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TRANSFORMATION IN CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

9

INTRODUCTION

11 The cultural industries consist of those organizations that design, produce,
13 and distribute products that appeal to aesthetic or expressive tastes more
15 than to the utilitarian aspects of customer needs such as films, books,
17 building designs, fashion, and music (Peterson & Berger, 1975, 1996; Hirsch,
19 1972, 2000; Lampel, Lant, & Shamsie, 2000). Less widely acknowledged, but
21 as critical, cultural industries also create products that serve important
23 symbolic functions such as capturing, refracting, and legitimating societal
25 knowledge and values. For example, educational publishers influence what
27 concepts and theories are promoted to students by the books they publish.
29 Architects shape the sensibilities of interactions at work, home, and play by
31 their choice of technologies, space design, and material resources. Music
33 producers discover and promote vocal artists whose lyrics shape our un-
35 derstandings of age, gender, and ethnicity. Because of the societal impact of
37 these symbolic functions, cultural industries have continued to interest both
popular writers and sociologists alike.

27 However, to a large degree the cultural industries have been considered
29 unique and out of the mainstream, not a subject for developing general
31 theory, and therefore relatively understudied by organizational scholars. We
33 argue it is no longer the case that cultural industries are so unique – rep-
35 resenting small markets and industries of little matter to research in the
37 sociology of organizations. Cultural industries are now one of the fastest
growing and most vital sectors in the US and global economies (United
States Census Reports, 2000). This growth is fueled in a large part by the
nature of the knowledge, creative, and symbolic assets of cultural industries.
These assets are increasingly the key underlying drivers of innovation and
competitiveness in both national and global economies (Florida, 2002).

39 In this volume we attempt to recognize that the functions of the symbolic,
creative, and knowledge-based assets of cultural industries are also char-
acteristic of the professional services industries as well, for example as design

1 services, advertising, and even the more mundane services of auditing. De-
 2 sign services, one of the fastest growing areas in the US economy (United
 3 States Census Reports, 2000), employs symbolic, knowledge and creative
 4 assets to create desirable products for clients and consumers. Brand and
 5 product marketing has shifted from its primary focus on price and location
 6 to aesthetics, identity, and image management (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997).
 7 Even audit practices, involves not only knowledge of standard accounting
 8 procedures, but more importantly the creative interpretation of complex tax
 9 codes, and the creation of symbols of public confidence in corporate prac-
 10 tices. Yet few scholars have explored how cultural, professional services, and
 11 other industries illuminate one other.

12 While a large part of our research and knowledge in the field of sociology
 13 stems from the study of the decreasing returns industries based in the eco-
 14 nomic traditions of land, labor, financial capital, and the industrial corpora-
 15 tion (Chandler, 1962; Arthur, 1996; Fligstein, 1990), the US Census data
 16 reveal that these industries in all likelihood will not be the key drivers of the
 17 economy in the future. Instead, increasingly, those industries driven by cre-
 18 ative workers and the professions – with organizing principles based in
 19 knowledge and aesthetics – combined in novel ways with the institutional
 20 logics of the market and the corporation – will be the industries to shape the
 21 new views of organizations and our understandings of institutional and
 22 organizational change. To date, we have a few descriptive and conceptual
 23 pieces with initial explorations such as Hirsch’s (1975) comparison of the
 24 record and pharmaceutical industries, Powell’s (1990) discussion of the
 25 convergence of biotech, high tech, film, music, and book publishing as net-
 26 work organizations, and Jones, Hesterly, & Borgatti (1997) examination of
 27 similarities among semiconductors, auto manufacturing, airplane outs-
 28 souring, and film for network governance. We believe that scholarly work,
 29 however, has not yet cultivated insights from these cross connections to help
 30 us to understand institutional and organizational change. Indeed, in this
 31 volume our journey into the realm of cultural industries produces insights
 32 that would not be revealed in a Chandlerian (Chandler, 1962,1977) or
 33 Fligsteinian (Fligstein, 1990, 1996) world of organizations. By examining the
 34 ways in which participants of cultural industries organize and accomplish
 35 their goals, our attention is focused on fresh sociological insights and new
 36 challenges in the study of organizations.

37 Given these transformational changes, the manuscripts in this volume
 38 illustrate how the boundaries become blurred between cultural and other
 39 related industries that also rest upon the endeavors of creative workers. In
 particular, we see these blending processes in the chapters that examine cell

1 phones, television critics, accounting, and architecture. These dynamic interactions in the commercial landscape between the cultural and professional service industries provide a richer context for the authors in this volume to examine changes in a specific market or industry, and also to advance more generally our knowledge of the latest theoretical and methodological tools sociologists have to offer in understanding the institutional transformation of organizations. We are delighted to present these studies to you.

9 Djelic and Anaimo explore the transpositions in institutional logics from the realm of aesthetic fashion to that of high technology in the context of the market for the emergent technology of cell phones. One of their findings points to the need for scope conditions on one of the key umbrella concepts of contemporary organization theory. Djelic and Anaimo show that the distinction between technical and institutional environments (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott & Meyer, 1983), may well be in the era of market capitalism – a more mercurial one. They show for example how the transposition of a fashion logic into the high technology market for cell phones are at the same time utilitarian and cultural, albeit a product designed and marketed to customer expression. Moreover, the agents or institutional entrepreneurs responsible for blurring the boundaries of the aesthetic and the utilitarian are not always rational actors and pioneers with unique inventions (DiMaggio, 1988). Institutional entrepreneurs do not start from scratch but piece together and recombine cultural elements available in society in ways that often involve creative discovery as well as happenstance (Thornton, 2004). Worth’s innovation of the modular dress, where component dress parts – sleeves, skirts, bodices, cuffs, trims, what have you – were rearranged in a myriad of permutations to maximize the product differentiation of the white dress for imperial ball occasions, is the telling metaphor. We see, not only in the origins of fashion logics themselves, but also in the track record of cell phone start-ups the potential for this hybridization of fashion and technology logics with varying consequences for strategic success in the product market.

33 Dowd, Liddle, and Blyler examine the interplay between production strategies and market concentration for the careers of creative workers. Market concentration has previously been found to limit the diversity of cultural products in the market (Mezias & Mezias, 2000). Dowd et al. assess how the product strategy of decentralization of musical performing acts mitigates the negative effects of concentration, with the effect of allowing for more diversity in cultural products as examined in a higher percentage of female acts. However, they also find that the density of female musical acts

1 never exceeds more than 25% in contrast to their prior findings on African-
2 American musical artists. Dowd et al. attribute this “glass ceiling” on female
3 acts in the marketplace to the “inattention” of record label executives to
4 female acts, reflecting society’s gender bias. In short, although the consumer
5 market may be receptive to increasing numbers of female acts, shown by the
6 number of prior female acts that gained top song status on Billboards, there
7 is a limit to this acceptance. This limit is demonstrated by the record com-
8 panies by not signing available female talent even though the success of
9 prior women’s acts should have paved a legitimizing path. Their important
10 and timely research shows that unless production strategies are accompa-
11 nied by a corollary change in societal level logics, change is unlikely to occur
12 in cultural products available in the market.

13 Bielby, Moloney, and Ngo point out that there has been little attention to
14 the scholarly study of the aesthetics of popular culture. They address this
15 gap in the literature by examining the television critic’s role in an increas-
16 ingly market driven world in which there are great pressures to evaluate
17 television in terms of “what will,” rather than “what should” the audience
18 be watching. As in the case of architecture in this volume (Thornton, Jones,
19 and Kury), the Bielby et al. research highlights a case in which critics are
20 situated in environments with conflicting constituencies that requires medi-
21 ating between the dual demands for aesthetic and commercial evaluation.
22 Using multidimensional scaling to generate descriptive mappings of mean-
23 ing structures (Mohr, 1998), they show how, over time and during signif-
24 icant industry transformation, that television critics attended to a
25 remarkably consistent set of core evaluative criteria directed to these dual
26 constituencies. As the authors point out there are structural changes in the
27 environment that support critics’ desire for greater legitimacy in the larger
28 arena of professional critics that orient themselves to aesthetics. For exam-
29 ple, this is evident in the development of professional organization, the
30 emergence of academic television studies, an elevation of the position of
31 television coverage in journalism, and more generally transformations in the
32 structure of media industries. However, it remains to be seen how critics’
33 simultaneous attention to popular aesthetics consistent with a professional
34 logic will moderate the influences of the almighty market in the evaluation
35 and production of television programs.

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36 Thornton, Jones, and Kury, contribute to theory and methods of analysis
37 of institutional and organizational change by integrating the work on in-
38 stitutional logics (Thornton, 2004) to understand how the content of culture
39 influences organizational change with that on historical event sequencing
(Sewell, 1996) to examine the causal events that transform the content of

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1 culture. They apply this dual perspective to examine three industries with
2 histories of institutional and organizational transformation – accounting,
3 architecture, and publishing – questioning in particular if there are coun-
4 tervailing effects from the institutional sectors of the state, the professions,
5 the corporation, and the market. While analyses show distinct patterns of
6 institutional and organizational change within each industry, they also re-
7 veal general models of institutional and organizational change that do not
8 consistently support the conventional prediction for corporate and market
9 rationalization. In particular, Thornton, Jones, and Kury focus on three
10 mechanisms in their analyses – institutional entrepreneurs, structural over-
11 lap, and historical event sequencing. In sum, in contrast to the outcome of
12 an *evolutionary* model of market rationalization in publishing, they illustrate
13 how accounting has followed a *punctuated equilibrium* model in which
14 managerial and market forces are periodically and increasingly stymied by
15 the State. Architecture has followed a *cyclical* model in which a dialectic of
16 conflicting institutional logics within the professions, between the aesthetics
17 of architects and the efficiency of engineers, have prevented conflict reso-
18 lution and linear transformations in the institutions and organizations of
19 architecture.

20 Zuckerman examines whether a transformation of the film industry from
21 hierarchy to market influenced actors' typecasting specialization or general-
22 ism. Prior research shows that the film industry went through a major
23 transformation from hierarchy to market governance (Christopherson &
24 Storper, 1989; Miller & Shamsie, 1996). Based on the fundamental differ-
25 ences between how market and hierarchies govern their productive assets,
26 should we expect to see a difference in the outcome of cultural products?
27 Zuckerman suggests that hierarchies and markets have internal countervail-
28 ing forces for generalism and specialism that effectively negate one an-
29 other. In the hierarchy period, studios had incentives to develop their actors
30 as generalists because of their sunk costs in a semi-permanent staff. They
31 were likely to use actors across a variety of roles rather than hire new actors.
32 Studios, however, also had incentives to develop their actors into specialists
33 with a clear persona that attracted audiences to films, made revenues more
34 predictable and allowed them to recoup their costs of training and devel-
35 opment for their stock of actors. In the market period, individual actors
36 have greater control over their career assignments so may turn down job
37 opportunities that unduly constrict their skill development. Individuals,
38 however, also experience forces for specialization such as the market's abil-
39 ity to match resources efficiently, which depends on a clear persona devel-
oped through experience in a role and genre. Zuckerman finds only modest

1 differences between actor specialization in hierarchy and market periods.
2 Thus, the governance of creative assets does not lead to significant differ-
3 ences in product diversity or typecasting in cultural industries. This raises
4 the question of whether the dynamics of cultural industries, which are fun-
5 damentally driven by consumer demand, swamp differences between mar-
6 kets and hierarchies. An important question is whether the logic of
7 consumerism, which underlies mass cultural products, trumps the govern-
8 ance dynamics of markets and hierarchies?

9 The chapters in this volume are distinguished by their theoretically in-
10 tegrative and mixed methods of analysis from ethnography to simulations to
11 confirmatory modeling among others – that bring forth a multifaceted focus
12 on the stories of creative individuals as well as the effects of markets and
13 hierarchies in which creative workers operate. Combined, these chapters
14 point toward new understandings of cultural products and industries, and
15 institutional and organizational change processes.

16 The chapters bring to light examples of the blurring of the boundaries
17 between the aesthetic and the utilitarian. The rise of mass customization
18 stemming from new technologies and materials shifts our understanding of
19 cultural products from serving primarily aesthetic or expressive, rather than
20 utilitarian purposes, to one in which aesthetics, expressive, and utilitarian
21 purposes are combined within a single cultural product. Thornton, Jones,
22 and Kury discuss how institutional logics in the architecture profession cycle
23 between expressive (e.g., aesthetic) and utilitarian (e.g., efficiency). Increas-
24 ingly, innovative architects such as Frank Gehry use new technological tools
25 to bend, twist, and create buildings such as the Bilbao museum that are at
26 the same time highly expressive and utilitarian. Djelic and Anaimo describe
27 how Nokia adopted fashion logics that suffused their cell phones, a formerly
28 utilitarian product, allowing consumers to use cell phones for both utili-
29 tarian and expressive purposes.

30 These studies call into question the generalization of classic sociological
31 studies of institutional legitimacy and diffusion (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983),
32 and if institutional change and diffusion are a linear function of market
33 rationalization. While the empirical evidence demonstrating the progression
34 of corporate and market logics in a variety of contexts has been mounting
35 (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999; Scott, Ruef, Mendel, & Caronna (2000); Lounsbury,
36 2002), the studies in this volume show that institutional transformation
37 does not necessarily occur in a linear process. The findings of Djelic
38 and Anaimo shows, which institutional logics prevail – that is which logics
39 drive isomorphism – is more a process of “oscillation,” not the classic S
40 curve, or linear process of market rationalization. The development of the

1 cell phone was influenced also by the mercurial and happenstance logic of
2 fashion rather than solely by the systematic and orderly advance of Moore's
3 law¹ that drives all of high technology in which cell phone technology is
4 embedded.

5 Similarly, Thornton, Jones, and Kury demonstrate that in architecture,
6 the logics of aesthetics versus efficiency, oscillated over time due to struc-
7 tural overlap and conflicts among rival but interdependent architect and
8 engineer professionals. These cycles or oscillations opened up new building
9 opportunities, and were triggered by shifts in the political landscape and
10 technological innovations that increased space efficiency and the aesthetic
11 use of new materials.

12 Moreover, their examination of accounting demonstrates a punctuated
13 equilibrium model of institutional change in response to market crisis, where
14 each crisis built upon and shifted the public's prior understandings (Sewell,
15 1996). With the first crisis, the public's distrust of market competition to
16 monitor unscrupulous companies deepened. The public accounting profes-
17 sion was the first to step in to claim the privilege and responsibility to
18 protect the public interest and assets. However, with each passing scandal in
19 public accounting from Penn Central in 1970 to Enron in 2001 and now
20 KPMG, this moral high ground has been increasingly eroded by the public
21 perception that accounting firms are more likely to protect their own reve-
22 nues rather than the public's assets. As the logics of the corporation and
23 the market began to dominate those of the profession of accounting, the
24 State usurped this progression and eroded professional power with tougher
25 laws to protect the public's assets. State Attorney Generals, such as Elliott
26 Spitzer of New York, continue to prosecute with much publicity the un-
27 scrupulous companies and accountants.

28 The chapters point to insights and opportunities for new research at the
29 cross-section between societal sector analysis and theories of the middle
30 range. For example, these chapters point to how the legitimacy of actors
31 such as female vocal groups and television critics involves interplay of pro-
32 fessional, corporate, and market forces. Bielby et al., Dowd et al., and
33 Zuckerman address to some extent careers in cultural industries and how
34 changes in production strategies do not alter the mix of cultural products
35 and careers. Bielby et al. make the case that television critics' seemingly
36 innate need for professional status in the eyes of the elite circle of aesthet-
37 ically inclined critics and cannot be stamped out by the almighty forces of
38 market rationalization. Dowd et al. show constraints on individuals' careers
39 due to societal level understandings of gender. Zuckerman shows that even
40 with organizational shifts in production strategies from integrated in a hi-

1 erarchy to disaggregated in a market, that there is little difference in the
2 diversity of cultural products, seen in actors career specialization under the
3 two governance forms.

4 Similarly, Thornton, Jones, and Kury, as well as Djelic and Anaimo show
5 how structural overlap provided institutional entrepreneurs with the op-
6 portunity to visualize and transpose institutional logics from one societal
7 sector to another, igniting change in a variety of industries. These chapters
8 extend and augment prior empirical research showing how institutional en-
9 trepreneurs import design or consumer logics to alter products and shift
10 markets (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001; Jones, 2001). However, the scope
11 conditions under which institutional entrepreneurs can take advantage of
12 structural overlap to initiate institutional change are not well understood.
13 Just how much of the discovery process is the happenstance of event se-
14 quencing versus the rational strategic behavior of entrepreneurs warrants
15 further research.

16 The integrative use of theory and methods in these chapters brings to light
17 the need to take stock of the accumulating research findings on cultural
18 industries with regard to how they compare with extant organization theory.
19 We encourage you in reading the forthcoming chapters to think along these
20 lines. For example, transaction cost theory argues that cost minimization is
21 the driving force and logic for hierarchies, particularly those that serve large
22 consumer markets (Williamson, 1985). However, Zuckerman points out
23 limitations of transaction cost theory in that it doesnot necessarily matter
24 whether or not it is the firm or the market that governs the typecasting of
25 actor talent – the result is much the same for specialism. While population
26 ecology theory argues that the effects of density are universal, instead we see
27 examples in which density dependence propels legitimacy for some cultural
28 products but not others, for example with African-American, but not female
29 musical artists. In other chapters resource dependences are not simply al-
30 tered by power, but instead by the institutional logics of the professions, the
31 market, and the corporation that combined shape aesthetics in new ways
32 (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). For example, the shift in architectural aesthetics
33 from Beaux Arts to Bauhaus was shaped by the rise of engineers as an
34 increasingly important profession during the 20th century in several West-
35 ern industrialized countries. With this shift came an appreciation for ma-
36 terial resources that were mass manufactured rather than hand crafted and
37 traditional (Guillén, 1999). In institutional theory organizational actions as
38 sign and symbol has been a vibrant line of research particularly with respect
39 to understanding the sources of legitimacy and the mechanisms to buffer
and loosely couple organizations in conflicting institutional environments

1 (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). We see applications and variants of this branch of
 3 institutional theory in widely divergent contexts such as in the realms of
 corporate executive practices (Zajac & Westphal, 1998, 2004), management
 of cultural organizations (Glynn, 2000), and entrepreneurial strategies
 5 (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). In this volume, Dejelic and Anaimo, with the
 case of cell phones, extends our understanding of how organizations located
 7 in highly cultural and technical environments transpose institutional logics
 to commercially use sign and symbol as the center piece for entrepreneurial
 9 opportunity and marketing strategy.

While these chapters bring renewed attention to classic studies of cultural
 11 industries, our hope is that these chapters motivate new scholars to take up
 the study of the cultural industries. By addressing a forgotten call to in-
 13 tegrate cultural sociology and organizational theory (DiMaggio, 1977), we
 have chronicled new insights brought forth in these chapters. The question
 15 still remains, given the rising prominence of the creative class and its im-
 portance to future economic vitality, just how special and how mainstream
 17 are the research findings from the cultural industries and how do they
 change what we now take for granted in organizational sociology.

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NOTES

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1. Moore's law originated with Gordon Moore, co-founder of <http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/M/Intel.html> Intel, in 1965 with the observation that the area of
<http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/M/transistor.html> transistors per square inch on
 computer chips had doubled every year since the chip was invented, increasing
 computing capacity fourfold every 4 years. (<http://www.webopedia.com>). These
 chips are the brains of computers, cell phones, car electronic systems, and a myriad
 of other products consumers use.

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27 Candace Jones
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