1. Introduction

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The creative economy, and the broad spectrum of creative industries that it encompasses, is an essential component of growth, employment and international trade in today’s global age (Higgs and Cunningham, 2008; United Nations, 2008). Indeed, in a recessionary and post-recessionary era, this somewhat heterogeneous set of industries (Flew and Cunningham, 2010) becomes even more attractive as a source of potential employment and entrepreneurial endeavour. This has already been recognized in the UK, with policy-makers being urged to target investment towards the ‘drivers of employment in the future’, ensuring that knowledge-intensive sectors such as the creative industries are given the support they need to fulfil their critical role in the recovery process (Lee et al., 2010, p. 30; UK Trade and Investment, 2006).

The term ‘creative industries’ first emerged in the 1990s and was originally used to describe all industries based on creativity that generated intellectual property (Henry, 2009). However, as noted by Howkins (2002), this description was quickly narrowed to include industries with a particular artistic or cultural bent. Amongst the many sectors that feature within the category of creative industries, arts and crafts, designer fashion, film, theatre and performing arts, advertising, publishing, broadcast media and recorded music would appear to be the most prominent. Some critics have suggested that the inclusion of software development, computer services, digital media and communications in the creative industries’ definition serves to inflate the sector artificially (Garnham, 2005), but others have highlighted the exclusion of particular industries such as tourism, heritage and sport (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). While this past decade may have witnessed a degree of consensus in relation to what constitutes a ‘creative industry’, many questions remain unanswered, prompting further debate on issues surrounding definitional and policy coherence (Flew and Cunningham, 2010).

Despite still being regarded by some as an emerging field of academic endeavour, it has been acknowledged that the creative industries constitute a valuable sphere of practice in their own right (Roodhouse, 2009).
With this in mind, and building on Henry’s (2007) text, this edited collection of chapters addresses a range of pertinent issues within current creative economy debates from a process, policy and practice perspective. As editors, we have endeavoured to include diverse yet complementary research contributions that deal with pertinent issues within this agenda; that adopt both conceptually and empirically based methodological approaches; and that employ a range of social and geographical contexts to explore the very nature of the creative economy. In presenting this collection, and drawing on international scholars, we aim to enhance understanding of creative processes and practices, demonstrating their dynamic interaction and embedding the creative industries firmly in the global policy agenda.

Following this introduction, the book adopts a logical yet strategic structure, beginning with four chapters that help lay the theoretical foundation by discussing some of the fundamental, definitional and structural issues associated with the creative industries. Some of the more practical, experiential and process-driven concepts are covered in the next two chapters. The final group of three chapters focuses on sector-specific issues of the creative economy, such as those found within the designer fashion, serious games and music industries.

In Chapter 2, Simon Roodhouse discusses the fundamental issue of defining and, indeed, redefining the creative industries and their related activities. He suggests that the constantly changing boundary definitions, which have been developed for the creative sector by government and its agencies over the years, are devoid of clear rationale. Indeed, such boundaries are often constrained to match the particular resources available at any given time. The author refers to the chaotic organizational pattern of creative industries agencies that has led to an absence of overarching regional strategies and a lack of shared understanding of an appropriate definitional framework to operate and evaluate such strategies. Roodhouse suggests that if research in the creative industries is to be taken seriously, precision is required in the use of classicality systems. Essentially, the sector needs to cooperate in the building of shared definitional frameworks.

Chapter 3, by Calvin Taylor, considers the concept of creative industries, including its link to innovation, as socialized economic activities. This is discussed within the broader trend of applying social constructivist epistemological principles to accounts of organizational development and professional practice. The strengths and weaknesses of such an approach, as applied to the creative industries, are examined, with the author arguing that the intense social reflexivity present in these accounts leaves them open to the charge of paradoxically underplaying the role of creativity.
The chapter also explores contemporary developments in knowledge exchange research, and offers an alternative theoretical account of the role of sociality and reflexivity in the development of the creative industries.

In Chapter 4, Andy and Kathryn Penaluna set out the case for fuller collaboration between business educators and those experienced in developing creativity and innovation. Through an extended literature review that includes current government and policy reports as well as empirical evidence from national and international networks, the authors consider the type and nature of comments that have been offered on the subject of creativity in business. The chapter discusses the creative industries in both business and educational contexts, and investigates current trends and factors of influence. The authors illustrate that, despite gaining some momentum, the creative industries have been practically invisible to the academic enterprise community, which has located much of its thinking in business school environments. Essentially, the chapter calls for the creative industries to engage further with entrepreneurship education policy and development.

Chapter 5, by Ted Fuller, Lorraine Warren and Sally Jane Norman, presents a conceptual framework to capture the emergence of novelty in the creative industries, especially those operating in the so-called digital economy. The authors use empirical study, which includes observations of workshops over several days with creative groups and interviews with creative enterprises, together with literature reviews on creative industries, business models and value systems to inform their analysis and conceptualization. They move from the micro level to a wider analytical problem, which is how society changes itself. Their argument is that the increasing level of innovation and creativity produces greater levels of instability in social structures (habits, norms and so on). Completely new industries can arise (and ‘creatively’ destroy old ones) as new stabilized patterns form, particularly where entry costs are falling rapidly, such as in the digital milieu. Project-based, non-standard ways of work and organization epitomize creative industries in the digital economy. Dynamic, innovative and often unorthodox collaborations result in numerous large, small and micro-businesses coming together for the duration of a project and then disbanding and forming new partnerships for the next project. The authors contend that research designs must, therefore, address multiple contexts and levels, presenting an analytical challenge to researchers. Hence, methodologically, they suggest that their framework has potential to deal with this challenge. Conceptually, their work broadens the notions of the ‘business model’ to consider value-creating systems and particular states reached by those systems in their evolution.

In Chapter 6, David Rae reflects on the experiences of creating and
running the SPEED (Student Placements for Entrepreneurs in Education) Programme, which ran in 12 higher education institutions in the United Kingdom between 2006 and 2008. The programme, which provided an action learning route for students to start their own businesses, supported over 700 participants. The chapter explores what is known about action and entrepreneurial learning in the context of new venture creation. The various types of businesses supported by SPEED, the majority of which were in the creative industries sector, are categorized, and the conceptual and practical learning gained from the programme is discussed. The author proposes a model of entrepreneurial action learning illustrating the connections between venture formation and ‘pull’ learning. Finally, recommendations for further developing the SPEED model in the post-recessionary economic era are proposed.

The focus of Chapter 7, by Brian Tjemkes, is organization development in the creative business services segment of the creative industries. He conducts a longitudinal case study of the establishment of an advertising agency in the Netherlands, to develop an integrative and multilevel process model of a creative business services start-up and assist with understanding of organization development. He explores how the firm’s organization design evolves toward one that reconciles economic and creative performance. The case he examines sheds interesting light on how organization design progresses through positive and negative adaptation cycles, toward a design that would enable it to achieve the dual objective of economic and creative performance. Contrary to commonly held beliefs that organizational problems can be fixed with instant solutions, he concludes that economic and creative performance objectives can be reconciled over time through incremental steps as a new venture becomes established.

In Chapter 8, Patricia Greene focuses on a creative industries segment accelerating in importance: the serious games industry. Her chapter highlights the importance of studying emerging industries from a socio-economic platform. Given that the industry is still emerging and industry data are limited, Greene’s study makes an important contribution to understanding this new industry. Pointing to the variety of terminologies that are used to describe the field such as ‘edutainment’ and ‘digital game-based learning’, she usefully sorts out what actually is a serious game and investigates what the industry looks like. She explores innovation in the industry to identify three sources: educational, technological and business models. She also identifies the types of businesses participating in the industry, discusses who is in the market for serious games and comments on the growth trajectory of the industry. Additionally, the chapter has valuable practitioner relevance since it suggests practical lessons to be learned and shared with entrepreneurs who are interested in working in this area.
Chapter 9, by Colleen Mills, delves into the New Zealand fashion industry to obtain insights into the start-up challenges of new designers. She employs enterprise development narratives to explore their experience of business start-up. Her chapter reveals how social capital and self-identity interact and structure the way these designers navigate the tension between creative expression and business practices that characterizes their participation in the designer fashion industry. She presents an enterprise development orientations framework to explain how nascent designers approach this tension. The word ‘orientation’ is used to capture how the designers positioned themselves in relation to creativity, business and the fashion industry. Three orientations are distinguished and designers’ orientations mapped according to how strongly their self-identity, start-up motivation and aspirations match these three defining orientations. An important finding is that those who successfully navigate the creativity–business tension access quite different social capital from those who feel constrained by this tension.

In the final chapter, Erik Noyes, Salvatore Parise and Elaine Allen are interested in the pattern of creative influences that increases the likelihood that an artist will pioneer a new market. Their longitudinal research examines the unique creative influences of all major artists in the popular music industry between 1950 and 2008, to check if certain structural positions in the complete network of influences make an artist more or less likely to be a first mover in new markets. They apply network analysis to the social structure of the popular music industry to ask the question: do artists who pioneer new markets occupy and exploit distinct structural positions in the influences network? Applying resource dependency theory, they examine each artist’s structural pattern of creative influences as an idiosyncratic resource base from which to fashion industry-shaping musical innovations.

This collection was put together after a widely circulated general call for contributions early in 2009 ‘for an exciting new book showcasing research on entrepreneurship in the creative industries, to be published by Edward Elgar in 2011’. While not a prerequisite, contributors were invited to present their papers at the 32nd Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ISBE; www.isbe.org.uk) Conference to be held in Liverpool, UK, 3–6 November 2009. For the first time, this conference included a dedicated ‘Creative Industries’ research track, chaired by the editors Colette Henry and Anne de Bruin. Following the conference time line enabled the editors to read and review submissions in advance, and facilitated the presenters in receiving feedback from other conference participants. It was especially significant that the ISBE Conference was held in Liverpool; as the European Capital of Culture in 2008, Liverpool
Entrepreneurship and the creative economy continues to experience a renaissance of creative and civic enterprise, and ISBE conference delegates were able to see at first hand both the achievements of economic regeneration through enterprise as well as the challenges of moving from decades of decline into rejuvenation and growth. Potential contributors to the book who were part of the broader creative industries community of interest but who were unable to attend the ISBE Conference were offered an option to submit directly to the editors. This ensured a rich and robust basis from which to source appropriate research contributions, allowing for a more balanced collection of creative industry perspectives encompassing the process, policy and practice dimensions. We believe this text has moved understanding of the creative economy a step forward and trust it will encourage readers to explore further and contribute to the creative industries debate.

REFERENCES