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VARIA

CULTURAL INTERMEDIARIES AND THEIR ROLE IN CREATIVE ECONOMY

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INTRODUCTION – THE SUBJECTS OF CREATIVE ECONOMY

Creative economy is the part of the economic system that develops under the dominant influence of culture and its resources. The goods that are created in such economy, which may be defined as creative goods, are characterized by relatively high cultural value, but they also have the ability to generate economic value. This means that they can be purchased and sold on the market. Accordingly, the activities that result in the creation of such goods are called the creative sector, the culture sector, creative industries or culture industries (see: Stachowiak 2015). This is the effect of the economization of culture, advancing since mid-20th century, which involves associating economic significance with cultural phenomena.

Creative economy is a sphere that comes into existence at the intersection of two parts of the society: economy and culture. The two parts are essentially different, thus the phenomena taking place within them are of dual nature. An artist, from the perspective of culture, is a creator of works of art, which are objects of specific aesthetic and artist value. From the economic perspective - he is an entrepreneur or worker who creates specific goods that are later released on the market and bought by consumers. At the same time, he is an element of the culture of a given society and a part of the economic system. Depending on the situation, he also has other features. Because of this, creative economy is characterized by economic-cultural duality (Stachowiak 2017), which is why elements of the economy may have, depending on the situation, economic or cultural properties.

The subjects that function in creative economy are – regardless of their organizational form – active participants of economic processes, and their decisions and activities have economic effects. The dualistic, economic-cultural nature of creative economy means that those subjects also function in the sphere of culture. David Throsby identifies, among others, the following categories of subjects in creative economy: cultural workers (both creators and assisting and administrative personnel), private for-profit companies, private non-profit organizations, public cultural institutions, art schools, state and local government agencies associated with culture and international organizations, such as UNESCO as well as consumers and recipients of culture (Thorsby 2010: 23-24). Depending on the economic structure of a given region or country and depending on the specificity of culture, the above subjects may play different roles. In economically and institutionally developed countries, a whole system of connections develops between creators and recipients, with non-government organizations, private companies or cultural institutions acting as intermediaries. They may also play different roles, e.g. cultural institutions may act as redistributors, if they decide on the allocation of public funds to specific cultural projects (as is the case with the Polish Film Institute in cinematography). This, however, places them in the role of the producer – they allocate funds, while at the same time judging the cultural value of a project. In some cases, cultural institutions may play the role of creators, if they engage in a creative process. Thus, it seems that, instead of drawing a list of all possible types of subjects, it is better to define them through the prism of the respective roles they play. After all, their role determines their place in economy. Accordingly, from the perspective of main economic processes, namely production, consumption and distribution, as well as considering the role played in the production and dissemination of cultural and economic values, the main types of subjects in creative economy are the following: (1) creators and producers, (2) recipients and (3) cultural intermediaries. Insofar as the first two groups of subjects were thoroughly researched, the significance of cultural intermediaries has been noted only recently. Accordingly, this article will focus specifically on them. I will present here two main approaches defining cultural intermediaries and then, I will show their role as gatekeepers in creative economy.

WHO ARE CULTURAL INTERMEDIARIES? REVIEW OF MAIN VIEWS

Cultural intermediaries are a specific and very crucial category of subjects in creative economy. They play an important role, especially in the dissemination of creative goods and serve as a bridge between creators and producers on the one hand and recipients and consumers on the other hand. The bridge, however, is of a specific type. In traditional economy, the main role of intermediaries is to match sellers with buyers. Intermediaries are most often associated with such forms of activity as employment agencies, financial or insurance brokerage or real estate agencies. Cultural intermediaries, on the other hand, not only match sellers with buyers, facilitating the flow of goods, but are also engaged in the development of the final value of goods. This concerns, in particular, the cultural value of goods, which is the sum of semiotic (including symbolic), aesthetic, artistic and historical values, and authenticity (see: Thorsby 2011). Thus, cultural intermediaries are a link in the chain of values that adds something to the already existing goods. They are hard to classify under one of the main processes taking place in economy – although they mediate between creators and recipients, and as such play a role in the distribution of creative goods, their activities very often extend to the sphere of production and even consumption. It does not make things easier that the concept of cultural intermediaries has not been ultimately defined: in the literature, it has three main meanings, namely: (1) individuals or groups who play the role of a medium between cultures, (2) a set of professions supposed to transfer cultural values in a society, (3) individuals or groups engaged in the transfer of creative goods and cultural values between creators and recipients.

In the first of the above definitions, a cultural intermediary is a connecting link or a medium between various cultural groups, e.g. between national cultures, ethnical groups, etc. The intermediary role is associated with the transfer of content of cultural values from one culture to another. Such intermediary knows and understands both cultural contexts and to some extent translates one content into another. An example is an immigrant who has lived in a non-native culture long enough to fluently use the language and a number of other cultural codes. This way, the values and attitudes typical of a native culture are transferred to the current place of residence, which is another culture. Analogously, the transfer may be in the opposite

direction – such immigrants adopt certain values and attitudes from the environment in which they live. David B. Ruderman and Giuseppe Veltri analyzed in this way the role of Jewish intellectuals in the development of Renaissance in Italy (Ruderman, Veltri 2004). However, the concept of cultural intermediaries is relatively rarely used in this sense in social research (Durrer, Miles 2009).

The other meaning of the concept of cultural intermediaries is linked with the works of Pierre Bourdieu, especially his book *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. It contains sections discussing new professions that developed in 19th century societies, which were supposed to mediate between the works of art and culture and the masses, a process that involves changing the form and social rank of those works. Although it is impossible to summarize Bourdieu's complex concept in a couple of sentences, the main message of the *Distinction* basically reads that participation in culture is entangled in differences between social classes, which means that social and cultural stratifications are concurrent, and social differences coincide with cultural choices. The natural consumers of high culture are social elites, whereas lower classes are influenced by culture produced at a mass scale. 'Because of this, a specific social rank is reflected in the cultural value of consumer goods and undertaken practices. The position in social hierarchy is thus closely related to the position of cultural products hierarchically arranged in the order of their legitimacy' (Strzyczkowski 2009: 196). In this situation, the dependencies between the 'educational capital' and the 'cultural capital' are also quite distinct. Those who visit museums and art galleries or can recognize classical composers – and so, are able to properly receive and participate in the 'legitimate culture' – in most cases are better educated. They are a minority, and consequently, the majority of the society cannot participate in their culture. As a result, in the second half of the 20th century new professions developed – including cultural intermediaries – as a part of the 'new petit bourgeois'. They make it possible to create 'average' or 'middle-brow culture', which, generally speaking, is a popularized and simplified version of the 'legitimate culture', available through such processes to broader audiences. 'This middle-brow culture (*culture moyenne*) owes some of its charm, in the eyes of the middle classes who are its main consumers, to the references to legitimate culture it contains (…) to give the impression of bringing legitimate culture within

the reach of all' (Bourdieu 1984: 323). Such references are 'film »adaptations« of classic drama and literature, »popular arrangements« of classical music or »orchestral« versions of popular tunes, vocal interpretations of classics in a style evocative of scout choruses or angelic choirs' (ibid.).

Bourdieu explains how such culture is created and disseminated:

> New cultural intermediaries (the most typical of whom are the producers of cultural programmes on TV and radio or the critics of 'quality' newspapers and magazines and all the writer-journalists and journalists-writers) have invented the whole series of genres half-way between legitimate culture and mass production ('letters', 'essays', 'eye-witness accounts') (ibid. 325-326).

Evidently, cultural intermediaries have a completely different character here than in the first meaning of the term. First of all, the legitimate culture referred to here is associated with artistic activity and art, such as literature, music or stage arts. Secondly, mediation is one-way: from legitimate culture to specific recipients, and not vice versa. Thirdly, there is a major difference in the size of the 'populations' between which the intermediaries are situated, since Bourdieu often refers to mass media and mass production. Thus, cultural intermediaries 'translate' from few-to-many: from a small group of creators to a much larger group of recipients. In connection with this, Bourdieu lists specific professions from the category of cultural intermediaries. He writes:

> The new petit bourgeois comes into its own in all the occupations involving presentation and representation (sales, marketing, advertising, public relation, fashion, decoration and so forth) and in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services. These include the various jobs in medical and health assistance (marriage guidance, sex therapy, dietetics, vocation guidance, pediatric advice etc.) and in cultural production and organization (youth leaders, play leaders, tutors and monitors, radio and TV producers and presenters, magazine journalists), which have expanded considerably in recent years (ibid.: 359).

He also calls them '»need merchants«, sellers of symbolic goods and services who always sell themselves as models and as guarantors of the value of their products, and who sell so well because they believe in what they sell' (ibid. 365).

Jennifer Smith Maguire and Julian Matthews (2014) note that although the concept of cultural intermediaries plays a relatively minor role in Bourdieu's analyses, it has become important in Anglo-Saxon sociological concepts. They significantly broadened the scope of the term, resulting in the development of the third meaning of cultural intermediaries as subjects engaged in the transfer of cultural values, especially between creators and recipients, but also within the respective internal fields of creators themselves or recipients themselves. Because of this broadening of the scope, cultural intermediaries became – according to David Hesmondhalgh (2002: 53) – one of the most unclear concepts, the more so that it resulted from relatively casual and sometimes improper interpretations of Bourdieu's ideas (see: Smith Maguire, Matthews 2014: 54; Negus 2002: 502). One could say that it was decontextualized, as a result of which only the term remained in use, but its original meaning was changed or replaced with a new one. For many researchers, it may be practically justified, because the category of cultural intermediaries is analytically useful, and the changed or new meaning makes it possible to distance oneself from the leftist-critical provenience of Bourdieu's thought. According to Hesmondhalgh, the new meaning was formed in the early 1990s. In the book on production in culture – *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production* edited by Paul du Gay – popular and influential in English speaking circles, one of the authors, Sean Nixon, extended the category of cultural intermediaries to include practically all the subjects engaged in the circulation of cultural goods and values: they are all the persons and/or organization that move symbols and their meanings, or, more broadly – the cultural value, from one place to another (Nixon 1997: 181). For Nixon, the same as for Bourdieu, the most obvious example of cultural intermediation is the advertising industry, whose significance and global market significantly increased in the 20th century. Advertising is often the part of communication that is supposed to provide persuasive information on goods to potential recipients or customers. To this end, it uses a wide range of cultural symbols and codes, often strongly entangled in semantic networks functioning in a society. At the same time, it is a link between the seller and a potential buyer. Evidently, unlike the former two meanings, such cultural mediation is neither a bridge between cultures nor between the legitimate and popular cultures, but rather, it is a transmission channel for almost every possible cultural form. Due to the very broad scope

of the concept of cultural intermediary, Hesmondhalgh (2002: 53) suggests to replace the ambiguous term with more specific ones, such as 'creative manager', 'creator of symbols' or 'creative practitioner'.

Regardless of the problems with the clarity of the term, it is difficult to question the role of cultural intermediaries in contemporary creative economy. In a work on the role of entrepreneurship in the culture industry[1], Charlie Leadbeater and Kate Oakley (1999: 45) characterize the significance of cultural intermediaries for creative economy in the following way:

> [They] will be vital to fill in the 'missing middle' in the British cultural industries. Cultural intermediaries seek and promote new talent, circulate ideas and trends, put people in touch with one another, set up venues and provide access to the market. Cultural intermediaries are often former content producers who have moved on: rock singers turned managers; actors turned promoters; television programmer makers turned commissioning editors. They oil the wheels of cultural industries. In Silicon Valley, this role (…) is played by venture capitals. Cultural intermediaries are far less formal and far less powerful than venture capitalists, but like venture capitalists they are deal makers: in essence they take the local talent to a wider commercial market. Thriving cultural sector needs not just creative producers but effective intermediaries as well. Promoting these intermediaries should become a goal of public policy.

This shows the role of cultural intermediaries as links in the chain of cultural production, with a focus on their economic significance and the ability to generate economic value through their activity. Thus, the significance of intermediaries involves the provision of means to create market goods out of cultural activity. Accordingly, they connect cultural artifacts with the market, which means that the products of culture may be bought and sold, and that they may yield profit to the creators. However, importantly, cultural intermediaries do not only play the simple, logistic role of product suppliers to the market. They participate in the circulation

[1] It is worth noting that the work significantly influenced the development of the creative sector policy in the UK in the late 1990s, especially the reports and documents developed by the British Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which later became the model for similar instruments in other countries.

of not so much goods as of cultural values – they rely on semiotic cultural codes, which they often modify and adapt to market requirements. Thus, both cultural competencies and knowledge of economic realities enable them to play the economic role.

The significance of cultural intermediaries for creative economy and the specificity of their operation have been the subject of numerous studies, each of them emphasizing their fundamental nature for the circulation of cultural values and creative goods (see: Negus 2002; Wright 2005; De Propris, Mwaura 2013; Smith Maguire, Matthews 2014; Jakob, van Heur 2015; O'Connor 2015; Taylor 2015). Chris Gibson (2015: 477) believes that science and scholars also play the role of cultural intermediaries – by studying the creative industry and its processes, they generate knowledge that is later transferred to the society through publications or lectures. Also, they often act as experts, helping to develop public policies. In this educational and expert dimension, they become the 'promoters' of creative economy. Thus, in this sense, this text and its author also play the role of a cultural intermediary.

Norma Rantisi and Deborah Leslie (2015) suggest moreover that education in general is of intermediary nature and it promotes not only the functioning of creative economy but also its development. After all, the artistic education system is an important link in the circulation of not only knowledge but also cultural values. In developed societies, it is complex and specialist. For example, in Montreal, Canada, the National Circus School (École Nationale de Cirque) has existed since 1981, with the status of a public higher school. The school in Montreal is the background for the circus art popular in the city, and in particular for the world-famous Cirque du Soleil founded in 1984. Cirque du Soleil is a unique combination of street art and business. The project is a large-scale one, with more than four thousand people from over forty countries working on the development of performances, annual revenue in excess of 810 million USD and over 20% in margin (profit). There is a similar artistic school in Poland, too – the National School of Circus Art (Państwowa Szkoła Sztuki Cyrkowej) in Julinek near Warsaw, which continues the traditions of a circus school founded in these buildings 1960s.

Apart from education, the role of cultural intermediaries is played by creative industries, such as the advertising industry (McFall 2002; Hodges 2006; Moor 2008), the media industry (Hesmondhalgh 2006; Smith Maguire,

Matthews 2010) or its sections, like journalism (Negus 1997). Also, many individuals or organizations implement the functions of cultural mediation in specific creative activities, such as talent agencies in film or music industries, or in stage arts (Martel 2010: 114-122), regional film commissions in film industry (Foster, Manning, Terkla 2015), independent artistic craftsmen (Schultz 2015), fashion designers (Skov 2002) or industrial designers (Vinodrai 2015). Cultural intermediaries are key links in industries with highly developed and complex production networks, such as film industry (Scott 2005; De Propris, Hypponen 2007) or music industry (Gałuszka 2009; Watson 2015). Interestingly, in the latter case, despite growing digitization of music production and popularity of virtual intermediaries such as YouTube, these are the real rather than virtual intermediaries who matter, if one is interested in at least minimum commercial success (Hracs 2015). Some authors suggest that even consumers may play the role of intermediaries. An example is the Japanese manga, whose fans undertake to translate, edit and disseminate the comic book outside Japan, without the official consent of copyright owners (Lee 2012). Thus, the question asked by Maguire and Matthews seems reasonable: haven't we all become cultural intermediaries?

Answering yes to this question will result in too expansive understanding of the term of cultural intermediaries. Accordingly, I propose to limit it to the following two meanings:

1. Cultural mediation as a role (the broader meaning) involving intermediation in the circulation of cultural values. Those values are linked with creative goods, so it is often mediation in the circulation of goods. Intermediary subjects need not to be (and often are not) specialized in mediation. Accordingly, the roles of cultural mediation involve: matching creators (sellers) with recipients (buyers), (b) passing on cultural values or (c) modifying cultural values. It should be noted that the role of cultural mediation may be either intentional or coincidental. Metaphorically speaking, it can be compared to the role of the bee that gathers pollen from some plants moves it to other plants and pollinates them. Insofar as bees do it instinctively, cultural intermediaries often act intentionally.
2. Cultural intermediaries as a specialist subject (the narrower meaning) – may be an individual or organization (e.g. company,

NGO), specializing in an activity, where cultural mediation is one of the main areas of operation or the source of livelihood or income.

According to this definition, intermediaries may be involved in all the main economic processes (production, distribution, consumption), but their main role involves production and distribution. Cultural intermediaries may operate on the market, if they intend to generate profit (e.g. talent agencies) or outside the market – if their activity is autotelic, i.e. aimed at achieving social missions or other universal values (art schools, fans).

CULTURAL INTERMEDIARIES AS GATEKEEPERS

The concept of gatekeeping has existed in social sciences since the late 1940s, when the social psychologist Kurt Lewin concluded, on the basis of his research, that in all kinds of social situations, the flow of information is always uneven and incomplete (Goban-Klas 2001: 58-59). This flow is governed by a whole series of barriers called gates, controlled by specific individuals or organizations that act as gatekeepers who pass on some information and keep other. In this sense, gatekeeping is the process of reducing a huge amount of information and transforming it into a limited number of messages that reach recipients in the process of social communication (Shoemaker, Vos 2009: 1). In large and developed societies, cultural communication is based to a large extent on various kinds of media, making them central to contemporary public life. The selection process not only determines which information will be supplied to the recipients but also what their content will be. Since symbolic culture is mainly semiotic and linked with the creation, transmission, reception and interpretation of various kinds of content, the process of the content selection may be called cultural selection. It involves filtering and transforming content and transmitting it through relevant media or channels.

With respect to the culture industry, especially popular culture, Paul Hirsch (1972) proposed a model of cultural production that included, among other things, the selection process. Hirsch's model was based on his pioneering studies on the production structure in music industry, where he analyzed the process of filtration and selection of songs or records that would become commercially successful (Hirsch 1969) – his studies later inspired research into the economics of the culture industry and creative industry (see: Caves 2006). Hirsch's approach was also based on the systemic

approach developing at that time in the theory of organization, which defined cultural production as a process in which few from the original, total number of creators are selected in subsequent stages of the process, whose work finally reaches the consumers (tab. 1). In the first stage, cultural intermediaries are individuals or companies that hunt for talented artists or promising creators and try to determine their creative potential. Such intermediaries are, for example, talent agencies, publishing houses or record companies. They provide creators with financial aid, technical assistance, distribution networks and other resources they have in order to create a specific product and put it on the market. TV shows, e.g. *Poland's Got Talent*, may also act as such gatekeepers.

The second stage involves surrogate consumers who purchase a finished product (song, film or TV program) and deliver it to the end recipient. This group includes radio and TV stations, newspaper publishers etc. Surrogate consumers also make a selection, this time of finished products, making them available to broader audiences. Accordingly, they do not generate goods but instead, through selection, influence the value of specific goods, creating a system of evaluation, such as hit lists, reviews, etc. Thus, they have a substantial role in the added value chain, sometimes influencing the market success or failure of specific creative goods, or strengthening their position, e.g. by frequently playing a certain song or film. They have an important say in determining the final cultural value of creative goods and strongly affect their durability (ibid.: 274). Sometimes events, instead of subjects, play the selective role, as is suggested by studies on such events as festivals or fairs that function as a 'gate' between the creator and the recipient (Moeran, Pedersen 2011).

Despite numerous organizational and technological changes that have since taken place in the music industry and other creative industries, Hirsch's model is still relevant, as was proven, among others by Gabriel Rossman (2012). He analyzed the process of dissemination of songs in a society (by analogy to the innovation diffusion process), how they become popular and what the role of the radio is in the process. One of his main conclusions was that, despite dynamic development of digital media in the first decade of the 21st century, the traditional radio still plays a key role for musicians on their way to commercial success. Also, the role of the cultural selection mechanism, crucial for the entire music industry,

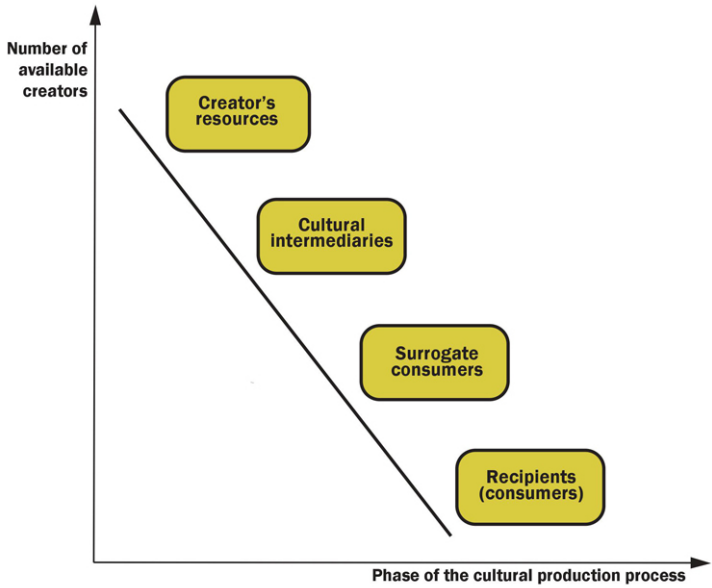

Chart 1. Hirsch's cultural selection model

Source: Author's own elaboration based on: Hirsch 1972

is very well visible. Rossman observes that selection in cultural production is often very restrictive. A small fraction of active creators is noticed by cultural intermediaries and even fewer of them are promoted by surrogate consumers. Very few of those who pass beyond that point actually become successful among end recipients, as was already suggested by Hirsch and as is illustrated by the steepness of the line in the chart 1.

Because of the selection mechanisms, subjects such as cultural gatekeepers play a crucial role in creative economy, as it is up to them to decide which creative goods will be published and will reach the recipients. From the economic perspective, gatekeepers reduce the transaction costs of acquiring information on the quality of goods and their evaluation. They also reduce risk and uncertainty at various stages of the value chain associated with the evaluation of the potential of specific ideas or projects to become commercially successful (UNDP/UNCTAD 2010: 85). In the case of visual arts, a gatekeeper may be an art gallery manager who decides whose

work he will exhibit. In the case of the media, the same role is performed by the editor-in-chief, who selects articles to the next issue of a newspaper or a news program on the TV or radio. Not only individuals but also specialist agencies, such as talent agencies, may play this role. It should also be noted that currently, the role of gatekeepers in creative industries is changing due to the development of the Internet and digital media, which enable creators to instantly publish their work without the agency of intermediaries. There are a number of tools available, such as social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), video sites (e.g. YouTube), online art galleries (e.g. Digart) or blogs (Szultka 2012: 44). Both intuition and some voices in the discussion (Shoemaker, Vos 2009; Benghozi, Paris 2016) suggest that the role of the selection mechanism will be diminishing as the Internet becomes more and more popular in the modern information society. According to this line of thinking, the Internet enables unlimited, cost-free and almost instantaneous delivery of works and universal access to them. Thus, there is no need for subjects who would be selecting the content to be put into circulation – the creators and recipients decide for themselves. On the other hand, this does not seem to be happening in practice and the selection mechanism - instead of disappearing – is still present, though in an evolving form. The result of the evolution is a new type of selection - technological selection, which exists alongside the traditional selection. In this case, gatekeepers are not people or organizations directly, but rather technological tools, such as search engines that index the content available through the Internet. They determine what information will reach us and in what form. It should be noted, however, that technologies are produced by man and they serve his purposes. Magdalena Szpunar (2013: 61) rightly observes:

> The logic of search engines is predefined by their creators. This logic relies on the commercial order, and reliable presentation of information is secondary to profit generation. According to surveys, 73% of respondents declare that the information browsers provide them with is accurate and credible, and 66% believe that search engines are a reliable and objective source of information.

According to Richard E. Caves (2006: 537-539), cultural gatekeepers are a critical element of the value chain in the production of simple creative goods. Production of such goods often involves one creator and

one cultural intermediary, who adapts a work to market requirements and then distributes it among recipients, sometimes with the help of other intermediaries. However, this seemingly simple relationship involves, according to Caves, significant organizational challenges. The reason for this is threefold. First, there are many creators on the market, often too many. Accordingly, a cultural mediator must play the role of a gatekeeper, picking some and rejecting others. Secondly, combining the effects of an artist's creative contribution with economic operations of a gatekeeper may have different organizational forms. A subject who plays the role of a cultural intermediary may either only represent a creator or he may partner with him, this way acquiring more impact on the final shape of a work as well as additional rights, e.g. to distribution. Also, he may employ an artist and have major control over the entire creative process and its effects. Thirdly, creative activity tends to agglomerate in certain locations. This trend, however, depends on how the relations between an artist and a cultural intermediary (gatekeeper) are organized and managed. Thus, the selection mechanism is dependent on location processes.

The location element of the cultural selection mechanism involves spatial consequences of the functioning processes of creative economy. It transpires that geographic proximity plays a major role in ensuring the position of creators, which in turn determines their commercial success. This entails proximity to gatekeepers and social networks connecting creators and producers. Elizabeth Currid-Halkett (2007: 130-132) showed empirically the role of geographic proximity in reputation building processes in the creative clusters of New York. According to her, creators experience high levels of uncertainty, both in terms of the stability of employment and predictability of demand for their work. In this situation, geographic proximity of cultural gatekeepers plays a key role and becomes one of the main factors in their location in the environment – they act as magnets that attract creators. Since the cultural and economic value of creative goods is the subject of constant negotiation, as a result of the value circulation mechanism, and at the same time, these are mainly gatekeepers who determine that value, then, not surprisingly, contact with gatekeepers is decisive for creators. Moreover, with these contacts, creators climb the ladder of recognition and popularity, which is crucial both for artistic and commercial success. Gatekeepers, who in a way also serve as information filters, have a huge impact on what is

said about a given creator and how it is said. According to Currid-Halkett, gatekeepers create so-called local buzz, i.e. circulation of gossip, informal information that comprises the media image of an artist. Also Gina Neff, Elizabeth Wissinger and Sarah Zukin (2005), who surveyed fashion industry and new media creators and workers, underline the importance of contacts with cultural gatekeepers. They also emphasize the fact that temporariness of employment and ephemeral character of artistic reputation mean that these contacts are virtually mandatory for creative workers. These factors lead to the formation of creative clusters. They involve the advantages of agglomerations associated with the development of trust-based bonds and accumulation of social capital. Apart from that, such agglomerations have three more types of advantages. These are: a specialist labor market, knowledge flow and a large number of business environment institutions (Stachowiak, Tomczak 2015: 67-70). Accordingly, the cultural selection mechanism promotes the formation of clusters. This is confirmed, among other things, by research conducted by Barbara Heebels and Irina van Aalst (2010) in two creative clusters in Berlin: in Prenzlauer Berg and Kreuzberg districts, respectively. The entrepreneurs and creators located there highlighted the special role of cultural gatekeepers in the early stages of their activity. Contacts with them and their spatial proximity enabled development of social networks and the building of reputation and brand in urban creative communities. Thanks to gatekeepers, more and more creators are attracted to such areas, causing their transformation into a cluster. Indirectly, the selection mechanism also influences the innovative character of an agglomeration, since selection plays an important role in the diffusion of information (Rogers 1983: 144-145). The selection mechanism determines which innovation will be distributed and which will be contained. It should be noted that in creative economy, apart from classical product, technology, organization or process innovations, there are also 'soft innovations', such as aesthetic, semiotic or artistic innovations (Stoneman 2010). Even Hirsch (1972) noticed the selective role of mass media and called them the 'institutional regulators of innovation'.

CONCLUSION

Cultural intermediaries are a group of subjects specific of creative economy. Their specificity involves, among other things, the fact that they often

participate in the creation of goods. However, they rarely do it indirectly. Creative goods are the effect of the work of individual creators or their groups, and may include: a song, a novel, a poem, a picture, a sculpture or a graphic sign. Their value is primarily the function of knowledge, skills, competencies, talent and creativity of their authors, which constitute their cultural capital resources. The size of the capital depends to a large extent on artistic or specialist education. Creators with relevant education reach a market where they or their products are noticed by the so-called cultural intermediaries. These are, among others: talent agencies, art galleries or art dealers who help the creators build the reputation that will increase the market value of their goods. Often, they also help distribute the goods made by creators. Accordingly, the qualifications of such cultural intermediaries are no less important than those of creators. They make a selection and decide which artists or goods should be broadly circulated. This, in turn, often determines commercial success on the market.

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Summary

The paper presents the role that cultural intermediaries play in creative economy. Cultural intermediaries are a specific and very important category of subjects in creative economy. They play a key role especially in the dissemination of creative goods. They also serve as intermediaries between creators and producers. However, they are involved not only in connecting sellers with buyers, but also in shaping the final value of goods. Therefore, cultural intermediaries can play a threefold role in creative economy. They can be: (1) individuals or groups acting as a medium between cultures; (2) a set of professions transferring cultural values to the society; (3) individuals or groups involved in the transfer of creative and cultural goods, cultural values between creators and audience.

Keywords: cultural intermediaries, creative economy, creative industries