



# CREATIVITY 360 DEGREES

Exploring the Dynamics of the Creative  
Industries in Southeast Europe

EDITED BY

MIRELA HOLY, JELENA BUDAK  
AND RINO MEDIĆ

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# **Creativity 360 Degrees: Exploring the Dynamics of the Creative Industries in Southeast Europe**

EDITED BY

**MIRELA HOLY**

*VERN' University, Croatia*

**JELENA BUDAK**

*The Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia*

AND

**RINO MEDIĆ**

*VERN' University, Croatia*



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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## About the Editors

**Mirela Holy** is a Professor of ethnology and comparative literature. After political career of the minister of environmental and nature protection and of the member of Croatian parliament, she works at the VERN<sup>9</sup> University in Zagreb as Head of the studies. She has published six books and many articles about environment, human rights and communication. She received the Miko Tripalo award for outstanding contribution to the society democratisation and promotion of human rights in 2012. She was elected to the European Parliament in the 2014 election, but she did not serve her mandate. Mirela Holy was a member of the EU Mission Board on Adaptation to Climate Change and Societal Transformation.

**Jelena Budak** is a Scientific Advisor with tenure with the Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia. She was awarded doctorate in economics by the University J.J. Strossmayer in Osijek. Her research interests include institutions and public sector policies, the quality of public governance and corruption and privacy in an online environment. She published over 70 scientific papers and book chapters, and her most recent publications are attitudinal studies on informality and on consumer resilience to privacy violation online. As a principal investigator, she successfully led projects funded by Croatian Science Foundation and was a project lead and team member at more than 50 research projects and expert studies commissioned by Croatian and foreign organisations.

**Rino Medić** earned his PhD at the Faculty of Economics in Osijek, Croatia, with a dissertation on 'The role of volunteering in remote communities' under the mentorship of Professor Dan Ebener, PhD, from St Ambrose University, USA. Rino was leading various projects including many business and scientific conferences. Rino started and leading the project 'What can we do for children' which aims to educate and support teachers in elementary and high schools in Croatia. Also, he is a founder and member of the international association Šipan Academy. Rino is an author of several scientific articles and chapters in books as well as an editor of five international proceedings.

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## About the Contributors

**Anca Anton** is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences, University of Bucharest, Romania, where she teaches marketing communications, media marketing, (corporate) public relations, business communication and digital writing. Her research interests cover several fields: the intersection of communication and democratised forms of diplomacy, with a focus on public diplomacy, civil society diplomacy and digital diplomacy; the transformation of the PR/comms profession and industry and their intersection with digital and social media; marketing communication; digital governmental communication. She is a member of several academic associations: EUPRERA, ICA, ECREA, EMMA. In EUPRERA, she is a member of the Board and co-leader of the Education Network.

**Davor Ćosić** earned his bachelor's degree in public relations and media last year, and he is currently pursuing a master's degree in human resource management at the University of VERN'. He balances academic life with his role as a PR Specialist at Bruketa&Žinić&Grey. Simultaneously, he volunteers at the Croatian Leukemia and Lymphoma Association, showcasing his dedication to community service. In his leisure time, Davor immerses himself in media, interpersonal dynamics and the music scene, reflecting his diverse interests and passions.

**Teodora Doroftei** is a young communication professional and graduate of the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences, University of Bucharest, Romania. She holds a BA in Public Relations and Communications and an MA in Advertising & Digital Communication from the same university, with papers addressing CSR and place attachment. During her MA, she completed an Erasmus+ semester at the Sapienza University of Rome, Italy. She is currently working in the PR industry in Romania and is interested in topics such as quality of life, sustainable development, behavioural psychology, multiculturalism and intergovernmental communications.

**Mirko Duić** is an Associate Professor at the Department of Information Sciences, University of Zadar. He got a PhD in 2015, the topic was 'Film collections in Croatian public libraries'. In the period from 2009 to 2022, he taught a number of full-time and part-time courses at the Department of Information Sciences in Zadar, where he currently teaches courses in the field of digital libraries, information organisation, digital multimedia, cultural studies and film heritage. He is the (co-) author of more than 25 scientific papers and has presented his research in

a number of domestic and international conferences. Some of his research and teaching interests are film and multimedia in library activities, building library and digital collections, cultural heritage within information institutions and digital libraries, information behaviour of scientists related to literature sources, availability and cultural diversity of literature.

**Sara Đurković** completed her undergraduate studies in Entrepreneurship Economics at VERN' University. Currently, she is pursuing a master's degree in Business Communication at VERN' University. In February 2023, she was awarded the Rector's Award at VERN' University for her outstanding academic achievements. In September 2023, she presented her thesis titled 'Behavior of Young Consumers When Buying Branded Clothes' at the Creative Future Insights 2023 conference, alongside professors Jadranka Ivanković and Diana Plantić Tadić. She is proficient in English and skilled in using programs such as MS Word, MS Excel and MS PowerPoint. Besides her studies, she works at VERN' University in the Office for Lifelong Education, Projects and Public Procurement. In her free time, she enjoys traveling and spending time with friends.

**Marina Funduk**, PhD, is a Research Associate at the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) from Zagreb. She holds a master's degree in Political Science (2005), an Advance Master of European Studies (2008) and a PhD in Comparative Politics (2015), all from the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb. She has worked as a Researcher at the IRMO Department for Resource Economics, Environmental Protection and Regional Development since 2008 and has 15 years of professional experience as a Political Scientist in environmental protection. Her research interests include environmental policy, sustainable development, regional development, nature protection, water management, bioeconomy and marine litter management. She is a member of the European Regional Science Association (ERSA), Croatia, since 2010.

**Marija Geiger Zeman** (Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Croatia) is a Scientific Adviser in Sociology at the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar in Zagreb (Croatia). Geiger Zeman is the author of many papers and conference presentations focused on gender issues, media (COVID-19, fake news, etc.) and age issues. Her empirical work is based on qualitative methodology. In 2010, Geiger Zeman received Annual Science Award by the Croatian Parliament in the field of social sciences.

**Dino Giergia** completed his undergraduate and graduate studies in management at the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka in 2011. In 2017, he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation. Since 2009, he has been working in various positions at Dea Flores d.o.o., while in 2014, he became a member of the company's management board. He is responsible for the development of the company's strategy, the development of new products and the management of the finance and sales sectors. He lectures at various universities in Croatia, such as the Rochester Institute of Technology, the University of the North and the Edward Bernays University of Applied Science. He teaches the courses 'International Business',

'Leadership' and 'Marketing Strategies' at the undergraduate and graduate levels. He is the author of several scientific papers in management in the country and abroad.

**Petja Grafenauer**, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Theory, University of Ljubljana, Academy of Fine Arts and Design (ALUO). Her specialty is regional art after the Second World War. She participated in the research projects *Models and Practices of Global Cultural Exchange and Non-Aligned Movement: Research in the Spatio-Temporal Cultural Dynamics* and *Protests, Art Practices and Culture of Memory in the Post-Yugoslav Context*, both financed by the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS). She regularly publishes in scholarly, professional and general media, including the academic journals *Third Text* and the *International Journal for Cultural Policy*. She is the author and the editor of several publications on visual art, including a study on Pop Art in Slovenia, i.e. *Slovenia and Non-Aligned Pop* (2017), a collection of Zdenka Badovinac's articles titled *Avtentični interes* [Authentic Interest] (2010) and a monograph on the painter Aleksij Kobal (2008).

**Ana Gudelj** has master's degrees in English Language and Literature and Italian Language and Literature from the University of Zadar. She is currently enrolled in the PhD program in Literature and Cultural Identity at the Faculty of Philosophy in Osijek. She fosters love and passion for Italian language and culture and English language and culture. Besides Italian and English language literature, her research and teaching interests include theatre, femininity, culture and identity.

**Jadranka Ivanković** is an Assistant Professor at VERN' University. Her areas of expertise are Marketing, Management, Strategy and Corporate Social Responsibility. She is teaching different courses such as Marketing, Marketing Communication, Brand Strategy, Management, Strategic Management and International Management on undergraduate and graduate level. Before she joined University, she had gained rich business experience from FMCG sector. She held various managerial positions in one of the biggest international food and pharmaceutical company with HQ in Croatia, where she was in charge for marketing and brand strategy, research and development and business internationalisation. Among other functions, she was a member of the Management Board, a Manager of Strategic Business Unit and a Director of Marketing. She published more than 30 articles in the field of Marketing, Customer Relationship Management, Corporate Social Responsibility, Management and Entrepreneurship.

**Daniela Angelina Jelinčić** is a Senior Research Adviser/full Professor employed by the Institute for International Relations (IRMO), Croatia. Her specific research interests are in cultural tourism, cultural heritage management, cultural/creative industries, cultural policy, creativity, experience economy and social innovations. She was a Fulbright Visiting Researcher (2019/2020) at the University of Georgia. As an adjunct Professor, she teaches at the University of Zagreb, Zagreb School of Business, Edward Bernays University of Applied Sciences in Zagreb and occasionally at the Helsinki University of Arts and at the UNESCO Chair for Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development, Institute for Advanced Studies (iASK) in Köszeg, Hungary. She authored or edited several

scientific books, articles, book chapters, studies and strategic documents, served as the Council of Europe expert for cultural tourism and coordinated or participated in a number of interdisciplinary research projects.

**Jakub Kintler**, currently works as a Vice-Rector for Development, Culture and Sport and an Associate Professor at the Department of Business Economics Faculty of Business Management University of Economics in Bratislava (FBM UEBA). Jakub has been a Lecturer and a Researcher at the Department of Business Economy, Faculty of Business Management at the University of Economics in Bratislava since 2008. Since then, he has been teaching subjects focused on the theory and practice of business. He teaches subjects oriented on the value-based pricing, corporate valuation and business management at the Department of Business Economy. In addition to the teaching, he is also a forensic expert in the field of accounting, finance, controlling and human resources. Since he has been at the university, he wrote 4 scientific monographs (3 foreign), 2 teaching books and 5 workbooks, 83 scientific works published in domestic and foreign journals and conference proceedings.

**Maria Kmety Bartekova** attained her doctoral degree in Management from Comenius University in Bratislava in 2018. Presently, she spearheads the OpenmusE research project under the Horizon Europe grant at the University of Economics in Bratislava, representing Slovakia in an international consortium. Her research focuses on the Creative Industries. Since 2023, she serves as a member of the Academic Senate at the Faculty of Business Management. Additionally, she has chaired sessions at various conferences including the ESD Conference in Rome, Italy; the 41st IBIMA Business Conference in Granada, Spain; the Global Business Conferences in Dubrovnik, Croatia (2022) and Zagreb, Croatia (2023); and the third Global Conference on Entrepreneurship and Economy in an Era of Uncertainty in Pattaya, Thailand (2023).

**Vlaho Kovačević** (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Croatia) currently works as an Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology and external associate at the undergraduate and graduate independent study of Communication and Media at the University of Split. His areas of professional and scientific interest include contemporary sociological theories, sociology of culture, sociology of education, sociology of media and sociology of religion. He participated in the project 'The European University of the Seas (SEA-EU)' focused on the development of the Observatory for Migration and Human Rights within the project of European universities. He is a member of the board of the European Center for Migration Studies (ECMS), Croatian Sociological Association, Christian Academic Circle and the expert team in the SEA-EU project. He has published a number of scientific papers in both domestic and foreign scientific journals and presented his research at scientific conferences in Croatia and abroad.

**Svend Erik Larsen**, dr. phil., is Professor Emeritus, Comparative Literature, Aarhus University, Denmark, Yangtze River Distinguished Visiting Professor, Sichuan University, past Honorary Professor, University College London. He is the past editor of *Orbis Litterarum*, the past Board Member of EuroScience, the

past Vice-President of Academia Europaea and the past General Treasurer of the International Comparative Literature Association. 12 books and 400+ articles. Recent book: *Literature and the Experience of Globalization* (2017). His recent articles are 'Interdisciplinarity, History and Cultural Encounters', *European Review* 26.2, 2018: 354–367; 'Breaking the Silence. Cultural and Legal Encounters', Chiara Battisti and Sidia Fidora, eds.: *Law and the Humanities. Cultural Perspectives*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019: 349–369; 'Narratives as cultural embedment', *Chinese Semiotic Studies* 18.3, 2022: 413–425; 'Between the Media: Media Relations in Literature and Art', *European Review* 31 (Supplementum 1), 2023: 7–22. Co-author and co-editor of *Landscapes of Realism* 1–2. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2021–2022.

**Silvija Londero Šimleša** is the Director and Editor-in-Chief at Media Servis, Croatia's largest radio news agency which produces news for 50 radio stations. She is also the President of the Croatian Radio Forum Association and the President of the Coordination of Commercial Radio Stations at Croatian Employers' Association. She is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences VERN', Algebra Bernays University, and Faculty of Political Science of Zagreb University, where she teaches radio journalism. Silvija completed journalist training and education for media trainers in Reuters London. She has a degree in Political Science and has completed postgraduate specialist study in Foreign Policy and Diplomacy at Faculty of Political Science of Zagreb University. She is now a PhD candidate in Communication Studies at Doctoral School Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek.

**Krunoslav Malenica** (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Croatia) is currently employed as a title assistant at the Department of Sociology, the Department of Early and Preschool Education, the Teacher's Study and the undergraduate and graduate independent study of Communication and Media at the University of Split. His area of professional and scientific interest are contemporary sociological theories, sociology of culture, sociology of upbringing and education, sociology of religion and sociology of local development. He published one scientific monograph – *#Selfiegeneration: a sociological view through the front camera* – and number of scientific papers in domestic and foreign scientific journals and participated in numerous presentations at international and national scientific conferences. For many years, he has also been active in the civil sector, through which he was the project manager of a number of European and other projects related to culture, art and social entrepreneurship.

**Arijana Marjanović** has a master's degree in sociology, and she is a PhD candidate at the Catholic University of Croatia. Arijana is employed as a Human Resources Manager, and her previous work experience ties her to work in a non-governmental organisation – the Institute for the Development of Education, in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, and an internship in the European Parliament. She acquired numerous skills there, which is why she has a lot of practical experience. In a scientific context, she participated in numerous conferences and projects and had the opportunity to publish several papers. During her studies, she mostly

researched the topic of migration and wrote her graduation thesis about it. Currently, her scientific focus is on the field of cyberspace and cyber violence, which is also the topic of her doctoral thesis. Arijana improved her research skills at the Institute for the Development of Education, where she was a co-author and a collaborator on the project. She also often conducted surveys, and, in the Parliament, she had the opportunity to write various articles and research on numerous social topics. In addition to the aforementioned, Arijana speaks fluently English, German and Russian, which is of great help to her for various scientific research.

**Dunja Matić Benčić** (1988) has acquired a master's degree in Cultural Studies at the University of Rijeka (2012). In 2013, she worked on the project 'Hybrid Identities and Boarder Culture' as an intern at the Department of Cultural Studies, University of Rijeka. She was one of the cofounders of the Subversive Film Festivals pilot project 'School of Contemporary Humanistic'. In 2015, she returned to the Department of Cultural studies as an associate teaching assistant. From 2019 till the middle of 2020, she was engaged in the Rijeka 2020 – European Capital of Culture programme, as one of the coordinators of the flagship '27 Neighborhoods', where she was working with local communities on different cultural and artistic projects. Since the fall of 2020, she has been working as a teaching assistant at the Department of Cultural Studies, on the courses: 'Methodology Research in Culture', 'Introduction to Cultural Studies' and 'Introduction to sociology'.

**Irena Medvešek**, PhD, is a Professor of English Language and Literature and German Language and Literature. She has been teaching Business English, English for Tourism and Hospitality Industry, English for Public Relations and English for Information Technology at VERN' University for the past 24 years. Her interest as well as research focus is on languages, communication and tourism. The main area of her scientific interest is research on the ways identity is constructed in popular genres generally and the role of tourist guidebooks in the presentation and branding of cultural and national identity specifically including linguistic landscaping. She has participated in a number of scientific conferences both as a presenter and a listener. She has also published a number of papers dealing with identity, culture and education. She is also a licensed tourist guide for the city of Zagreb in English and German language and actively participates in creation of blogs and websites that promote and brand tourism and Croatian cultural and national identity.

**Geran-Marko Miletić** (Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Croatia) is a Scientific Adviser at the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar (Zagreb, Croatia). He is a Sociologist, and his research interests are concerned with social aspects of spatial transformation as well as with dynamics of community development. As an author or a coauthor, he has published about 80 scientific and professional articles as well as three books. He has participated in 30 scientific research projects, and in seven of them, he was the principal investigator.

**Diana Plantić Tadić** has worked at VERN<sup>7</sup> for more than 20 years as a Marketing and Quality Management Professor, as well as the Head of Market Research Centre since 2013. She has lectured at numerous workshops and conducted many research projects for several leading companies in Croatia (Coca Cola Croatia, Croatian Telecom, Association of Croatian Travel Agencies, PBZ Card). Diana is also a Professional Associate of Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education. She has published over 60 articles and presented a significant number of scientific/professional papers on the topic of marketing communication, branding, market research, as well as quality management. Diana holds Charter Award for Outstanding Contribution in Developing and Promoting Quality in Science and Practice.

**Frano Plišić**, PhD, after finishing high school, in 2012, entered the Faculty of Economics & Business of the University of Zagreb and graduated with highest honours in 2017. He worked in Hotel Tamaris in Baška on the island of Krk, in operations management until the beginning of 2023. During the development of his professional career, he engaged in research work and obtained a doctorate in the interdisciplinary field of science on the topic related to development possibilities of Croatia as a tourist destination of the European Union. Today, he works as a business consultant for the company RRiF plus and is also one of the editors of one of the most successful professional magazines for business practice in Croatia, RRiF. Frano Plišić's fundamental research interests are the sustainable development of tourism in the European framework, business and trends in the hospitality industry, as well as the possibilities of financing and supporting tourism development by adjusting the institutional framework. In his spare time, he likes to play tennis or football and reads a lot.

**Edo Rajh** is a Scientific Advisor with tenure with the Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia. He received his PhD at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics and Business. His primary research areas are consumer behaviour, market research methodology and measurement scales development. Recent publications are related to his work on survey-based research projects.

**Katarina Remenova** since 2010 has been with the Department of Management, Faculty of Business Management, University of Economics, in Bratislava (FBM UEBA), where she currently holds the position of an Associate Professor. As a Senior Researcher, she is professionally engaged in the topic of data-driven decision-making in general, as well as in specific research area – pricing. In the project, she will apply her knowledge in the development of an innovative concept of data-driven culture in order to provide the need for different data types for the decision-making process. She has led two projects at the university. As a co-investigator, she has participated in seven VEGA projects so far. She is the co-author of 3 scientific foreign monographs and 12 scientific papers in foreign academic journals indexed in Web of Science and SCOPUS databases.

**Mira Mileusnić Škrčić** graduated from the Department of Mathematics (Information Science and Mathematical Statistics) at the Faculty of Natural Sciences in 1983. In 2003, she obtained a Master of Science degree in Information Sciences from the

Faculty of Organization and Informatics Varaždin, University of Zagreb, Croatia, as part of a postgraduate doctoral study in Social Sciences. In 1997, Škrtić assumed the position of Head of the Information Technology Centre at the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO). Later, in 2005, she became the Head of the Department of Informatics and Statistics at the same institute. Between 2010 and 2021, Škrtić held the position of advisor at the Centre for Research Project Support. She also holds teaching positions at the University of Applied Health Sciences, the University of Zagreb and VERN' University.

**Marija Slijepčević** works as a Senior Lecturer at VERN' University in Zagreb and as an executive editor of scientific journal *Contemporary Issues*. She lectures on subjects as Media Relations, Public Relation Basics, Specialised Journalism, Media Literacy and fact-checking. She defended her doctorate in the field of Communication Studies at the University of Osijek on topic of disinformation and fact-checkers, which is her special area of interest. She graduated journalism from the Faculty of Political Sciences and postgraduated organisation and management from the Faculty of Economics, both University of Zagreb. She is the author of 15 scientific and professional papers and works as a PR consultant in her spare time.

**Daša Tepina**, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of cultural history and a Researcher at the School of Humanities, University of Nova Gorica. Her main research interests are social movements, autonomy, art, communities and utopias. She participated in the research projects *Models and Practices of Global Cultural Exchange and Non-Aligned Movement: Research in the Spatio-Temporal Cultural Dynamics and Protests*, *Art Practices and Culture of Memory in the Post-Yugoslav Context*, both financed by the Slovenian research agency (ARRS). She regularly publishes articles on social movements, art, utopias, cultural exchanges and non-alignment, including in the international academic journal *Third Text* and the *International Journal for Cultural Policy*. Her monograph *Revolucionarne utopije* [Revolutionary Utopias] was published by Aristej in 2022.

**Martina Topić** (University of Alabama, US) is a Behavioural Sociologist and a mass communication scholar. Currently, she is an Associate Professor in public relations leadership at the University of Alabama, College of Communication and Information Sciences, Department of Advertising and PR, USA. Previously, she worked at Leeds Beckett University, UK, in a number of roles, a GTA, a Lecturer in PR, a Senior Lecturer in PR and a Reader at Leeds Business School (2014–2023). She is an editor-in-chief of the Corporate Communications: An *International Journal* and *Northern Lights* journals and editor-in-chief of the book series, *Women, Economics and the Labour Relations* (Emerald). Since 2021, she has been leading the EUPERA research network, Women in PR (previously a research project, 2018–2021). She is an author of *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Affairs in the British Press: An Ecofeminist Critique of Neoliberalism* (Routledge, 2021) and *Workplace Culture in Mass Communication Industries* (Routledge, 2023). She is a member of the American Sociological Association, British Sociological Association, and EUPRERA. She is the author and the lead of the Comms Women advocacy initiative (<https://www.commswomen.uk>).

# Preface: Overcoming Geographic Discrimination in Research

*Martina Topić*

The editors of the book on cultural and creative industries in Southeastern Europe, *Creativity 360 Degrees: Exploring the Dynamics of the Creative Industries in Southeast Europe* rightfully say that creative industries are important for cultural, economic and political strategies in the 21st century, and particularly for gig economies, entrepreneurship and fostering creativity. Since many freelancers are historically women, particularly working mothers (IPSE, 2022), understanding these industries is important from the perspective of gender equality too. In addition to that, the COVID-19 pandemic has particularly affected creative and cultural industries due to global lockdowns, which means that the usual benefit of cultural and creative industries as supporters and drivers of innovation, creativity, diversity and social cohesion has taken a backturn during the pandemic.

Since creative and cultural industries are globally acknowledged as contributors to tackling important issues such as social inequality and environmental crisis, it goes without saying that these industries are essential in creating a better world that will work for everyone. I have consistently argued in my work that equal societies are better for everyone, but equal societies cannot be created without tackling social class discrimination and poverty, which is exactly what these industries tackle because many small business owners and entrepreneurs come from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. For example, in the United States, 18% of the population comprises minority businesses, and while this number is low since minorities comprise a total of 32% of the population, the number still shows significance for minorities (U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship, 2023). In addition, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) constitute 99% of businesses in OECD countries, and minority businesses constitute a considerable percentage of new start-ups and SMEs (Farmaki & Altinay, 2015).

Despite lockdowns and the devastating effect the pandemic has had on these industries, they have shown resilience and continue to thrive. However, some regions are more developed than others when it comes to creative and cultural industries, and according to some information, Southeastern Europe lags in the development of these important industries. Therefore, it is essential to tackle this lack of development, and for academic literature, it is essential to tackle this region to help expand these valuable industries that ultimately empower those who historically lacked the support they needed to thrive.

While lots of work has been done on creative industries and the gig economy in the Western world, not much is known about Southeast Europe. This lack of knowledge is a part of a wider trend of Westernisation of research, and due to the competitiveness of academic publications and the proliferation of research driven by various metrics in Western countries, there is simply no room for all. Sadly, this means that some countries get an advantage in publishing their perspectives and developments, whereas others are left behind. In the case of the editors of this book, who are based in Croatia, the Government in Croatia introduced open access policies in 2012 when a Declaration on Open Access was introduced (Srce, 2022), and many other Southeastern European countries analysed in this book did the same. However, due to SEO issues and the paradox of Google algorithm and the way this algorithm classifies information, the most clicked information is on the top of the Google mountain. In academic terms, the more journal is read, the more likely articles from that journal will appear in searches; thus, authors from Southeastern Europe will face less online visibility even if they publish in English (and thus overcome the language barrier) and even if the Government invests in open access. It is a paradox and no-win situation for countries which are smaller and less influential in the global academic scene.

Therefore, this book – presented to an international audience through the Emerald and Emerald Insights platform – provides a valuable contribution to knowledge from a Southeastern European perspective, a perspective much needed but often lacking in research. Authors in the book shed light on the variety of practices in cultural and creative industries in the region and provide a platform for increasing understanding of these industries in Southeastern Europe and finding effective solution to foster further growth.

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# Introduction: Cultural and Creative Industries Sector in Southeast Europe

*Mirela Holy<sup>a</sup>, Jelena Budak<sup>b</sup> and Rino Medić<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>a</sup>VERN<sup>1</sup> University, Croatia

<sup>b</sup>The Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia

## Introduction

The concept of creative industries emerged in the 1990s, blending ‘creative arts’ and ‘cultural industry’ (Hartley et al., 2015). It is closely linked to social and economic transformations, marking the transition to a new post-industrial economic paradigm known as the ‘new economy’ (Hartley et al., 2015). Information technology and the information revolution have been central to this shift, fostering global connectivity and enabling the production, distribution and consumption of cultural content on an unprecedented scale. This environment empowers individual creativity and entrepreneurial initiatives, driving the commercialisation of human creativity. Creative industries are essential to the gig economy, as many creative workers are freelancers (Royal, 2018). Creative industries have become integral to the cultural, economic and political strategies of the 21st century. At the European Union (EU) policy level, they are recognised as dynamic economic sectors fostering cultural diversity, social cohesion and technological innovation. Initiatives like Creative Europe underline the EU’s commitment to nurturing creative industries. Globally, creative industries are acknowledged as economic responses to social inequality and environmental crises, aligning with sustainable development by prioritising ideas and creativity over traditional resource exploitation of land, work and capital (Howkins, 2013). A creative economy encompasses various cultural and creative industries (CCIs), differing from traditional economic systems by emphasising ideas, imagination and innovation. In the EU, CCIs employ millions and contribute significantly to national economies, though Southeast Europe (SEE) has yet to embrace these trends fully.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the creative industry was the fastest-growing sector in the EU (Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, n.d). The contribution of CCIs to national economies is notable in the EU: in 2022, there were 7.7 million people in cultural employment across the EU, counting for 3.8 %

of the total employment (Eurostat, 2023, acc. Budak et al., 2023). It contributed economically and positively to social dynamics and environmental protection. Namely, unlike traditional growth paradigms reliant on resource exploitation, the growth of creative industries hinges on human creativity and imagination. As such, creative industries align with the principles of a new, digital, green and socially just economy. Despite global lockdowns, creative industries displayed resilience, underscoring their significance in navigating present and future challenges, including ongoing natural, social and economic crises. In 2019, the creative economy participated with 4.4% of the total EU GDP. Hence, CCIs turnover and employment indicators declined sharply during the COVID-19 crisis (European Parliament, 2021 acc. Budak et al., 2023). Although Europe is, according to UNCTAD Report (2022, p. 47), ‘the largest exporter of creative services (with the exports of creative services amounting to US\$ 564 billion in 2020)’, SEE lags behind these trends. Considering that, despite Europe’s global leadership in creative services and goods, SEE countries trail behind the European average in developing creative industries, the book provides a comprehensive overview of the creative industries sector in SEE and beyond, emphasising its influence on everyday life dynamics.

## **Southeast Europe CCIS Overview**

SEE includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. These countries are located in the southeastern part of the European continent and are often grouped together due to geographical proximity, historical connections and cultural similarities. However, there are big differences between these countries as some of them are members of the EU (Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Romania and Slovenia), and others applied for EU membership (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia).

The infrastructural dimension of SEE’s creative and cultural industries sector differs from country to country. Although the CCIs play a vital role in the EU, unfortunately, this role is not recognised in all EU member states in Southeastern Europe. The analysis of available secondary data on the CCIs in Southeastern Europe shows that the share of the sector in the GDP in these countries is below the EU average, that the number of employees in the sector is generally lower than the EU average, and that this sector is generally in the competence of the ministries of culture, not the ministries of the economy. In Slovenia, according to Predan and Pezdirc Nograšek (2020, p. 2), the share of CCIs in 2017 amounted to 2.7% of Slovenian GDP, that is, it generated almost three billion euros in revenue that year. Another study claims that the share of CCIs in Slovenian GDP is 3.5% and that the sector employs 35,212 people, which represented 4.7% of all employees in 2017 (Murovec et al., 2022). Slovenia has more employees in the CCIs than the EU average, but the share of CCIs in the GDP is less than in the EU average. Similar results can be found in Croatia, where it is estimated that CCIs participated with 3.1% of GDP in 2019 (Ekonomski institut Zagreb, 2022).

CCIs employment in Croatia reached 3.6% of total employment in 2020 and fell to 3.1% in 2022 (Eurostat, 2023). These Croatian results show that the number of employees and share of CCIs in the GDP is smaller than in the rest of the EU. Other SEE countries have even worse results than Slovenia and Croatia. For example, in Bulgaria, the CCIs account for 2.5% of the country's total economy; 44,000 people worked in the sector, but employment increased by 33% between 2012 and 2016 (Creative Industries in Sofia, 2018). Even 86.4% of the Bulgarian CCIs are concentrated in Sofia; for example, 93.5% of all Bulgarian radio and television activity and 96.3% of the production of films and TV shows (Creative Industries in Sofia, 2018). CCIs also lag behind the EU average in Greece. This is evident from the following data: 'CCIs in Greece in 2014 employed 110,688 employees in 46,370 enterprises, which sold symbolic goods and services of about € 5.3 bn, with about € 2.1 bn added value for the Greek economy, and 1.4% contribution to the GDP' (Avdikos et al., 2017, p. 5). In Romania, the last EU member state in SEE, the share of CCIs in GDP 'has been growing steadily over the period 2002–2008, from around 4% to around 7%, with a small decrease in 2009, possibly caused by the economic crisis' (Creative Industries characteristics in the 3 countries and EU, 2019, p. 32). Regarding the number of the employees in the CCIs, the highest number of employees in CCIs in Romania 'was reached in 2005 (177,450)' (Creative Industries characteristics in the 3 countries and EU, 2019, p. 33).

The situation in non-EU countries in the southeast area of Europe differs. CCIs in the Western Balkan area shows limited engagement of 'economies as partners at international levels; limited use of EU funds/grants for CCI sector projects', 'limited awareness of and participation in Creative Industry development by key partners/ministries; no opportunities to share best practices between regional governments; low recognition of CCIs by policymakers and creation of public budget lines' and 'low awareness of Policy and Legislative Options through provision of best practice information'. Special problem is also 'limited data on the economic impacts of the sector' (Cuff & Zečević, 2022, pp. 7–8). In Serbia, CCIs are a very important part of the country's economy. Namely, Serbian CCIs encompass various fields, from film and music to the information technology sector, video game production, marketing, publishing, architecture and advertising and their activities make up as much as 7.4% of Serbia's gross domestic product (Andelković, 2021). However, other data show different results. According to the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia, in the third quarter of 2022, there were over 61,000 employees in Serbian CCIs with salaries above average, and approximately 4% in the creation of GDP and 4% in total employment (Jovanović, 2023).

CCIs in Montenegro belong to one of the fastest-growing sectors and are the main drivers of the progress of the economies of developed countries. In addition to being a significant source of income and employment, these industries contribute to human, inclusive and sustainable development. Recognising the importance of this sector, the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development implements the project 'Development of cultural and creative industries as part of a sustainable economic sector in Montenegro'. The goal of

the project is to strengthen the sector of CCIs by mapping these industries, assessing the economic effects they create, identifying best practices, improving the business skills of entrepreneurs in this sector and drafting a proposal for a strategic framework for the development of creative industries in the coming period. According to the Mapping of the CCIs in Montenegro, ‘the gross value added of the CCI industry in 2017 was EUR 53 million, representing 1.5% of the gross value added at the level of Montenegro’ (2019, p. 15). According to the Mapping of the Creative Industries in the Western Balkans, the CCIs in Montenegro ‘engaged 4.4% of the economy’s workforce and generated 1.4% of the total revenues of business entities’ (Cuff & Zečević, 2022, p. 78).

Regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no official data on the number of employees in CCIs nor the share of CCIs in the country’s total GDP. According to the Mapping of the Creative Industries in the Western Balkans, the CCIs in Bosnia and Herzegovina significantly contribute to GDP (5.72% of total GDP) and have ‘the high percentage of employment in cultural establishments (4.75% of the total employed population)’ (Cuff & Zečević, 2022, p. 59). According to the Mapping of the Creative Industries in the Western Balkans, Macedonian CCIs employ 3.1% (23,000 people) of Macedonian total employment, and cultural enterprises’ ‘total value added at factor cost is €86 million, 2.3% of the total nonfinancial business economy’ and ‘the turnover is €213 million, 1.2% of the total in nonfinancial business economy’ (Cuff & Zečević, 2022, p. 86). In Albania, the contribution of the creative economy ‘is around 0.5%–1% of the GDP’, which is significantly less than in most of the developed countries, where ‘the artisan economy contributes with around 3% of the GDP’ (Cuff & Zečević, 2022, p. 47). In Albania, there are around 3,500 jobs in CCIs, ‘or from 0.5% up to 1% of the labour force’ (Cuff & Zečević, 2022, p. 47). Finally, there is no official or official data regarding CCIs in Kosovo, so it is not possible to present numbers regarding the share of CCIs in the state GDP or the number of employees (Cuff & Zečević, 2022, p. 67).

## **Book Structure**

Book is divided into six parts. The book’s first part is named ‘Understanding Cultural Dynamics’ and consists of three chapters. The first chapter, ‘From Everyday Creativity to Collective Development’, brings an overview of the concept of creativity and emphasises that the term ‘creative’ has gained widespread popularity over the past two decades, being applied to various fields from industries to tourism. The second chapter, ‘Cultural and Creative Industries in Croatia: Public Perceptions and Policy’, investigates the public perception of CCIs in Croatia, revealing low awareness and recognition of their benefits, and suggests that policy should include public campaigns to boost familiarity and support for these sectors. The third chapter is named ‘Social Exclusivity and Inclusivity of Cultural and Creative Work’ and examines social exclusion and inclusion in SEE’s art and culture sectors, focusing on the socioeconomic barriers to participation and the potential for cultural work to foster communication and solidarity among disparate social groups.

The book's second part, 'Economic and Social Trends in the Creative Sector', consists of two chapters. The fourth chapter, 'Trends of Employment in Cultural Industries: The Case Study from European Countries', assesses the impact of educational attainment and employment parameters on the cultural industry across European countries, finding that EU countries tend to have a higher number of full-time employed individuals in creative and performing arts, journalism and linguistics compared to non-EU countries. The fifth chapter, 'Innovative Creative Industry Practices in the Context of Social Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of the Oksid Association', explores the underdeveloped concepts of creative industry and social entrepreneurship in Croatia, using the Oksid association's transformation into a social enterprise as a case study.

The book's third part 'Media, Representation, and Perception' includes four chapters. The sixth chapter, 'Performers in Croatian and Serbian Media: Analysis of Media Coverage and Public Perception', is a study that investigates media coverage of entertainers in Croatia and Serbia, focusing on nationalism and sexism, using quantitative content analysis of popular sensationalist portals and a survey to assess public perception. The seventh chapter, 'Students' Perspectives on Media and Communication in Creative Industries', examines students' perspectives on media, communication and sustainability in the rapidly evolving creative industries, using mixed methods to analyse attitudes across various disciplines and providing insights for both students and employers about future challenges and job market expectations. The eighth chapter, 'Films on Social Media Sites and Websites of Selected Dalmatian Museums', analyses films published by Dalmatian museums, examining aspects like views, user engagement, film duration and structural complexity to understand how museums use films to connect with the public. The ninth chapter, 'The Contribution of The Radio Sector to The Development of Cultural and Creative Industries', examines how technological evolution and the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted the radio industry and contributed to the growth of CCIs in Croatia and the EU.

The fourth part of the book, 'Social Interactions and Experiences', consists of four chapters. The 10th chapter 'Wellbeing and Gender Differences in PR and Communication Sector in Croatia: Descriptive Analysis of Interpersonal Relationships, Work-Life (In)Balance and Experiences of Discrimination', analyses data from a Croatian PR and communication sector survey, revealing gender differences in interpersonal relationships, work-life balance and gender equality, highlighting more significant challenges for women and the need for inclusive policies. The 11th chapter 'Social Experiences of Online Gaming: Socialisation and Cyberbullying' examines the social aspects of online multiplayer gaming among Croatian students, focusing on both positive experiences like mutual help and friendship, and negative experiences such as cyberbullying, harassment and misinformation. The 12th chapter, 'Behaviour of Young Consumers When Buying Branded Clothes', gives valuable insights into the purchasing behaviour of young customers when it comes to branded clothes. The 13th chapter, 'Transformational Leadership - Where Is It Going?' presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of transformational leadership.

The fifth part of the book is named ‘Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Ideology’ and incorporates three chapters. The 14th chapter, ‘Croatian Tourism – Adapted to The Future?’ examines the competitive position of Croatian tourism based on the critical production groups in the tourism development strategy until 2020 and proposes future strategic directions. The 15th chapter, ‘The Visual Code and The Hegemonic Ideology of Capitalism and Yugoslav Non-Alignment’, examines how art and its visual code in Yugoslavia interacted with capitalist ideology post-WWII, exploring cultural imperialism through modernist trends and events like the Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts. The 16th chapter, ‘Place Attachment as Branding Mediator: Leveraging Expat Insights for Bucharest’s City Branding Strategy’, addresses Bucharest’s lack of strategic city branding, proposing the use of expat insights to enhance its image and employs Scannell and Gifford’s Person-Place-Process Model to analyse expat emotions and experiences through surveys and focus groups.

The sixth part of the book is named ‘Literary and Cultural Analysis’ and consists of two chapters. The 17th chapter, ‘Modernism in Ernest Hemingway’s Works’, analyses modernist elements in Ernest Hemingway’s ‘*The Garden of Eden*’ and ‘*The Sun Also Rises*’, highlighting how ‘*The Garden of Eden*’, despite its 1986 publication, exemplifies modernism and comparing its modernist depictions to those in ‘*The Sun Also Rises*’. The final, 18th chapter, ‘Multiple Literacies’, argues that creative industries, by being inherently innovative, produce products requiring users to learn new literacies – visual, digital, social and cultural – and calls for these industries to clarify the personal, cultural and social impacts of their products before marketing them. The book finishes with Conclusion Thoughts that summarise ideas and current CCIs state of affairs in SEE.

Although the majority of authors are from SEE countries, some chapters are written by authors who live in the rest of Europe or the USA. The different topics and perspectives presented in the book could serve as valuable ground for the further exploration of CCIs in SEE and the rest of the world, as they show multiple benefits from the strategic and structural attitude towards CCIs.

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