

STRATEGIES IN CULTURAL (NON-)INSTITUTIONS. CASE STUDY OF ZAMEK CIESZYN

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FOREWORD

Organizational strategies of the cultural industries are a poorly explored topic of academic deliberations, however, the number of publications concerning this issue is constantly growing. This is probably due to the growing importance of cultural industries, and also more broadly – the creative industry, in the economy and in the society. In social sciences, culture and creativity are more and more often perceived as the backbone of modern development. The issue of strategies in these industries is particularly interesting as their organizations are different than enterprises¹. Because of this, all kinds of research, both theoretical and practical, are strongly needed as they help understand the specific nature of organizational management in cultural and creative industries, and grasp a full picture of the research area. Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to present organizational strategies in the cultural industries based on the example of the cultural (non-)institution of Zamek Cieszyn, which combines the best elements of non-profit organizations and for-profit ones. Before the case study is done, the article describes and characterizes organizational strategies in cultural industries.

The article is both theoretical and empirical. Based on a critical analysis of literature, I present theoretical hypotheses, which I later verify in the case

¹ An enterprise is an organized set on non-material and material components used to conduct economic activity.

study. I use the following tools in the case study: semi-structured in-depth interview, analysis of materials provided by the organizations in question and publicly available information.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES – FOREWORD

Strategy is probably the most frequently used term in the context of organizational management. It is believed that, without a strategy, it is difficult for an organization to achieve its goals and develop. However, it is hard to find an explicit answer to the question of what the strategy is in the literature on the subject. Krzysztof Obłój (2014: 24) writes that ‘the strategy theory is like a carpet woven from sometimes contrary – but at times complementary – main concepts’ that include: theories of planning, evolution, position and resources (see: Gierszewska, Romanowska 2017: 12-15; Sopińska 2010: 24-57; Romanowska 2009: 11-13; Stańczyk-Hugiet 2012: 164).

According to the planning strategy theory, the managerial personnel is capable of freely and rationally developing a strategic plan (Obłój 2014: 24). Strategies are thus understood as a set of planning decisions taken on the basis of a detailed analysis of an organization’s environment as well as its strengths and weaknesses (the classical tool of the planning theory is the SWOT analysis)², which are supposed to ensure the achievement of certain goals (Romanowska 2009: 12). The evolutionary theory was developed in opposition to the planning theory. It assumes that strategy is developed through an informal process of searching for a model that emerges from the exploration of new options and repeating established solutions (Obłój 2014: 25). A strategy emerges with the passage of time, and it is a combination of plans and changes (Stańczyk-Hugiet 2012: 164). The ability to learn and improve is important, as it is the only way for an organization to be successful (Romanowska 2009: 12).

² SWOT analysis – the name is an acronym of the following words: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The SWOT analysis involves analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of an organization and the opportunities and threats associated with its environment.

Another concept is the position theory, where the strategy is associated with the organization's position in the competitive environment³, which determines the strategic advantages it may achieve. Here, the focus is on developing a competition strategy, rather than on setting the direction and pace for an organization's development. The strategy is developed from the perspective of the competitive environment, rather than the organization's internal resources. The latter perspective characterizes the resource theory, which assumes that the success of an organization depends on the quality of its resources, especially the intangible ones (ibid.: 12-13). The resources that an organization has are more important than the conditions of the industry (Oblój 2014: 25). However, Maria Romanowska (2006: 93-96) claims that the success of an organization does not depend so much on resources as on the ability to manage them. She proposed four resource strategy models:

- 'rich dilettante', i.e. an organization that owns resources but cannot manage them;
- 'lord of the treasures', i.e. an organization that owns resources and competently manages them
- 'errand boy', i.e. an organization that neither owns resources nor has the ability to use or manage the resources of others;
- 'business architect', i.e. an organization that does not own resources but has extensive abilities to use and manage the resources of others.

Romanowska (2006: 96) believes that 'one can be successful without owning resources (»the business architect«), but one cannot be successful without the ability to manage resources, even if one owns extensive resources (»rich dilettante«)'. It is important to have access to resources and be able to manage them, rather than only own them. Thus, organizational strategy should also be regarded from the perspective of a network (Stańczyk-Hugiet 2012: 166). Organizations should maintain and develop relations with other organizations and individuals in order to create, protect and capture the created values (Lewicka, Zakrzewska-Bielawska 2016: 109). Relations are an important source of competitive advantage in the dynamically changing world. Adam M. Brandenburger and Barry J. Nalebuff (1996) identify two

³ The competitive environment³ consists of all the entities that cooperate or compete with an organization, i.e. the existing and potential competitors, suppliers, buyers and producers of substitutes.

strategies, depending on the engagement of organizations in a network of relations: the strategy of independence and the strategy of involvement in a cooperative network. The first means that an organization does not establish relations with other organizations or individuals. The latter means that an organization establishes various relations and through cooperation, it increases its own competitive position compared to organizations that are not members of a network.

Each of the above theories has its supporters, critics, assumptions, tool box and limitations. These theories are partly contradictory and partly complementary. I believe that, in practice, it is hard to identify only one theory that an organization applies in its strategic approach. In organizations, there is usually one dominant approach, more or less consciously combined with other approaches (e.g. the evolutionary theory of strategy may be dominant, mixed with elements of the resource theory). Generally speaking, there are three approaches to strategy development in an organization: the first approach – ‘outside-in’ means that a strategy is market oriented. The chances and threats that exist in the organization’s environment determine its goals and strategies. In the second approach – ‘inside-out’, the opposite perspective is applied. The strategy is determined by the resources that an organization owns or has access to. In this case, the strengths and weaknesses of an organization define its goals and strategies. The third approach integrates the former two, the strategy being the resultant of organization’s strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats associated with its environment.

In the traditional approach, strategy is the effect of work preceded by a strategic analysis and strategy designing. The document, once ready, is submitted for implementation, and strategy changes take place only in the subsequent period, once again preceded by strategic analyses and strategy designing. In a contemporary approach, strategy is understood as a constant and dynamic process that never ends. Strategy is a dynamic process of overcoming difficulties that an organization encounters in the course of its development (Romanowska 2009: 17, 19).

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES IN THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

One of the basic concepts in management theory is the organization, which is 'a group of people working together in a structured and coordinated fashion to achieve a set of goals' (Griffin 2015: 4). Most simply, organizations may be divided into for-profit and non-profit. The goal of for-profit organizations is to maximize the value, and the profit is shared between owners or reinvested in further development of an organization in order to ensure its value growth in the future. On the other hand, the goal of non-profit organizations is to achieve a mission and create non-commercial products. It is not their goal to generate profit, which, however, does not mean that they cannot be profitable. Profit generated by them is not shared between the owners, but instead, it is reinvested in the organizations' development. Heerad Sabeti (2012) notes that such division is oversimplified as modern organizations are hard to classify as one or the other type. In the area of culture, examples are easy to find. It is worth noting here the study by Towarzystwo Inicjatyw Twórczych Ė (Kubecka, Białek-Graczyk 2016) and the book *Kultura i rozwój. Analizy, rekomendacje, studia przypadków* [Culture and Development. Analysis, Recommendations, Case Studies; Hausner et al. 2016]. Both publications highlight cultural initiatives / cultural non-institutions that frequently stay outside the domain of formal culture, but at the same time cannot be defined as non-profit organizations, and as such are impossible to classify. Meanwhile, these initiatives promote institutional governance in culture and socio-economic development. This means that there exist a hybrid organization, which H. Sabeti (2012) calls for-benefit enterprises, and Justyna Szumniak-Samolej (2015; 2016) – enterprises built around a social and/or environmental mission. Hybrid organizations combine elements typical of for-profit organizations (e.g. focus on the effectiveness of activities) with typical elements of non-profit organization (e.g. focus on the achievement of a mission). In the cultural industries, there all the three types of organizations: non-profit, hybrid and for-profit, the latter type being the least common. Considering the above circumstances, description of the strategies of cultural industries organizations is an interesting topic that requires both theoretical and empirical exploration.

Organizational strategies in the cultural industries are increasingly frequently discussed by academics and practitioners, however, this area

still remains relatively underdeveloped. Mateusz Lewandowski (2014: 62) notes that the methods and tools taken from the strategic management area are increasingly popular in Polish cultural institutions. Strategic management tools are also used to describe cultural industries (e.g. in academic publications), one example being Anna Wróblewska's (2013: 242-265) study on the feature film production industry in Poland.

M. Lewandowski (2014: 62-63) identifies the following areas of research concerning strategic management in Polish cultural institutions: (1) mission development and strategic management process in museums, (2) strategy and strategic management from the perspective of practitioners managing cultural institutions, (3) marketing strategies in the art and philharmonic industries, and (4) strategy typologies and characteristics of the strategic management process in cultural institutions. The latter area is discussed by Lidia Varbanova (2012), who, based on an in-depth analysis of the literature on the subject, proposed typologies of various organizational strategies in the cultural industries: main organizational strategies, product-market (program-market) strategies and competition strategies (table 1). General strategies determine the directions of organizational development and concern the entire organization. Product-market (program-market) strategies focus on the paths of product (program) and market development. An organization may focus on the existing markets and products (programs) by applying the penetration strategy, or it may develop new products (programs) and/or markets. The purpose of the competition strategy is to create, strengthen and maintain competitive advantage, which means to strengthen the organization's position in the industry compared to other operators. It should be noted that organizations should have and implement each type of strategy and that they may implement several strategies simultaneously. For example, an organization may implement both innovation strategies and strategies for the development of contract networks (general strategies) as well as cost leadership strategies in one industry and quality leadership strategies in another (competition strategies).

In her book, L. Varbanova (2012: 121) also defines organizational strategies in the cultural industries as 'system of approaches, methods and tools for the evaluation of and choice between alternative(s) to achieve the mission and priority long-term goals in the most effective way, given external and internal influencing forces and considering organization's resources and capacity,

as well as its innovative, entrepreneurial and creative potential'. In this definition, strategy is perceived as the resultant of external conditions and the strengths and weaknesses of an organization. Having and implementing a strategy is crucial for the achievement of goals and making the best use of an organization's internal potential.

Table 1. Typology of organizational strategies in cultural industries

Main organizational strategies	Strategies determining the directions followed by an organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation Strategy • Spin-off (Outsourcing) Strategy • Privatization Strategy • Capacity-building Strategy • Survival Strategy • Liquidation (Bankruptcy) Strategy • Integration Strategy • Partnership Strategy • Creative Cluster Strategy • Co-production Strategy • Networking Strategy • Lobbying strategy
Product (programme-) market strategies	Development strategies associated with different risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Penetration Strategy • Market Development Strategy • Product (Programme) Development Strategy • Diversification Strategy
Competitive strategies	Strategies that are supposed to help achieve, strengthen and maintain competitive advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost Leadership Strategy • Differentiation Strategy • Product (Programme) Focus strategy

Source: Author's own elaboration based on: Varbanova 2012

Chis Bilton (2007: 91 et seq.), using the creative strategy concept, identifies three approaches to its development: (1) 'heroic' model, (2) adhocracy, and (3) posthocracy. In the 'heroic' model of creative strategy, the leader occupies the most important position. Based on his experience, ability to analyze market trends and creativity, he identifies the unique competitive advantage and creates the strategy. In adhocracy, according to the assumptions of the evolution theory, the strategy is developed collectively and gradually,

and the future strategy emerges from current activities. In a world of chaos and dominance of apparently unrelated events, it is crucial to recognize weak signals and ‘invisible’ regularities, and an order emerges from seemingly random and unorganized interactions (Hartley et al. 2013: 28-29). Adhocracy in strategic management does not mean simple acceptance of chaos and uncertainty, but it involves a bottom-up process of strategy development, meaning that the strategy emerges from action and operational decisions. The third approach is posthocracy, where unpredictability of the environment is so great that planning becomes impossible. Decisions are based on the decision-maker’s emotions, *ego* and personality, and their rationality is evaluated *ex post*. The types proposed by C. Bilton are confirmed by Martyna Śliwa (2011: 211), who claims that Polish cultural institutions have varying understanding of the strategy: ‘from traditional, where the leader makes most decisions and leads the team towards the achievement of his strategic vision to a style based on the development of the strategic vision of an institution in dialogue with employees, and leaving significant creative freedom to the team’. The traditional approach corresponds to the ‘heroic’ model of creative strategy, and the latter – to adhocracy. M. Śliwa (ibid.: 212) also claims that there is no such thing as one general strategy implemented by all the cultural institutions in Poland as every institution creates its own strategy, taking into account the environmental conditions and its own strengths and weaknesses, which confirms previous deliberations on various strategies and is coherent with the definition of organizational strategy in cultural institutions proposed by L. Varbanova (2012).

Martyna Śliwa also notes that managers of Polish cultural institutions are confronted with major unpredictability of the environment⁴ and have limited impact on most decision taken in the public sphere, in the broad meaning of the term, that directly affect their organizations (Śliwa 2011: 212). Organizations that operate in the public sphere, also in cultural industries, are forced to pursue a public mission, which influences their goals and strategies. As a result, the goals of non-profit organizations are different than those

⁴ Uncertainty of the environment is quite thoroughly discussed in the literature on the subject. Thus, considering the limited size of this article, I decided not to describe the situation here. More on this issue may be found in: Bērziņš 2012: 10-11; Caves 2000: 2-3; Hesmondhalgh 2013: 26-28.

of for-profit organizations, and the means for their achievement also differ. Also, authorities of various levels often express, directly or indirectly, their expectations of those organizations and the methods for pursuing the public mission. As a result, the environment in cultural industries is complex, and political factors are important for the functioning of organizations in those industries. Central and local authorities have a major impact on the directions of cultural policies and institutional governance in cultural industries, thus strongly affecting the goals of organizations. The question is, then, how independent are cultural industry organizations in determining their own missions and goals? This is hard to determine, but it would not be an exaggeration to say that cultural industry organizations are at least partly 'incapacitated' in their strategic decision making (e.g. legal limitations to conducting economic activity or different plans of the owners)⁵. Another obstacle to creating and implementing a strategy is the need to reconcile the goals of various stakeholder groups (i.e. individuals, groups or organizations within or outside an organization), whose interests are linked with the management of an organization and may directly or indirectly affect its operation. Stakeholders influence an organization, but are also influenced by it (Wachowiak 2013: 46). In the case of cultural industry organizations, the number of stakeholders is much higher than in the case of for-profit organizations (see: Gawęł 2012), and satisfying their needs is a much greater challenge (see: Williams, Lewis 2008). Various stakeholder groups have different, often contradictory interests, and the job of organization managers is to develop and implement a strategy in such a way as to satisfy the aspirations of each of those groups. Accordingly, managers have to balance between various interests and compromise, which limits their freedom to make strategic decisions.

⁵ It is worth noting here that, in the case of some for-profit organizations, the ability to make strategic decisions is also limited. This is the case with, for example, subsidiaries that are totally dependent on parent companies. Strategies are developed by the parent company, and the subsidiaries are supposed to implement them.

ZAMEK CIESZYN – STRATEGY OF A CULTURAL (NON-)INSTITUTION⁶

Zamek Cieszyn was founded in 2011⁷ as a municipal budgetary unit, but since 2011, it has been a local government cultural institution co-managed by the City of Cieszyn and Silesian Voivodship. The goal of Zamek Cieszyn is to ‘develop innovative entrepreneurship through the use of design’, which is understood as an effective tool ‘to increase the competitiveness of companies, institutions, towns and regions’⁸. With this goal, the activity of Zamek Cieszyn focuses on three areas: design, entrepreneurship and tourism. Services offered in the designing area are mainly addressed to designers, and they include: workshops and training sessions, counseling for self-employed business owners and counseling/assistance in project implementation. The services offered in the entrepreneurship area are addressed to the business and they include: training sessions held by the Zamek personnel, customer-tailored training held by outsourced experts, counseling/assistance in project implementation and corporate events. Moreover, both groups offer rental of exhibition space and offices. Zamek Cieszyn also organizes transfer to design fairs and festivals. In the tourism area, services include accommodation, tours of the castle hill, workshops in traditional and artistic craft, and events⁹. The services provided by Zamek Cieszyn are partly free of charge and partly provided on commercial terms. The budget of Zamek Cieszyn consists of grants from the Town Office and

⁶ The case study was developed on the basis of interviews with the employees of Zamek Cieszyn, the materials provided by them as well as publicly available information. Interviews were conducted by Patryk Dziurski (Collegium of Management and Finance, SGH Warsaw School of Economics) and Mikołaj Lewicki (Warsaw University, Institute of Sociology) in June and July of 2015 for the needs of the research project *Culture and Development* financed from the Program of the Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage 2015 – Culture Observatory.

⁷ Until 2011, Zamek Cieszyn was called Śląski Zamek Sztuki i Przedsiębiorczości (Silesian Castle of Culture and Entrepreneurship).

⁸ *Projektujemy możliwości*, <http://www.zamekcieszyn.pl/pl/artukul/projektujemy-mozliwosci-199> (accessed: 30.10.2019).

⁹ <http://www.zamekcieszyn.pl/pl/artukul/oferta-200> (accessed: 30.10.2019).

Silesian Voivodeship ($\frac{1}{3}$ of the budget), external financing, (e.g. EU projects; $\frac{1}{3}$ of the budget) and revenue from economic activity ($\frac{1}{3}$ of the budget).

Zamek Cieszyn combines tradition and modernity. It makes a link with tradition and history directly through its name and location on the castle hill, and indirectly through protection and promotion of traditional craftsmanship. At the same time, the activity of Zamek Cieszyn focuses on modern designing. It sets the direction for design development in Poland by promoting the designing of services, public space and social changes. Ewa Gołębiowska (2011: 157), the director of Zamek Cieszyn, notes that 'combining history, tradition and identity with designing and modern technologies' constitutes Zamek's strength.

Zamek Cieszyn is a local government cultural institution, but, looking at its activity, it is hardly a typical cultural institution. One of the respondents says: 'We are an unusual cultural institution' (respondent 1). She also says that she and her team would like to be called 'an inspiring place' rather than treated as a traditional institution or house of culture. According to newspapers, the employees of Zamek Cieszyn call it a 'company', meaning that there is 'a certain goal, community of action, vision, (...) strategy of action. (...) We do not necessarily mean a company in the sense of the goal being for-profit economic activity, but rather in the sense of effective actions aimed at achieving a certain goal' (respondent 1). Another respondent adds: 'We [the employees of Zamek Cieszyn – P.D.] always have the mission at the back of our heads. Sometimes, we can do a thing that is not exactly financially profitable (...); there are actions that will yield profit only after some time, and not always *stricte* financial, sometimes it will rather be a change in mentality, or setting the ground for some other solutions' (respondent 2). Zamek Cieszyn combines pursuit of the public mission with economic activity, being a hybrid organization that unites the best elements of for-profit and non-profit organizations.

At Zamek Cieszyn, the strategy is seen as a dynamic process of overcoming challenges in the process of development (modern approach). Its employees identify numerous problems that need to be solved in order to be able to implement projects and develop. They also note that long-term planning is difficult, especially in terms of finances, which makes operation and organizational management more complicated. Ewa Gołębiowska (2011: 150) undoubtedly is a strong leader, but – as she herself declares in one

of the interviews – the process of creating, implementing and even controlling the implementation of strategy requires major involvement of the employees.

In Zamek Cieszyn, the strategy is seen partly through the prism of the resource-based theory, which is why the strategy development process is inside-out. All kinds of resources are important: both tangible (financial resources and buildings), and intangible (knowledge and skills, relations, reputation and image, strong brand and effective management system). However, intangible resources are more important, especially knowledge, skills and relations. The director of Zamek Cieszyn states that ‘an institution needs a good, strong backbone, a fixed team’ (ibid.: 151). One of the respondents believes the same: ‘we need to have a crew, the most important thing is to compile a team and to develop it and create bonds within it’ (respondent 1).

An important intangible resource of Zamek Cieszyn are relations, which were created and used even before its foundation as well as during its operation. The interviewees stressed the fact that it was possible to create Zamek Cieszyn thanks to the help and engagement of personnel of the Cieszyn Town Office and Marshal’s Office. After its creation, various relations were and still are intensively used in order to gain knowledge and skills required to pursue the mission (e.g. outsourcing experts). It should be noted, however, that currently, the team of Zamek Cieszyn has extensive knowledge and skills that enable the development of training and counseling services. Also, Zamek Cieszyn acts as a cooperation animator, which means that its actions make it possible to create and strengthen relations between other individuals and organizations. Such initiative includes: the Entrepreneurs Club, Silesian Design Cluster and business breakfasts. The institution’s large network is also useful in daily activity, to help entrepreneurs, designers and other design centers, as one of the respondents notes: ‘You can always call us and ask, where to find this or that specialist. If we can help, we share phone numbers or other contact details’ (respondent 1). This means that Zamek Cieszyn implements a strategy called by Brandenburger and Nalebuff the strategy of entanglement in a cooperative network or the strategy of creating a network of contacts, according to the typology proposed by Varbanova. Zamek Cieszyn creates various relations that it uses in the course of its development and makes available to its other partners.

It is difficult to define the resource strategy of Zamek Cieszyn. On the one hand, it has its own resources (tangible, i.e. buildings and funds,

and intangible, i.e. knowledge, skills and relations), but – on the other hand – it successfully uses outsourced resources (mainly intangible, i.e. knowledge and skills). This means that Zamek Cieszyn has a well-developed skill of managing not only its own, but also outsourced resources. Thus, its resource strategy is positioned between the ‘lord of the treasures’ strategy and that of the ‘business architect’, but in my opinion, it is closer to the former of the two options.

It also seems that Zamek Cieszyn applies an innovation strategy that, in this case, involves expanding the scope of designing services (not only product designing but also service, public space and social change designing), which stimulates the growth of effectiveness. It seems that the product-market strategy of Zamek Cieszyn is the product development strategy. This means that it releases new products on its existing markets.

The last issue I would like to discuss is the impact of stakeholders on the creation and implementation of the strategy. Zamek Cieszyn has to cope with the expectations of various stakeholders. For example, the interests of the institutions’ owners – the voivodeship authorities, who want to increase the presence of Zamek Cieszyn outside the Śląsk Cieszyński area, are contrary to those of the municipal authorities, who expect the institution to be more present in Cieszyn. Creating and implementing a strategy with such contradictory expectations is a very difficult task, besides, there are the expectations of other groups: the designers community, residents of Cieszyn, entrepreneurs, partners and employees, which may be different and mutually excluding. A strategy is created and developed as a result of a compromise, and not on the basis of individual decisions of Zamek Cieszyn employees, which confirms my former remarks.

CONCLUSIONS

The above deliberations lead to two conclusions. First of all, creating and implementing a strategy is a difficult task for cultural industry organizations. However, I would not say that it is more difficult for them than for for-profit organizations. The strategic management process is specific for every type of organization, and those who create and implement a strategy face different challenges. This leads to the other conclusion, namely that the process of creating and implementing a strategy in cultural industry organizations is influenced the most by the following factors: the goals

of an organization (other than those in for-profit organizations), the need to manage contradictory activities, such as exploration and exploitation¹⁰, the need to reconcile the expectations of various stakeholder groups and unpredictability of the environment and political factors.

Research concerning cultural industry organization strategies should be continued, as this area is still insufficiently explored. I believe, however, that future research should focus not only on strategy but also on the entire strategic management process, which would show the full picture of the actual situation. Also, it seems desirable that future research takes into consideration the conditions presented by me, in order to confirm, reject or supplement them.

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¹⁰ The issue of managing contradictory activities, such as exploration and exploitation, was not discussed in this article, but I think this is an everyday challenge in cultural and creative industries, thus affecting the process of creating and implementing a strategy. See: Knight, Harvey 2015; Wu, Wu 2016.

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Summary

The aim of this article is to present organizational strategies in cultural industries, based on the example of a cultural (non-)institution Zamek Cieszyn. Zamek Cieszyn is an unusual institution, because it combines the best elements of for-profit organisations with those of non-profit organizations. It applies the best managerial practices in cultural industries. The author uses an appropriate methodology. The research method is

a critical analysis of academic literature (desk research) and the case study method. In the article, the author presents theoretical hypotheses which are then empirically verified in the case study. To sum up, developing and implementing organizational strategies in the cultural industries is a difficult task because it is affected by the following factors: organizations' goals are different than the goals of for-profit organizations, the need to manage complexity, the need to reconcile different expectations of stakeholders, unpredictability of the environment and influence of political factors.

Keywords: cultural industries, strategy, cultural institution, strategic management