Francophone Perspectives on Creative Industries and the Creative Economy

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ABSTRACT Research on the socio-economics of culture, collaborative Web, and the creative economy converge today in an ideological construction: the notions of creative industries and creative economy, at least as they are presented by national or supranational institutions and experts. Most of these themes have been introduced in the Francophone research works by the Anglophone ones. In this regard, the distinction between the various forms of critical research on the one hand, and non-critical, on the other, seems much more fundamental. As such, we propose taking seriously the notion of creative industries, deviating from the definitions given by experts, building a critical theory of creative industries that reflect the dynamics of the economy of symbolic goods.

KEYWORDS Cultural industries; Creative industries; Creative economy; Web 2.0; Socio-economics of culture; Book publishing; Mass communication

RéSUMÉ Les travaux sur la socio-économie de la culture, le Web collaboratif et l'économie créative convergent aujourd'hui dans la construction idéologique que forment les problématiques des industries et de l'économie créatives, du moins telles qu'elles sont présentées par des institutions nationales ou supranationales et par des experts. La plupart de ces thèmes ont été introduits dans la recherche francophone par des travaux anglophones. À cet égard, la distinction entre les diverses formes de recherche critique, d'un côté, et acritique, de l'autre, semble beaucoup plus fondamentale. À ce titre, nous proposons de prendre au sérieux la notion d'industries créatives, en s'écartant des définitions qu'en donnent les experts, pour construire une théorie critique des industries créatives rendant compte de la dynamique de l'économie des biens symboliques.

MOTS CLÉS Industries culturelles; Industries créatives; économie créative; Socio-économie de la culture

Introduction

This article examines unique perspectives of Francophone research with regard to creative industries and the creative economy. In order to distinguish Francophone
research from that developed in other linguistic areas, notably Anglophone, I first look at the ways that research on the cultural economy and Web 2.0 was introduced into the Francophone scientific sphere. In each case, as with creative industries and the creative economy, inspiration came from the Anglophone sphere. It was not so much that Anglophone research on the cultural economy and Web 2.0 directly contrasted to Francophone work in the same domain, but that each has been built upon vastly different theoretical foundations. Anglophone work on creative industries and the creative economy, when introduced into the Francophone sphere, clashed with older critical work that was solidly anchored in the concept of culture industries. My interest in the cultural economy and Web 2.0 has followed the numerous propositions from specialists in these areas, which has subsequently "fused" the concepts of creative industries and the creative economy. The propositions that I make here concerning creative industries take this history into account.

Long ignored by economists, the theme of cultural economy began to attract the attention of well-known American researchers in the early 1960s and 1970s; for example, William Baumol is considered the founder of cultural economy (Baumol & Bowen, 1966). The Ford Foundation commissioned Baumol to conduct a study on the economics of the performing arts because it wanted to see this cultural domain gain funding from American public institutions. Indeed, the central theme of the study was public funding, and Baumol considers such funding to be legitimate given certain economic specificities of culture. Generally, he aims to show that public funding permits culture to approach its optimal level, the ideal situation that it would have attained if mechanisms of market allocation of resources were able to function in the cultural sector. In contrast, James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock (1962) vigorously opposed public investment in any domain in their book *The Calculus of Consent*. Their perspectives are largely applied through economic research on the economics of culture. Building up the notion of public choice, the authors take up the "economic analysis of bureaucracy" tradition, emphasizing that public spending and regulation leads to a sub-optimal quantitative level of production, while in qualitative terms, work produced under the auspices of public subsidy tends to stray from public taste. All of this research has grown out of the controversy over public funding.

This issue was equally important in orienting Francophone research on the socio-economics of culture, which underwent significant development at the beginning of the 1980s. The work of Francophone cultural economists that was most visible—particularly in France, thanks to funding and commissions on the part of the Minister of Culture—was critical of public funding. This work was put to use in Francophone countries then in the midst of developing public policy on the performing arts, heritage, and culture industries. The research of Xavier Greffe (1981), for example, may have attempted to legitimize a market orientation in public investment (in this case, in France after 1984). After the 1980s, research continued, but at a slower pace. Instead, researchers applied these same preoccupations with public investment in analyzing the non-industrialized sectors of culture and the culture industries. Today, this has been extended to the creative economy. The work of Françoise Benhamou (2006) is emblematic in this respect. Some of the French scholars who did not adapt liberal
Anglophone approaches include “heterodox” economists such as Alain Herscovici (1994) and economic researchers working in communication studies like that undertaken under the direction of Bernard Miège at the GRESEC, Université du Grenoble. These researchers criticize the fact that the work of so-called liberal economists seeks to centre debates on culture and cultural policies around uniquely economic rubrics, in particular the evaluation of the capacity of public policy to orient cultural activities toward making a larger economic contribution to the economic growth in the territories in which these cultural activities are undertaken.

In summary, with this first set of subjects and approaches, we see the appearance of different elements that together represent Francophone research being conducted today on creative industries and the creative economy: an adoption of research themes originating in Anglophone countries; a strong investment by certain researchers in current issues (to legitimize public policy changes in France, for instance); and the existence of multiple venues for critical thought, with participating researchers more often from the field of political economy of communication than from the academic discipline of economics.

Web 2.0 research took off quickly in the Francophone sphere after the theme appeared in the United States, beginning in the latter half of the 2000s under the impetus of Tim O’Reilly’s consultancy firm (predecessor to O’Reilly Media) and a variety of financial and industrial actors who supported the idea. It is impossible in this space to fully explore the scientific fusion that resulted in Web 2.0, but the central themes are important: participation and emancipation. While Francophone research adopted themes addressed in Anglophone work, most notably that of fan culture (Jenkins, 2006), it also pursued well-worn lines of scientific questioning. This is not surprising, since the collaborative ideas at the heart of these media did not wait for the “2.0” label to warrant study. New media have been dreamed of since the 1970s, above all by researchers interested in the “local” as a means of liberation from mass media controlled by economic or state interests. This form of media would permit citizens to construct their own media representations of society. Isabelle Pailliart’s (1993) work, for one, has focused on this issue in the context of France and internationally. Today, these perspectives have been grafted onto the Web. Initially they focused on file sharing sites as a means of bypassing culture industries at the levels of both creation and distribution. Then, with the development of social networking sites, other themes—such as interindividual communication, the construction of self, and the construction of public and collective space—moved to the heart of research questioning. In summary, the introduction of Web 2.0 gave a new face to established research perspectives.

This has occurred equally in both Francophone and Anglophone academic spheres. However, French work in this area is more uniformly critical in its approach and, as in the case of the cultural economy, communication researchers working from a political economy of communication stance are making significant contributions. One notable criticism made by Francophone researchers is that research on Web 2.0 tends to be exceedingly microsocial. Éric George (2012), for example, is critical of the fragmentation that results from research focused on questions of limited scope that do not question the macrosocial order. George’s observation is well warranted, as Web 2.0 discourse is
rarely mobilized on its own. Additionally, this approach has largely lost its gloss since
the end of the 2000s due to its own success, narrowly circumscribed approaches are
unable to put the macrosocial order in perspective. Scientific research and action has
evolved according to the evolution of different phenomena, such as blogs, crowd-fund-
ing, and crowd-sourcing. To the contrary, critical researchers such as Franck Rebillard
(2007) tend to re-situate Web 2.0 within its socio-economic or genealogical framework.
These researchers may also associate Web 2.0 with the use of culture industry theories,
such as accounting for changes to culture and communication industries and their in-
sertion into the capitalist system (Bouquillon & Matthews, 2010). As with other research
into the cultural economy, this Francophone work is critical of the ideological dimension
of dominant approaches (dominant in terms of quantity and visibility). In the Anglophone sphere, as in the Francophone one, these non-critical works
are frequently advocated by socio-economic actors in that they serve to legitimize the
current changes in capitalism. The adoption of a critical posture is considered by some
of these researchers, such as Jenkins (2006), as archaic in that Web 2.0 provides intel-
lectual tools and techniques so that a collective critical approach originating in users-
contributors may be constructed. To criticize this affirmation is thus to defend the old
authoritarian order. Finally, numerous perspectives on Web 2.0 that advocate current
changes to capitalism are appropriated by promoters of the cultural economy, partic-
ularly in establishing a relationship between participation, human capital, and devel-
opment. As we will see, both Anglophone and Francophone critical researchers
propose alternative visions. In the Francophone case, this is done with the support of
culture industry theories and built upon components of the political economy of com-
munication.

The issue of culture industries and the creative economy has only recently pene-
trated Francophone scientific spheres, and even then only to a limited degree. Originally,
work in this domain grew out from a series of reflections undertaken in the late 1990s
and early 2000s within the Labour Party, then in power in the United Kingdom. These
were then taken up and developed by various consultants and researchers. The theme
of culture industries and the creative economy would later give rise to opposition on
the part of British scholars from the critical tradition, culture industry specialists among
them. Many critics were opposed to the very concepts of creative industries and the
creative economy. In expressing their opposition, they examined the origin of the con-
cept of creative industries and its link with the liberal shift of the Labour Party
(Schlesinger, 2007), as well as its role in providing an impetus for defending cultural
industrial actors. Perspectives on creative industries amalgamate creation, culture, and
creativity in order to make them the major economic source of innovation in the
was one of the first Francophone scholars to focus on this issue, using these two obser-
vations as a starting point and contributing a critical analysis of the statistics that have
increasingly gained importance in the industries themselves. Tremblay is quite direct
in his critical vision: “In terms of theory, the concept of creative industries contributes
absolutely nothing to cultural industries” (p. 82). The promoters of the creative industry
and creative economy concepts, who, as previously noted, tend to hearken from gov-
ernment spheres, private consultancies, and industry as much as they do academic spheres, ultimately designed a new economy of symbolic goods. In their work, however, the objectives of and the concept of symbolic goods are quite different from previous academic perspectives, particularly those of Pierre Bourdieu (1994) and other sociologists with respect to the so-called limited markets of art and culture.

These new promoters of creative industries and the creative economy wanted to demonstrate that contemporary economies, in the North as much as in the global South, must stake a claim in the production of “goods” (the term is used here in its common sense, without reference to the distinction between goods and services), according to the language employed in the initial British definitions. Ideas must be protected by intellectual property rights in order to be transformed into merchandise destined to be sold. We pass from creative industries, understood here as the entirety of sectors (artistic productions for the art market, culture industries, digital tools and services for integrating content, industrial design, fashion, craftwork, gastronomy, etc.) to the creative economy, defined as the extension of the symbolic dimension of various products of contemporary economies (as opposed to the “functional” dimension of these products). Importantly, the transition is made through industrial design, envisioned as the conveyor belt moving industries toward the rest of the economy.

Culture industry specialists have been critical of these perspectives, judging them to be vague and noting that they legitimize a profound liberalization of the economy, particularly the job market (George, 2012). They reposition public investment in private enterprise, sometimes going so far as to propose a wholesale re-orientation of cultural policy according to industry standards along the lines of standard models for industry investment (Bouquillon & Le Corf, 2010). Indeed, the concepts of creative industries and the creative economy, by being associated with such heterogeneous domains, make the act of creation and its economic, social, and political inscription a “black box,” an absolute unknown. In sum, both critical Francophone and Anglophone work largely originates in the tradition of the political economy of communication and stands in stark opposition to the work of Francophone and Anglophone consultants such as Richard Florida (2002), cultural economists (Throsby, 2001), art and artistic labour sociologists (Menger, 2009), and Web 2.0 specialists (O’Connor, 2009).

With that critique out of the way, it is worth asking if there is really anything more to say on the subject. Does the concept of creative industries, as Gaëtan Tremblay (2008) has stated, contribute absolutely nothing to the greater discussion? In the form it has been given by its promoters, by the consultant-authors of official reports and researcher-scholars like those noted above, Tremblay’s conclusion is definitely warranted. That said, it seems that while these criticisms should be taken to heart, the prerogatives developed by numerous researchers, experts, and social actors around the concept of creative industries and the creative economy are today widely appropriated by socio-economic actors (for example, culture and communication industries), as well as by supranational or national organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the European Union, plus various national governments and subnational authorities. In other words,
the issue of creative industries and the creative economy offers a common frame of reference for socio-economic actors, public institutions, and the non-profit sector. Does this framework, though, create a common understanding between different activities? Furthermore, is it not the symbolic dimension of cultural creations and industries, communication industries, as well as fashion, industrial design, and even craftwork that serves to create the commonalities that constitute the fundamental elements and market drivers of these activities?

Recent Francophone work, much of it interdisciplinary, tends to respond to this question in the affirmative and explores the latest evolutions of the economy of symbolic goods. Two examples are the work of Thomas Paris (2010) and the Impact collective. Furthermore, it seems that the issue of creative industries should be taken seriously but in a manner that proposes a new formulation of creative industries that responds to the criticisms documented here. This alternative formulation aims to focus upon the importance of the tasks and activities related to the act of creation. In other words, it is an intervention upstream of the industrial channels embodied by specific people that self-identify as artists (culture industries) or creators (industrial design, fashion, craftwork) and whose work it is to conceive products that they then deliver a certain uniqueness to the rest of the economic chain—from the point of production to the process of valorization. In this way, products find themselves invested with a singular value and singular symbolic dimension that prevails over the functional dimension (culture industries) or co-exists with it according to various arrangements (industrial design, fashion, craftwork).

From this perspective, which draws on cultural industry theory, the concept of creative industries is a generic category that assembles otherwise heterogeneous activities, but within which certain common points are found through a shared symbolic dimension. I would like to further propose that the augmentation of the symbolic dimension of activities formerly removed from this sphere (namely communication industries, but also fashion, industrial design, and craftwork where the symbolic dimension also makes itself well known) tends to favour interrelations between industrial channels. Some examples are the links built between craftwork and industrial design, or between music recording and electronics. At this point, it is likely that the common traits of these diverse activities assert themselves equally and thus, with the use of culture industry theories, I attempt to define some of them here.

As relationships between formerly distinct activities develop, are the operating modes of cultural labour equally observable in other domains? Can culture industry theories offer an analytical strategy that might aid in understanding these changes, particularly those that have taken place outside the traditional limits of culture industries? These questions and this approach are representative of Francophone research, having originated in and undergone their most significant development in this realm, even if they have far exceeded the Francophone sphere (George, 2005; Miège, 2000). Research on the symbolic dimension of creative industry production, such as that of Lash and Lury (2007) and O’Connor (2009), is quite far removed from the theoretical perspectives mapped out by culture industry theories. Thus, the common tendencies linking the dimension of symbolic goods to creative industries can be identified at two
levels: first, the existence of intense relationships between industrial channels; and second, the use of rationalization processes within each industrial channel.

Symbolism and inter-channel relations
Thanks to the symbolic dimension of creative industry products, intense relationships have developed between industrial channels. These relationships play an essential role in the functioning of these activities, both in terms of their insertion into the financial system and in terms of industrial operation.

The symbolic dimension and financialization processes in creative industries
Certain creative industry activities are at the core of financialization processes, and symbolic goods and their products support these processes directly. From the 1990s until the bursting of the speculative bubble, the actors who were the subject of greatest financial speculation were those engaging in activities outside the realm of culture, yet working with the products of cultural industries. They included telecommunications enterprises, but above all were made up of electronic commerce players such as Amazon, and Internet providers such as AOL. Some large culture industry actors were able to combine their work with online innovation, thereby gaining the interest of investors. As of the second half of the 2000s, and even more so at the beginning of the 2010s, manufacturing actors (such as Apple, the most valuable company in the world in terms of stock valuation in 2012) and Web actors (such as Google) were among the most highly valued companies in the world. The common point of their success was their ability to turn their products into cultural content. The case of Apple is exemplary not only because of its stock valuation—more than $600 billion in October 2012, which is much higher than those next in rank—but also because of the conditions in which this value was produced. In effect, the stock valuation of this equipment manufacturer increased, more so than its actual revenue and profits, at the exact moment that its strategy, in terms of cultural content and music-on-demand, was celebrated as a success. Furthermore, this success was not measured in financial terms (for several years the strategy had not been directly profitable for Apple), but in terms of users. Thus, it is the capacity of Apple to articulate material and content that financial circles have “rewarded.”

The presence in the economy, even partially so, of symbolic goods presents important issues from the perspective of financialization, in that it introduces elements of incertitude and opaqueness to the activities of these corporations whose previous activities were fairly straightforward. The economic calculus demonstrates that this sort of economic activity is less reliable than other sorts of activities. In effect, the business strategies of important players of the communication industries (for instance that of the big four: Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) are generally operating de facto at the edge of legality, as they are juridically risky and may cause the companies’ operations to be impeded by judicial or regulatory decisions. In addition, once we are presented with an economy of symbolic goods and the uncertain character of use values (Miège, 1984), the unknown (Caves, 2000) and the uncertain character of valorization gain prominence. These operations are thus industrially risky as well. Nevertheless,
when they are successful, the financial results may be quite high. While these industrial actors may not be substantially invested in (as in, not at all) content production, they are in a position to acquire content due to their dominant quasi-monopolistic positions in their respective markets. In this situation, financial actors tend to adopt sheeplike behaviour. Financial ratings agencies and business bank boards do not understand the specific nature of the trend-following economy of symbolic goods, instead relying upon evaluations and prognostics supplied by various finance and information and communication technology (ICT) gurus. Speculative phenomena are facilitated in this manner and, with them, the potential for investor profit. It is ultimately due to their characterization as symbolic goods that these activities have thus become objects of financial speculation.

Does this same phenomenon occur with respect to other creative industry actors? Although there is a marked absence of research on this subject, it is evident that other actors profit less from these movements, even if they play by the rules of financialization. The same can be said for industrial activities that, while they are not part of traditional communication industries, do take part in symbolic goods industries. Luxury goods are one such example, as well as social networks, which surf an economically uncertain space in between the symbolic and the real. The less than impressive initial public offering (IPO) of Facebook demonstrated this, as its industrial base did not allow it to aspire to vastly high rates of profitability. Cultural content presented Facebook with weak externalities, and it is these very externalities, more than anything else, that added a symbolic dimension (which they did not initially possess) to what they do, which is ultimately not much different than manufacturing.

Symbolism and the industrial effects of externalities on relationships between industrial channels

According to promoters of creative industries and the creative economy, including the pioneers in this field mentioned earlier, cultural and creative industry products—and industrial design, in particular—have contributed significantly to the broader economy. British scholars, such as Justin O’Connor (2009) have attempted to theorize these perspectives. The theories of O’Connor were discussed by Kate Oakley (2009). In particular, she notes that the position that creativity will spill forth thanks to creative industries is objectionable, yet his position is not founded on studies or actual fact. It could simply be that firms in innovative sectors have a greater need for industrial design, branding, and advertising services than others. The conversion of the entire economy to a creative economy appears to originate in a place of liberal ideology, and indeed with the aid of links made between cultural products and industries, technology companies have got this process well underway (Bouquillon & Combès, 2011).

While their importance in financialization processes was noted earlier, these links drive an intensification of the capitalist valorization of cultural products, this time on an industrial scale. Forms of indirect valorization are mounted upon the valorization practices of established culture industry actors such as retail sales, subscriptions, and advertising. New among them are online advertising and marketing information sales as well as the association of cultural products with the base operations of established actors in order to set them apart from the pack and permit them to rise above price
competition. Through a variety of indirect valorization practices, culture industry products make an impact elsewhere that is most difficult to measure. That said, the actors that have best succeeded, Google and Apple in particular, are leaders in their respective markets. Through the Android operating system, Google has transferred its dominance in mixed models of online advertising to cellular phones, most notably smartphones. Apple has managed to renew its sales volume in short order thanks to two products (the iPhone and the iPad) and can sell these products at a higher price than its competitors while simultaneously facilitating their rapid obsolescence and establishing dominant market positions.

**Symbolism and the “rational” organization of industrial channels**

In the culture industries, different industrial channel organizational practices allow socio-economic actors to take on a central function or a position of control within the industrial channel and thus to capture an essential portion of the surplus value that is produced. Some of these organizational practices develop in other creative industry components, and the symbolic dimension of creative industry products does nothing to hinder this, instead reinforcing the capacity of actors, while maintaining a central function in rationalizing the process of creation.

**Symbolism and the position of central actors**

A diversity of models are employed to protect central actors that assume the risks of creation while a portion of the costs is shifted onto other industrial actors. Among these models are the phenomena of externalizing the labour of independent workers and remuneration through copyright—both recently examined by Éric George (2012) in the context of journalism. Bernard Miège (1984) has demonstrated the importance of capital to valorization with regard to this subject, while showing that the organization of industrial channels into all-encompassing oligopolies also plays an important role. However, it would be interesting to see whether this sort of industrial organizing is found within other components of creative industries, such as in craftwork, industrial design, or fashion. While a significant lack of previous field research makes addressing this topic difficult, I have recently participated in research that investigates this question.

India is a fascinating site for examining the relationships between industrial organization and creative industries in that craftwork is very well developed and has played—and continues to play—a central economic and policy role, something that can be seen in Ghandi’s campaign to promote domestic fabric manufacturing and self-reliance in the face of the British colonial regime. Design in India has undergone significant development, symbolized by the founding of the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad shortly after the country gained independence in 1947. Since this time, design (industrial and otherwise) has been considered to be an element in the affirmation of “Indian-ness.” Today, the relationships between craftwork and design are well developed, as shown by research conducted in 2012 by myself, Julie Paghini, and Catherine Servan-Schreiber (Bouquillion, Singh, Paghini, & Servan-Schreiber, in press). In this study, we looked at organizations working in production, distribution, and the valorization of artisan products, showing that, by default, intellectual property rights
and piecework artisan pay structures are at work. This is how the industrial channel organization clearly distinguishes downstream actors from creative actors, while transferring part of the risk incurred.

According to a German governmental report on the subject, small enterprises (making a profit between 100,000 and 200,000 euros) are made up significantly of creative industry actors. Their importance can be measured not only in their population, but also in terms of revenue and employees. Small creative enterprises account for 39% of profits in the arts, 59% of the performing arts market, and 75% of the design market in Germany, not taking into account design activities tied to advertising (Federal Republic of Germany, 2009). This report also explores the socio-economic specificities of creative industries, focusing on interdependence between enterprises of large, medium, small, and micro scales. The small enterprises are seen as training grounds and innovation incubators, including innovation in management, know-how, and organization, and the knowledge acquired is redeployed within the larger enterprises. The report asserts that only the small organizations have the flexibility necessary to innovate in creative industries. The use of ICTs in these environments is equally pioneering.

Symbolism and the rationalization of the creation process within a prescribed territory

The introduction of devices for promoting managerialization as the model for creative activities has been recommended by numerous governmental and expert reports. Managerialization is understood here as the market-oriented and entrepreneurial evolution of business or organization management practices in the context of creative industries. The need to nourish a corporate spirit among creative workers and enterprises in this sector is asserted, for example, within the majority of European reports (Bouquillon & Le Corf, 2010). The typical artist or creator ignores economic and commercial realities and is thus stigmatized. On the other hand, these reports show that one of the missions of public authorities is to sensitize and train creators in entrepreneurial approaches (intellectual property, funding mechanisms, and management techniques) [Nordic Innovation Centre, 2007].

According to this discourse, managerialization addresses two issues. For one, it is a necessary condition if these activities are to create wealth. Secondly, it is imperative if creativity is to be made generally available. This aspect in particular explains why propagandists of creative industries and the creative economy do not limit themselves to one singular economic dimension but rather understand it—with a bit of inspiration from sustainable development—to be social, cultural, and even individual development. This holistic vision allows us to consider a territory’s characteristics in all their diversity, as territorialized resources that can be mobilized. These resources must be transformed into products that can be put on the market. Thus, these perspectives extend those developed within the socio-economics of culture. It has become common to see economists, elected officials, and cultural institutions attempting to show that investment in culture has a greater multiplier effect than other types of public expenses. Their objective is to thereby justify the existence of public subsidies. For example, in Avignon, France, studies on the financial effects of festivals were undertaken long before Jack
Lang became Minister of Culture in 1981. However, the methodologies used in these studies are often dubious, making their results less than convincing. That said, the studies do demonstrate a tendency, beginning in the 1980s, to legitimize cultural investment through economics rather than the satisfaction of artistic and cultural objectives.

The city of Avignon is representative of this situation. The Festival d’Avignon was founded in 1947 and is today one of the biggest cultural activities in France. Its founder, Jean Vilar—comedian, stage manager, and theatre director—initiated it at the beginning of a movement to democratize and decentralize culture in France following World War II. The Festival d’Avignon itself thus became a symbol of the democratization and decentralization of culture and of the desire to break with the tradition of “bourgeois” entertainment that had dominated French provinces throughout the first half of the twentieth century. This movement then directly influenced cultural policy put in place with the creation of the Ministry of Culture by General Charles De Gaulle and his Minister of Culture, writer André Malraux, in 1959. Beginning in the 1960s and increasing markedly in the 1980s, local officials in Avignon protested the festival’s presence due to problems of social order the event caused every year, when tens of thousands of festival-goers would descend on the city over the course of a month. The festival organizers’ response was to emphasize the benefits of the festival to the local economy.

Considering the great notoriety of this institution and its identity, an evaluation of the festival based only on its supposed economic benefits, with no reference whatsoever to the goals of decentralization and democratization, appears to call into question the legitimacy and the original nature of non-economic cultural policy objectives, not only in Avignon, but throughout the entire country. This corresponds to a more general change regarding the way culture is considered, particularly by bureaucrats.

The administrative decentralization that occurred in France throughout the 1980s, under the auspices of opening economic borders in Europe and internationally, led to culture becoming a central element in territorial strategies for competing nationally and internationally. In 1984, the Ministry of Culture strongly encouraged this evolution, adopting a new orientation revolving around the official slogan “Reconciling culture and the economy.” These themes, particularly the reorientation of public investment, were debated and finally legitimated during large events that brought together national and local politicians and economists (Collectif, 1985). Among the studies on the economic benefits of the Avignon festival, Sylvie Pflieger’s (1986) work represents the situation well.

The creative industries movement takes up this tradition and amplifies it, and these perspectives have been extended in the aspirations of Web 2.0, “creative environments,” and “2.0 environments.” These categories, though, should be understood within their broader contexts. Models for citizen participation should serve, from this point of view, as an economic project. Thus, we can better understand why projects presented in creative economy terms tend to accentuate personal development, a form of development that should lead to, according to the hopes that are placed in it, a blossoming of sorts, an emancipation also understood in terms of “human capital.” Emancipation leads to a state of conversion and then to an intensification of human resources competencies under the auspices of an economic project, one which then
grants revenue and social insertion to individuals and prosperity to certain territories. Said territories see this as a way to solve social problems, as expressed in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2010 report on the creative economy (UNCTAD, 2010), whereby a distinct vision of culture is put forward, as well as a particular behaviour on the part of social agents. Here, culture is defined according to a meaning originating in the Anglo-Saxon anthropology of the nineteenth century, today largely accepted as common sense and thus capable of influencing the analyses of international organizations that deal with culture.

Specifically, this work brings to mind the work of Edward Tylor (1871), for whom culture was “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (p. 1). The components of this “complex whole,” however, are understood from a creative economy perspective, such as production factors that shape human capital. This is how culture turns into creations: the relationship between social agents and culture is no longer simply that of consumption or of participation, but rather that of work—creative work. One of the essential missions of public authorities in this respect consists of training cultural workers, in particular so that they become good managers. It is through this model that territories inserted into international competition might transform themselves into a brand, hoping to become ever more attractive to tourists as well as to corporations and individual entrepreneur-creators. That said, there is little on-the-ground research with which to evaluate these claims. Jean-Baptiste Le Corf (2011), for one, has noted that French territorial groups are chiefly motivated by a desire to win European Union grants when they propose creative projects. As for creative industries, their capacity to anchor themselves, as well as to undertake other activities, in a given territory remains to be proven.

Statistics contained in the 2010 UNCTAD creative economy report indicate that developing countries have seen their part of world commerce increase thanks to creative industries, in spite of the 2008 financial crisis. Following the critical work of Gaëtan Tremblay (2008) on the data contained in the 2008 UNCTAD report (UNCTAD, 2008), I examined the means by which the statistical frameworks for culture and creative industries are developed in Europe and at UNESCO (Bouquillon, 2012). It seemed only due diligence to take such care before questioning the results of research conducted by international organizations. However, the results are yet another indicator demonstrating that creative industries are not built upon the foundations of culture industries and that instead, mechanisms for rationalizing production processes are at work. As in the case of culture industries, these statistical studies were directed by actors situated downstream from industrial channels. The UNCTAD relied on specific qualities related to the symbolic dimension of products to rationalize the process of creation.

As mentioned earlier, I conducted research in India with Julie Peghini and Catherine Servan-Schreiber in 2012, focusing on Delhi, Bombay, Jaipur, and, most importantly, Gujarat, where we focused on the city of Ahmedabad and the region of Bhuj, looking at businesses and non-profit organizations active in the handloom fabric-making industry (Bouquillion et al., in press). In most of our case studies, either non-profit organizations or for-profit organizations of a charitable nature were found at the centre
of the industrial channel. These actors perform a central function not only as interme-
diaries, but also connect supply to pre-existing demand and rely upon intangible or-
ganizational practices. In fact, thanks to their integration of industrial design
techniques, they are able to structure the initial steps of the industrial channel and
production processes—heading upstream, then downstream, through to valorization.
The designers of these organizations order products from artisans and set the formal
production requirements (shape, content, material used, fabrication techniques). They
also determine the primary characteristics of the processes of production/reproduction,
such as the fragmentation of subproducts (modules), precise fabrication techniques
for each component, techniques for the assembly of components, the division of
labour, and remuneration conditions of the artisans. These important organizations
may also provide financial aid in the form of loans and advances and may provide pri-
mary materials.

The work of these organizations allows for the adaptation of products to the tem-
poral expectations of consumers—either middle-class Indians or foreigners. They also
help train the artisans to use new techniques (particularly techniques that help lower
costs) and thus to produce a series of similar products at a consistent level of quality
according to a set schedule. Taking into account this very narrow framing, the products
are not only, nor principally, the fruit of unique artisan traditions of each community.
These organizations are also very active in the constructing of symbolic value of artisan
products. Designers or those who wish to promote their work construct important dis-
courses around the designer/artisan relationship and the role of designers in the process
of creation. According to these discourses, the participation of industrial design in cre-
ation presents four advantages:

- Industrial design allows artisan productions to enter market-oriented
  modernity.
- Thanks to their reconfiguration, according to industrial design, artisan prod-
  ucts can subscribe to a logic of sustainable development.
- In order to construct the symbolic dimension of products, which must pre-
  vail over their functional dimension, these discourses suggest that the value
  of products is founded upon cultural dimensions. This fabric is compared
to, and thus assimilated by, artistic productions, and these products come
to “reflect” a culture in the anthropological sense—a set of beliefs, behav-
  iours, and cultural traits.
- Another dimension of tradition is also present in the discourse of these or-
  ganizations. Promotional discourse insists on their social functions, particu-
  larly those directly related to industrial design, and especially education,
  artisan training, and the improvement of living conditions of artisans, their
  families, and their communities, thanks to an improvement in the quality
  of product permitted by industrial design. Service/assistance relationships
  that are created between artisans and designers are a continuation of social
  relations between high and low castes. Members of the urban middle class,
  no matter their real caste membership, participate in this system through
  their purchase of textile products.
From this point of view, the rationalization of creative business practices undertaken by central actors contributes to the construction of the symbolic value of artisan productions. Indeed, it is largely because these acts are rationalized within an industrial process (one specific to creative industries) that they have symbolic value to begin with.

**Conclusion**

As we have seen, Francophone perspectives on creative industries and the creative economy most definitely have some unique qualities. However, French research in this domain also has a history of adopting perspectives previously presented in Anglophone research, thus inheriting perspectives already tied to the cultural economy (Greffe, 2006) and the artist-entrepreneur (Menger, 2009), or, to take it a step further, Greffe’s artist-enterprise (Greffe, 2013). Therefore, different themes cut across work on the cultural economy, Web 2.0, creative industries, and the creative economy, especially when questions of territoriality and development are introduced. Issues of territory and development play central roles in work on the socio-economics of culture and Web 2.0, with emphasis on participation in local life, unlocking the question of human capital, and territorialized resources. The softening of labour laws alongside the development and defence of intellectual property laws is also related to these perspectives, and the issues of creative industries and the creative economy are supported by the constant attacks against public policies, something supported—in its own way—by the socio-economics of culture (i.e., academic work on Web 2.0). Such work either explicitly facilitates social change or explicitly does not. Thus, the work of scholars such as Henry Jenkins (2006)—guru of fan culture and Web 2.0, who should, in this context, be considered an intellectual smuggler—also falls under this umbrella. Facilitating and legitimizing social transformation is an important commonality among non-critical work.

Francophone research on the creative industries and creative economy presents two distinct qualities, the first residing in its critical nature. Critical Anglophone work on these issues does, of course, exist and has at times been pioneering, such as the work of Garnham (2005) and Schlesinger (2007), noted earlier. That said, these voices, as strong as they may be, seem to be in the minority in the Anglophone sphere. In the Francophone sphere, most notably in the field of communications, critical researchers are far more numerous. To provide a bit more cultural context, the French government—including the Ministry of Culture and Communication—has always maintained a fairly reserved position regarding the notions of creative industries and the creative economy, contrary to what could be observed with respect to the cultural economy of the 1980s (Bouquillion, 2012). The second distinct quality of Francophone work in this domain has to do with references to culture industry theories, themselves well anchored in critical Francophone communications research on the culture industries. These theories allow for an approach to creative industries that distinguishes honest theoretical approaches from those of industry-oriented promoters.

This article has shown how we can study the ways that the common symbolic dimension of certain activities (culture, communication, industrial design, fashion, and craftwork industries) promotes links between activities formerly closed off from one another, particularly through financialization and the use of effective externalities. Through these new articulations, we can observe common points between activities
that still maintain strong differences. These common points apply notably to the position of central actors in each industrial channel, as well as to the rationalization processes at work in creation-related tasks. From this point of view, the notion of creative industries is a broad generic category grouping together activities of a strong symbolic nature that are nonetheless different from one another. It is in this way that perspectives uniting various Francophone scholars have ultimately grown out of a central referential foundation in culture industry theory.

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Notes
1. The term creative industries is used in its plural form both to accentuate the divergences between different sets of work (the limits of this current article do not allow for their exploration) and as a reference to the frameworks within which these theories were produced. These reflections on culture industries began to be developed at the end of the 1970s and were more profoundly built up in the 1980s within certain national environments that maintain certain important specificities. For example, Canadian research on bilingualism and close proximity to the United States (and American satellite television networks) has no equivalent in France, where the issues at hand were more related to the liberalization of the television market and the role of the traditional telecommunications network operator in the fields of culture and information.

   Certain common points do indeed exist in French and Canadian research on cultural industries, such as questioning the role of the state, yet—if we take this example—such a questioning does not occur identically in different countries. Furthermore, as Bernard Miège (2000) has noted, these theories were developed in parallel yet also in isolation. The researchers working on this issue were not consciously organized with the goal of constructing a single coherent theoretical framework. One of the first international research activities of importance was organized in Grenoble in 1989 by GRESEC and led to the publication of the collection Médias et communication en Europe (edited by Bernard Miège). The title of this collection shows clearly an interest only in the European continent. Nevertheless, researchers outside Europe and notably from Québec, including Gaëtan Tremblay, participated in this event and in the authoring of the collection. Finally, the denotation “theories of culture industries” did not arrive until much later, when it was proposed by Pierre Mœglin (2000) during a series of seminars at the MSH Paris Nord in the 2000s. In the 1980s and 1990s, the originators of these theories had not yet designed their work to be parts of a larger whole.


3. Publishing, the press and news, cinema and audiovisual, recorded music, video games.

4. Telecommunications, consumer electronics industries, the Internet, and computing industries.

5. The work and final products of this collective (directed by Pierre-Jean Benghozi, Laurent Jeanpierre, and Hervé Serry) were presented at the “Intermédiaires et prescripteurs au centre de la centre de la création” colloquium in Strasbourg, France, from June 20 to 22, 2012.

6. See the article by Marc Ménard in this same issue for an extensive discussion of the concept of industrial channels, les filière industrielles.

7. A member of the Socialist Party, as Minister of Culture, Jack Lang introduced a number of policies and programs to support the arts in France.
References


