

Introduction

This special issue was conceived as an attempt to provide insights and increased understanding on the significance of people's creativity for economic efficiency, competitiveness and development; on what creativity entails, on its economic implications and on its determinants, including how it might be fostered as a matter of economic policy. Our objective was to present a diverse set of contributions that, together, would stimulate readers and cross boundaries.

To some extent our intention was to focus on 'creative industries' as a source of market generated wealth, a topic that has been addressed in a growing literature over recent years: visual and performing arts, indeed cultural activities more generally, have been associated with the production of goods and services that can be traded on markets to desirable economic effect (Caves 2000; Florida 2002; Currid 2009). However, our aim was to go beyond creativity, art and culture as functional to market success, and by doing so to highlight the need for a perspective on the economics of creativity that is more rounded, richer and possibly more provocative.

Some of our thinking on such a perspective is explored in the issue's opening paper, which we have written with Francesco Sacchetti. The paper is based on the identification of strategic choice as a source of power. Its especial focus is creativity as an element that might favour the emergence and recognition of publics and their interests. We identify two catalysts in favour of the creation of new spaces of debate and inclusion, namely artistic activities and education, and discuss in particular the former, illustrating the argument through the experience of self-styled 'Mutoids'.

An aspect of the education sector, specifically the impact of budget cuts and incentive wages on academic work, is the subject of the second paper, by Johan Willner and Sonja Grönblom. Their theoretical analysis is a comment on new public management. They introduce intrinsic motivation as one side of a multiple self in a principal-agent model, and show the possibility of higher creative effort in a regime of fixed wages rather than performance-based pay.

The third paper in the issue is an empirical analysis of a particular creative industry: Ian Jackson and Philip R. Tomlinson study UK studio pottery. Their focus is cooperation amongst micro-businesses, their argument that cooperative environments can often stimulate creative processes. However, they observe micro-businesses in their survey engaging relatively little in cooperative interaction, which they attribute to difficulties in establishing mutual commitments and concerns over power asymmetries.

Forms of cooperation are also a focus for Patrick Cohendet, David Grandadam and Laurent Simon, whose contribution is illustrated from experience in two strands of popular music: soul and rap. They are especially interested in the possibility of creative activity being embedded in creative territories, hence they consider soul in Detroit and rap in New York. Their argument is that the dynamics of creativity lie in

the interaction between three layers of a territory: the *underground*, the *middleground* and the *upperground*.

The fifth paper, by Jens Christensen, is conceptual. It discusses critical and creative thinking in relation to economic development, posing the question: has economic development anything to do with the meaning of life? Answers are pursued through a discussion of ‘thing’ and ‘mystery’, the former pointing towards an appreciation of expert-based calculation and manipulation, the latter towards participation, communication, hermeneutics and art. Christensen’s analysis explicitly challenges the reification that he sees as embedded in conventional economic thinking and practice.

The issue concludes with a book review article in which Fiona Carmichael contemplates links between creativity and sport, for example that participation in sport may be able to enhance community cohesion and thereby help to provide an environment more conducive to creativity; and that sport may be used as an integral part of innovative practices in essentially non-sport-related areas, for example in economic development, social work and education policy.

References

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