

What is Wrong With the Notion of Creative Industry?:

20 Objections to the Notion of Creative Industry

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Abstract: The notion of ‘creative industries’ usually coupled with implicit or explicit neo-liberal discourse is rarely criticized on the basis of its reductionistic understanding of creativity, its untenable assumption of a crystal clear definition of creativity, misclassification of industries as creative and non-creative, and the bizarre agency problem which attributes creativity to an industry, rather than individuals (especially personality differences), organizations (including group and team settings as well as uses of technological tools for creative activity) and cultures. Although the discourse of ‘creative industry’ usually goes in tandem with ‘cultural industry’, the use of ‘culture’ and ‘cultural’ is misleading as they usually refer to popular culture of mass production that revolve on economic indicators such as profitability, revenue, resource efficiency etc. ignoring the fact that there may be cultural differences in the way creativity is interpreted, promoted or discouraged (e.g. the notions of creativity in Chinese vs. Global Western culture). Thus in this article, what is wrong about the widespread notion of ‘creative industry’ is shown through 20 objections, and a set of research papers on psychological, organizational and cultural dimensions of creativity is presented and discussed.

Keywords: Creative industries, creativity, psychology of creativity, creativity at organizations and cultural interpretations of creativity

Yaratıcı Endüstri Kavramsallaştırmasında Yanlış Olan Ne?:

Yaratıcı Endüstri Kavramsallaştırmasına Karşı 20 İtiraz

Öz: Genellikle gizil ya da açık bir neo-liberal söylemle bağlantılı olan ‘yaratıcı endüstriler’ kavramsallaştırması, yaratıcılığa ilişkin indirgemeci anlayışı, yaratıcılığın apaçık bir tanıma sahip olduğu biçimindeki savunulamaz varsayımı, endüstrileri yaratıcı ve yaratıcı olmayan endüstriler olarak yanlış bir biçimde sınıflandırması ve yaratıcılığı

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bireylere (özellikle kişilik farklarına), (grup ve takım ortamları olduğu kadar teknolojik araçlarının yaratıcı etkinlikler amacıyla kullanılmasını da içermek üzere) örgütlere ve kültürlere yüklemek yerine bir endüstriye yükleyen garip fail sorunu temelinde nadiren eleştiriliyor. ‘Yaratıcı endüstri’, ‘kültürel endüstri’yle yanyana anılmakla birlikte, ‘kültür’ün ve ‘kültürel’in kullanımı, yaratıcılığın yorumlanma, desteklenme ve engellenme biçimlerinde kültürel farklar olabileceğini yok sayarak (örneğin, Çin ve Küresel Batı kültürlerinde yaratıcılık kavramsallaştırması), kâr getirirlik, kazanç, kaynak verimliliği vb. gibi ekonomik göstergeler üzerinden dönen, çoğunlukla toplu üretim olan popüler kültüre gönderme yaptığından yanıltıcıdır. Bu nedenle, bu makalede, yaygın dolaşımda olan ‘yaratıcı endüstri’ kavramsallaştırmasının neden yanlış olduğu 20 itirazla gösteriliyor ve yaratıcılığın psikolojik, örgütsel ve kültürel boyutları üzerine yapılmış olan araştırmaların bir bölümü sunuluyor ve tartışılıyor.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yaratıcı endüstriler, yaratıcılık, yaratıcılığın psikolojisi, örgütlerde yaratıcılık ve yaratıcılığın kültürel yorumları.

Introduction: How to Define Creative Industry?

As stated by Karl Marx (1846/1968) in ‘the Critique of German Ideology’, “[t]he ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas”. Thus, in many cases, we see emergence and exploration of ideas that seem to be in the interest of everybody or humanity, but in reality serve the ruling classes in disguise. Various notions such as ‘creative industry’ or ‘talent management’ are proposed to boost economic development or productivity which are framed as beneficiary for all, hiding their function of maintaining the status quo in favor of the ruling classes. In this article, we claim that the notion of creative industry is such a notion to be dethroned from a labor perspective. In the upcoming pages, we propose our own objections through a discursive style, as a product of critical contemplation on the matter. This notion has clear policy implications as discussed in 20 objections by various ways such as demeaning blue collar workers.

Unlike what its champions declare, the notion of ‘creative industry’ is far from clear. It usually leads to confusion as a viable government policy (Moore, 2014). The way creative industries are classified is imprecise and creativity in those sectors are hard to measure (Berg & Hassink, 2014), despite of all those statistical glorifications, since before all, what is included and excluded are highly influential over the result. In this research area, what one scholar means by ‘creative industry’ is not usually identical with the uses of the term by another scholar (Boggs, 2009). Nevertheless, all scholars of the relevant literature more or less agree with the core sectors to be included. In their comparison of the geographical distribution of

creative industries in 4 European countries, Boix et al. (2014) refer to the following as the creative industry:

“printing, publishing, advertising and related services, architecture and engineering, arts and antique trade, crafts, design and specialised design services, designer fashion, film, music, performing and visual arts, photography, broadcasting, software, computer games and electronic publishing, and heritage” (p.137).

Another definition which is rather short is the following: “Cultural industries refer to industries, which combine the creation, production and commercialization of creative content, which are intangible and cultural in nature” (Moore, 2014, p.745). Of course, a higher number of definitions can be added here, but they more or less refer to similar components which means it would be redundant to list others as well.

20 Objections to the Notion of Creative Industry

Resource Allocation Problem

Although these industry sectors are considered to be vital for economic growth, a few theoretical problems are visible. First of all, there may be other industries that are more vital such as natural resources and their exploitation. For example, a country may have oil, but if it doesn't have processing technology to produce petroleum from crude oil, the economy will have to pay a lot more for foreign refineries which brings revenue loss as well as dependency. In such a case, assigning 'scarce' public resources for the so-called 'creative industries' rather than refineries could have disastrous consequences.

Misclassification Problem

Secondly, the sectors listed in the initial quotation above may not be necessarily creative. Let's take the case of architecture. In many capitalist countries, architects are experiencing a professional erosion where they are considered just as another cog in the corporate machine rather than creative experts. Usually the company dictates what and how to build in the city rather than architects' professional tool set and initiative.

Creativity without Economic Value

Thirdly, the initial quotation associates economic value with creativity. However, there may be cases whereby creativity would bring aesthetic value but no monetary gains. For example, a jazz musician compared to a pop musician will have more difficulty to find audience and earn her living by her art *ceteris paribus*. Secondly, we can produce art for our own enjoyment, not for sale. For example, we can write

poems to share with friends, compose songs to perform at school, produce handicrafts as gifts to thank our beloved ones etc. As these are not for sale, they have no economic value. Thus, by notion of ‘creative industry’, non-economic forms of art are overlooked and not taken into account.

Agency Problem

Fourthly, as we will see in the upcoming sections, assigning creativity to an industry rather than individuals or organizations with an eye on different interpretations of creativity in different cultures leads to an agency problem. The term ‘creative industry’ assumes that the industry is creative rather than its components. This agency problem may seem negligible at first blush. But let’s have a second look: There may be uncreative individuals and organizations listed under creative industry. Then it would not make any sense to call them creative.

A proposed solution to this agency problem is referring to the notion of ‘creative class’ⁱ rather than ‘creative industry’; however this characterization is not a cure for the likely possibility that the so-called ‘creative class’ member can be an uncreative person performing uncreative tasks in an uncreative organization. Secondly, the notion of creative class is just an epiphenomenon of income differentials under capitalism. In fact, what makes the cities wealthier is not their so-called ‘creativity’ but their above average incomes. Higher salaries bring more spending. Conventional working classes rarely earn as much as an engineer, their labor is not valued under capitalism. So what makes cities grow is not based on number of engineers but that of above average wage earners. Thus, with the realization of the class reality of the notion of creative class, we are not surprised to see that ‘creative industry’ is detrimental to city dwellers as a gentrifier, which will be explained soon.

Who is NOT Creative?

Fifth problem is a more philosophical and fundamental one: Dean Keith Simonton (2016), the leading theoretician and researcher of psychology of creativity points out that in our attempt to define creativity, we also need to identify what is not creative. In fact all economic activities can be considered as creative. All the productive activities create value by bringing out either a product or a service. In that sense, the term ‘creative’ is a misnomer. Another associated term, ‘cultural industry’, just like the former is not immune to theoretical challenges. In fact the mobilization of the term ‘cultural’ is even more misleading than that of ‘creative’. Recognizing this obvious problem, recent creative industries discourse has been shifting from elitist creativism to popular creativism (Schlesinger, 2006). It is recognized that everybody can be creative. Thus, the notion of creative industry

ⁱ For Richard Florida’s ‘creative class’ thesis cf. Florida, 2002; 2003, and for his various critiques cf. Moss, 2017.

which is seen as outdated is replaced by the notion of creative economy (Schlesinger, 2006). That means all industries can be creative. But then the initial assertiveness of creative industry proponents goes with the wind: If all industries can be creative, the public funds can't be mobilized for a particular industry. So the proponents' policy advice finds itself in the dustbin of history.

White-Collar Supremacism

It is also noticeable that a preferential treatment for the so-called 'creative industries' exalts white-collar labor and demeans blue-collar labor. However, blue-collar labor can also be creative in certain cases. The common observation that blue-collar workers are less creative than the white-collar workers is due to the fact that capitalist relations of production expect blue-collar workers to be less creative in their standardized work settings.ⁱⁱ In that sense, the least creative (yes the least) blue-collar workers become the most productive ones. Obviously, under capitalism 'productive' does not mean 'creative'. Whereas white-collar labor usually produces services rather than products. On the other hand, can we say that white-collar labor comes up with less standardized services? That is not true. In fact most of the sectors listed in the initial quotation produce standardized services, which means they are not really creative.

This supremacism is based on the distinction between manual labor and intellectual labor which is inherited from Cartesian philosophy of mind with its dualism of body and mind (Parker, 2007). Mind is held dearer than body. Likewise, in creative industries discussion, blue-collar labor is demeaned and found to be non-creative. Let us also note that some of the creative industry elements are called as 'no-collar' referring either to the fact that they don't have to work to earn their living, which means they are bourgeoisie or that they work in more flexible work settings which allow casual dress. Both cases need further discussion in another paper.

Mass-Produced Art

The initial quotation does not make any distinctions among kitsch art, popular art, commercial art, truly aesthetic art etc. We can have lots of citizens in a society without high art appreciation which can be easily hooked by the most commercial forms of art. By making no distinction as such, the support for the so-called 'creative industries' may lead to the lowest forms of arts to dominate the public opinion. If we consider the fact that art products are mostly mass-produced under capitalism, the gravity of this criticism will be more obvious.

ⁱⁱ Cf. Amazon case to be explained in an upcoming section.

Oversimplification of Creativity

The notion of ‘creative industry’ in fact oversimplifies the notion of creativity. Due respect to the term would be possible only after considering its psychological, organizational and cultural dimensions as we will see in the upcoming sections.

In addition to these dimensions, Gaut (2010) considers creativity as an interesting topic from a philosophical point of view and lists the following as the philosophical problems associated with creativity:

“the definition of ‘creativity’; the relation of creativity to imagination; whether the creative process is rational; whether it is teleological; the relation of creativity to knowledge; whether creativity can be explained; computational and Darwinian theories of creativity; whether creativity is a virtue; the relation of creativity to tradition; the aesthetic value of creativity; and whether creative activity is different in science and art” (p.1034).

Support Services Not Acknowledged

This discussion of ‘creative industry’ often ignores the works of support services without which the so-called creative industries could not operate for a single day. These are: Security, cleaners, restaurants, construction workers (who had built the buildings in which the so-called ‘creative industries’ operate), infrastructure providers (including internet, electricity and water) etc. In fact their contributions are indispensable for the so-called ‘creative industries’.

Commodity Fetishism

In these discussions, the end product or service are celebrated regardless of the production process. Whether the labor has secure and humane work conditions in the industry or not is not taken into consideration. This attitude for example makes exploitation at film sector (e.g. overwork for weekly series shooting) invisible.ⁱⁱⁱ Even if the product or service would be creative, it is another matter to call the process as creative.

Creativity as a Matter of Degree

The notion of ‘creative industries’, philosophically and logically speaking is based on the assumption that creativity is clear-cut rather than a matter of degree. In fact everybody can be creative to some extent. You can find a creative way to save time to cook. For example, you can cut a lot of potatoes and onions and keep them in fridge or you can at the same time cook dinner meal while having lunch at home.

ⁱⁱⁱ For overwork in film industry cf. Evans & Green, 2017.

These are examples of creativity. But of course this case will not be as creative as an artist's creativity.

Domain-Specificity of Creativity

If we assume that creative industries consist of creative people (which is in fact not true), even in that case, we need to recognize the fact that these creative people are creative only in their area. They may not necessarily have creative personalities which require creativity in multiple domains. Again, we can conclude that people in the creative industries are not as clever as expected or proposed.

Generic vs. Specific Model of Creativity

The notion of 'creative industry' relies on a generic model of creativity which does not reflect the reality. It is wrongly assumed that creativity of a computer scientist is identical with or analogous to that of an artist. Obviously, this is not the case. In fact, precursor to this discussion in cognitive science was whether we could have a single model of creativity to explain both musicians like Mozart and scientists like Einstein. Now the most widespread view among the academic community favors impossibility of such a single model (Gezgin, 2014).

Potential Omnipresence of Creativity

Under capitalism, the notion of entrepreneurship requires certain forms of creativity (Gezgin, in press) and entrepreneurs can operate in any business area, not only in creative industries. So the question is whether creativity comes from the nature of the economic activity or the overall attitude for any productive activity. In other words, even a company in a non-creative industry can be entrepreneurial, therefore creative. We can also reflect on this point from the other direction: Not all the companies operating in so-called 'creative industries' are entrepreneurial. Again and again, we observe misclassification and blurred lines between creative and non-creative activities.

Converging with this point, Galloway & Dunlop (2007) propose that “[a]ny innovation – including scientific and technical innovations – of any sort in any industry is creative, and, in such terms, any industry is, therefore, potentially a “creative industry”” (p.19).^{iv}

Creative Industries as Gentrifiers

Usually support for creative industries is recommended for governments as if such a support is beneficial for all the economic and political actors in the country. However, creative industries often form clusters with high spatial concentrations

^{iv} We had stated that this line of thought shifted towards the notion of 'creative economy' rather than 'creative industries'. Cf. point 5 above.

(Boix et al., 2013) which leads to gentrification. Gentrification “is a shift in an urban community toward wealthier residents and businesses with increasing property values at the expense of the poorer residents of the community” (Moore, 2014, p.743). As a result of gentrification, the rents and prices of social facilities skyrocket in a short time which forces tenants to leave the neighborhood. Gentrification is a major source of local inflation and urban disparities. This is not because they are more creative, that is due to the fact that they are paid higher than working classes.^v With a higher budget for housing and other items of spending, they boost the local prices to the disadvantage of the local residents. Other than instigation of spatial inequalities through gentrification, Booyens (2012), based on a literature review and her own interview data concludes that “creative industries can exacerbate existing inequalities and marginalise working class residents. Furthermore, the benefits of creative urban renewal do not necessarily reach poor communities” (p.43).

Non-interchangeability of Creative Industries with Other Terms

In fact there are better terms to characterize the situation and they can't be interchangeably or metonymically used with the notion of 'creative industry'. These terms are 'innovation', 'knowledge economy', 'information economy', 'talent' etc. Each of these need full-fledged discussions in another paper.

Galloway & Dunlop (2007) state that

“The terminology currently used in creative industries policy lacks rigour and is frequently inconsistent and confusing. The terms “cultural industries” and “creative industries” are often used interchangeably; there is little clarity about these terms and little appreciation or official explanation of the difference between the two” (p.17).

Likewise, it is stated that the creative industry discussions “confuse or conflate culture and creativity, two quite different concepts” (Galloway & Dunlop, 2006, p.33).

Tremblay (2011) is quite right when he proposed that in Britain the discussion started with the 'cultural industries' such as TV, film, music etc. and proceeded to include other sectors that are deemed to be creative such as software, video games, fashion etc. In fact the latter's contribution to the economy (i.e. software, video games, fashion etc.) is much higher compared to the former's (i.e. TV, film, music etc.). But by using the term 'creative industry' together with 'cultural industry', the champions of creative industries got both the higher contribution of the latter (i.e. creative industry) and the prestige associated with the

^v Cf. point 4 above.

former (i.e. cultural industry). Thus, for Tremblay (2011), the terminological confusion is mainly because of the fact that different terms serve different functions. That means this confusion is not accidental at all. Furthermore, again according to Tremblay (2011), creative industry proponents combined unrelated categories of professions and worse than that, they cooked the book, in other words they based their arguments on dubious statistics. In fact, the percentage contribution of the so-called 'creative industries' to overall GDP is meager if not mean when more reliable statistics are mobilized.

Vulgar Determinism

The idea that the economy will grow as a result of economic support for the so-called 'creative industries' is a case of vulgar determinism. In fact, the characteristics of the education system of the country and the training programs of the companies are equally influential over the creativity levels. Otherwise, the list of the richest countries of the world would completely overlap with the list of the most creative countries. That is not the case. We have a number of rich countries with low creativity levels. Revised versions of creative industry discussions recognize this problem and calls for teaching creativity to students (Schlesinger, 2006). But the underlying notion of creativity is still relatively shrouded in mystery, because the creative industry discussions have not relied on the relevant findings of psychology and cognitive science which are the most relevant sciences for creativity research.

A high school student equipped with critical thinking skills will be more successful at university and if those skills are encouraged and developed in higher education, they will be 'boons' for the so-called 'creative industries'. At least some elements of creativity can be taught. Thus, the notion of the so-called 'creative industries' is an inherently educational issue. High school and even middle school years are pivotal for the development of creativity. Creativity at adolescence years predicts adulthood creativity (Park, Lubinski & Benbow, 2008).

Measuring Success by Creativity

We stated that creativity was measured by economic means in creative industry discussions and rejected that on the grounds that not all creative activities bring economic benefits. We can also consider this point from the other way around. It is misleading to evaluate performance and even success of a profession on the basis of professional's creativity. Creative industries discussion unfairly conceals the significance and irreplaceability of certain professions which are not considered to be creative. For example, in order to have a more creative economy and thus economic growth, should we offer financial support for people so that they can become kitsch artists rather than firefighters, nurses or doctors? These three professions are not considered to be creative, but they are definitely needed. Likewise creative economy proponents don't shed a positive light over peasants

and fishermen, but in case of a food crisis, the so-called creative industries can't operate. Furthermore, a social portrait of a lot of IT professionals, but a few doctors is obviously an example of lopsided development. This is due to the fact that allocation of scarce public resources underlines a trade-off between the two in a simplified economic understanding.

Likewise, in Yusuf & Nabeshima (2005), we see that the notion of 'creative industry' is loosely stated to cover high-tech innovation. However, this will lead to even more complicated forms of misclassification: For example, innovation can take place in sectors that are not considered innovative. For example, peasants can find a more efficient way for food production. Since they are not engineers, they are not considered to be creative in this creative industry discussions; but they can still be innovative. Also, all other creative industries that do not utilize technologies as high level as those of engineering will be excluded such as fashion. For Potts (2009), the relationship between creative industries and innovation is just a hypothesis, not an established fact. Furthermore, for him, innovation policies are usually about science, engineering and technology areas excluding arts and cultural activities. Rozentale & Lavanga (2014) in this context find that only 1/3 of all companies conventionally listed under creative industries are innovative, based on a survey they conducted in a Baltic city (Riga) with those 'listed' companies. This either questions the link between creative industries and innovation or challenges the universality of the notion of creative industries that emerged and was developed in the Global West. From another, but still relevant angle, Boggs (2009) concludes that "[t]he presence of innovation outside the cultural industries means that innovation is not an essential feature of cultural industries" (p.1488).

All these show that the notion of 'creative industries' is a misnomer and should be replaced with some other terms which will not overlap with the initial conceptualization that has led to confusion and misclassification.

Creative Products and Services as Intermediate Goods or End-products?

If we think about art products and services vis-a-vis creative industry, we have a problem of philosophy of economics: Are they intermediate goods or end-products? The answer depends on whether we model the relationship between art and society as a teleological or a functional one or a random one. If art helps people to take a rest, so that they can be productive in their next work period, than art serves a function and it is intentional. In that case, it should be considered as an intermediate good or service. If art has no purpose or function, if it is just randomly produced and serviced, then it should be an end-product ready for 'consumption'. However, creative industry proponents do not make this distinction.

Why is this important? For one thing, whether an art product or a service is an intermediate good or not determines how you calculate its economic value and

include it in GDP. If it is an intermediate good, it can't be included in GDP. It can directly be a part of GDP only if it is an end-product. This again shows the possibility that creative activity is not necessarily economic. It may not even be reflected in GDP calculations. A similar case is applicable for tourism. In some of the high-income countries, tourism is not considered to be an essential sector.^{vi} However, it serves an intermediate function for overall production: People work with the dream of a vacation and feel relieved after vacation. Through these two points, the system boosts production.

Finally, what to include and not include in GDP calculations can exaggerate the contributions of creative industries (Tepper, 2002) as stated above. Another point to justify this objection is the fact that

“Many kinds of innovation exist, from changes in how output is produced (i.e., process innovation) to changes in outputs' features (i.e., product innovation). Some innovations are incremental, as is common with process and product innovation; others are radical, creating novel output” (Boggs, 2009, p.1488).

Sports Excluded

It is noticeable that sports are excluded in the definition of 'creative industries', but it may be claimed that they also involve creative activity. The multiple intelligence model which is getting more and more popular proposes kinesthetic intelligence as one of the intelligences. Kinesthetic intelligence covers intelligence shown in dance or sports performance (cf. Visser, Ashton & Vernon, 2006). So from this perspective, sports can be considered to be a part of the so-called 'creative industry'.

Psychology of Creativity

Based on a meta-analysis about personality characteristics of creative vs. non-creative scientists vs. artists, Feist (1998) concludes that “[i]n general, creative people are more open to new experiences, less conventional and less conscientious, more self-confident, self-accepting, driven, ambitious, dominant, hostile, and impulsive” (p.290).

Creative people are less conservative on average (Dollinger, 2007) and more extroverted (Furnham & Bachtar, 2008). Racial intolerance is found to hinder creativity (Tadmor et al., 2013). Furthermore, empirical research usually fails to find a direct significant relationship between intelligence and creativity (Furnham

^{vi} For a presentation and discussion of creative tourism cf. Richards & Marques (2012). However let's note that the notion of 'creative tourism' does not logically imply that tourism is a part of the creative industry. In this account, only some forms and portions of tourism but not all are considered as creative.

& Bachtiar, 2008). The most intelligent people are NOT the most creative. So creativity is a more intuitive and elusive phenomenon with unconscious processes reigning supreme over conscious processes (Dijksterhuis & Meurs, 2006; Yang et al., 2012).

Ritter et al. (2012) reflect on the highly common situation that creative people had had unusual life experiences such as loss of mother or father at a young age, separation from family etc. Based on their reflections as such, they perform 2 experiments and conclude that ‘diversifying life experiences’ lead to cognitive flexibility which brings out creativity. Ritter et al. (2012) state that

“Past research has linked creativity to unusual and unexpected experiences, such as early parental loss or living abroad. However, few studies have investigated the underlying cognitive processes. We propose that these experiences have in common a “diversifying” aspect and an active involvement, which together enhance cognitive flexibility (i.e., creative cognitive processing). (...) [Our experiments] showed that a diversifying experience—defined as the active (but not vicarious) involvement in an unusual event—increased cognitive flexibility more than active (or vicarious) involvement in normal experiences. Our findings bridge several lines of research and shed light on a basic cognitive mechanism responsible for creativity” (p.961).

Until recently a significantly high number of the research studies on psychology of creativity was on creative people, i.e. special people known to be creative. A relatively recent strand of research focuses on everyday creativity as it is found to be behind a number of innovations (Amabile, 2017). Other than these, we have psychopathological research (e.g. Prentky, 1989) investigating the relationship between creativity and schizotypy (Batey & Furnham, 2008; Burch et al., 2006), synaesthesia (Ward et al., 2008) and hypomania (Furnham et al., 2008). Let us also note that how to measure creativity matters a lot (Dewett, 2007). On some measures the same individual can be found to be creative, while on other measures that is not necessarily the case.

Considering the research briefly reviewed here, we can conclude that to be more creative necessitates a personality change which is hard after a certain age unless negatively or positively intensive traumatic life events are experienced; or exposure to diversifying experiences which can be exemplified by having friends with different cultural backgrounds and travelling. These will form the basis of creativity training. These may also explain the ‘success’ of Florida’s promotion of multiculturalism along with creative class as growth engines.

Creativity at Organizations

A line of research on creativity at organizations overlaps with a subfield of ergonomics. That revolves on the question of “what kinds of tools, technical facilities, work settings, computers, labs etc. should be used to support creativity at work?” (e.g. Magadley & Birdi, 2009; Shneiderman et al., 2006). The implication is that with inappropriate work settings and facilities even the most creative people can become dumb. This corresponds to common work-related complaints of bright employees. For example, open office system is a killer of creativity, as it is hard to concentrate under noise and lots of distractions. But the mainstream architects and interior decorators sell this model by claiming that it helps to foster team spirit rather than the case for separate cubicles (cf. Pearce & Hinds, 2018). In fact, that is a way for employers to cut costs and make more money and better control everybody with a single look.

They love to show Amazon as a success story for open office model, but never mention the fact that the vast majority of Amazon staff are not creative and are not expected to be creative. They are expected to be super-fast in a standard system even having no time for restroom (Pollard, 2018). However, this capitalist system exalts the owner of the Amazon as one of the most creative of ‘our’ times and now he is declared to be the richest person (Vinton, 2017). As this example shows, the notion of creative industries can never be objective. It is ideological, serving interests of particular group of the privileged in the society.

As can be seen from the above discussion, creative staff can be creative only if they are provided with the appropriate work settings and not discouraged to be creative. When organization values creativity, this boosts staff creativity (Farmer, Tierney & Kung-McIntyre, 2003). Staff high on psychological empowerment and role satisfaction tend to be more creative in India (Sangar & Rangnekar, 2014). Similar findings were reported from China (Sun et al, 2012). Just like the findings in the previous section, staff open to new experiences are the ones that are most creative (Williams, 2004). Based on an extensive literature review, Andriopoulos (2001) proposes

“five key factors that affect organisational creativity, namely organisational climate, leadership style, organisational culture, resources and skills and the structure and systems of an organisation” (p.834). Mostly converging with Andriopoulos (2001), Hon (2012) lists “a climate for creativity, empowering leadership, and coworker support” (s.53) as factors fostering staff creativity and “[a] controlling or coercive management style characterized by a focus on punishment, obligations, or external standards” (s.53); and “task and personal conflict” (s.53) as discouraging factors.

In three other unrelated studies we realize that psychological research on creativity can be easily adapted to work areas: In one of them, creativity and entrepreneurial behavior were associated with each other (Zampetakis &

Moustakis, 2006). In another, Burroughs & Mick (2004) applied the notion of creativity into consumer research and conducted a set of experiments on creative consumption. They found that creative consumption is a function of time constraints, situational involvement, locus of control and metaphoric thinking ability. In the third one, Faullant et al. (2012) focused on lead users in innovation which are the key persons as the first users of a new technology. Their endorsement or disendorsement is influential over whether the new technology would spread to the public and reach economic success. In their profile description, they associated lead users with creativity.

Until this point, our focus was on creativity of individuals at workplace. We can also consider team-level or organizational-level creativity within this context. Organizational creativity is usually defined as “the creation of a valuable useful new product, service, idea, procedure or process by individuals working together in a complex social system” (Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993). Teams with culturally diverse members are known to be more creative (Tadmor et al., 2012). Likewise, teams high on functional heterogeneity, in other words, teams that consist of people of different departments or professions are the most creative (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2013). On other hand, Sethi, Smith & Park (2001) additionally identify other factors such as ‘encouragement to take risks’ as influential on team creativity in cross-functional teams. Transformative leadership supports both individual creativity and organizational creativity also known as organizational innovation (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009).

Here is our conclusion for this section: Again, as we mentioned previously, without the work conditions discussed here, creative industry elements can’t be creative; thus it doesn’t make sense to call them creative. That means the notion of ‘creative industries’ is even more confusing than previously believed. Secondly, considering the case of Amazon, we can conclude that ‘creative industry’ is not an objective term, it is rather ideological in its attempt to bolster current class relations.

Cultural Interpretations of Creativity

Diverging with the implicit and sometimes explicit universality claim of creative industries proponents, a number of research studies revolve on the cultural interpretations of creativity. For example Yao et al. (2010) observe that a Confucian concept, Zhong Yong (中庸), which is “the Confucian doctrine of the mean, [that] emphasizes taking a holistic perspective on the entire situation before acting, rather than acting upon impulse” (p.53) moderates the relationship between self-rated individual creativity and innovative behaviors rated by supervisors. In other words, for staff under the influence of Confucian heritage, creativity does not automatically bring out innovation.

Comparative studies of ‘the Global Western’ and Asian understandings of creativity (e.g. Kim, 2007; Miller, 2006; Niu & Kaufman, 2013), unsurprisingly reveal similarities as well as differences. One of the differences observed is that for the West, the characterizing property of creativity is novelty, while for Asia, it is usefulness (Morris & Leung, 2010). This immediately brings to one’s mind the Japanese kitchen utilities that are both useful and creative such as banana holders (cf. Daiso, n.d.). On the other hand, we need to be careful about homogenizing and essentializing the Global West and Asia. Both entities harbor large differences within, considering the fact that each consists of more than 30 countries with different histories, languages and cultures.

In alignment with psychological research proposing that diverging life experiences lead to cognitive flexibility and heightened levels of creativity, a group of research studies investigate the link between multicultural variables and creativity. For instance, Lee & Kim (2011) find that bilingual people are more creative than monolingual ones. This multiculturalism-creativity link found more support in different geographies as well as in mathematical problem solving. Bilinguals are found to be more creative than monolinguals both in nonmathematical and mathematical problem solving (Leikin, 2012).

To conclude this section we can state that universality assumption of creative industry proponents is questionable and the term ‘cultural industry’ could be replaced with ‘multicultural industry’ as a promoter of creativity based on the findings we presented in this section.^{vii}

Conclusion

In this article we presented and discussed 20 points of objections against the notion of ‘creative industry’. These were resource allocation problem, misclassification problem, creativity without economic value, agency problem, creativity of all, white-collar supremacism, mass-produced art, oversimplification of creativity, exclusion of support services, commodity fetishism, creativity as a matter of degree, domain-specificity of creativity, generic vs. specific model of creativity, potential omnipresence of creativity, creative industries as gentrifiers, non-interchangeability of creative industries with other terms, vulgar determinism, measuring success by creativity, creative products and services as intermediate goods or end-products, and finally, exclusion of sports.

After these 20 points of objection, we proceeded to present and discuss psychology of creativity, organizational creativity and cultural differences in creativity based on a set of relevant research studies. We concluded that creativity

^{vii} The term ‘multicultural industry’ is still an underdeveloped one. Just a few articles refer to it, but they are just mentioning it rather than providing a thorough discussion. Thus, we would like to state that this term ‘multicultural industry’ has a potential for future conceptualizations.

is a personality issue and is a byproduct of diversifying life experiences. We identified a set of personality variables such as openness to new experiences that are associated with creativity. Our second destination was research about team- and organization-level creativity. In full agreement with the list of 20 objections, we realized that at least some of the people and companies that are under the banner of creative industries are not creative at all. We specified the variables that foster vs. discourage creativity at work. Finally, we paid attention to cultural elements and issues relevant for creativity that challenge universality assumption of the notion of ‘creative industries’.

All these show the methodological, philosophical, ideological, psychological, organizational and cultural deficiencies of the notion of ‘creative industry’. New terms without the problems associated with ‘creative industry’ are needed to be proposed to offer a more realistic understanding of the capitalist societies, keeping an eye on employee welfare.

This work which integrates various objections with reviews of diverse fields shows that although the depiction of creativity in the creative industry discussions is far from satisfactory from a scientific point of view, it is mobilized to serve class interests with the non-critical support from the mainstream academia. We need a more critical and pro-labor discussion of the notion of creative industries to decide whether to discard it altogether or salvage it with major modifications. This work has been proposed as a starting point for such a critical reflection.

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