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Submission to Sub-theme 43: Creativity and enterprise in unusual places – ‘Re-conceptualizing enterprise and creativity’

TITLE: Identity, creativity and the cultural entrepreneur

This paper discusses the identity of cultural entrepreneurs. Cultural entrepreneurs are by definition required to demonstrate a wide range of skills and aptitudes. The paper argues that the multitasking culture of cultural entrepreneurs is not only a pragmatic necessity but is also an essential component in their creative abilities and identities. Cultural entrepreneurs move between the worlds of art and commerce and their sense of identity is formed in the tensions and contradictions which lie between these two spheres of influence. These implicit contradictions remain a powerful source of motivation and creativity but resurface more problematically in attitudes to business and business growth. This in turn presents challenges for management and policy in the commercial creative sector. Finally it also raises challenges for organisational research in the cultural sector. In order to adapt cultural policy and management to an increasingly entrepreneurial cultural sector, researchers need first to identify the subjective self-perceptions and identity myths of the cultural entrepreneur.

What is cultural entrepreneurship?

Cultural entrepreneurship describes businesses operating in the arts or cultural sector. The practice of cultural entrepreneurship thus brings together two spheres of activity, the artistic and the commercial, which have historically viewed each other with suspicion. In this opening section I will argue that external pressures have pushed these spheres closer together. At the same time I will argue that cultural entrepreneurship is not merely a pragmatic response to the commercialisation of the arts. It is also a lifestyle choice which cultural entrepreneurs appear to embrace willingly, not least because it connects with a definition of creativity based on contradiction and multiplicity.

One way of theorising the distinction between artists and cultural entrepreneurs is that whereas artists are concerned primarily with cultural production, cultural entrepreneurs are more likely to extend their activities along the value chain into cultural distribution as well (Rae 2005). According to this argument, the cultural entrepreneur rejects the idea that art is an inherently self-fulfilling and self-sufficient sphere. Cultural entrepreneurs are not satisfied with generating content, they also want to get involved in the process of marketing and exploiting the content they create.

Political and economic circumstances have forced many artists and arts organisations to become more entrepreneurial. Historically, entrepreneurial tendencies in the arts are nothing new, from the craftsmen’s guilds of medieval Europe to the actor-managers of the early nineteenth century or the showmen and impresarios of nineteenth century Boston (Dimaggio 1986). A more recent development has been the shift from a cultural policy discourse based on patronage or subsidy driven by artistic and social objectives towards a regime of investment pursuing economic goals. Artists and arts organisations who traditionally relied on patronage to protect them from the market faced a tighter cultural policy regime through the 1980s and 1990s where subsidies were tied to economic and social objectives and accountabilities, to the point where ‘artistic’ qualities have become increasingly irrelevant to today’s cultural policies (Caust 2003).

Since the late 1990s political enthusiasms for the economic possibilities of the creative industries as the basis for a new creative economy (Heartfield 2001) has accelerated this entrepreneurial emphasis. The pressure to view art as a commodity rather than as an intrinsic, autonomous activity has become the dominant discourse in British and European cultural policies (Casey, Dunlop & Selwood 1996; McGuigan 2005). This policy discourse has been reproduced in developing cultural economies in eastern Europe and East Asia as economic competition intensifies in the global market for culture.

The category of creative or cultural industries has been variously configured¹, but typically bundles together traditional artistic practices (performing arts, visual arts) with commercial creative activities (advertising, publishing). Within this policy discourse, artists and cultural producers are encouraged to see their work in terms of intellectual property (DCMS 1998). By defining art in these terms, the category of creative industries highlights the entrepreneurial aspects of cultural production. The legal concept of intellectual property requires that individual inventive ideas must be embedded in an innovation process which connects idea generation (creativity) with idea development (implementation, diffusion). To meet the standard for copyright protection, ideas must therefore be fixed in a concrete form; for an invention to be patented it must add value and represent a significant step from existing practice or knowledge. These additional 'steps' in the legal status of intellectual property take us away from art as a self-sufficient activity into a reliance on value chains and markets. In order to draw out these connections, cultural policy makers have devised various interventions to foster entrepreneurial traits among artists, especially in graduate training schemes and business start up opportunities directed at young and emerging talent.

While the sphere of autonomous art is shrinking as a result of the policies and economics of the creative industries, opportunities for cultural entrepreneurship are expanding through the technologies of digital distribution and production. Cheaper computer technology has democratised cultural production, allowing home computer users access to sophisticated editing and production software for photography, music composition and film-making. The technology of digital distribution has allowed individual artists to bypass traditional intermediaries and communicate directly with fans through social networking sites like MySpace. File-sharing technologies (Gnutella, BitTorrent) and websites (YouTube, Flickr) have closed the gap between producers and consumers, allowing consumers not only to produce or manipulate their own cultural products but also to become DIY cultural distributors of music, film and video.

Cultural entrepreneurship in the creative industries has thus moved from a definition of art and artists based on the self-contained integrity of ideas, artefacts and content towards a definition of cultural production based on collective systems and networks. The creative industries are characterised by individuals and micro-enterprises with highly specialised skills on the one hand, and by collaborative projects, teams and networks on the other. In order to thrive in this environment, cultural entrepreneurs have had to develop a multi-tasking culture of self-management in which managerial and operational

¹ The UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport defines the creative industries as 'those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'. They include 13 sub-sectors within this category, including 'interactive leisure software', 'performing arts' and 'advertising'. For a critique of this definition, see Bilton 2006, pp. xvi – xvii; Pratt and Hesmondhalgh 2006)

tasks overlap. A successful graphic designer is likely to spend more time on managerial tasks (liaising with clients, developing and responding to briefs, acquiring new business, project management) than on the artistic process of graphic design. This multi-tasking culture is very different from the concentration and focus of the individual artist. At the same time, the cultural entrepreneur may continue to see him or herself as an artist or 'practitioner – but one who is required to move smoothly between 'creative' and 'managerial' roles.

The transition from art to cultural entrepreneurship produces a fundamental dualism in policy and practice, combining an attachment to traditional ideals of artistic integrity and value with a more pragmatic, commercial mindset. This in turn results in psychological tensions and perceptions which shape the role and identity of the individual cultural entrepreneur. In the next section I will consider how this complex identity relates to theories of creativity.

Creativity and multi-tasking

The creative and media industries are characterised by high levels of self-employment and micro-enterprise (businesses with less than 10 full-time employees). In many cases these small enterprises operate through an invisible world of informal networks, sole-traders, informal and semi-professional micro-businesses. Much of the productive work of the creative industries is not undertaken by organisations at all, rather by temporary partnerships assembled from a loose federation of like-minded individuals on a project by project basis. Cultural production in the creative industries is thus driven by networks of small enterprises or individual cultural entrepreneurs; the results of this entrepreneurial culture are then picked up and exploited by larger enterprises concerned with publishing, dissemination, investment and marketing.

As already noted, cultural entrepreneurs are adept at moving up and down the value chain, connecting raw content and ideas with markets and consumers. The vertical relationships up and down the value chain connect the individual entrepreneur or enterprise to markets, intermediaries and to sources of finance. These vertical networks are complemented by more localised 'horizontal' networks of collaboration with fellow producers coming together on specific projects (Bilton 2006, pp. 46 - 49, Grabher 2004). This networking activity can result in a tension or 'dissonance' between individual creativity and the collective processes required to manage, develop and deliver the resulting product or service (Wilson and Stokes 2005; Morris et al. 1993). The multi-tasking culture of creative enterprises can thus place a strain on the individual's role and identity as a cultural entrepreneur, as well as on the integrity and focus of the enterprise as a whole. Cultural entrepreneurs are required to play multiple roles both inside and outside their organisation or practice.

At the same time, many cultural entrepreneurs seem actively to prefer this model to the more tightly defined structure which would be available in a larger more hierarchical firm with clearly defined horizontal and vertical divisions of responsibility. For example a majority of design and architectural practices are constituted as partnerships or federations of self-managing individuals; of course there are different levels of managerial accountability and control but to a large extent individuals are responsible for managing their own projects. At one level this preference may reflect the classic trait-based definitions of entrepreneurs as 'rugged individualists' who are typically bad at delegating tasks and want to retain control over their own work and over a business they may well have created in the first place (Mcgrath, Macmillan and Scheinberg 1992).

Cultural entrepreneurs may be additionally driven by the intrinsic satisfaction derived from successful completion of a task; this observation is supported by Amabile's findings that creativity depends upon strong intrinsic motivation, the feeling of a job well done (Amabile 1998; Hennessy and Amabile 1988). In order to attain this satisfaction in the fragmented network economy of today's creative economy, cultural entrepreneurs must extend their involvement in a project from origination and development through to realisation and dissemination.

To some extent then, the multi-tasking culture of cultural entrepreneurs is a pragmatic response to the realities of working in the commercial creative industries. But it is also a deliberate choice. Tasks are complex and multi-faceted. In order to achieve the intrinsic satisfaction of completing a task, and in order to thrive in a competitive environment, cultural entrepreneurs must take on many roles and slip easily between the worlds of art and commerce. Such behaviour fits with general theories of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behaviour. It is further reinforced by cognitive theories of creativity which emphasise the multiplicity of the creative process.

Cognitive theories of creativity suggest that the creative process is characterised by multiple intelligences, switches between 'divergent' and 'convergent' thinking styles and transitions between different sometimes apparently contradictory frames of reference (Koestler 1976; Boden 1994). Frank Barron described this ability to tolerate tensions and contradictions as 'ego strength', and found this capacity to be especially pronounced among artists (Barron 1968). Multi-tasking and self-management can thus be seen as an aspect of creativity as much as an entrepreneurial necessity.

The ability to handle different modes of thinking and to switch between different ways of seeing and points of view allows creative people to solve problems. When it comes to organisational structure, it is not surprising to find that many creative organisations allow and encourage individuals to exchange roles and pursue tasks which cut across the functional divisions of a more traditionally structured firm (Bilton and Leary 2002; Thompson 2003). Indeed Grabher (2002; 2004) argues that the basic unit of analysis in the creative industries is not the individual firm, but a 'project ecology' within which temporary project-based teams coalesce for specific projects then melt back into the broader network. Organisation thus becomes a temporary pattern of communication between individuals rather than a permanent fixed structure.

The definition of creativity as a multi-faceted, complex process also challenges the traditional concept of the value chain. Whereas the traditional value chain separates out activities along the value chain in order to allow individuals and sub-divisions to pursue separate specialist tasks, creative processes require a degree of overlap between different competences and roles. As noted previously, cultural entrepreneurs move up and down the value chain, recognising that 'pure' content is not the end point of cultural production or consumption. The distinction between entrepreneurial and traditional approaches to the value chain in the creative industries can be seen in the differing responses to disintermediation in the music industry. Digital technologies have allowed musicians and record labels to distribute directly to consumers and to change the relationship between production and consumption. At the same time consumers have embraced the possibilities of customising and even co-authoring their experiences, using interactive technologies and new forms of delivery to add value to the raw content. Individual artists have responded to these developments by setting up their own websites and networks either independently or through social networking sites like

MySpace. The mainstream music industry has been much slower to respond, initially trying to retreat back into its traditional business model of rights ownership and exploitation within a clearly defined value chain. However, with consumers no longer respecting the boundaries and definitions on which this value chain rests, the major labels found themselves in the bizarre position of attempting to curtail the new technologies through restrictive formats (Digital Rights Management or DRM) and taking their customers to court for copyright theft, in order to defend their traditional value chain position as exclusive distributors. Belatedly, and with a technology company leading the way (Apple's iTunes), the major record labels have had to accept the new relationship between product, consumers and value in the music industry.

The example of the music industry is further evidence of how cultural entrepreneurs extend their work along the value chain, from content creation to adaptation and delivery. The 'creativity' of cultural entrepreneurship goes past traditional definitions of artistic self-expression into a more complex process. The complexity of cultural entrepreneurship correlates with the dualism in cognitive theories of creativity, encompassing multiple thinking styles and meeting the dual criteria of 'novelty' and 'value'. I have argued that this is partly a pragmatic response to the technologies, markets and working practices of the creative industries, based as they are on flexible, multifunctional teams and temporary projects in networks. It is also a reflection of a creative process which goes beyond idea generation into development and dissemination, and which combines individual invention with collective implementation. How then are these dualisms and complexities reflected in the role and identity of the cultural entrepreneur?

The subjective identity of the cultural entrepreneur: myths and perceptions

Cultural entrepreneurs combine the traditional artistic function with an ability to identify and exploit the resulting commercial opportunities. This lends itself to a multi-tasking operational culture and a belief that creativity requires more than novel ideas and individual talent. Combining the roles of artist and entrepreneur, the cultural entrepreneur requires that 'ego strength' identified by Frank Barron as the creative ability to tolerate and capitalise upon contradictory ways of thinking and acting. In particular cultural entrepreneurs must move between the worlds of artistic creativity and commerce. Historically these worlds of creativity and management have been seen as hostile, even mutually incompatible. This assumption is rooted in perceptions of the creative as inherently unreliable, unpredictable and unmanageable and of management as a form of control and constraint. Such perceptions may be both inaccurate and unproductive (Bilton 2006, pp. 12 - 14). However, they remain strongly embedded in business culture, not least in the business of the creative industries themselves. How then do cultural entrepreneurs reconcile these seemingly opposing identities and roles?

Organisational researchers have used the stories and anecdotes exchanged inside an organisation as a method for understanding its underlying culture and values (Gabriel 2004; Turner 1992). What then are the mythical stories which cultural entrepreneurs tell of themselves and what do they tell us about the underlying identity and character of cultural entrepreneurship?

Firstly, some cultural entrepreneurs appear uncomfortable or hostile towards the terminology of art and creativity. One cultural entrepreneur working in new media and online games told me that anybody who uses the word 'creative' in their job title is unlikely to be doing creative work themselves. In defining themselves as 'entrepreneurs'

and adopting the language of business, artists like Andy Warhol and Damien Hirst are self-consciously distancing themselves from the language of art and deliberately detaching themselves from their fellow-artists, as with Andy Warhol's provocative remark that 'business is the best kind of art' or Hirst's claim that the advertising executive and collector Charles Saatchi was his 'hero' and a worthy recipient of the Tate Gallery's Turner Prize². For both men, the embrace of commerce was a calculated affront to the art establishment and a deliberate attempt to distance themselves from the traditional artistic role. Even among my own students, those from an arts background often compete to project a philistine, anti-aesthetic persona and to be more 'business-like' than their colleagues. The historic conflict between art and commerce is here internalised into a form of self-recrimination or guilt, repressing the aesthetic aspiration of cultural work and highlighting its industrial, commercial realities.

On the other hand, cultural entrepreneurs seem equally ill at ease in the world of business. There is a strong tradition of exceptionalism in the creative industries, based on a perception that the creative industries are not like other industries and that outsiders (especially investors) cannot possibly understand them. Even the notion of the creative industries themselves seems like an artificial attempt to separate out a coherent industrial sector from the rest of the economy, based on some rather dubious 'special' characteristics. Business advisers counter by pejoratively labelling the creative industries as 'lifestyle businesses' – a kind of hobby, not a proper business. As noted in a recent report by NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts), such insistence on the exceptional character of the creative industries may alienate investors as a form of special pleading³.

In a recent survey of cultural entrepreneurs in Vienna, Erich Poettschacher found that cultural entrepreneurs and enterprises would insist on the fact that they were completely unlike conventional manufacturing businesses, even when they appeared to have more in common with these businesses than they cared to admit. This perception of difference was rooted in 'creation myths' – stories the entrepreneurs told themselves about how the organisation was founded in opposition to the perceived norms of more conventional businesses. These mythical stories continued to support the enterprise's self-perception as oppositional and alternative long after it had evolved into something more comfortable and mainstream. In the end Poettschacher argues that the objective characteristics of the cultural enterprise matter less than the subjective self-perception of being different or exceptional. However implausible such claims may appear from the outside, internally they become important resources of self-belief and shared purpose. From this perspective the rather contradictory identity and role of the cultural entrepreneur may be understood as a strength rather than a weakness (Poettschacher 2005).

By perceiving themselves as different from ordinary artists and ordinary businesses, cultural entrepreneurs are reinforcing their own sense of identity and purpose. Ruth Gunther McGrath and Ian Macmillan present an empirical study which suggests that entrepreneurs perceive themselves as different from other organisations, and argue that this belief in their own distinctiveness cements their identities as entrepreneurs (McGrath

² This is not to diminish the artistic seriousness or reputations of Hirst and Warhol – indeed Hirst in his more recent interviews appears more comfortable in his skin as an artist and less eager to play the part of the maverick entrepreneur as provocateur. Perhaps the need to distance himself from the art world has come full circle, and Hirst now seeks to redefine his own art world on his own terms.

³ NESTA: *Creating Value: how the UK can invest in creative businesses* (May 2005).

and Macmillan 1992). The 'mythical' identity is formed in opposition to the status quo and defines the entrepreneur as different or unique; even when, objectively speaking, the differences cease to matter, the subjective mythology survives. The contradictions in the identity of the cultural entrepreneur thus become a source of distinction and inner confidence.

For the cultural entrepreneur, identity and self-perception are connected to motivation. According to Amabile's studies of motivation and reward in the creative process, creative individuals draw upon a strong intrinsic motivation which is to a large extent independent of external rewards or set-backs. Amabile suggests that this inner self-belief has its roots in childhood, a view supported by Freudian psychology and by Albert Bandura's concept of 'self-efficacy' beliefs (Bandura 1997)⁴. Freud argued that the creative impulse was essentially dysfunctional, resulting from an inability to reconcile childhood desires with adult realities (Freud 1985). The alienation and self-conscious 'exceptionalism' of the cultural entrepreneur supports Freud's view that creativity comes from an inner drive for self-expression in the face of opposition. Opposition and resistance in the self-perception of the cultural entrepreneur serve a creative purpose.

For the cultural enterprise, these individual traits are manifest in a collective organisational culture. The group identity formed in opposition to other types of business contributes to a powerful sense of purpose and motivation, driving forward the creative process. As with Freud's view of individual artistic creativity, this collective identity may be essentially dysfunctional, retreating into a mythical past instead of adjusting to the present reality of the organisation, yet it remains a powerful motivating force. The cultural enterprise continues to believe in its exceptional, outsider qualities even when this belief is no longer objectively justified.

Of course these identity myths can also have negative consequences. Strong intrinsic motivation and a belief in the unique character of the enterprise are rooted in formative experiences of the individual entrepreneur and of the business (Schein 1983). This makes it hard to reflect critically on the identity and character of the business, and harder still to change them. Entrepreneurs and enterprises can become so locked into their foundation myths and their self-efficacy beliefs that they are unable to take on board new ideas and new people, to delegate tasks or to confront the need for strategic change.

I have argued that the 'mythical' identity of the cultural entrepreneur or enterprise is based on feelings of alienation and 'exceptionalism', poised uneasily between the opposing worlds of art and commerce. From a creative perspective, this uneasy self-perception may be a useful source of motivation. It may also help the organisation or individual to switch between opposing perceptions, to make unexpected creative connections between opposing frames of reference, or to move between different networks, tasks and thinking styles. From a management or policy perspective, however, the conflicted cultural identity of the entrepreneur or enterprise may make it harder for them to reflect and grow. The self-perception of the cultural enterprise may be a source of strength from an internal perspective, but becomes more problematic when viewed externally from the perspective of cultural policy

Implications for cultural policy and management

⁴ I am grateful to Claudia Chibici-Revneanu for introducing this concept to me.

The UK government's creative industries mapping document of 1998 was an attempt to develop a baseline of knowledge about the entrepreneurial cultural sector. However, the attempt was compromised by inconsistent definitions. Dating back to Myerscough's 1988 survey (Myerscough 1988), objective data on the cultural sector has been compromised by advocacy to and by government, particularly in the definition and measurement of their economic scale and scope. Instead of developing policies towards the creative industries which are 'evidence-based', there is a danger instead of being misled by policy-based evidence. The problem of mapping the creative industries is exacerbated by the complexity of cultural employment. The formal statistics on creative businesses are only the visible tip of a much larger informal economy where part-time / casual work, self-employment, voluntary activity and non-registered businesses are difficult to quantify.

Having attempted to categorise and quantify the scope of the creative industries in economic terms, UK policy on the creative industries has taken a similar economic turn. Within the framework of a creative economy and a discourse of entrepreneurship, policy makers have assumed that the first goal of cultural entrepreneurs will be to grow their businesses by acquiring new resources and skills, tapping into new markets, employing more people and thereby increasing revenues and profits.

Yet this paper has observed that cultural entrepreneurs are profoundly ambivalent about making this transition from informal lifestyle business to burgeoning creative enterprise. Cultural entrepreneurs have defined themselves by their opposition to the values and assumptions of traditional business culture. They have retained this oppositional identity even when they begin to adopt more traditional structures and processes. Subjectively they remain stubbornly attached to an outsider mentality even when they are swimming in the mainstream. This ambivalent status and identity is linked to their modus operandi as shape-shifters within the value chain and to a creative process which not only incorporates multiple elements but actively thrives on contradiction and complexity. The fact that cultural entrepreneurs are unlikely to 'stand up and be counted' not only removes them from the official 'mapping' of the creative sector, it also places them at odds with the underlying policy priorities of economic development and growth. These priorities are enshrined in the UK mapping documents of 1998 and 2001 and have filtered downwards to other regional and local agencies. British definitions and assumptions have also influenced creative industries policies around the world.

For the small business sector in general, only a small percentage of businesses are responsible for overall growth in the sector; for the rest, the majority of whom are likely to be sole traders, it is enough to maintain a viable business which guarantees their autonomy (Storey 1994). For the cultural sector, reluctance to grow is exacerbated by the unpredictability of the business cycle, a tendency to measure success in qualitative rather than quantitative terms, and a reliance on individual human capital as the primary asset. Consequently creative enterprises are more likely to invest profits in improving the quality of the product rather than recruiting new people or increasing their capacity (Bilton 1999).

The identity and culture of the cultural entrepreneur or enterprise as 'not business as usual' creates internal resistance to business expansion. This paper has argued that the identity and culture of creative enterprise is rooted in a self-perceived distinctiveness and 'deviance' from traditional business. Bringing new people into this tightly defined, oppositional business culture threatens the distinctive identity of the founding individual

or group and the multi-tasking culture of creative work. As businesses grow, it is inevitable that the fluid exchange of roles in the creative business hardens into a more rigid demarcation of tasks and responsibilities and the lines of communication become more hierarchical instead of flowing informally between individuals. Given that cultural entrepreneurs are likely to conduct their work through projects and networks rather than fixed organisations, the problem of organisational capacity is in any case more easily solved by partnership or joint projects rather than growing the core business. Beyond these practical difficulties, there is also a 'cultural' resistance to change based on a kind of siege mentality which reflects the identity myths of many cultural enterprises.

If the goal of cultural policy is to 'develop' the cultural enterprise, then it must first make some concession to the cultural entrepreneur's self-perceived distinctiveness. Poettschacher, in his role as business consultant, argues that it is important to make such concessions, even if objectively speaking the 'exceptionalism' of the sector is more myth than reality. In the UK, small business advisers have begun to concede the special character of the creative enterprise rather than pejoratively dismissing them as amateur or 'lifestyle' businesses; this acknowledgement of difference may be a form of placebo rather than a genuine change in approach, but can be justified if it makes business advice and resources more accessible to the cultural sector.

By attempting to grow or develop creative enterprises, cultural policy makers are dealing with organisational change. This in turn means confronting the identity myths which lie behind the organisational culture of the creative enterprise. Some of the barriers to change are external, based on the difficulty of accessing finance and markets and the uneven structure of the creative industries where lucrative rights are monopolised by a handful of powerful corporations. Breaking out of the confines of the small enterprise in such circumstances is never going to be easy. But the internal, subjective barriers to organisational change may be equally powerful. An organisational culture based on paradox, complexity and contradiction revolves around the dynamics of individual relationships and perceptions. Unless these perceptions and myths of identity are acknowledged, organisational change is likely to be resisted.

Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that cultural entrepreneurs have evolved a particular organisational culture and identity, an uneasy combination of the commercial and the artistic. This contradictory identity is partly a pragmatic reflection of their precarious status within the ecology of the creative industries, but is also a source of strength. From a creative perspective, their position on the edge of two opposing value systems can be seen to support a multi-tasking culture, allowing them to switch internally between multiple thinking styles and tasks and to forge multiple relationships and networks outside the business. From an organisational perspective, their self-perception as distinctive or exceptional supports a strong sense of motivation and purpose.

The identity of the cultural entrepreneur is 'oppositional', defined reactively against familiar stereotypes of art and business. It is also 'mythical' in that the self-perceived distinctiveness of the organisational culture or individual personality is not always matched by the objective reality. These characteristics can have negative consequences, particularly in relation to organisational change and growth. Cultural entrepreneurs may be reluctant to grow their business for a variety of well-founded 'objective' reasons, but their oppositional mentality and their subjective attachment to a mythical identity are additional obstacles to change.

UK creative industries policy is premised on a belief in economic growth. The UK definition of the creative industries and the policy interventions to support them have been widely imitated around the world. According to this paper, there is a blind spot in these policies and definitions, in their attempt to treat the creative industries as 'business as usual' and to define them according to measurable outputs such as jobs created, profits or revenues. This perspective is precisely what cultural entrepreneurs resist in the myths and self-perceptions which they have constructed around themselves. Policy makers may need to concede that subjective self-perceptions and organisational cultures may be no less important than objective statistical data, not least because much of the quantitative data on the creative industries appears unreliable. They might also reflect that the complexities and contradictions of cultural entrepreneurship, whilst effective enough in their own sphere, may not be the most stable basis on which to construct their economic development policies.

Subjective perceptions, affect and culture have exercised the attention of organisational researchers (Schein 1991, Turner 1992, Hofstede 1990), but have been relatively underutilised in cultural policy and creative industries research. It may be time to apply a more 'cultural' approach to research in the cultural sector and to introduce a more subjective dimension into cultural policy.

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