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Geoforum

Volume 31, Issue 4, November 2000, Pages 453-464

Risk and trust in the cultural industries

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-7185\(00\)00008-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-7185(00)00008-7)

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Abstract

Preliminary claims have been made that working practices within cultural industries such as fashion, music, design and the night time economy may differ from Fordist or modernist arrangements. Cultural firms are often imagined to be more innovative, information-rich, dynamic, flexible, non-hierarchical and dependent on local clusters and networks than their Fordist counterparts (Lash and Urry, 1994). As their impact and significance increase, understanding how creative and cultural industries actually work is of high priority. This paper presents preliminary findings from an on-going ESRC funded study of cultural Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) within Manchester, England. Drawing on one element of the project, this paper considers the significance of risk and the importance of social trust for the cultural entrepreneur. Following a discussion of Beck's development of risk as an analytical concept, and its intersection with Giddens' notion of "active trust", the paper examines how risk and trust are defined, experienced and negotiated by entrepreneurs in Manchester's cultural industries. It is suggested that senses of risk are constitutive and often pivotal to the whole economic and social basis of cultural entrepreneurship "risk being central to

choices made not only in business but in the lifeworld more generally. The paper then investigates the importance of trust for facilitating as well as countering or offsetting risk. Empirical evidence is presented to show how risk and trust co-relate and interact as constitutive elements within a wider set of shifting relationships between work, leisure and lifestyle in the "creative city"™.



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Keywords

Risk; Trust; Cultural industries; Entrepreneurship; The city

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