

**Track no. 17: Changing practices of cultural industries: Exploring the grey zone between culture and commerce**

NFF 2013 Track Proposal

Professor Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, PhD

Elena Raviola, PhD

Andreas Diedrich, PhD

Peter Zackariasson, PhD

In 2010, the European Competitiveness Report, published by the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry, European Commission, reported that cultural industries' production constitutes 3.3% of total EU GDP and employs 3% of the European labor force, and insisted on their positive and significant effect on the growth rate of local GDP per capita. In the same year, the Swedish Regional Growth Agency has initiated a program, called KKN (Kreativa och Kulturella Näringar), for the economic development of cultural industries and the Gothenburg Region has launched a program for the Business Development of the Cultural Sector. These are just few examples of how economic interests in the so-called cultural industries have grown over the last couple of years at the international, national and local level. In this trend, culture has been qualified as productive, and its artifacts – like books, films, music, performing arts, visual arts, and video games – as products, carrying both economic and societal value (Caves, 2006; Hesmondhalgh, 2007) and as such subjected to various kinds of measurements.

Having noticed the specialty of cultural industries, several scholars have justified their “oddity” by resorting to the apriori and almost legendary opposition between culture and commerce, standing more or less solidly on the shoulders of new and old giants such as Adorno (1991), Bourdieu (1992), Guillet de Monthoux (2004), and Thorsby and Whitters (1979). The so-qualified cultural industries have often been portrayed as loci of conflicts between on the one hand the cultural logic, guiding work for the production of the best culture and submitted to peer-

evaluation, and on the other hand the commercial logic, guiding work for maximizing sales and profit.

This way of characterizing culture evokes somehow a societal model founded on battles of principles that smell of passé Marxist-like struggles. The conflict between commerce and culture is not as clear today for a number of reasons. One reason is that the public financial support, on which culture has long relied, is shrinking today in all Western democracies. Another reason might be the digitization of society, which has allowed new forms of culture, new forms of businesses, and new forms of working and organizing work (Shirky, 2008). Thus, traditional professional norms and practices have been challenged, and the very distinction between production and consumption has been questioned.

If many scholars have come to feel the discomfort of representing culture and commerce as two opposing apriori logics, we are interested in discussing what form the grey zone between the two territories is taking and has taken. We thus welcome paper focusing on new ways of representing cultural industries and/or new phenomena in the realms blurring culture and business. In order to create a track with depth and width we strongly stress the importance of interdisciplinary approaches. We especially encourage papers that theorize empirical observations in order to increase our knowledge on these industries.

Thus, questions that might be addressed, but are not by any rate exclusive are:

- How is cultural work organized and what do cultural workers do at work?
- How are money and culture dealt with?
- What is good culture and how is it evaluated?
- How does entrepreneurship in cultural industries develop?
- How are markets for culture created?

- How have digital technologies changed traditional cultural production and consumption practices, including the relationship between culture and commerce?
- How does the relationship between culture and management (as the logic of efficiency, and productivity) look like?
- How can we study these issues? How well equipped are we to study new phenomena with old methods?

## References

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### **Short bios of track conveners**

**Pierre Guillet de Monthoux** ([pgm.lpf@cbs.dk](mailto:pgm.lpf@cbs.dk))

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, PhD, is professor and head of department at the Department of Management, Politics, and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School. His research deals with management and philosophy and has published extensive works in the field of arts and management.

**Elena Raviola** ([elena.raviola@gri.gu.se](mailto:elena.raviola@gri.gu.se))

Elena Raviola, PhD, is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Gothenburg Research Institute, School of Business, Economics, and Law, Gothenburg University. Her PhD thesis and her current postdoc project explore the changing newswork practices between newspapers and web, in France, Italy, and Sweden. Her research interests focus on the relationship between professional work and management and on the changing practices and norms of professions in the creative sectors in the digitized society.

**Andreas Diedrich** ([andreas.diedrich@gri.gu.se](mailto:andreas.diedrich@gri.gu.se))

Andreas Diedrich, PhD, is an associate professor at the Gothenburg Research Institute at the School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. His research interests focus on the role of knowledge and technology in organizing. In particular he is interested in the classification of knowledge and skills as part of organizing. At present he studies the development of a national system for the assessment of prior learning of recent immigrants in Sweden.

**Peter Zackariasson** ([peter.zackariasson@gri.gu.se](mailto:peter.zackariasson@gri.gu.se))

Peter Zackariasson, PhD, is an associate professor in marketing at University of Gothenburg, School of Business, Economics and Law, Sweden. His research area is arts and culture marketing. He has published extensively on the video game industry, art and interactive media.