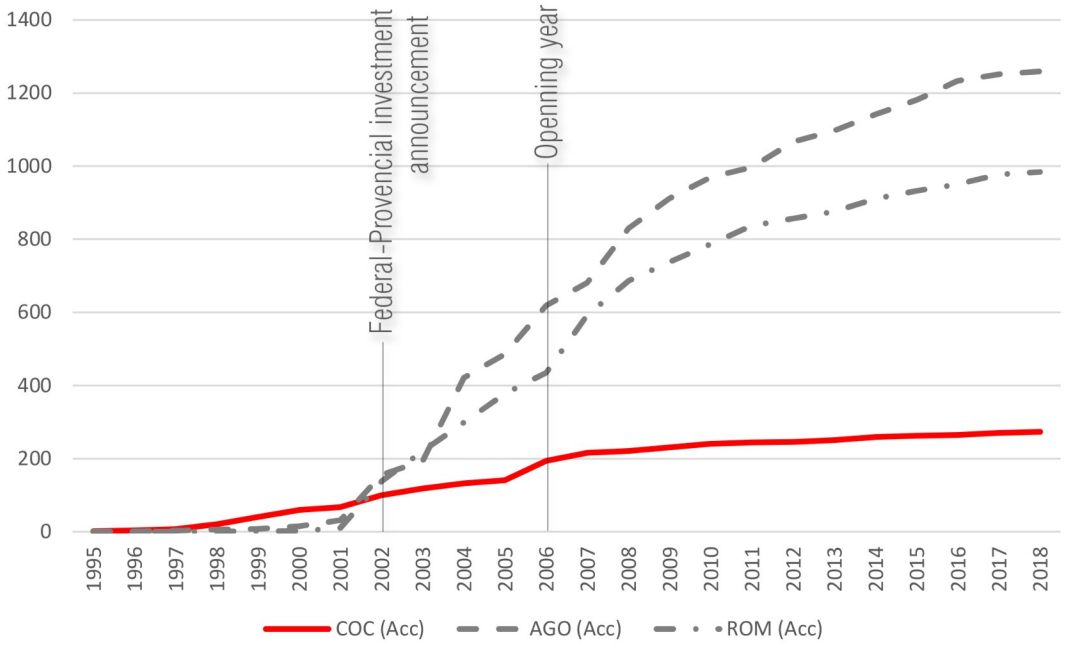
international chain of luxury hotels and resorts. Obviously, in every case, the lead donations were accompanied by the contribution of tens of other philanthropists and private donors, many of whom still offered big-ticket gifts and contributed on a multi-million dollar scale.

In the case of the opera house, following Isadore Sharp's lead donation, Roy Fraser Elliott, the co-founder of an international business law firm, contributed $10 million to the development, and the performance hall was named in his honour. The COC board members themselves collectively pledged $13 million, and later this amount was increased to $22.6 million. A further $5 million came from Hal Jackman, and the VIP lounge was named after him. The Royal Box on the Grand Ring in the auditorium went for $7 million after a combined donation from Meighen Foundation and E. Louise Morgan. Joey and Toby Tanenbaum donated $2.75 million; Milton Harrises and Leslie Dans contributed $2.5 million and $2 million, respectively (Amiel, 2006). Here, it is important to mention that many of the above philanthropists contributed to more than one Cultural Renaissance organization and simultaneously played a role in the other ongoing developments in the city. For example, Isadore Sharp, the COC's lead donor, also contributed 2.5 million to the AGO's expansion project, Roy Fraser Elliot was a patron of the Royal Conservatory of Music, and the Tanenbaums were long-term supporters of the AGO.

Without the significant contribution of the TCC members, the Cultural Renaissance developments, including the COC's opera house, could never have been realized. Here, again from a theoretical point of view, the approaches of the AGO and ROM in utilizing iconic architecture align with the political economy studies that have theorized this trend as a project

driven by the TCC (Sklair, 2017). However, the case of the opera house, which also substantially benefited from the support of this group but did not tread the same path, merits further investigation and clarification. In fact, although urban political economy studies offer some frameworks for studying and understanding those cases of developments that in some way incorporate the strategy of iconic architecture — regardless of their level of success — for those cases that for various reasons might have pursued different approaches, these studies often fail to provide robust explanations and are prone to contradiction. This issue is occasionally brought up in other studies (e.g., Grubbauer, 2014; Patterson, 2015) and, as Lieto (2020) argues, it is probably the consequence of the "over-concentration" (Lieto, 2020; also see Jones, 2009) within studies in this area on the cases of the eye-catching buildings and their celebrity designers — i.e., a small and rather elitist segment that is never a true representation of the wider practice of architecture (Stevens, 1996) and cannot account for the broader social function of architecture as a cultural arena (Dovey, 1999; Gutman, 1992; Jones, 2009). In the context of Toronto's Cultural Renaissance, as expected, the cases of ROM and AGO have attracted a higher share of attention in both media (see Figure. 11) and academic literature (e.g., Jenkins, 2005; Patterson, 2012, 2015, 2019), while other developments in this program, such as the case of the COC, have remained on the margins of investigations.

Figure. 11. Media coverage related to each organization



Note. The (cumulative) number of published articles per year about each organization in mainstream newspapers (1995-2018); source: Factiva database

By investigating the case of the COC, which is a non-iconic case, this work aims to transcend the limits of previous studies. It avoids being dazzled by the spectacle of iconic buildings or besotted by the fame of their celebrity designers. Instead, it concentrates on the role of other agents in the process, explores those factors that might have been missed due to the disinterest of previous studies, and assesses the broader function of architecture as a cultural field.

4.3.2. Theory of Practice

As the previous section illustrated, urban political economy studies are prone to contradiction in explaining cases such as the COC. In fact, by standing afar from the activity process itself, and by omitting the role of human agency, urban political economy approaches often remain

incapable of discussing how structures operate within localities. In turn, their synoptic view of the world could easily fail to grasp complexities that might transpire on scales other than that of a global scale. In this context, there is a need for incorporating "participatory views" (Hillier & Rooksby, 2005) — or subjective views — which investigates action from the standpoint of participants and accounts for the influence of human agency[19]. Bourdieu's *theory of practice* and his conception of *habitus* is an attempt at providing a link between the two views:

> [habitus] is the mediating link between objective social structures and individual action and refers to the embodiment in individual actors of systems of social norms, understandings and patterns of behaviour, which, while not wholly determining action (as in the objectivist model) do ensure that individuals are more disposed to act in some ways than others. (Painter, 2000, p. 242)

Habitus is understood to be an "invaluable tool for exploring the interdependence of human agency and social structure" (Hillier & Rooksby, 2005, p. 10). It allows accounting for both individual reason-based action and for social determination (Painter, 2000). *Habitus* develops and operates within socially constructed spaces, what Bourdieu regards as *fields,* where actors play out their engagement with each other and with other *fields*.

This section will show that the COC's development was shaped by the interplay of forces emanating from two distinct, but related *fields*: the *field* of music and performing arts, and the *field* of professional architecture. Reviewing specialized publications reveals that the members in each *field* received and interpreted the COC's development differently. While the project was

[19] Still, concentrating on agency (subjectivism) without considering the influence of structures could likewise be misleading.

largely applauded in the *field* of music and performing arts, opinions were fairly divided with regards to the *field* of professionals architecture. This contrast demonstrates how priorities and expectations were established differently within different social spaces. The specific dynamics of each *field*, which were not necessarily aligned with each other, could have also informed actors' decisions in the process of developing the project. Therefore, this section studies the unfolding of the COC's development by considering the specific dynamics of each *field.*

4.3.3. Field of Music and Performing Arts

The development of Toronto's new opera house was most effectively directed by the actors who could be considered members of the *field* of music and opera performance. The COC's board members were deeply passionate about the art of opera; many were long-term patrons of the Opera Company and enthusiastic enough to personally spend substantial amounts for revitalizing this form of art[20]. In addition, some of the organization's key actors were actively involved in producing music and opera performances. On this point, the most notable figure was the COC's general director, Richard Bradshaw, who was simultaneously a widely respected opera composer. Moreover, in the course of the development, the organization largely benefited from the consultation of several experts in this field. Since the directors' decisions were to a great extent informed by their engagement in the *field* of music and performing arts, there is no surprise that the dynamics of this *field* were among the most persuasive in directing the COC's development.

[20] Only for building the Four Seasons Centre, the board members had collectively pledged over $20 million to the organization.

In the course of Toronto's Cultural Renaissance, the board members and directors seemed to be utterly reluctant to collaborate with celebrity architects or consider a signature design for their development. Their reluctance was most vividly exhibited in the events following an initiative for incorporating Frank Gehry. Although this initiative eventually failed, studying the actors' behaviour along the process helps to picture the dynamics of decision making in this project and to understand the actors' disposition toward the question of architecture.

How an architectural titan got away

In 1998, the COC is in the midst of conducting research to select an architect for developing a purposely built opera facility in Toronto. A selection team comprised of a few board members has narrowed down the scope of the investigation to a shortlist of few architectural firms, most of which are either based in Canada or have Canadian ties. Outside the selection team, Niv Fichman — an almost new board member — is the only member who has concerns about the shortlisted architects. He feels that the selection team is not advantageous enough in its quest and does not appreciate the significance of the opportunity for erecting a "landmark for the city" (as quoted in Knelman, 2000). Therefore, with the help of a few friends, Fichman personally starts networking with Frank Gehry and assesses different ways that he can incorporate Gehry's firm into the project.

After the success of his work for Guggenheim Bilbao, Frank Gehry is probably the most renowned architect of the time. Gehry was born and raised in Toronto; however, he has never done any project in his birth city, a dream that Gehry himself is very eager to realize once in his

life (Lownsbrough, 2001). Although Fichman informs Richard Bradshaw — the COC's director — of his intention, he has kept the initiative a secret from the other board members. Eventually, however, by the COC's selection process moving forward, Fichman has to unveil his proposal. The idea promptly unsettles the other members, and as Fichman describes, the board's reaction to his proposal is "surprisingly hostile":

> One of them shouted: 'University Ave. is not ready for Frank Gehry.' The attitude seemed to be: We're a safe, sensible city. Why mess things up with something fancy by a big-name showoff? There was even a debate about the validity of Gehry's ties to Toronto. 'He's not even a Canadian citizen,' said one board member. (Niv Fichman as quoted in Knelman, 2000)

Despite the negative reactions, Fichman does not give up on his initiative. He believes that if the board members meet with Gehry and witness his passion for designing a building in Toronto, they would reconsider their decision. Using the excuse of a public lecture, he invites Gehry to the City. On the side, he organizes a meeting between Gehry and the key members of the board. However, at the meeting, over half of the invitees do not show up. The meeting takes place with the participation of only seven people, including Richard Bradshaw. It seems that the board members have already made up their minds, and they are not interested in hearing Gehry's proposal or having a conversation with his advocates. The board's justification is that a signature design comes with extra expenses that the COC does not have the luxury to afford, especially since the COC has previously declared that it would fund the construction all privately (e.g., see Lownsbrough, 2001). The conversation comes to an official end when a few weeks later, Gehry's firm gives its estimate on the construction costs, which turns out to be $30 million more than

what the COC has initially approximated. Gehry argues that his firm is capable of delivering an opera house within the same budget that any other architect would do. He claims that the COC has underestimated the costs even for a non-signature design. Time proves that Gehry has not been wrong, and two years later, the COC has to increase its estimate; however, in practice, the report has given enough excuse to the board to put an end to the storey.

A few months later, through a different channel, the idea of considering Gehry is once again raised. This time, a few of potential donors and urban figures make the board organize another meeting to hear them out. During the meeting, Georgia Prassas, the board's president, makes sure to assert the COC's position by mentioning that the invite has been a "courtesy to have lunch" (Lownsbrough, 2001), an attitude that some invitees find condescending. They feel the organization has "co-opted" (Lownsbrough, 2001) them, and the board has had no intention of having a conversation about the issue. Once again, the tension runs high between the parties and as Bradshaw recalls, "insults fl[y]" and "the whole meeting disintegrate[s]" (as quoted in Knelman, 2000). After this incident, the board rushes to put a permanent end to the controversies and over the period of a few days, the COC announces its final decision: Diamond Schmitt Architects is selected for designing Toronto's first Opera House.

A Habitus

Justifying their decision to deny Gehry's (or any other celebrity architect's) contribution, the COC directors most commonly frame the issue as an inevitable outcome of financial restrictions. They frequently raise the issue of funding and claim that the COC's budget is insufficient for

developing a signature building (e.g., Lownsbrough, 2001). However, the directors' fiscal arguments might seem more convincing at an earlier stage in the 1990s, when the cultural organizations were facing unprecedented cutbacks to their budgets and, particularly, the COC had despaired of the government's contribution. By the end of the century, this dynamic has totally changed. The competitive city rhetoric has been moving away from dry-business and managerial strategies, and instead, it is increasingly concentrating on topics like urban amenities and quality of life. There are indications of a substantial public investment in Toronto's cultural infrastructure, which eventually materialize in the Culture Renaissance program. At the same time, the case of ROM — the COC's rival organization — which, despite struggling with financial problems, still strives to build a Libeskind-trademark iconic construction (see section 4.1.1), proves that financial restrictions are not impenetrable barriers. In addition, an iconic design could help the COC fit its development into Ontario's cultural tourism agenda (Adams, 2002), and avoid much friction with the government. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that in the COC's decision, motivations other than fiscal calculations might have been at play. Particularly, the heated encounters over Gehry's participation, where tension ramps up swiftly and emotions are expressed unreservedly, suggest that stronger imperatives might have informed the decisions and behaviours on both sides of the struggle.

The importance of taking note of such emotions in understanding subjective experiences is previously emphasized in Andrew Sayer's work (2005). Emotions, which are typically influenced by previous experiences, could have a more complicated relationship with circumstances than unemotional commentaries; emotions could point at dispositions that actors acquire over time

and embody somewhere deeper than rational deliberation, at the level of feelings and sentiments. In the case of the COC, the tension around the participation of Frank Gehry and the actors' strong reactions to this proposal indicate the influence of certain dispositions toward the question of architecture among the actors. In an interview, one of Gehry's advocates describes their last meeting with the COC's board and points at instances of such dispositions:

> There was a lot of fear, and the fear was manifesting in rigidity. [...] People moved into their most resistant mode. [...] [The meeting became] as sort of Old Guard-New Guard thing, it was one of those unbelievable moments when you're offered something so phenomenal but you can't see it because of pre-existing fears. This was my greatest moment of frustration, culturally, in the city. (Sandy Simpson, in an interview with Lownsbrough, 2001)

The "pre-existing fears," "resistant mode," and "guards" could point at a structure of dispositions — i.e. a *habitus* — that informs the actors' decisions and behaviours. As Hillier and Rooksby (2005) discuss, *habitus* shapes by experience and history. Delving deeper into the COC's past reveals that the *habitus* toward disdaining iconic buildings was built on the long history of the COC's struggle for building an opera house in Toronto. This *habitus* was developed and operationalized in the *field* of music and performing arts, and other than the COC's specific history, it was maintained by specific forces that operated within this *field*. For example, the failure of previous archetypal iconic buildings in providing functional performance facilities or the specific ways that artists and professionals in this *field* perceived architecture and interacted with it were all influential in shaping the *habitus*. Following, each of these factors is discussed in more detail.

A Drama

The *habitus* toward disdaining iconic architecture was partly shaped upon the COC's long history of unsuccessful struggle to build a purposely built opera facility in Toronto; what Richard Bradshaw used to describe as a "Thirty Years' War" (Eatock, 2005). This history was particularly marked by a tragic experience involving the collaboration of a celebrity architect, Moshe Safdie.

The idea for building an opera facility in Toronto was first raised in the 1970s, two decades after the foundation of the COC when the Canadian opera had found a growing audience not only inside the country but on international stages (Hoile, 2020). Although during the 1960s and the 1970s, Toronto experienced a boom in the construction of grandiose public buildings — e.g., the CN Tower, the Eaton Centre, the SkyDome — building an opera house did not become a feasible project until the late 1980s, when the COC could successfully secure substantial support (more than $160 million, which is equivalent to $300 million today) from the three levels of the Canadian government for building a sophisticated facility designed by one of the most reputable Canadian architects, Moshe Safdie. In that year, no one imagined that realizing this long-waited dream would still take Torontonians two more decades. However, in 1990, the triumph of the NDP — a social-democratic party to the left of the Liberals — in the provincial election changed the fate of Toronto's first opera house.

Moshe Safdie's design for the opera house was a huge structure, stretching along almost an entire downtown block (from Bay to Yonge street). It comprised a two-thousand-seat auditorium plus two side stages and two rear stages beyond the main stage, separate rehearsal rooms for

ballet and opera, storage spaces, offices, retail and several impressive foyers that connected the facility to the street. Compared to every standard, the design was an ambitious scheme. The facility was estimated to cost $300-million (equal to the current value of more than half a billion dollars), and it was expected to become "one of the most spectacular theatres in the world" (Schabas & Morey, 2000, p. 193). Unsurprisingly, some groups in Toronto considered the project to be "extravagant, elitist and too expensive" (Hume, 1991), and with the victory of the NDP, they had the momentum to raise concerns about spending so much on "luxuries" (see Currie, 1990), especially since, at the time, the city was struggling with severe social and economic problems (e.g., housing crisis and more than 20,000 homeless in the city). Along with the oppositions, the socialist government, which had inherited a 2.5 billion deficit from its predecessor and faced an economic recession, deemed the opera house as an unnecessary burden and withdrew its support from the project. Although the government felt obliged enough to secure a smaller contribution toward an alternative plan, its withdrawal triggered a complete unravelling of the deal. The federal and municipal governments grabbed back their funds, and a few years later, with the election of Mike Harris as the new Ontario premier, the province also ceased its entire contribution. Over the period of a few years, building an opera house had become an inconceivable fantasy.

After the NDP's opposition to Safdie's scheme, the COC conducted several studies toward drafting an alternative plan. The company considered every option, from slashing down Safdies' design to renovating the O'keefe centre — the rental home to the COC until 2006. Eventually, however, the directors came to the conclusion that building an independent and purposely built

opera facility was the only way ahead of the company to sustain its growth. Therefore, in 1996 — after the cease of all public contributions — the company launched another initiative. This time, it aimed to realize the project independent from the government. Nevertheless, despite the COC's pledge to fund the construction all privately, the project only became feasible with the significant contribution of the Canadian governments through the Cultural Renaissance investment. The new initiative — which eventually led to the construction of the Four Season Centre — was gravely overshadowed by the COC's tragic experience in the 1980s. This history was frequently re-narrated in the media and recalled in the directors' interviews with the press. The directors had learnt that, for any government, investing in opera was prone to being seen as "catering to the wishes of cultural elitists" (Rochon, 1988), a vision that Safdie's design had never helped them repel; instead, it had made the opera house the most obvious case for the political coalitions to snip off. In the course of the new initiative, this experience notably informed the directors' decisions:

> Around the time of Bob Rae in 1989 when the opera house was cancelled, there was a great shouting in the streets of bread not circuses [...]. Over the next 12 years, we've been talking, I hope calmly and rationally, about it not being the health programs or the arts, or education or the arts, or housing the homeless or the arts. All of those things are important, and apart from anything else, what is spent on the arts isn't going to make a blink in the health service —we're talking about different sorts of figures. (Richard Bradshaw as quoted in Errett, 2002)

In the course of the new initiative, the COC directors remained constantly cautious of being viewed as an organization for the elite or a source of extravagant expenditures. They were trying to correct such presumptions about their activities, and even their pledge to build the opera house

without the governmental assistance was understood as being a strategy with the same intention, "to communicate a message of fiscal restraint," "a no-gold-traps-in-the-washroom tone" (says a COC staffer as quoted in Lownsbrough, 2001). This mindset also informed the directors' approach toward architecture. They believed that "if there was any hope of resurrecting the dream of a Toronto opera house, it would have to be much less extravagant than the Safdie's house" (Knelman, 2006b). Therefore, to these actors, a design that "display[ed] its modesty at every turn" (Hume, 2002) seemed to be more of a viable solution than an eye-catching iconic building from a celebrity designer.

Failed archetypes

In tandem with the COC's tragic history, the previous failure of some archetypal cases of iconic facilities was influential in predisposing the actors to disdain iconic buildings. Similar to the field of museology that was inspired by the prominence of a globally known iconic building, Guggenheim Bilbao (Patterson, 2015), the field of music and performing arts was affected by the prominence of another global icon, the Sydney Opera House; however, the influence of this global icon was more in a negative way. The Sydney Opera House, whose worldwide prominence was thanks to its picturesque architecture, in the community of music and performing art was reputed for its various shortcoming in providing an adequate performance environment, and particularly for its acoustic problems.[21] For those actors who were primarily concerned about the quality of music and performance, the Sydney Opera House was a frequent

[21] Admittedly, since 2020 the Sydney Opera House has started a $200 million renovation in the hope of addressing some of the problems (Wyman, 2020).

reference to highlight the inadequacy of iconic buildings in accommodating the requirement of a functional performance hall (Conlogue, 1998; e.g., Kastner, 1998). Indeed, in the course of the COC's development, while there were different opinions about what should be built at the corner of Queen and University Avenue, there was a stronger consensus about what not to build, and that was another Sydney Opera House:

> Bradshaw thought and Jack [Diamond] agreed, you know, that Sydney Opera House was exactly not what we wanted. [...] If you like postcards, by all means buy the Sydney Opera House postcard. But if you like opera, Milan is where you go. (interview with Mathew Lella)

Further, the repetition of a similar story by a local facility strengthened the presumptions about the inadequacy of iconic buildings. The Roy Thomson Hall, located in the heart of Toronto downtown, presents a peculiar architecture that distinguishes it from the surrounding skyscrapers (Figure. 12). Since its construction in the 1980s, this construction had become one of Toronto's iconic buildings — although this icon was known mostly on a metropolitan level. Similar to the Sydney Opera House, the Roy Thomson Hall also suffered from various acoustic problems, particularly the penetration of downtown noise into the performance environment. Two decades after its construction and concurrent with the COC's development, the facility had to go through a $20 million retrofit to address some of the problems ("Fine Tuning Roy Thomson Hall," 2002).[22] This expensive experience, which was unfolding down the street from the opera house's site, had an acute effect on maintaining a disposition of hesitancy toward iconic buildings among the actors:

[22] The renovation of Roy Thomson Hall was also part of the Culture Renaissance program.

> Nobody wants a repeat of the expensive acoustical mistake that was made at Roy Thomson Hall, home to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. If the acoustics aren't near perfection, a 'WOW' exterior will be as useful as a pretty face on a lousy singer. (Martin, 2003)

Both the Sydney Opera House and the Roy Thomson Hall were strong cases for promoting the idea that for building a performance facility, what is inside should be prioritized over how the building looks from the street; or as the COC directors often described, such facilities should be "built from the inside out" (Ashenburg, 2006).

Figure. 12. Roy Thomson Hall

Note. Photo by author, July 2021

Building from the Inside Out

While among architects or urbanists, the idea of designing a building from the inside out might be more of a debatable topic, in the *field* of music and performing arts, this idea could face much less dispute. This probably has something to do with the specific ways that artists in this *field* interact with a building and perceive architecture, which could be quite different from the

experience of other types of artists. For example, while the architecture of a museum or a gallery has minimal or no effect on the work that a painter or a sculptor produces, the story for a musician, a performer or a conductor is quite different:

> But as a conductor, I had a passionate interest in building the opera house of our dreams where the acoustics would be perfect and the orchestra pit would be fabulous. (Richard Bradshaw as quoted in Knelman, 2006a)

The quality of a concert or a performance — even the feasibility of holding them in the first place — is inextricably tied to the physical capacities of the venue in which they are presented. These capacities are not simply a matter of the size of a place; indeed, many theatre venues, despite providing an adequately large performance space, are unable to host, for example, opera or symphonic orchestra because they might lack a certain level of acoustic standards. It is no surprise that specialized publications in this *field* frequently and elaborately discuss topics like acoustics, sound systems, stage design, backstage, and a long list of other technical specifications, all of which are in a way concerned with facilities' interior architecture. The importance of the interior — and its immediate impact on the art that is produced in the *field* of music and performing arts — conditions the members of this *field* to evaluate architecture based on what transpires inside it, an issue that is clearly evident in the reviews that the Four Seasons Centre itself received after the inauguration. In the publications specialized in music and performing arts, while the smallest interior details — e.g., the carpets, the seats' foot room, the wall paint in the orchestra pit — became the subject of critics' scrutiny (for a collection of the reviews see “The Sound and the View,” 2007), the building's exterior was often entirely

overlooked. The occasional mentioning of the architecture's facade was often overshadowed by the reviewers' fascination with the performance environment or whether it exhibited a neutral tone.

The critics' concentration on the inside and their obliviousness toward the exterior gives a glimpse of how priorities are set in the *field* of music and performing arts. In the course of developing the Four Seasons Centre, a similar mindset prevailed among the COC directors. This inward-looking interpretation of architecture determined the directors' expectations from the development. The directors' fixation with the interior was frequently exhibited amid the controversies around the participation of Frank Gehry:

> People said that having Gehry as an architect would help fundraising [...] but we don't want a Bilbao if it means we don't get the auditorium right. (Arthur Scace, chair of the COC board as quoted in Martin, 2003)

Moreover, as the commissioned designers attested, "the COC insist[ed] that the stage, backstage, orchestra pit and auditorium should be the most important aspects of the project" (Eatock, 2005). Some board members also took every opportunity to reassert the COC's approach toward architecture and emphasized that the auditorium and acoustics should be the main drivers of the design. (e.g., see Michael Gough's interview with Lownsbrough, 2001).

Indeed, after the opening, the COC's excessive attention toward the inside satisfied the expectations within the *field* of music and performing arts. Although the development received mixed reviews in the mainstream media — primarily due to its humble exterior look — it was consistently perceived as a success in the publications specialized in music and performing arts.

The critics particularly celebrated the success of the development in delivering an acoustically excellent environment:

> [...] the acoustics in the Four Seasons Centre seemed to take on a role of their own. Having tried seven different seats, I can state that in no other hall I know save Bayreuth's Festspielhaus is the sound of the orchestra in the pit so well blended with the singers. [...] The sound is always warm and generous with exceptional clarity yet never clinical". (“The Sound and the View,” 2007)

The reviewers also admired the auditorium's total isolation from the ambient noise, especially since the subway crossed right under the building (Hoile, 2006; see also “Sounds like the Four Seasons,” 2003). At the same time, they celebrated the capacity of the performance hall (including the stage, backstage and orchestra pit) in accommodating some of the most complex plays (Knelman, 2004).

Banishing an Aristocratic Past

The very rare criticism that targeted the Four Seasons Centre's simple facade (only one case in the specialized publication) came from a marginalized voice that explicitly cried for returning to the glory and the aristocratic appeal of opera in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

> Master builders nowadays habitually try to point towards a democratic future rather than recreate an aristocratic past. [...] But as socially admirable as recent opera-house design may be, it has sacrificed much of the intimacy and glamour associated with the great old houses. Granted, Berg's Wozzeck or Britten's Turn of the Screw probably appear more at home in a modern house. But the repertoire of most companies is dominated by works from the 18th and 19th centuries, not the 20th and 21st. (Litter, 2004)

The call for a glorious past was heard louder outside the *field* of music and performing arts; for example, similar opinions from the same author were published in the mainstream local and

national newspapers (e.g., Littler, 2004, 2005). However, the vision that considers opera an elite form of art has become increasingly unpopular within the *field*. Today, not only in Toronto, but across North America, many opera leaders are concentrated on banishing the aristocratic traditions and reinvigorating opera as a form of art that resonates with the contemporary values of democratic societies. This new approach has a lot to do with the fact that the processes of neoliberalization have made the organizations rely more on their self-generated income, and therefore they need to reach a larger audience. In an interview David Gockley, an art director from Hudson Grand Opera, brags about the opera community's accomplishments in this path:

> Some of the social stigma of opera has worn off, the tuxedo idea has worn off. And opera is high-impact. It commands the attention of a generation used to rock concerts and MTV. (as quoted in Conlogue, 2000)

The COC itself was a leader in adopting the new democratic vision. For example, in the 1980s, the company pioneered the use of Surtitle[23] in opera production (Davies, 2016). Surtitle, invented and developed by the COC, was an instrument to make opera more accessible to everyone, since traditionally, most performances were conducted in multiple languages, and therefore, their primary audiences were from certain classes of people whose education gave them enough skills to understand the lyrics. Besides, under Bradshaw's leadership, the COC tried to reach a broader audience by adopting strategies that were sometimes viewed as controversial. Choosing more provocative materials (see Schabas & Morey, 2000, p. 193) and commissioning film and theatre directors for conducting opera (Knelman, 2006b) were examples that turned out

[23] Projection of simultaneous translations onto a screen above the stage, similar to subtitles in movies

to be fairly successful in drawing more people to opera houses. Holding free concerts and offering substantially reduced-price opera tickets for the youth and students were some other instances of the organization's endeavours to engage more people in its activities.

The cultural shift in the opera community away from an aristocratic past toward a more democratic future, a trajectory in which the COC claimed to have a leading role, was a significant force that discouraged the directors from utilizing a form of architecture that was known for its extravagance and splendour.

Overall, the development of Toronto's first opera house was significantly impacted by a *habitus* of resentment toward iconic buildings, which was developed and operationalized in the *field* of music and performing arts in Toronto. The *habitus* was primarily shaped upon the COC's tragic experience with a celebrity architect in the 1980s, and reinforced by specific dynamics of the *field*, including the peculiar expectation of the *field* members from architecture, the negative reputation of some of the well-known examples of iconic buildings, and the shift of mentality in the opera community from an aristocratic past toward a democratic future. Although this *habitus* remained mostly confined within the *field* of music and performing arts, it had some parallels across other social spaces that will be discussed further.

4.3.4. Field of Professional Architecture

In the *field* of professional architecture, the opinions about the opera house were quite divided. While some architectural critics joined their counterparts in the *field* of music and art and applauded the development, particularly for delivering an excellent acoustic design, some

denounced it for exhibiting an "unremarkable exterior" (Hume, 2006a). This section investigates the source of the multiplicity of opinion among the architects and subsequently discusses how specific dynamics within the *field* of professional architecture informed the COC's development.

Architectural Reviews

From architects' point of view, the COC's development is most commonly criticized for its approach toward the building's facade, which the critics often have found "too modest," "underwhelming," "ordinary," and "cheap" (Hume, 2006b):

> So regular, so hard, so profane are the brick elevations running along Queen Street West, Richmond Street and York Street in downtown Toronto that the building and its significance as Canada's first opera house disappear from civic consciousness. (Rochon, 2006b)

Some critics scorned the design by describing it as a "no-frills" facility (Dickson, 2002) and comparing it with "shopping malls" (e.g., Rochon, 2006a) and "hockey halls" (Dickson, 2002). The complaints often came from those groups that had previously considered the Cultural Renaissance an opportunity for Toronto "to show off and prove it's a city the world can't ignore" (Littler, 2004). For this group, the fact that the Four Seasons Centre was not another Sydney Opera House became a source of great disappointment (e.g., Hume, 2005; Littler, 2005). From their standpoint, the COC had wasted a tremendous opportunity for erecting a symbol of "civic greatness" (Hume, 2006b), a loss that the facility's superiority in other respects — e.g., acoustic design — could never compensate for:

> The Four Seasons, for all the good intentions, never rises to the occasion. That's not to say it fails, but neither can it be considered a success. To those for whom an opera house

> is simply a venue for musical theatre, it will be welcomed with open arms. To those for whom an opera house is a symbol of civic greatness, it will be a disappointment. (Hume, 2006b)

Nevertheless, in regards to the interior, even the toughest critics had to credit the designer architects:

> Outside blah, inside awe; While the exterior brick wrap is mean to the street, the interior of the new opera house is nothing short of triumphant. (Rochon, 2006b)

Indeed, by concentrating on the facility's functionality and its successful acoustic performance, another group of architectural critics, similar to their counterparts in music and art publications, admired the architect's excessive attention toward the interior space (e.g., Lasker, 2006; Mays, 2006b). Along with the acoustic design within the auditorium, the technicalities of isolating the performance space from ambient noise attracted much attention, especially since the auditorium and the stage were physically separated from the foundation and were entirely floated upon elastic pads. The lobby and the hanging glass stairway were among other elements that received applauds from the reviewers (“Stairs and Louvres,” 2009). The use of some computer programs for studying sound behaviour as well as sight-lines in the auditorium also attracted some attention (Mays, 2006a). The development also received the acclaim of some of the most important professional institutions in Canada. In 2007, it received a design award from the OAA (Ontario Association of Architects) and a planning award from the City of Toronto, and in 2009, it was selected for the Award of Excellence Innovation by the RIAC (Royal Architectural Institute of Canada).

Overall, in the *field* of professional architecture, opinions about the COC's development seemed to be swinging between two poles. On the one hand, there were groups that condemned the development for its exterior's modesty, and on the other hand, groups that admired the building's functionality. In between, many reviewers restated ideas from both sides with different levels of intensity.

A Dichotomy

In both the specialized architectural publications and the mainstream media, the simplicity of Four Seasons Centre's exterior is attributed to the COC's financial restrictions.[24] Indeed, facing criticism, the COC directors themselves often adopted a language of fiscal restraint and justified their decision by referring to the company's budgetary limits (e.g., Hume, 2002; Knelman, 2006b). The directors' strategy proved to be effective in shifting the blame to governments and politicians, whose history of ignorance toward art and culture in the 1990s had made them a better target to be condemned in the media:

> For the most part, however, the design of the Four Seasons seems to have been largely a question of how cheaply can you build an opera house [...] You get what you pay for, of course, and as is so often the case in this city, we decided we were too poor to build something spectacular. (Hume, 2006b)

Along the same lines, some critics interpreted the architecture with the same logic and understood the architect's choice of simplicity as an inevitable consequence of financial restrictions:

[24] Some reviewers also might mention the COC's history as a factor that discouraged the directors from playing any bold move.

> In [Jack] Diamond's defence, it wasn't his fault that the Canadian Opera Company demanded a pared-down hall that displays its modesty at every turn. [...] When former premier Bob Rae [...] killed the first opera house in 1989, the cost had soared to $311 million. Poor Jack Diamond had less than a third of that. (Hume, 2002)

Although fiscal restraints played a role in shaping the COC's approach (see the previous section), arguing that the simplicity of the building's facade was the outcome of financial impediments and budgetary setbacks is hardly accurate. Throughout its career, the Diamond Schmitt firm — the COC's commissioned architect — has developed a reputation for its modest aesthetic taste and its aversion to using "obvious signature form" in its designs (Phillips, 2000). An architecture critic describes the firm's typical designs as being "more humble than grand, [and] more interested in the grammar of architecture than the rhetoric" (Diamond & Schmitt, 1996). Besides, at the time, the firm's architects — notably Jack Diamond, the head architect — took every opportunity to express their resentment toward the widespread craze for urban spectacles:

> They don't get it. There's a kind of provincial attitude out there that wants spectacle [...] of course, there is a place for pavilion-like buildings. it depends on where they are, but you do not do it on every block. you do not make a city out of iconic pieces. (Jack Diamond as quoted in Mays, 2006b)

In the course of the Cultural Renaissance, Jack Diamond was critical of the celebrity architects' works in the city. Although he was often wary of calling names and barely challenged his rivals directly, some reviewers started to refer to him as "anti-Libeskind" (Jermanok, 2009) or "anti-Gehry" (Lownsbrough, 2001). Moreover, responding to criticism about the Four Seasons Centre, Diamond Schmitt architects never stopped defending their work as an impeccable

success. The design team believed that compared to other concurrent developments in the city — notably AGO and ROM — their work was the most successful project. To them, the critiques either were based on all the wrong theoretical presumptions or were raised by reviewers whose competence as commentators were under question:

> Those reviews came from architectural critics, many of whom never really attended the performances, or blatantly, I think deliberately thought they should separate their experience of theatre, from their judgement as an architectural critic of the building on the street. And I couldn't disagree more with that approach (interview with Matthew Lella)

The apparent dichotomy in the architectural community — exhibited by the comments of the commissioned architects and architectural critics — was, in fact, the reflection of a deeper divide within the *field* of professional architecture. Such a dynamic was not specific to Toronto or the Cultural Renaissance development; rather, for example, other cities that were on the path to building opera facilities were dealing with similar discussions (e.g., Conlogue, 2000). Understanding this dichotomy requires a broader analysis of the *field* of professional architecture and picturing how the architectural markets function.

A Competition

As discussed in chapter two, the emergence of iconic architecture is understood to be the outcome of the globalization of architectural markets during the second half of the twentieth century (McNeill, 2005). For architectural firms, playing the role of celebrities and producing iconic designs constitutes a well-recognized strategy to prevail in an intensifying competition unfolding in the framework of the globalized market. However, this strategy is by no means the

only route to get ahead of the game. Rather the architectural firms might utilize a variety of other approaches to organize their work and compete with their rivals. In this regard, one of the most cited analysis of the *field* of professional architecture is presented by Coxe et al. (1986, 2005).

Based on the various methods through which architectural firms provide services to their clients, make themselves recognized by their peers, and receive commensurate rewards in the form of professional satisfaction and material return, Coxe et al. (2005) categorize architectural firms into three separate groups: "strong idea," "strong service" and "strong delivery" firms. The s*trong idea* firms are almost the equivalent to what here is regarded as celebrity-architecture (or starchitecture) firms. Such firms are typically shaped around the charisma and personality of one individual designer and tend to produce unique and exceptional projects with peculiar aesthetic styles that are often recognized as innovative and creative designs. Secondly, the *strong service* firms are reputed for their experience and reliability in complex designs and developments. These firms often become specialized in one or a few trends of development and tend to target specific architectural markets, which might sometimes be inaccessible to many other professionals. Lastly, the *strong delivery* firms organize their work around providing highly efficient services in projects that are either similar to each other or require the replication of similar solutions. The repetition of established routines allows the *strong delivery* firms to provide services that are reliable and optimized in terms of cost and schedule compliance. Although the *strong delivery* firms do not pertain directly to the research at hand, it is important to acknowledge their hefty presence in the *field* of professional architecture, especially since a tremendous amount of (if not most of) resources and values in the *field* is controlled by firms in

the second and third category — the *strong service* and *strong delivery* firms (see Sklair, 2017 for empirical analysis on architectural corporates' revenue and employment).

In the course of Toronto's cultural renaissance, while Libeskind and Gehry's firms represented the *strong idea* category, Diamond Schmitt fit best in the *strong service* definition. The apparent tension between these architects is, in fact, a manifestation of the competition between the two contending trends for dominating the architectural markets.

After the Cultural Renaissance, although Libeskind and Gehry continued to sell their trademark style services to museums all around the world, they were hardly as much prosperous in Toronto. Libeskind, in particular, severely damaged his reputation in the city during his collaboration with the ROM (see section 4.1). A few years later, his proposal for renovating another cultural centre in Toronto (Hummingbirds Centre) faced fierce opposition from various local groups and was terminated (Knelman, 2005b). Since then, neither Libeskind nor Gehry has received any other public commission in Toronto. In the following years, they only found the chance to collaborate with the private sector in developing a few condominium skyscrapers.[25]

By contrast, Jack Diamond and his firm remained among the most decisive figures in the development of Toronto's public venues. In some instances, he even got the chance to intervene in other Cultural Renaissance projects (Gray, 2005). More importantly, in the global markets, the firm acquired a strong reputation for designing music and performance facilities and became one

[25] Each architect has collaborated in only one development, and until today, Gehry's work has remained unbuilt.

of the world's major players in this area. While the firms' prosperity in Toronto (and rather in Canada) was shaped upon various grounds — which is beyond the purposes of this research to elaborate further on — its triumph in the global markets was primarily thanks to the international reputation it earned by designing Toronto's first opera house. After the Four Seasons Centre, the firm signed a contract with the Quebec Government to design La Maison Symphonique in Montreal, and a few years later, in 2009, it was selected to design Saint Petersburg's new opera house, a commission that dominated the headlines in the Canadian media and became celebrated as a form of national triumph (e.g., “Toronto Firm Selected to Design New Ballet and Opera House in St. Petersburg,” 2009).

In this trajectory, Diamond Schmitt architects constantly faced criticism similar to what they experienced in Toronto. In both Saint Petersburg and Montreal, their work was criticized mainly for the "simplicity" of the exterior facade (e.g., see Fraser, 2013), 2013, which many critics find "plain, bulky, and lacking personality" (Bigg, 2013). However, such criticisms never come as a surprise to the architects. The architects are fully aware of the opposing view about their approach and dealt with it as part of their career requirements. One of the architects discusses his experience after the opening of the Four Seasons Centre:

> [the criticism] was exactly the same as in Montreal, like, exactly. But that was from outside of the group that was doing the design. So we were hearing it to be sure. [...] and I learnt a lot from this. Jack [Diamond] was unfazed by it, he believed firmly, and so did Richard [Bradshaw], and so did both teams, that this was the right use of the money; and this was the right approach.

Controversies with similar patterns around Diamond Schmitt's works in Toronto, Montreal

and Saint Petersburg proves that the case of Four Seasons Centre was not an isolated case, and therefore, it should not be treated as an exception — which might be the way urban political economy studies understand this case (see section 4.3.1). The multiplicity of opinions around this project among the architectural community could be best understood as the outcome of the permeation of the competitive dynamics of architectural markets — between *strong idea* and *strong service* firms — to the broader *field* of professional architecture. While in the architectural markets, this competition — or this *battle* as Bourdieu would have termed it — might be over winning commissions or developing a solid reputation, in the *field* of professional architecture, it has broader implications in terms of occupying or retaining a leading role in the *field*, acquiring professional and academic respect, expanding the scope of influence and the like.

The Architecture of Diamond Schmitt

Enmeshed in the framework of a *battlefield* in the *field* of professional architecture, the Diamond Schmitt firm eventually found its way ahead of its competitors to design Toronto's first opera house. However, the firm's ascent was not simply because it occupied a better position relative to its rivals within the *field.* On the contrary, at the time, comparing to some of its big-name competitors — e.g., Frank Gehry or Moshe Safdie — the firm had a rather humble portfolio of significant public projects. Instead, it was largely the influence of external forces emanated from other cultural *fields* that helped the firm to get ahead of the game. In particular, the *habitus* of disdaining iconic buildings in the *field* of music and performing arts resonated with Diamond Schmitt's status in the *field* of professional architecture since the firm seemed to represent a counter-position to the celebrity architects, notably Gehry and Libeskind.

As discussed previously, the architects in Diamond Schmitt firm were critical of celebrity architects' works (e.g., Mays, 2006b). They resented the use of direct iconography in architecture (e.g., Phillips, 2000) and often averted to present obvious signature forms in their designs. Instead, one major principle that governed their work was maintaining architecture's functionality and program, or as some might put: the "legibility of plan" (Phillips, 2000). In this regard, the influence of modernist tradition on the firm's designs was quite evident. In the course of developing the opera house, Jack Diamond's favourite mantra, "first you get it right, then you make it pretty" (Jack Diamond as quoted in Martin, 2003), reminded of the one famously attributed to early modernist architects: "form follows function." Indeed, many architectural reviewers have previously mentioned the persistence of modernist inspirations in Diamond Schmitt's work (e.g., Conlogue, 2004; Phillips, 2000).[26] Moreover, in defending their design for the opera house, the firm's architects frequently manoeuvred around the importance of prioritizing function and program:

> It's easy to design a building that makes you gasp but doesn't work. It's more difficult to design one that works while still making you gasp. Hopefully, we've done both. (Jack Diamond as quoted in Cowan, 2003)

Diamond Schmitt's approach in privileging interior functionality over exterior appearance resonated with the expectations within the *field* of music and performing arts, whose members

[26] Although, in some respects, Jack Diamond has been critical of modernist approaches, particularly where architecture is predominantly and solely ruled by the interior (e.g., see Phillips, 2000). In his vision, "exterior continuity" (Rochon, 2006b) is another essential principle in architectural design (see also Phillips, 2000), which will be discussed further.

interpreted architecture "from the inside out" (see section 4.3.3) and assessed the facilities based on what transpired within them. Indeed, in 1998 — amid the controversies around incorporating Frank Gehry — it was the firm's attention toward program and function that gained the trust of the COC directors:

> 'Jack Diamond had the unanimous support of the board,' Garland said. Together with Richard Bradshaw, she agrees that Diamond won the competition because he was willing to work with the opera company to ensure that the hall would be musically and acoustically sound, rather than erecting a 'trophy building' that might have reduced value as a performing-arts venue. (Conlogue, 1998)

Another influential factor in forging the relationship between the Diamond Schmitt firm and the COC was Jack Diamond's background as a social activist — e.g., his anti-racism activities in South Africa and his membership in the Ontario Human Rights Commission between 1986-1989 (Polo & French, 2016). Jack Diamond was often eager to incorporate his political vision into his architectural works. His portfolio in designing some of the most acclaimed mixed-use infill community-housing projects in Toronto — e.g., Beverley Place, York Square, Dundas-Shurborn and collaborating in the enhancement of the Regent Park neighbourhood — had brought him a reputation as a social justice advocate (e.g., see Rochon, 2001). Diamond's progressive gesture gave his firm a better chance to obtain the support of actors engaged in the *field* of music and performance arts, especially since the opera community was experiencing a cultural shift away from its aristocratic traditions to a more democratic condition (see section 4.3.3). The firm's approach in architectural design, which in many instances exhibited a socialist tone, could help the COC to repel the accusations of being an institution for the elite and recreate its image as a

democratic institution. Indeed, today, some architectural elements in the Four Seasons Centre seem to be the outcome of such attempts. An example is the architects' treatment toward the entrance:

> Traditional European opera houses took an elitist approach to the question of coming and going. There were often grand baroque entrance halls for the upper set, while the common folk had to trudge up Dickensian staircases at the side to reach the upper balcony. Diamond, on the contrary, takes a democratic, Toronto approach. There's an entrance to the lobby directly from the subway, accessible even to TTC users who don't have opera tickets. There's no divide segregating patrons with expensive tickets from those with cheaper tickets. (Knelman, 2005a)

Another instance of such democratic gestures was an auxiliary performance space inside the lobby and beside the building's glass curtain wall on University Avenue. Visible and accessible from the street, the space was designed to invite the public to engage more with the COC's activities, and for this reason, it was named the "City Room." Since the inauguration, the COC has been using the City Room to host a series of concerts and performances that are free to the public.

Using the term "gesture" for describing the architects' approach in utilizing progressive social and political ideas is a conscious one. Although the architects seemed to be eager to incorporate their political vision in their design, their work was never primarily determined by it. Instead, in mobilizing such gestures, they often had a flexible agenda that was more responsive to the clients' demands. For example, in contrast to their treatment of the entrance, the lobby and the City Room, in the auditorium, they incorporated the use of private boxes. A private box is a separated group of seats with its own private access and exclusive services and amenities. In the

Four Seasons Centre, the boxes are positioned in a way to provide the best experience of the performance, acoustically and visually. The right to the boxes is often privately owned by certain sponsors, and, in case box-seat tickets become available for purchasing, they would be more expensive as compared to the regular seats. During a performance, it is common to see notable figures — e.g., major sponsors, corporate patrons, political and business figures, and in some countries, aristocrats and Royal families — occupy the box seats. In fact, the box seats are remnants of aristocratic traditions in opera (e.g., see Alexander, 2019)[27], and other than a place for the private viewing of performances, the boxes are understood to be a "place to be seen" (Amiel, 2006), a scene for displaying high social status and prestige.

In order to open up space for more mass seating, previously in many contemporary performance facilities in North America — e.g., the Roy Thomson Hall[28] — the use of private boxes was obsolete (Amiel, 2006). However, the increasing reliance of cultural organizations on self-generated income and donation funds made the private boxes ideal solutions for attracting the attention of the wealthy and philanthropists. Indeed, in the course of the COC's fundraising campaign, each of the twenty-one boxes was signed to a donor for over $1 million, while the Royal box brought $7 million to the organization (Conlogue, 2003).

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[27] The fact that the most prestigious box is called the Royal box tells enough about the origin of this tradition.

[28] As part of the Cultural Renaissance, this facility was renovated in 2002 and private boxes were added to the auditorium (“Fine Tuning Roy Thomson Hall,” 2002).

Architectural components like the private boxes in the auditorium or a separate lounge for the exclusive use of certain sponsors (for a list of all the facilities in the building, see Martin, 2006), 2006) were instances of the decisions that stood at odds with the architects' progressive gestures in other parts of the project. This could be a demonstration of the fact that architecture is primarily driven by the political and economic forces that commission it (Dovey, 1999). In this context, how the architects' arbitrary referencing to socially and politically progressive concepts[29] could be interpreted is the question that will be discussed in the conclusion chapter.

[29] While in the Four Seasons Centre the presence of private boxes and other exclusive amenities are toned down, at least visually, the arbitrariness of the architects' reliance on progressive social and political concepts is better exhibited in their design for Mariinsky II in Saint Petersburg, where aristocracy is still explicitly part of the opera culture and indeed it is vividly reflected in the architecture of the facility, for example by the splendour of the Royal box in the auditorium (see Amiel, 2006).

5. CHAPTER FIVE | CONCLUSION

In the early 2000s, constructing iconic buildings was part of a prevalent trend of developing cultural infrastructure all around the world, and Toronto was no exception. Yet, for developing Toronto's long-anticipated opera house, the COC directors deployed a different approach and constructed a modest architecture that signalled their contempt toward the widespread craze for spectacular icons. By concentrating on the COC's divergence from the prevalent trend of the time, this research posed new questions about the phenomena of iconic architecture and challenged the assumptions of previous studies in this area. By borrowing from Bourdieu's *theory of practice*, it highlighted some complexities that were previously overlooked in the urban political economy literature; it discussed the importance of struggles that transpired within different cultural fields (the field of professional architecture, and the field of music and performing arts) in directing the project and foregrounded the role of local actors in responding to global pressures. Overall, from the discussions presented here, three conclusions are drawn:

1. Creativity of Neoliberalism

The COC's diversion from the prevalent trend of the time never meant that the organization had a significantly different agenda compared to its rivals or was exempt from the imposition of structures that had led the other concurrent developments to pursue the strategy of constructing iconic buildings. On the contrary, the political and economic forces that drove the COC's project were closely comparable to the ones that influenced those of AGO and ROM. The three developments were realized in a context of more than one decade of aggressive neoliberal restructuring and under a program that itself heralded the beginning of a new chapter of neoliberalization, particularly in art and cultural arenas. Besides, the developments only became feasible with the substantial contribution of Transnational Capitalists — who are understood to be the key drivers of contemporary neoliberal globalization (Sklair, 2017). In this context, the fact that the COC, unlike its rivals, pursued the construction of an architecture that represented a counter-position to the trend of iconic buildings is a demonstration of the diversity of forms and pathways through which structures can transpire in practice. By investigating the case of Toronto's opera house, this work challenged the predominant assumption about the phenomenon of iconic architecture in urban political economy studies, which conceptualizes this phenomenon as the product — and simultaneously the means — of hegemonic forces of mega-structures — e.g., capitalist production or neoliberal globalization apparatus — but tends to omit the importance of other factors and complexities along the process. Although this work does not contend that political economy assumptions are incorrect, it argues that they can obfuscate the view to a diversity of other forms by which structures materialize on the ground, affect localities and shape places.

The plurality of approaches in Toronto's Cultural Renaissance points to the multiplicity of cultural pathways and development trends that can serve the same structural goals. In order to understand this diversity, in addition to situating cultural fields within broader structures — which is the customary approach in political economy studies — it is also essential to view the cultural fields in their own complexity. Cultural *fields* are not simply subordinated or subsumed under political economy factors. In the case of the COC, investigating the two *fields* of professional architecture, and music and performing arts — whose members were among the most decisive figures in directing the project — shows that each *field* operates also based on its own internal logic. The *field* members, who have embodied certain values, ways of thoughts and dispositions, do not decide solely based on rational economic or productive calculus; instead, they become subject to different types of *habitus* that are developed upon specific history and experiences accumulated within the *field*. Moreover, the actors are not immediately engaged in the frameworks of a mega structure such as the *field* of capitalists globalization. Rather, they initially compete in a race that transpires within the dynamics of their respected *fields* and between contending members who try to dominate the *field* or take control of different types of capital that might be available within it. Understanding the process under this light helps explain why the logic of capitalist production does not prevail immediately and in a linear manner in certain projects.

2. Architecture, not Iconic Architecture

Despite the multiplicity of approaches in the Cultural Renaissance developments, so far, only Toronto's iconic buildings have become the centre of attention in mainstream media (Figure. 11),

as well as in critical academic studies (e.g., Jenkins, 2005; Patterson, 2015, 2019). Although iconic architecture is an undeniable manifestation of appropriation of cultural means by the powerful to retain its interest in urban space, over-concentration of critical studies on cases of spectacular icons and their celebrity designers can obfuscate the broader view to a variety of other channels through which architecture is complicit in processes of power (Dovey, 1999; Jones, 2009; Lees, 2001; Stevens, 1996). In fact, iconic architecture, which is necessarily constituted by some form of spectacle, often lends itself to the domains of the "noisy complicity" of architecture (Dovey, 1999), especially since spectacle — as a form of contemporary social relationship (Debord, 1970) — is prone to spawn opposition agendas and foster spaces of resistance (Gotham, 2002, 2011). Indeed, in the course of Toronto's Cultural Renaissance, both cases of the AGO and ROM faced serious opposition from different civil society groups. Similarly, in the 1980s, the COC's plan for building a spectacular facility designed by Moshe Safdie had triggered opposing reactions and was terminated. Without negating the importance of investigating the *noisy complicity* of architecture, this work points to a deeper level of architecture's complicity that arises from its capacity to deem itself neutral and innocent toward the underlying political and economic forces, i.e. the "silent complicity" of architecture (Dovey, 1999).

Previously, Patterson, in his work (2015), has illustrated that in the course of the Cultural Renaissance developments, the AGO and ROM attempted to acquire — or maintain — their "public legitimacy" by emphasizing the aesthetic and artistic values of their architecture and framing their development projects as a form of contribution to the social good; a task that

celebrity architects played a pivotal role in realizing (Patterson, 2015). Similarly, this work illustrated that the COC had aimed for a comparable goal but by emphasizing the facility's functionality — rather than its spectacle — and by showing off the organization's diligence to an agenda of fiscal restrain. Like the other two cases, here also the commissioned architects, their reputation and expertise became central in shaping the public perception about the development. By refraining from creating a spectacular scenery, the architects helped the COC to become better immunized against attracting opponents — and indeed, the COC did not face any serious opposition such as that which its rivals encountered. Besides, the organization could better repel against the claims that viewed the opera house as a source of extravagant expenditure. In addition, the architects' arbitrary use of politically and socially progressive references, some of which presented a socialist tone, helped the COC to build a more democratic image and distance itself from its aristocratic past. However, in practice, the COC — just like every other culture organization in Toronto — was becoming more reliant on philanthropists' support and entrepreneurial activities, and to attract a certain class of wealthy patrons, it had incorporated exclusionary measures such as VIP amenities or even some touches of its aristocratic traditions.

The case of the COC illustrates that developing iconic buildings is not the only way that architecture serves the interest of political and economic powers in urban space. Therefore, instead of focusing merely on cases of iconic edifices or celebrity architects — which has kept critical studies confined within a small area — it is essential to navigate the broader capacities of architecture as a field of production of culture and to identify different pathways through which the powerful mobilizes architecture to make its political-economy projects "socially meaningful"

(Jones, 2009). Along this path, it is particularly crucial to account for various measures of the *silent complicity* of architecture, an issue that has attracted little attention in studies in this area.

In elucidating COC's trajectory from its ambitious plans in the 1980s for erecting one of the world's most outstanding facilities to the current modest-looking construction, there are some lessons that might be transferable to other cases. In fact, the COC is not the only organization that has undertaken such a journey. Simultaneous with the polarization of wealth and power to an unprecedented level all around the world, a similar change of attitude is evident in many other organizations. Particularly, among institutions that have a leading position in the field of professional architecture, there seems to be a move away from the trend of iconic architecture. For example, the Pritzker Prize institution, which played a pivotal role in promoting a generation of celebrity architects in the late twentieth century, today is increasingly showing interest in architecture with socialist hues. During the past decade, the institution has frequently promoted architects who are primarily known for their socially and politically progressive portfolio — e.g. Alejandro Aravena in 2016, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal in 2021, all of whom recognized for their social housing works. While some, optimistically, might consider this reorientation a fortunate indication of social change (e.g., Harper, 2021), the lack of any meaningful alternation in the institution's relationship with sources of wealth and power that long have been supporting it[30] leaves the space wide open for skepticism and posing the hypothesis that such a change is merely the outcome of the emergence of new pathways through which

[30] e.g., transnational chain of hotels and of tourism industry many of which are understood to play key roles in processes of neoliberal globalization; see Sklair's work (2017) for more details.

architecture serves the interest of contemporary political and economic powers. In this context, a pessimistic framing of the issue without exploring different aspects of architecture's relationship with forces that necessarily commission it will only contribute to further silencing the complicity of architecture.

3. The Issue of Framework

Studying iconic architecture is a highly multidimensional task. This topic has received attention across various disciplines including architecture, urban planning, tourism studies, sociology, geography, and cultural studies (for a collection of this literature see Alaily-Mattar et al., 2020b). However, there seems to be a lack of bridging works that integrate the findings and methodologies produced across different disciplines (Alaily-Mattar et al., 2020a), and a theoretical gap for a framework that can account for the pluralistic nature of the issue.

In regards to urban political economy studies, Chapter Four illustrated that while this literature offers some explanation about the phenomenon of iconic architecture — particularly in relation to dynamics of (mega) structures linked to capitalist production — they are prone to a contradiction in understanding cases like the case of the COC, which despite being enmeshed within those same structures, for various reasons, might adopt a variety of other strategies and tread alternative pathways. The research traces the source of this problem to the synoptic vision of political economy approaches, which often fails to grasp how structures — particularly global structures — operate in practice and tends to omit the influence of local factors and human agency. Moreover, other scholars (e.g., Jones, 2009; Patterson, 2015) have previously

highlighted the failure of political economy approaches in accounting for the cultural aspects of architecture. Therefore, there seems to be a critical need for developing new theoretical frameworks that can compensate for the shortcomings of political economy approaches in this area. In order to account for the agency exercised by the local actors and at the same time to incorporate the specifics of architecture as a cultural arena, this work borrowed from Bourdieu's *theory of practice* and deployed his conceptions of *field* and *habitus* as complementary tools. Still, it is also essential to acknowledge the limitations of Bourdieu's frameworks.

By conducting some survey studies on scholarly publications in the field of geography, Painter (2000) illustrates that although geographers have been frequently referring to Bourdieu's conceptual frameworks in their writings, in a majority of cases, their engagement with Bourdieu's theoretical work has remained at a "gestural or at best schematic" level (Painter, 2000, p. 253). In fact, while geographers seem to be interested in the suggestive implications of Bourdieu's conceptual tools, such as *habitus,* which hold the promise of transcending many of the divisions in human geography — e.g., structure/action or subjectivism/objectivism — for various reasons, they have rarely engaged with his theory in depth, and therefore, they have little explored the exegetical or applied implications of his approaches for geographical studies and research. This issue becomes even more apparent when moving from cultural and social geography to more political and economic spheres. Considering that Bourdieu in his writings offers little substantive analysis of the issue of spatiality, there seems to be a need for a critical appropriation of Bourdieu's work in geography — rather than a straightforward translation of his approach to the field — and particularly conciliating his conceptual frameworks with

geography's core concepts like the issues of space and place[31].

Notes for practitioners

The practical implications of this project for architects and designers are in two respects. First, by highlighting how, where, and when agency matters in the process, this work points to the potential spaces of resistance and pushback for those who wish to contest the frameworks of the practice. Particularly, the conceptions of *habitus,* which is understood to be a generative phenomenon (Hillier & Rooksby, 2005), opens up the prospects for agency and manoeuvring within the broader structures. *Habitus*, despite its durable character, is not immutable or solid; rather, it continuously expands in response to circumstances and experiences and has the ability to transform and fit new situations. This generative character of *habitus* is what one can use for planting the seeds of change; it is within the flexibility of this phenomenon that reimagining and reconfiguring the framework of the practice becomes conceivable. At the same time, however, it is essential to note that in architectural practice, there is a narrow line between social activism and cultural appropriation, and this is where this research's second lesson becomes relevant.

This work highlights the extent to which architectural practice is vulnerable to appropriation and commodification and shows that incorporating progressive ideas in the process of design does not necessarily guarantee a step forward, especially because such acts are heavily inclined to participate in a deeper level of complicity that is implicit and silent. Learning and identifying

[31] Nevertheless, more recently, the emergence of new schools of thought, such as the trend of "cultural political economy" (see Ribera-Fumaz, 2009), heralds that more geographers will start critically incorporating Bourdieu's conceptual frameworks in their work.

different measures of architecture's complicity would help practitioners navigate better in a professional field that, although has been historically durable to become the backdrop of political-economic inquiries, is ironically saturated with a culture of grand socio-political statements and progressive gestures. However, identifying measures of complicity is itself a daunting challenge and requires the practitioners to transcend the limits of architectural discourse and theory — which often frame the practice as an autonomous profession — and become more aware of the social function of the practice. Reflecting more openly on the influence of political and economic forces that commission architectural projects and acknowledging the potency of this field in appropriating progressive concepts might be some initial steps for revealing and eventually breaking the silent complicity of architecture.

Future Expansion of the Project

Parts of this research were affected by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the early 2020, Ontario public health restrictions severely curbed activities of theatre and performing arts initiatives in Toronto, and up until the current moment — summer 2021 — communities and businesses engaged in this field are still facing serious uncertainties about their future (e.g. see Friend, 2021). The Canadian Opera Company was not an exception, and during this period it had to terminate almost all its public programs, which had grave consequences for the organization in regards to revenue and management. At the time of conducting this research, the Opera Company, which seemed to have been severely short-staffed, was not too collaborative in terms of responding to academic inquiries; as a result, this work could not benefit from the direct contribution of the organization's staff, directors or artists. Therefore, an initial and essential step

for expanding the work at hand would be to engage more directly with the community of Opera and performing arts and incorporate resources that might be available in the organization.

Another area for expanding this work would be to revisit the development of the opera house in relation to the paradigms of the *field* of heritage preservation, which historically has had a formative influence in shaping Toronto's built environment. Previously historians have discussed the role of the "preservationists" (Caulfield, 2010) in Toronto's post-industrial urban history and particularly in the emergence of the reformist movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Caulfield, 1994). Since the triumph of the movement, the preservationists have gradually become more assertive actors in processes of decision-making over Toronto's built landscape. Today, in addition to administering a few key institutions that oversee major developments in Toronto, the preservationists exercise a strong influence in shaping the public discourse and particularly in defining Toronto's place identity. In the course of Toronto's Cultural Renaissance, the preservationists had some mutual interests with the COC's main actors. The most obvious was their disdain toward the celebrity architects' works in the city. For example, almost all the oppositions to the AGO and ROM's developments were either directly initiated by preservationist groups or drew inspirations from their tradition of thinking in urbanism (see Patterson, 2015). By contrast, in the course of developing the opera house, the COC never encountered any major issue with preservationist groups. In fact, it is the preservationists' absence in the COC's project that makes the link between them and the COC actors — particularly the commissioned architects — an intriguing subject for further investigation. Nevertheless, the field of heritage preservation did not directly affect the COC's development;

instead, the influence of this cultural *field* transpired at the level of struggles over the city's collective identity and forging Toronto's placeness, topics that have not been the focus of discussion in this work but merit more attention in future investigations.

Finally, the relevance of this case study for discussions of neoliberalism lies in the implicit participation of opera house in processes of neoliberalization that had started decades ago in Toronto. Considering the over-concentration of critical studies on investigating cases of iconic buildings — which obfuscates the view to a diversity of other methods that contemporary architecture is appropriated to retain the capitalist interest — and a dearth of the examination of architectural products that are considered banal and ordinary, there seem to be myriad opportunities in conducting comparative studies on less spectacular architectural projects across different geographies; especially since such cases tend to leave more room for foregrounding the influence of local factors, which can help researchers better interrogate the mutual constitution of the local and the global, and at the same time, allow them to highlight how, where and when agency matters in the process.

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