

## Book Review: The Oxford Handbook of Creative Industries edited by Candace Jones, Mark Lorenzen and Jonathan Sapsed

*The creative industries are on the rise across the globe and their economic importance is also increasing. Through their new book, **The Oxford Handbook of Creative Industries**, editors **Candace Jones, Mark Lorenzen and Jonathan Sapsed** offer a collection of scholarly articles reflecting on this growing sector through a number of disciplinary lenses, including economics, public policy, management and law. **Elisa Pannini** finds this a useful read not only for scholars researching the field, but also for creative professionals engaged with the issues shaping their sphere of work.*

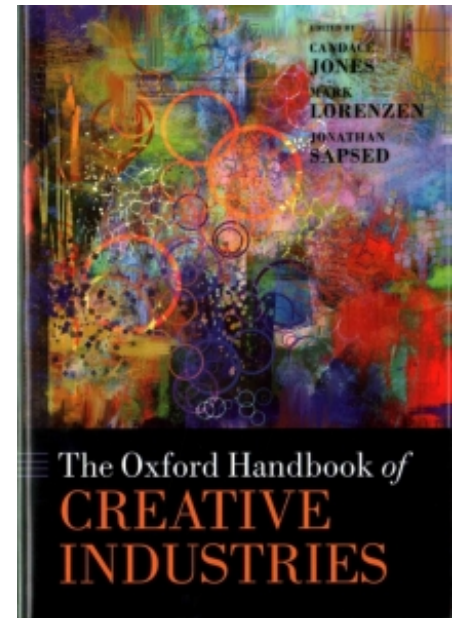
***The Oxford Handbook of Creative Industries*. Candace Jones, Mark Lorenzen and Jonathan Sapsed (eds). Oxford University Press. 2015.**

The relevance of cultural and creative industries is on the rise worldwide; the number of people involved in them in various capacities and the economic importance of the sector are increasing. Hence, this book, edited by Candace Jones, Mark Lorenzen and Jonathan Sapsed, is a much welcome addition to the *Oxford Handbooks* family. It is a collection of scholarly articles that cover the main issues related to the creative sector, offering different perspectives ranging from economics, public policy and management to law, among others. It is a good read not only for students and scholars with a specific interest in the subject, but also for the creative professionals willing to reflect on the various issues surrounding their sector.

The authors contributing to this handbook are leading scholars conducting research on the creative industries in different fields; indeed, one of the main strengths of the book is the variety of perspectives offered by its chapters. After an introduction by the editors, the book is structured into five parts, each featuring four to seven chapters. The first part offers an insight into the concept of 'creativity' at large. It poses the bases for understanding the peculiarities of the creative industries; it also explores the functioning of the creative mind and more generally the conditions under which people tend to be able to innovate and express their potential. This analysis is fascinating for all those interested in understanding the dynamics of creativity and the basic definitions of the concepts used in this context.

This first section also features a chapter by Richard Florida, Charlotta Mellander and Patrick Adler clarifying the importance of the geographical dimension to the development and thriving of creative industries. The work largely draws on the concepts developed by Florida in his well-known book, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), and reviews literature about the creative class itself and creative cities. This chapter helps in understanding the critical role played by cultural activities, services, communities and industrial clusters within cities in fostering creativity and attracting a skilled and creative workforce.

The second part of the book focuses on issues related to 'Valuing Creativity and Creating Value'. It provides a few interesting empirical examples of different sectors, ranging from the Chinese art market to Indian fashion and *haute cuisine*. More generally, the variety of creativity forms shown in this section of the book encourages the reader to consider creativity to have a broader meaning than has been traditionally used: not only musicians, painters and



writers, but also bartenders, wine makers and software engineers can be legitimately considered creative workers. In addition, the main theme discussed in this section deals with the value of creativity and creative products; an overview of Pierre Bourdieu's foundational theory about cultural production is offered in the chapter by Barbara Townley and Elizabeth Gullledge within their analysis of the relationship between the symbolic and monetary value of creative goods.



**Image Credit:** [Lars Plougmann](#)

This discussion about the economic relevance of cultural products aptly introduces the following two sections that focus on the perspective of organisational and management studies: 'Organising Creative Industries' and 'Industrial Organisation and Creative Economy'. Here, the chapter by Tara Vinodrai and Sean Keddy examines the relationship between project-based work in the creative industries and local labour markets. It highlights the virtues of this kind of arrangement in creating pools of specialised labour in specific geographic contexts, allowing firms to benefit from the resulting flexibility and from the smooth circulation of knowledge and innovation. However, the authors also point to the shift of economic risk from firms to individual workers: individuals become responsible for their own training, often do not have access to social benefits and bear the weight of precarity in their working lives. This is an important perspective to be taken into account when discussing the creative industries and people employed in these sectors. The authors also call for more research on institutions and regulatory regimes that play a crucial role in shaping creative labour markets across different countries.

Two chapters on user innovation, by Eleonora Di Maria, Vladi Finotto and Francesco Rullani, and by Stephen Flowers and Georgina Voss respectively, introduce the discourse on the role of consumers in the development of new ideas and the improvement of existing products. They provide various examples where communities of users have proven crucial to the development and survival of products; Open Source Software is the most known and researched occurrence. The phenomenon of consumers offering their time, knowledge and skills in order to improve a product they like is relatively new and supported by the large diffusion of new technologies. Many organisations have learned to deal with their user communities and to give them the right amount of space in the development process as well as all the tools for tailoring details to their needs. The dynamics of creativity that leak in from outside the boundaries of the firm are the subject of many existing studies, and its relevance is growing; users are already considered actors in the innovation process.

The last section of the book analyses 'Policy and Development' in the creative industries. The chapter discussing issues related to copyright law and state interventions, such as tax breaks for the movie industry, are very informative. However, in this section, I particularly appreciated the contribution by Neil M. Coe, which explores the relationship between creative industries and global production networks. The 'cluster' aspect of the creative sector is of fundamental importance, as seen in works by Florida and other scholars; on the other hand, globalised work offers a wider arena for all the actors in the sector. The creative output can be transferred quite easily, the distribution of the finished work is more widespread and firms and capital can be moved with less constraint. Without forgetting the relevance of cities and their 'ecologies' to the creative industries, a more integrated global perspective will be able to add new elements to the study of the creative industries.

Overall, *The Oxford Handbook of Creative Industries* is a very interesting reference book that is valuable for all scholars interested in the field as well as those approaching the subject for the first time. The only fault that I can see in the collection is the lack of a broader introduction to the book. In their interesting first chapter, the editors focus on the typologies of change that creative products undergo in their main aspects; nonetheless, a more general introduction to the topic and the nature and structure of the book itself would have been appreciated.

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*Note: This review gives the views of the author, and not the position of the LSE Review of Books blog, or of the London School of Economics.*

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