

Fairs and Festivals

Negotiating Values in the Creative Industry

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Creativity at Work:

Fairs and Festivals: Negotiating Values in the Creative Industries

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Abstract

This paper looks at creative industry events – in particular fairs and festivals – and at how they provide a venue for the (re)enactment of institutional arrangements in a particular industry field, as well as for the negotiation and affirmation of different values that underpin them. Tracing the study of such field configuring events back to studies in economic anthropology and sociology, the authors of the paper argue that it is the notion of values that underpins fairs, festivals, awards, auctions and similar events. Going beyond the economist's notion of 'Value' in the singular, the paper posits that, in order to understand the relationship between culture and economy, we need to consider a plurality of material/technical, social, situational, appreciative and functional values when examining how economic Value is derived from creative products. It is these values that are continuously being (re)negotiated and transacted by those participating in creative industry fairs and festivals.

Keywords:

Economic anthropology, fair, festival, field configuring event, organizational sociology, tournament ritual, values

Fairs and Festivals

This paper represents our thinking for the introduction to a multidisciplinary collection of papers by specialists in art history, business administration, business history, communications, marketing, organizational behaviour, social anthropology, (institutional) sociology, and strategic management. It focuses on how certain industry events bring together on a regular basis different actors who, by their intensive business negotiations and social interaction with other players over a limited period, reveal and simultaneously (re)configure the fields of which they form a part.

The events that we choose to focus on are primarily fairs and festivals. These are not exactly the same, but they share a number of common features. Firstly, fairs and festivals are *spatially bounded*: usually stage-set in and framed by a particular location – whether in an indoor exhibition hall, park, or around a town or city, or a combination thereof. Such settings are often set apart from their surroundings, thereby reflecting the liminal nature of the events that they house (cf. Skov 2006: 768; Lampel and Meyer, 2008:1027). Secondly, they are *temporarily bounded* in terms of both duration and regularity. Fairs are short-term events in which all related activities take place over a period of from three to eleven days, although some festivals – especially those with artistic content – tend to go on considerably longer (in some special cases up to three months). They are also usually held at regular intervals – normally once a year, but in the case of some so-called art ‘biennales’ every two, five or ten years. Thirdly, they are *socially bounded* in that they bring together a large and diverse number of participants who are closely involved in the production and distribution of the products and services being exhibited – industry manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers. End-users tend to be marginal.

At the same time as being socially bounded, fairs and festivals are also *functionally unbounded*. By this we mean that they appear to serve multiple purposes – purposes that are often tightly related to the actors and agents participating in these events since both fairs and festivals bring together a large and diverse group of participants who also happen to have diverse agendas and reasons for going to such events. Some may come to trade (to buy or to sell products exhibited); others to obtain financial support for projects; others to build or maintain social relations and networks; yet others to engage in some form of reputation-management by promoting a product, a company, themselves, or some kind of political agenda. Fairs and festivals also attract other kinds of participants who are not closely linked to the industry concerned: for example, media organizations gather at such events in order to get or create a good story. Indeed, story-telling is an inherent aspect of fairs and festivals, as it is of organizations in general (cf. Boje 1991, Czarniawska 1997, Gabriel 2000, Moeran 2007, Reff and Strandgaard Pedersen, 2008).

In spite of their obviousness and the fact that they have been increasing in number very rapidly over the past two decades (for example, currently more than 3.500 film festivals take place worldwide [cf. Mazza and Strandgaard Pedersen 2008]), trade fairs and festivals have, until recently, largely been ignored by scholars working in such disciplinary fields as economics, sociology, anthropology, and management. The volume to which this working paper is an introduction seeks to bring together the latest developments in thinking through the social, cultural and economic meanings of different industry fairs and festivals – including music festivals, art biennales, design exhibitions, film and television festivals, and book, fashion and wine fairs.

What is interesting about fairs and festivals, together with awards, prizes, auctions, exhibitions and other related phenomena, is the intersection of institutions and individuals, on the one hand, and of economic, social and symbolic activities, on the other. Overtly, trade fairs are about exhibiting ‘the new’, be it an idea in its initial state or a finalized product, showing one’s capabilities, and trading in a particular commodity (that can range from aerospace to art, by way of electrical engineering, energy, food and restaurants, hardware, health, IT and telecoms, jewellery, leisure boats, optics, packaging, pharmaceuticals, security, toys and travel, to keep the list fairly short). They provide opportunities for participants to enter into business negotiations with long-term partners, to gain knowledge through market information exchanges, and to initiate and sustain social relations (Anand and Watson, 2004; Skov 2006: 770; Lampel and Meyer, 2008). Fairs also let participants observe competitors’ exhibits. They may lead to vertical integration along an industry’s supply and value chains, as well as to horizontal interaction among competing firms therein (cf. Maskell, Bathelt and Malmberg 2006: 1001-2). But, contrary to the claim made by Maskell and his co-authors, actual trade itself is *not* necessarily marginal (Skov 2006: 770), even though trade fairs (and festivals) are largely about social relationships, symbolic hierarchies, and cultural capital prized by the institutions and individuals attending them. One indication of the economic importance of fairs is a participant’s expenditure and income. Booths at the Maastricht art fair, for example, may cost as much as €50,000, with total costs for a dealer wishing to exhibit there (including shipping, travel, accommodation, food and entertainment) reaching €80,000. In 2007, sales arranged at this venue for the 219 participating dealers had a value of €790 million, with dealers claiming that 40-70 per cent of their annual sales were made during the eleven days of the fair (Thompson 2008: 188-189).

Anthropological Approaches to the Study of the Economy

One thing that makes the study of fairs and festivals so fascinating is the fact that they provide a venue for the (re)enactment of institutional arrangements in a particular industry’s field and for the negotiation and affirmation of the different values that underpin them. While the function of economic exchange may be to create value, it becomes clear that all sorts of other, different kinds of

– material, social, symbolic and creative (or appreciative) – values are introduced and promoted as part of the negotiation of the economic worth of an artwork, fashion collection, book, or film. As Karl Marx (1976: 138) noted long ago: ‘they are only commodities because they have a dual nature, because they are at the same time objects of utility and bearers of value’ – a point to which we shall return below. Fairs and festivals epitomise Simmel’s argument that value is never an inherent property of objects, but arises from a judgement made about those objects by people whose whole lives ‘consist in experiencing and judging values’. In other words, the conceptual meaning of value or valuation is not itself part of the world, but ‘the whole world viewed from a particular vantage point’ (Simmel 1978: 60). For this very reason, values become what might be broadly called ‘cultural’. This book explains how particular worlds, bound in space and time, are viewed from the vantage points of different participants for whom the values they hold form a comprehensive part of their world views and are thus a counterpart to their very being.

The research carried out on fairs and festivals so far – whether from the point of view of tournament rituals (Anand and Watson, 2004) or of field configuring events (Lampel and Meyer, 2008) – shares at least one concern: the extent to which what might be broadly termed ‘cultural phenomena’ inflect economic practices and vice-versa (cf. Throsby 2001). This concern may be traced back to anthropological approaches to the study of so-called ‘primitive economies’ and to a realization or belief that economists’ explanatory tools just did not work when applied outside the sphere of capitalist economies.

In an early work on themes in economic anthropology, Raymond Firth (1967) noted the marked contrast between the institutional framework of the business enterprise with its impersonal labour markets, profit orientation, limited liability companies, global trading, banking and credit, and so on studied first and foremost by economists, and small-scale, highly personal, ‘subsistence’ economic systems, which may have no money medium at all and little in the way of a market economy, studied primarily by anthropologists. For a long time, therefore, the latter talked about ‘primitive economies’ and ‘primitive economics’, and focused on social relationships when looking at the transactions in which people engaged. Precisely because quality goods and services were not in unlimited supply, individuals made choices about the nature of the exchanges that they wished to enter into. This included choices about the people with whom they decided to deal, and the kind of social relationships with which they wished first to engage and then maintain during the course of their dealings. In contrast to the *prescriptive* nature of economic theory, therefore, anthropology has been *descriptive*, analyzing what people actually do, rather than what they *should* do (Plattner 1989: 7). In short, while economists have been concerned with *individual* economic behaviour (cf. Frey 2003: 1), social anthropologists have tended to see *social relations* as the primary force in economic transactions. Thus, whereas economists argue upwards from individual choice to the dynamics of economic systems as a whole, anthropologists have worked down from social structure to individual

behaviour (Wilk 1996: 12). The contributions to this volume try to combine these two rather different approaches.

Although from the vantage point of the 21st century we may now not totally agree, four decades or so ago it was claimed that exchange in primitive economies did not have the same role as economic flows in modern, (post-)industrial societies. From this followed the anthropological proposition that no social relation, institution or set of institutions was of itself 'economic' (Sahlins 1974: 185). As Marshall Sahlins opined in his discussion of forms of primitive exchange:

'What are in the received wisdom 'noneconomic' or 'exogenous' conditions are in the primitive reality the very organization of the economy. A material transaction is usually a momentary episode in a continuous social relation. The social relation exerts governance: the flow of goods is constrained by, is part of, a status etiquette...

'Yet the connection between material flow and social relations is reciprocal. A specific social relation may constrain a given movement of goods, but a specific transaction – "by the same token" – suggests a particular social relation. If friends make gifts, gifts make friends. A great proportion of primitive exchange, much more than our own traffic, has as its decisive function this latter, instrumental one: the material flow underwrites or initiates social relations.'

Sahlins (1965: 139-140)

According to this line of anthropological thought, the role of transaction in the economy of primitive communities functioned differently from that found in modern societies: more detached from production *per se*, less involved in acquiring the means of production, and more involved with redistributing finished goods through society (Sahlins 1965: 140; 1974: 186). As Firth (1967: 4) put it:

'While the material dimension of the economy is regarded as a basic feature, the significance of the economy is seen to lie in the *transactions* of which it is composed and therefore in the quality of *relationships* which these transactions create, express, sustain, and modify.'

However, his own view was that an absence of a general market for goods and services or of impersonal market relationships did not necessarily mean that people had no concept of economic advantage. There was, he suggested, a continuum of economic behaviour in all economic systems of whatever kind, so that the differences that did exist should be attributed primarily to structural and institutional fields (Firth 1967: 6). This is what has since become known as the 'formalist' stance: 'the view that that the logic of scarcity is operative over the whole range of economic phenomena' (Firth 1967: 4) and that rational action involves choice between alternative uses of scarce resources. This approach has been put forward in contrast to the 'substantive' view of the economy which sets material 'needs' and their means of satisfaction concretely in the social

structure of a society, with its logic of social relations and the realization of socially necessary ends (cf. Narotzky 1997: 3).

Although the first hint of the formalist-substantivist (and, by implication, a universalist-relativist) divide may be found in Bronislaw Malinowski's (1921) critique of the use of Western economic tools to understand the 'primitive' economy of a people like the Trobriand Islanders, Karl Polanyi (1957) was the first to clearly demarcate two meanings of the word 'economic', when he used *formal* to refer to the study of rational decision-making and *substantive* to the material acts of making a living. It was only in the historical development of modern Western economies, he argued, that these two different meanings came to be conflated as a single term. While the economy was thus embedded in the institution of the marketplace in modern capitalist societies, elsewhere it was embedded in other social (for instance, kinship or religious) institutions and operated according to different principles from those of the market. In other words, in different societies the economy was based on entirely different logical principles (Wilk 1996: 6-7).

This division between formal and substantive approaches to the study of economic practices and behaviour dominated economic anthropology during the 1960s and early 70s. It is by no means clear who won the debate, but the formalists showed that economics *could* be applied to non-capitalist economies, while the substantivist position that economic activities were deeply embedded in all sorts of institutions, from kinship (cf. Nakane 1967) to art galleries and auction houses (cf. Thompson 2008), is now accepted as commonplace (Granovetter 1985). It is this latter position that pervades current discussions of trade fairs and festivals. Economy consists of two realms – community and market – both of which are ever-present as we foreground social relationships and contextually defined values at one point, and then favour impersonal, anonymous short-term market exchanges abstracted from social context at another. As Stephen Gudeman (2001: 1) points out:

'Both realms are ever-present but we bring now one, now the other into the foreground in practice and ideology. The relationship is complex: sometimes the two faces of economy are separated, at other times they are mutually dependent, opposed or interactive. But always their shifting relation is filled with tension.'

What is interesting about fairs and festivals, then, is that they are sites where two contradictory logics – those of culture and the economy – clash (cf. Eikhof and Haunschild 2006; 2007). They reveal *how* creative works are commodified (Velthuis 2005: 51-52).

Values

The study of values has always been central to explanations of the political economy, as well as an inescapable element in anthropological theory. The notion of 'value' (utility, price and worth) is the origin of, and motivation for,

all forms of economic behaviour (Throsby 2001: 19) and has been examined principally as a means towards equating the 'inherent' qualities of commodities with their quantitative worth (as witnessed in Marx's exposition of use, exchange and surplus values). Values are the criteria by which people judge what is legitimate (Suchman, 1995:574) and worthwhile in their everyday lives (Graeber 2001: 3). They are the very stuff of fairs.

Both economists and anthropologists are interested in values in the plural, since they encompass all kinds of (social, aesthetic, spiritual, and other) beliefs and moral principles. It is such values, always in a state of constant (re)negotiation and continuous transaction, that link economic and cultural fields. Perhaps because of their very diversity and consequent resistance to measurement (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004: 359) and simplified explanatory models, values tend to be singularized. Economists have built theories of value around the concept of a price system (Debreu 1987), so that even a cultural economist who simultaneously recognizes and espouses the plurality of values, while acknowledging the shortcomings of price as a measure of economic value and the multiple and shifting nature of cultural value within a single domain, cannot get away from a 'theory of value' (Throsby 2005: 19, 24, 28). As we shall see below, fairs and festivals have been referred to as 'tournaments of value' (Appadurai 1986), rather than as 'tournaments of values' (Moeran 2010).

The question then becomes: why continue to use the term 'value' in the singular? One possible answer, perhaps, is to be found in the overwhelming dominance of economics in contemporary societies. It was only economics among the social sciences that did not explicitly focus on the study of values in the 1960s (Hitlin and Paliavin 2004: 362). Certainly, neo-classical economists are dismissive of cultural economists who do try to adopt a broader view of cultural phenomena (Throsby 2001: xii), and find it difficult to comprehend patterns of values held by members of different cultural groups who occupy different social structural positions. After all, the process of evaluation is always contingent on who is evaluating what for whom, when, where, how, why and in what context. In other words, value is "neither a fixed attribute, an inherent quality, or an objective property of things but, rather, an effect of multiple, continuously changing, and continuously interacting variables or, to put this another way, the product of a system, specifically an *economic system*" (Herrnstein-Smith 1988: 30).

Another answer, then, may lie in the very diversity and variability of values themselves, which can be used to refer to anything from the aesthetic, spiritual, social, historical, symbolic and authenticity values found in art works (Throsby 2001: 28-29) to the ten value-types of hedonism, power, achievement, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, conformity, tradition and security analyzed for 70 different cultures around the world (Schwartz 1994). Alternatively, they may include the 'non-user values' of option, existence, bequest, prestige and innovative values discussed by Frey (2003), as well as 'interests, pleasures, likes, preferences, duties, moral obligations, desires, wants, goals, needs, aversions and attractions, and many other kinds of selective

orientations' (Williams 1979: 16). Given the broad range of enumerated values and the variety of applications to which they are put (some psychological, others social), is it possible, or even advisable, to try to synthesize these different emphases on the concept of value?

Our own concern is with the production, negotiation, and transaction of various kinds of values in the context of fairs and festivals transacting *commodities* (in this instance, creative products): animation, art works, books, fashion items, music, films, television programmes, wine, and so on. It is these that make Value (with, if we are to singularise it, a capital V). Following earlier work by Brian Moeran (1996, 1997, 2004), we wish to suggest that what constitutes Value in the kinds of creative *products* (as opposed to agents or social processes) that are the focus of trade fairs and festivals are material, social, appreciative and utility values which, together, create a symbolic exchange value. It is this qualitative symbolic value that is then exchanged for a quantitative economic value, or what we prefer to call commodity exchange value.

What exactly are these different kinds of values and how can we see them at work in the production, distribution and exchange of creative goods at fairs and festivals? First, let us look at *material* values. These are primarily based on the materials and techniques used by creative personnel during the course of designing and making creative products. For example, a fashion designer will make use of the way in which a particular material hangs from the body in one of his dress designs; a photographer will pay close attention to camera type, shutter speed, focus, lighting, background and so on during the course of setting up a shot; a potter will explain in some detail the difficulties involved in forming pots with a certain kind of clay, as well as what she can and cannot do with particular glazes when finished forms are placed in different parts of a wood-fired kiln (and what effects wood – as opposed to electricity or gas – might produce during the course of firing). These kinds of material values are based on the professional knowledge developed by a craftsman during the course of his work, and are not necessarily known or shared by others involved.

Second, if we turn to *social* values, we find that almost all creative products are affected by social relations of one sort or another. A fashion designer will choose a particular photographer because of previous experiences of working together or because of a recommendation by someone else whom he knows and respects. The photographer in turn will select a particular model not simply for the appropriateness of her 'look' *vis-à-vis* the task in hand, but also because he is already sleeping with her or would like to. A potter will back up her claim to artistry by proclaiming a 'lineage' through apprenticeship to an already well-known ceramic artist, or a designer to the fashion school from he graduated or fashion houses for which he has worked. In this way, the value of the creative product (fashion item, photograph or pot) is enhanced by means of individual social contacts of one sort or another or of institutional affiliations. In this way, social values incorporate notions of prestige: witness the importance attributed to a particular dress or piece of jewellery being worn by a particular

film star at the Oscar awards, and the attention paid to the clothing of celebrities in fashion magazines.

Third, we come to *appreciative* values. These are primarily, but not exclusively, aesthetic and emerge from the ways in which creative products are praised or damned by critics in media reviews. Certain kinds of aesthetic language come to be used for certain kinds of creative products (the language used to appraise traditional pottery, for example, differs radically from that used to describe less functional sculptural forms). At the same time, however, such language is not necessarily strictly aesthetic, since product advertising, for example, can make use of a different kind of appreciative language designed to attract consumers to buy the product in question and, ideally, convert it into a 'brand'. Appreciative values also include legal evaluations (affecting, for instance, copyright in creative products), so that the former are in many respects ideological values which impact upon the perceived Value of a creative product.

Finally, let us consider *utility* values, which are the uses to which a creative product is put. Generally speaking, clothes are worn, photographs are looked at, and pots are eaten out of or used for decorative purposes. However, a stocking can serve as an elongated container for Christmas presents or as a bank robber's mask; magazine photographs can be used as wrapping paper; and a plate as an ashtray. Most times such uses are temporary, but they can become more permanent, as when a number of photographs are put together as wallpaper or a jar is used as a flower pot. It is the uses to which we wish to put a creative product that influences our decision about whether or not to purchase it.

Together, we weigh up the different aspects of material, social, appreciative and utility values in every creative product, and calculate their combined *symbolic exchange* value, which we then test against an economic criterion – money or price. If the price established for a product meets our symbolic exchange evaluation, and we decide to purchase a little black dress by Chanel, a photographic print by Helmut Newton, or a dish by Lucie Rie, then we have engaged in what might be termed *commodity exchange* value. It is here that quality meets quantity, culture economy.

The advantage of such an approach to the study of values is that it stresses their ongoing social construction and negotiation as we go about our everyday lives. The disadvantage, perhaps, is that it ignores individual or affective values (stemming from what Bourdieu would term *habitus*), although it could be argued that the latter are in fact socially constructed and therefore an integral part of social values. What should be made clear, though, is that different people in a social world will tend to stress different kinds of values: a seamstress is likely to be more focused on material and a fashion designer on aesthetic values than – say – a fashion model for whom social networks are more important, while for the consumer the wearability of a garment is the deciding factor in the symbolic-commodity exchange equation. Similar

considerations come into play in the art, film, music, and other creative worlds, and they tend to take centre stage in events like art fairs and exhibitions, film festivals, and so on, where creative products are on display and transformations of symbolic values regularly take place (Anand and Jones 2007: 1049-1051).

Fairs as Tournament Rituals

One tension that pervades trade fairs and festivals is the role of the commodities or creative products exhibited therein. In the Introduction to an influential edited volume, *The Social Life of Things*, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai takes issue with the standard argument put forward by political economists that 'commodities are special kinds of manufactured goods (or services), which are associated only with capitalist modes of production and are thus to be found only where capitalism has penetrated' (Appadurai 1986: 7). He argues, instead, that all commodities have their social lives; that they are things with a particular kind of social potential, in some ways and from certain points of view distinguishable from objects, artefacts, products, and goods; and that they circulate in different regimes of value in both space and time (Appadurai 1986: 3-6). If, he continues, one accepts that a commodity is '*any thing intended for exchange*', then the question arises: 'What sort of exchange is commodity exchange?' (Appadurai 1986: 9).

Such a question necessarily implies a cultural framework within which exchange becomes possible because, at a certain phase in its social life (or career) and in a particular context, a commodity elicits some measure of shared cultural assumptions (Appadurai 1986: 15-16). Commodities are not mechanically governed by laws of supply and demand; rather, they have their 'paths' and 'diversions'; in any given situation the flow of commodities is 'a shifting compromise between socially regulated paths and competitively inspired diversions' (Appadurai 1986: 17).

The example that Appadurai uses to illustrate his argument is that of the celebrated *kula* exchange – an extremely complex system for the circulation of certain kinds of valuables among men of reputation in the Massim group of islands in the Western Pacific (see Malinowski 1922). Precisely because the large-scale exchanges of shells define the value of the men who value and exchange them, the paths and diversions taken by such shells become very important to the politics of reputation.

It is here that the *kula* ring becomes a paradigm for what Appadurai calls *tournaments of value*. These, he says, are:

'Complex periodic events that are removed in some culturally-defined way from the routine of everyday economic life. Participation in them is... both a privilege for those in power and an instrument of status contests between them. The currency of such tournaments is also... set apart through well understood cultural diacritics... What is at issue... is not just status, rank, fame, or reputation of actors, but the disposition of

the central tokens of value in the society in question. Finally, though such tournaments of value occur in special times and places, their forms and outcomes are always consequential for the more mundane realities of power and value in ordinary life.'

Appadurai (1986: 21)

Appadurai clearly recognized that 'an agonistic, romantic, individualistic, and gamelike ethos that stands in contrast to the ethos of everyday economic behavior' (Appadurai 1986: 50) is to be found in contemporary industrialized societies. In answer to his call for 'a fuller examination of the modes of articulation of these "tournament" economies' (ibid.), Brian Moeran went on to argue in his discussion of competitive presentations in the Japanese advertising industry that tournaments of value also included:

'The various *haute couture* and *prêt-à-porter* fashion shows held in Paris, London, Milan, New York, and Tokyo; certain types of auction put on with accompanying publicity by Sotheby's, Christie's and other art auctioneers; annual media events such as the Miss World and Miss Universe beauty competitions, the Eurovision Song Contest, the Grammy awards for music, the Oscar awards for those working in the film industry; some art exhibitions and film festivals themselves (in Cannes, Venice, and so on); and, of course, the Nobel prizes.'

(Moeran 1993: 93)

Organizational Sociological Approaches to the Study of the Economy

Whereas antropologists, until recently, first and foremost have been occupied with 'primitive economies' or 'subsistence economies', and with the exchange and the role of gifts, as described earlier in this chapter, the organizational sociologists have in their turn, primarily been focused on 'modern economies'. A substantial body of these organizational sociological studies have been conducted under the label of new institutionalism. The studies have often been historical and concerned with pre- or early, western capitalism and industrialist entrepreneurs. Examples of such studies of early foundations are, for example, Dobbin's study of the early railroad entrepreneurs and industrial policy formation in US, Britain and France (Dobbin, 1994), Shenhav's account on the role of the engineering profession on early organization theory (1879-1932) and, Mezas & Mezas' study of the early American film industry (Mezas and Mezas, 2000); while others have studied the rise and development of the modern corporation, for example Neil Fliegstein's study of the spread of the multi-divisional form (Fliegstein, 1985; 1991), Baron et al.'s study of the evolution of modern personnel adiminstration in US industry (Baron et al., 1986; 1988) or Strandgaard Pedersen and Dobbin's work on the development of the individual, the modern state and the modern corporation, (Strandgaard

Pedersen and Dobbin, 1997) or Powell's study on the social construction of the field of biotechnology (Powell, 1998).

A common feature across these institutional studies is a concern for describing, documenting patterns of diffusion within a certain area and explaining the diffusion and adoption of certain organizational forms or practices among organizations taking place within a particular industry or sector, as often discussed as 'field'. These set of organizations could be non-profit or public, like in for example, Zald and Denton's study on the transformation of the YMCA (Zald and Denton, 1963), Tolbert and Zucker's study of the diffusion of the civil service reform 1880-1935 (Tolbert and Zucker, 1983) and, DiMaggio's study of U.S. Art Museums (DiMaggio, 1991). Or these studies could be concerned with for-profit, private sector organizations, like for example, Davis, Diekman and Tinsley's study of the decline and fall of the conglomerate firm in the 1980s (Davis et al. 1994), Scheiberg's account on American fire insurance, 1900-1930 (Scheiberg, 2002), or Burdros' work on the adoption of downsizing programs, 1979-1994 (Burdros,1997).

Organization Field

The concept of organizational field is central to the new institutional analysis as pointed out by several authors (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; 1991; Scott and Meyer 1983; 1991; Scott 2008; Scott et al 2000; Dacin, Goodstein and Scott 2002). In spite of this centrality, for the first many years, the concept of the field was primarily used in studies to set the boundaries of the study in question, whereas the dynamics and mechanisms within the field were relatively unexplored, except for a few studies, like DiMaggio and Powell's three mechanisms of isomorphism respectively termed 'coercive', 'normative' and 'mimetic' forces (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

The general notion of the concept of field is that it simply defines a social space and identifies a number of nodes, points of observation or positions and their mutual relations in the analysis. Bourdieu (1992), for example, defines fields as 'configuration of relations between positions', and in a similar vein, Wacquant (1992) defines a field as 'a socially structured space in which agents struggle'. From this perspective, the concept of organizational field primarily deals with the nature of relations among nodes within a social space, in the same vein as other concepts, such as 'industry systems' (Hirsch 1972) and 'societal sectors' (Scott and Meyer 1983; 1991).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) propose to define an organizational field as consisting of 'those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services and products' (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:143). The actor approach is distinct in their definition of the field, focusing on the various actors constituting the recognized organizational field in the aggregate. Building on DiMaggio's (1991)

assumption that fields are socially constructed by the actors' cognitive view of the environment, Scott (1994:71) includes relational and cultural elements, stating that, 'fields identify communities of organizations that participate in the same meaning systems, are defined by similar symbolic processes, and are subject to common regulatory processes.' In his view, '...the definition of field is, to a large extent, coterminous with the application of a distinctive complex of institutional rules' (Scott 1995:135).

Another body of institutional research tends to emphasize the conflictual interplay between actors and power relations regarding organizational fields. Brint and Karabel have described organizational fields as 'arenas of power relations' (Brint and Karabel 1991:355) applying at a field level the power-dependence dynamics which Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) investigated at an organizational level. In an attempt to bring together Scott's focus on cognitive and cultural elements with DiMaggio and Powell's focus on actors, Hoffman (1999) suggests that fields form around issues - instead of markets or technologies - and 'that fields become centers of debates in which competing interests negotiate over issue interpretation' (Hoffman, 1999:351). In this way Hoffman represents fields as structured by the composition of interests.

Field Change and Transformation

By assuming fields to be communities framed upon the actors' functional, relational and cognitive criteria, the question of how to consider the state of a field emerges. Are fields stable or, given the complex criteria on which they are built, do they vary over time and across societies? And, if they vary over time how are they transforming?

These questions have raised the attention of many scholars arguing for models and patterns of institutional change affecting a field. First, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) depicted a two-step model referring to a field life cycle; during field 'youth', changes driven by economic and competitive forces are likely to be implemented, while during field 'maturity', institutional isomorphism paves the way to field stability. In effect field change is *'neither frequent nor routine because it is costly and difficult...it is likely to be episodic, highlighted by a brief period of crisis or critical intervention, and followed by longer periods of stability or path-dependent development'* (Powell 1991:197). Based on this view of field dynamics, new institutional theorists define a few change factors at the field level. Fligstein (1991) hypothesizes that 'external shocks', provided by macroeconomic conditions, the state or other organizations, may provoke change in an otherwise stable field. In this case, the dynamics among the actors in the field and the institutionalization forces, following from such shocks, shape the direction of change.

Powell (1991) identifies three factors enhancing field change: 'the development of changes at the periphery' of a field, that is to say the innovations coming from marginal organizations in the field network; 'the

ineffectiveness – or the effectiveness only in the short run – of isomorphic pressures’ to shape organizational choices, that is to say the failure of those institutions spreading normative and coercive isomorphism in making their prescriptions implemented; ‘the re-arrangement of field boundaries’ due to deep political or legal upheavals, as fields are recomposed and either split into sub-fields or merge with other fields of similar blurred boundaries. In line with these arguments, Scott et al. point to five processes resulting in profound transformations in fields: (1) changes in relations among existing organizations, (2) changes in boundaries of existing organizations, (3) the emergence of new populations, (4) changes in field boundaries, and (5) changes in governance structures (Scott et al. 2000:24-25).

This research into change and transformation of organization fields and the insights from these studies have formed the foundations for recent interest within organizational sociology, in the study of the role gatherings, congregations and events within different industries (e.g. Anand & Watson, 2004; Meyer et al., 2005; Lampel & Meyer, 2008). Such gatherings and congregations may be termed differently in different fields and industry sectors - conferences, award ceremonies, trade shows, technology contests, fairs and festivals and so forth (cf. Garud, 2008; McInerney, 2008; Oliver and Montgomery, 2008).

Fairs as Field Configuring Events

Field configuring events (FCEs) is the term suggested by Meyer et al. (2005) and further developed by Lampel and Meyer (2008). They refer to and build on the work by Anand and Watson (2004) who, in their study on Grammy Award Shows, suggested the term ‘tournament rituals’, as the term to capture and discuss this phenomenon. They are in their turn inspired by and build on Appadurai’s work and his proposed concept of ‘tournaments of value’ (Appadurai, 1986:21). Appadurai (1986) mentions in a footnote that in coining the term ‘tournaments of value’, he himself has been inspired by Mariott (1968) and his conception of ‘tournaments of rank’ (Appadurai, 1986:59).

Meyer et al. (2005) has defined Field-Configuring Events (FCEs) as: ‘... temporary social organizations such as tradeshows, professional gatherings, technology contests, and business ceremonies that encapsulate and shape the development of professions, technologies, market and industries’. (Meyer et al. 2005, here from Lampel & Meyer, 2008:1026).

Building on the concept of Field-Configuring Events (FCEs), Lampel and Meyer (2008), in their Guest Editors’ Introduction to the special issue of *Journal of Management Studies*, titled ‘Field-Configuring Events as Structuring Mechanisms: How Conferences, Ceremonies, and Trade Shows Constitute New Technologies, Industries, and Markets’, further define FCEs as: ‘... settings in which people from diverse organizations and with diverse purposes assemble periodically, or on a one-time basis, to announce new products, develop

industry standards, construct social networks, recognize accomplishments, share and interpret information, and transact business'. (Lampel and Meyer, 2008:1026).

Suggesting an operational definition of FCEs, Lampel and Meyer outline six defining characteristics for FCEs:

1. FCEs assemble in one location actors from diverse professional, organizational, and geographical backgrounds.
2. FCEs' duration is limited, normally running from a few hours to a few days.
3. FCEs provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face social interaction.
4. FCEs include ceremonial and dramaturgical activities.
5. FCEs are occasions for information exchange and collective sense-making.
6. FCEs generate social and reputational resources that can be deployed elsewhere and for other purposes. (Lampel and Meyer, 2008:1027).

Within the disciplines of anthropology and institutional theory, with a particular focus on the variant of organizational sociology - leaving economic, historical and political institutionalism aside for nowⁱ - several concepts have, thus, been suggested so far. 'Tournaments of rank' (Mariott, 1968), 'tournament of values' (Appadurai, 1986), 'tournament rituals' (Anand and Watson, 2004), and 'Field-configuring events' (FCEs) (Meyer et al. 2005; Lampel and Meyer, 2008) has been suggested. Combining these insights from anthropology and institutional sociology a suggestion for yet another coining of the phenomenon, could be to take rituals to the field and talk about 'field rituals or field ceremonies'.

Final Thoughts

The debate about the relation between culture and economy outlined in different manifestations in this Working paper has spread from the comparatively narrow confines of economic anthropology to broader intellectual fields, including sociology, cultural studies, and creative industries and the experience economy. What is of interest to us here is that those studying trade fairs and festivals regard the economy as a type of human activity that is embedded in different social institutions in different kinds of societies. What are those institutions? And how - if at all - do they differ when the objects of study are as varied as art displays, book publishing, fashion shows, film production, television programming, and wine classification? How far do the fairs and festivals in which (rights to) such objects are displayed, discussed, negotiated, bought and sold reveal the economic rationality of

maximizing individuals? How much are these same individuals constrained by the social structures in which they find themselves?

Some of these questions have since been taken up, with a number of scholars taking up different perspectives as they analyse art biennales (Tang 2007a, 2007b), fashion and textile shows (Entwistle and Rocamora 2006; Skov 2006), book (Moeran 2010) and television fairs (Havens 2003; Harrington and Bielby 2005), Grammy Awards (Anand and Watson 2004; Watson and Anand 2006), the Booker Prize (Anand and Jones 2008), the Olympic Games (Glynn 2008), and film festivals (Barbato and Mio 2007; Evans 2007; Mazza and Strandgaard 2008; Mezias et al. 2008). However, although originally acknowledging Appadurai's contribution to their theorizing by referring to 'ritual tournaments' (e.g. Anand and Watson 2004), recent studies fall more squarely within the field of institutional sociology whose proponents now talk of tournaments of value as 'field configuring events' (Lampel and Meyer 2008) since tournaments of value – or, ideally, of values (Moeran 2010) – link ritual to the evolution of organizational fields (Anand and Jones 2007: 1038). It is this discussion that chapters in the edited book take up in a number of different ways.

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Endnote

ⁱ For a very illuminating review of the different institutionalisms within social science see Scott (2008), and for an overview of central themes and the development within institutional theory see Greenwood et al. (2008).