

DIFFERENTIATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Purpose: The aim of the article is to assess the level of development of the cultural and creative sector in Poland in comparison with selected European countries.

Design/methodology/approach: To assess the level of development of the cultural and creative sector, the Hellwig development pattern method and the Ward's agglomerative clustering method were used. A synthetic indicator was developed based on selected diagnostic features, which was used to create a ranking of European countries according to the level of development of the cultural and creative sector. Subsequently, using a dendrogram, countries were grouped based on the similarity of their features.

Findings: The research results indicate variability in the development of the cultural and creative sector—countries were classified into groups with very high, high, low, and very low levels of the synthetic indicator, and clusters of European countries with similar levels of development based on selected diagnostic features were identified. Poland is characterized by an average level of development in the cultural and creative sector. France is the leader in this regard.

Research limitations/implications: This article is part of the ongoing research efforts to create coherent conceptual foundations for defining the cultural and creative sector and understanding its mechanisms of influence on the economy. The presented research may also contribute to further, more in-depth analyses of the impact of the cultural and creative sector on the socio-economic development of European countries.

Originality/value: The article addresses the controversies among researchers regarding the so-called “economisation of culture.” It highlights the increasing importance of the cultural and creative sector in the economy, referencing international studies in this field. Based on diagnostic features selected by the author, a synthetic indicator was constructed to assess European countries in terms of the development of the cultural and creative sector. The article identifies the leaders in this area and the gap between them and Poland. It also distinguishes clusters of countries with similar levels of development based on selected diagnostic features. The analyses focus on the economic role of the cultural and creative sector. The research findings are directed towards the public authorities of the European countries under study, particularly Poland. They may provide guidelines for creating and developing legal and economic solutions that facilitate the growth of the cultural and creative sector. These efforts are of particular importance in the context of rising social welfare, which creates demand for goods and services in this sector, and the increasing expansion of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in various areas of socio-economic life, including creative work.

Keywords: role of culture in the economy, cultural and creative sector, economisation of culture, Z. Hellwig method, Ward method.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

The cultural and creative sector (CCS) is becoming an increasingly significant component of the global economy, as evidenced by the growing turnover of creative goods and services. As societies become wealthier, there is a shift in the structure of needs—from basic socio-economic needs to higher-order needs such as cognitive, aesthetic, recognition, and self-actualisation needs—which stimulates demand for products and services related to knowledge, science, culture, and entertainment offered by the creative sector. There is an intensification of the semiotisation of consumption and the economisation of culture. In the former case, brand, design, and the symbolic meaning of products and services start to play as important a role as their utilitarian functions (Lash, Urry, 1994). In the latter case, market mechanisms, manifested in the commercialisation of cultural goods, are entering the realm of cultural activities. Culture and the economy are increasingly interwoven.

Efforts are being made to establish coherent conceptual foundations for defining the cultural and creative sector, including the industries that compose it and the mechanisms of its impact on other sectors of the economy. This article fits into the current research trend. It addresses the conditions for the development of the creative sector in the contemporary economy and the dilemmas associated with its measurement at the national level.

The aim of the article is to assess the level of development of the cultural and creative sector in Poland in comparison with selected European countries. It should be noted that the analyses are focused on the economic role of this sector.

In our research, the Z. Hellwig development pattern method and the Ward agglomerative clustering method were used. Based on 8 diagnostic features, a synthetic indicator was developed, which then served as the basis for creating a ranking of countries according to the level of development of the cultural and creative sector. The study covered 23 European countries.

In the first part of the article, the role of culture in the economy is discussed, with references to international studies in this area. The article also addresses controversies among researchers regarding the so-called “economisation of culture.” The second part presents the difficulties associated with measuring the cultural and creative sector in the economy and the operational definition of the cultural and creative sector adopted for the purposes of the study. The research methods employed are then described. The third part of the article includes the presentation of the results of our research. In analysing the variation in the development of the cultural and creative sector in Europe, particular attention is given to the role of the CCS in the Polish

economy. Based on the analysis of activities undertaken in countries with significant CCS participation in their economies, recommendations for Poland are proposed.

2. “Economisation of Culture”? On the Role of Culture in the Economy

The impact of culture on the functioning of the economy is an increasingly explored topic in economics. On one hand, it is emphasised that, through its influence on human and social capital, culture is a significant factor in economic growth and development (Noga, 2014). Culture fosters imagination, sensitivity, creativity, stimulates interests, and teaches different perspectives on the world. It serves as a catalyst for innovation. On the other hand, works of cultural creators are becoming objects of market transactions, increasingly contributing to GDP. There is a distinct interpenetration and mutual stimulation of the economic and non-economic values produced by culture, indicating both an “economisation of culture” and a “culturalisation of economics”. The creator of both concepts is J. Szomburg, who over 20 years ago observed that “separate thinking about culture and economics is becoming an anachronism in the modern world”. He further emphasised that “an increasing number of economic products—and to an increasing extent—are infused with inspirations and meanings rooted in culture, which enhance their value, providing an advantage over other products. Meanwhile, the cultural and artistic sector, previously considered part of the so-called sphere of social services (which create costs rather than economic benefits), is increasingly moving beyond this sphere (...). It is becoming an independent field of economic activity” (Szomburg, 2002). The increase in social welfare has clearly accelerated the phenomena described by the author. With a higher level of education and “artistic refinement” in society, and a relatively high degree of satisfaction of basic needs, attention has shifted towards original goods that fulfil aesthetic needs, enable self-realisation, express personal identity, and offer unconventional, creative ways to spend leisure time. It can be hypothesised that only exogenous factors relative to the market mechanism (e.g., wars, ecological disasters, pandemics—all on a global scale) could significantly weaken the growing demand for goods offered by the cultural and creative sector.

Based on research conducted between 2013 and 2014 across five continents and in 78 countries with varying socio-economic levels, a significant impact of the cultural and creative sector on social welfare, measured by GDP per capita, was demonstrated (Boix Domenech, De Miguel Molina, Rausell Köster, 2022). Moreover, it was found that this impact was notably greater in highly and very highly developed regions (Boix Domenech, De Miguel Molina, Rausell Köster, 2022).

Economic research also highlights the relationship between economic innovation and the cultural sector (Bakhshi, McVittie, 2009). A post-industrial, innovative economy is “based” on culture, which serves as a source of creative attitudes and inspiration, even in the economic sphere.

The economisation of culture is associated with concerns that focusing on achieving economic goals may lead to a decline in the artistic quality of works, an “expansion” of mass culture at the expense of “high culture.” M. Horkheimer and T. Adorno (1994) had already strongly emphasised concerns related to the commercialisation of culture and art, discussing the weaknesses of artistic production subordinated to market demands (Horkheimer, Adorno, 1994). This economic approach to culture, termed “econocentric,” is contrasted with the “culturocentric” approach. Both perspectives have their proponents and opponents (Andres, Chapain, 2012). However, considering that culture, especially “high culture,” is a crucial factor in economic development shaping, as previously emphasised, human and social capital, the innovative potential of countries and regions, and serves as an impulse for the development of economic sectors, public funding of culture and treating these expenditures as investments that often yield returns over the long term is justified. At this point, it is worth mentioning the concept of “concentric circles” (Throsby, 2008). This concept assumes a symbiosis and mutual permeation, as well as numerous interactions among different industries within the cultural and creative sector, which belong to specific concentric circles. The first circle is the so-called “core of creativity”, which includes areas such as painting, sculpture, dance, theatre, photography, museums, and libraries. The next two circles group industries that revolve around this “core”. The second circle comprises industries involved in the production and distribution of creative goods and services, such as the music, film, publishing, and broadcasting sectors. The outermost circle consists of industries primarily engaged in the mass reproduction and distribution of products from this sector, including computer games, design, fashion, architecture, and advertising. The essence of an economy based on the cultural and creative sector is the so-called process of “spilling over” of development, which involves the radiating influence of the “core of creativity” and the subsequent circles on each other (Szultka, 2014). “Creative industries and, subsequently, other branches of the economy need inspiration from cultural activities to develop properly; and culture, to translate into a developmental impulse for the entire economy, requires creative industries. These industries allow the cultural activities—presumed to be autotelic—to achieve “instrumental” effects, commercialise their outputs, and provide a sort of “return on investment” (Szultka, 2014).

In the context of these considerations, does Poland have a chance to base its economic development on the cultural and creative sector?

The answer to this question is complex and requires an assessment of Poland’s strengths and limitations in this regard. An undeniable strength is the relatively high level of creativity and entrepreneurship among Poles, especially the younger generation. This is evidenced by the 2022 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results, which showed that the

creativity of Polish 15-year-olds is among the highest in the European Union. Only students from three countries (Estonia, Finland, and Denmark) achieved higher scores than those from Poland (Dobosz-Leszczynska, Kazmierczak, Weremiuk, 2024). However, there are concerns about the low propensity for collaboration and cooperation among Poles, which is critically important for the aforementioned process of “spilling over” development. This concern arises from the low level of social capital and the deficit of social trust that characterises Poles” (Witczak-Roszkowska, 2017).

3. Methodology of own research

Research on the cultural and creative sector presents methodological challenges. These largely stem from difficulties in defining the scope of the term “cultural and creative sector”. Contributing factors include:

1. The diversity in understanding the concepts of creativity and culture, and the complex nature of interactions between culture and creativity.
2. Different visions of the role of culture in society (Stachowiak, 2015)—whether it has solely artistic significance as an expression of the creator, or also economic significance, where cultural goods become market commodities like other products (Stachowiak, 2015).

Scientific articles often exhibit a certain “chaos” in the terminology used for this area of research, frequently resulting from the mechanical, overly literal translation of terms from English. According to K. Stachowiak (2015), the most commonly appearing terms in Polish are: “cultural industry”, “cultural industries”, “creative industries”, “creative sector”, “cultural sector”, “creative activities”. However, as the author himself points out, these Polish terms referring to the cultural and creative sector do not fully correspond to their foreign counterparts. This is especially true for the terms “cultural industries” and “creative industries”, which have entered Polish usage as translations of the English terms “cultural industry” and “creative industry”. In English, the term “industry” has a much broader meaning and refers to “any economic activity” (Goodall, 1987), whereas in Polish, it means “a sector of material production where the extraction of natural resources and their processing into production means and consumer goods occurs on a large scale, based on the division of labour and with the use of machinery” (Janasz, 1997, p. 42). In this context, it should be noted that many activities related to culture and creativity do not correspond to the term “industry”. This article acknowledges these observations as valid, and for the purposes of the conducted analyses, the term “sector” has been adopted. The sector comprises subsectors and industries of a similar nature; in this case, they are industries whose “activities are based on cultural values or other forms of artistic and individual or collective creative expression”, corresponding to the

definition adopted by the European Commission in the “Creative Europe” programme (European Commission, 2018). Due to the great difficulty in unequivocally assigning certain types of activities to either the creative sector or the cultural sector, and the significant impact of both sectors on socio-economic development, they are treated jointly in this article, which is also reflected in the used term “cultural and creative sector” (CCS).

It must be clearly emphasized that the term “cultural and creative sector” refers to a diverse group of activities “rooted” in culture and creativity. This diversity leads to numerous classifications of activities that make up this sector, depending on the position adopted by researchers. The result of this is various statistical data regarding the development of this sector and its share in the economy, which complicates comparative analyses (Stachowiak, Tomczak, 2015). In this context, it is appropriate to list the cultural activities considered in the conducted research. The cultural activities included in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Cultural activities adopted in the own study

Cultural activities based on the NACE classification	
1.	Printing and reproduction of recorded media
2.	Manufacture of jewellery and related articles
3.	Manufacture of musical instruments
4.	Retail sale of books in specialised stores
5.	Retail sale of newspapers and stationery in specialised stores
6.	Retail sale of music and video recordings in specialised stores
7.	Books publishing
8.	Publishing of newspapers
9.	Publishing of journals and periodicals
10.	Publishing of computer games
11.	Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities
12.	Programming and broadcasting activities
13.	News agency activities
14.	Architectural activities
15.	Specialised design activities
16.	Photographic activities
17.	Translation and interpretation activities
18.	Renting of video tapes and discs
19.	Printing and reproduction of recorded media
20.	Creative, arts and entertainment activities
21.	Cultural education
22.	Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities

Source: Eurostat.

To examine the regional diversity of the level of development of the cultural and creative sector in European countries, the Z. Hellwig development pattern method was applied, which belongs to the group of taxonomic linear ordering methods. In this method, the assessment of a multifaceted phenomenon is conducted based on an aggregated synthetic indicator. This indicator forms the basis for the hierarchy of the studied objects.

In the author's research on the creative and cultural sector, 8 diagnostic features were taken into account (Table 2). The selection of potential diagnostic variables was based on substantive, formal, and statistical criteria (Strahl, 2006). The set of diagnostic features includes 7 stimulants (features from x_1 to x_7) and one destimulant (x_8). They are derived from three Eurostat surveys (Eurostat, 2022). The diagnostic features regarding the number of enterprises, added value, and net turnover of the cultural and creative sector come from Structural Business Statistics (SBS). According to these statistics, the sector comprises 22 economic branches in the area of culture (Table 1). The diagnostic features illustrating employment in the cultural and creative industries come from the European Union Labour Force Survey (LFS). The international trade in cultural goods is illustrated by diagnostic features derived from the Eurostat Comext database. The diagnostic features considered in the study pertain to the years 2021 and 2022.

Table 2.

Diagnostic features adopted in the own study

	Name of the diagnostic feature
X ₁	Share of enterprises in the cultural and creative sector in the total number of enterprises in the non-financial sector (i.e., industry, construction, market services) (in %)
X ₂	Share of workers in the cultural and creative sector in the total number of workers in the non-financial sector (in %)
X ₃	Added value generated in the cultural and creative sector per employee (in thousand euros)
X ₄	Share of the added value of the cultural and creative sector in the total added value of enterprises in the non-financial sector (in %)
X ₅	Share of net turnover of the cultural and creative sector in the total turnover of enterprises in the non-financial sector (in %)
X ₆	Share of exports of products from the cultural and creative sector in the total exports of a given country (in %)
X ₇	Share of exports of products from the cultural and creative sector of the studied countries in the total exports of the European Union (in %)
X ₈	Share of imports of products from the cultural and creative sector in the total imports (in %)

Source: Original Research.

The Ward method, a hierarchical classification method, was used to cluster countries. The study was conducted based on standardized variables. Clusters were created using Euclidean distance. The application of the Ward method's effects was presented in the form of cluster trees—dendrograms (using the Statistica 13.1 program). This method allowed for the grouping of countries that are most similar to each other and simultaneously maximally different from others in terms of the identified characteristics defining the level of development of the culture and creative sector. In the conducted study, a critical value was established based on the analysis of the agglomeration process plot. After observing the largest increase, where multiple clusters form at approximately the same binding distance, a cut-off point is made, dividing the set into classes (Ward, 1963).

4. Research findings – diversification of the development of cultural and creative industries in European countries

The diagnostic features adopted in the research showed a significant degree of diversity. The coefficient of variation ranged from 35.3% to 171.7%. The European countries included in the study exhibited particularly similar shares of culture and creative sector enterprises in the total number of enterprises within the industry, construction, and market services sections, as well as similar shares of employment in this sector. For these diagnostic features, the coefficient of variation reached the lowest values, amounting to 35.3% and 37%, respectively. The highest share of culture and creative sector enterprises was observed in the Netherlands (11.76%), while the lowest was in Slovakia (3.06%). In Slovakia, the lowest share of employment in this sector was also noticeable (1.67%), in contrast to Belgium, which had the highest level of this share (6.86%).

European countries showed the greatest variation in the share of culture and creative sector products in the total export of the non-financial sector of the European Union—the coefficient of variation was 171.7%. The highest value of this indicator was in France (19.3%), while the lowest was in Cyprus (0.01%).

In light of the diagnostic features adopted for the research, the highest level of development in the culture and creative sector was noted in four countries: France, Cyprus, the Netherlands, and Malta (see Table 3).

Another group of eight countries is characterized by an average level of development in this sector. This group includes: Austria, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Poland, Finland, and Slovenia (see Table 3).

A low level of development in the culture and creative sector was observed in seven countries (Latvia, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Greece, Croatia, Lithuania, Hungary), while the lowest level was found in four countries: Luxembourg, Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia (see Table 3).

Poland achieved a relatively high 10th position in the ranking of the 23 countries included in the study. However, the Hellwig indicator characterizing the development of the culture and creative sector in Poland was nearly twice as low as that of the ranking leader—France. Poland represented a similar level of development in the sector as Spain and Finland. It is worth noting that, in light of the diagnostic features adopted for the study, a particularly low level of development in the culture and creative sector was characteristic of Slovakia. In this case, the Hellwig indicator was more than 14.5 times lower than in France and nearly 7.5 times lower than in Poland.

Table 3.

Ranking of European countries according to the level of development of the cultural and creative sector

No.	Country	The value of the synthetic Z. Hellwig index (di)
Countries with the highest index		
1.	France	0,419
2.	Cyprus	0,359
3.	Netherlands	0,311
4.	Malta	0,300
Countries with an average index		
5.	Austria	0,280
6.	Sweden	0,277
7.	Germany	0,244
8.	Belgium	0,239
9.	Spain	0,230
10.	Poland	0,219
11.	Finland	0,217
12.	Slovenia	0,201
Countries with a low index		
13.	Latvia	0,180
14.	Czechia	0,179
15.	Portugal	0,159
16.	Greece	0,149
17.	Croatia	0,144
18.	Lithuania	0,131
19.	Hungary	0,115
Countries with the lowest index		
20.	Luxembourg	0,092
21.	Romania	0,053
22.	Bulgaria	0,050
23.	Slovakia	0,029

Source: Own research.

In this study, an attempt was made to determine the critical value based on the analysis of the line plot of linkage distances against subsequent stages of the bonding process. From the analysis of the agglomeration graph, it can be concluded that the point of division on the dendrogram is at the 17th step (the longest vertical line in Figure 1). Thus, the linkage distance is positioned between levels 3 and 6.

The dendrogram division at a linkage distance level of 4 served as the basis for identifying seven groups of relatively homogeneous units, including single-, four-, and six-element clusters. Three countries formed separate, independent clusters. In the taxonomic analysis, two of these countries were classified into units with the highest level of development in the culture and creative sector, namely France and Cyprus, while Belgium was placed into the medium-level group. This indicates clear differences in the level of development of these countries compared to others.

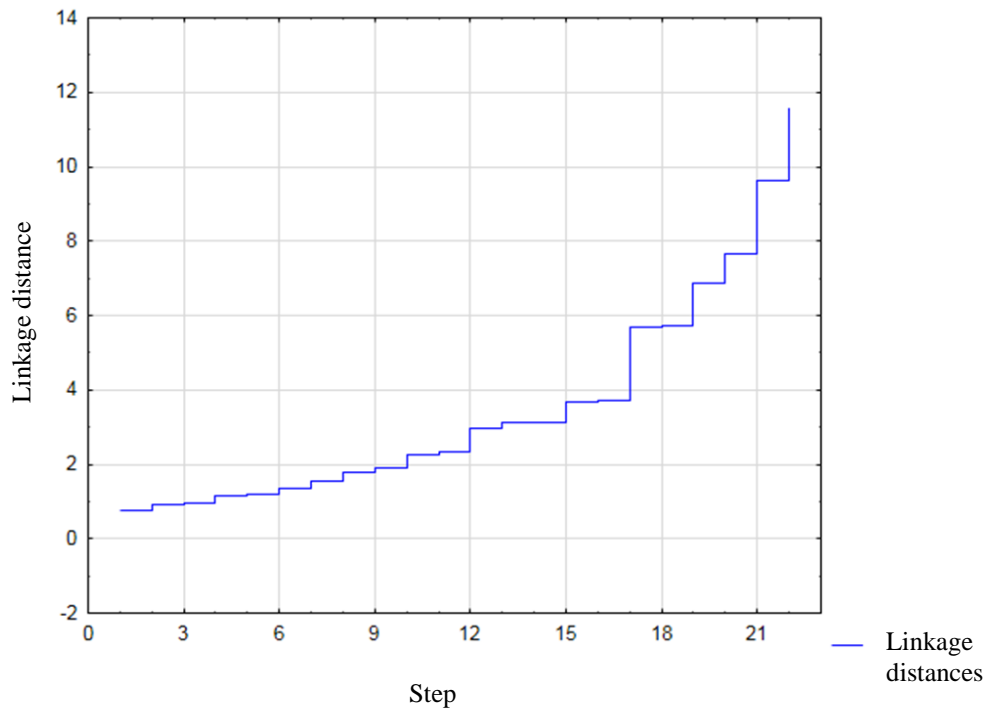


Figure 1. Agglomeration flow chart.

Source: Own research.

A four-element group consisted of two countries with a high Hellwig index level, namely Malta and the Netherlands, and two with a medium level, namely Austria and Sweden. Additionally, two six-element clusters were identified. First six-element cluster: Spain, Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, Latvia, Luxembourg. The first three countries in this cluster exhibit a medium level of CCS development, the next two have a low level, and the last, Luxembourg, has the lowest level. The second six-element cluster includes three countries with a low level of CCS development (Greece, Croatia, Portugal) and three with the lowest level (Bulgaria, Slovakia, Romania). The final, seventh group of clusters comprises four countries. Two of them, Lithuania and Hungary are characterized by a low level of CCS development, while Slovenia and Finland have a medium level.

Both methods presented — cluster analysis and linear ordering — group countries similarly in terms of their development in the CCS.

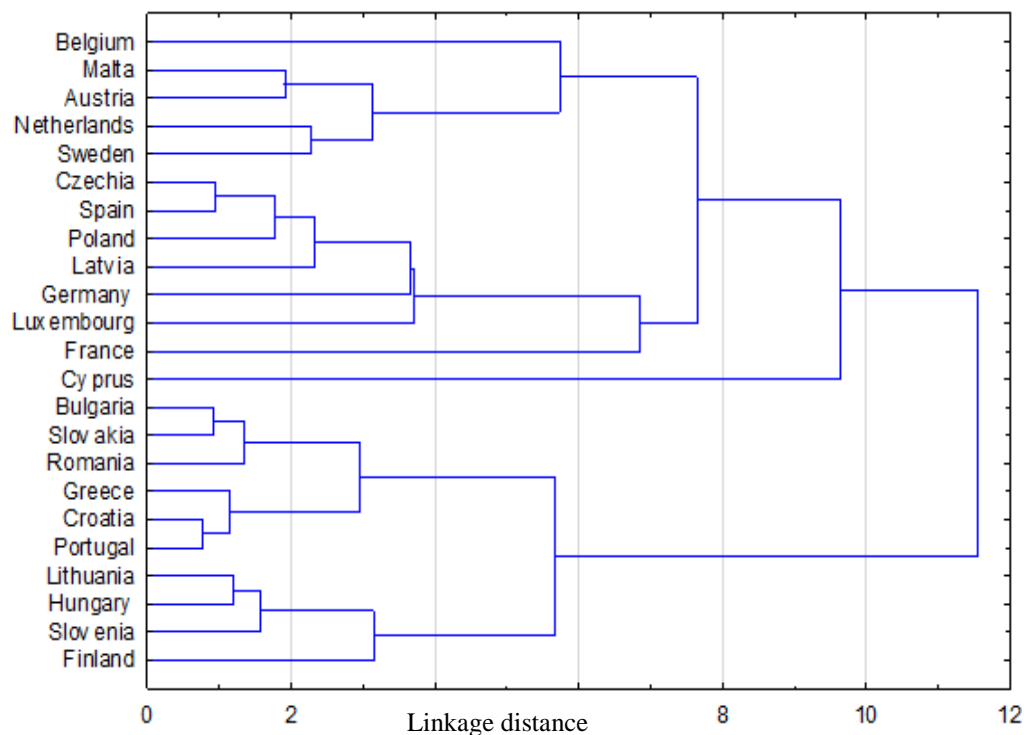


Figure 2. Similarity of European countries in terms of cultural and creative sector development based on the Ward method.

Source: Own research.

The remainder of the article focuses on a comparative analysis of the role of the cultural and creative sector in the Polish economy, against the background of selected European countries, especially France.

In 2021, Poland had 117,754 enterprises in the Culture and Creative Sector (CCS), which is 6.5 times more than Slovakia but 2.5 times fewer than France. The share of these enterprises in the total number of non-financial sector enterprises (i.e., industry, construction, market services) in Poland was 4.4%, compared to 6.8% in France. For comparison, the highest share of enterprises in the CCS was in Sweden, at 11.8%.

The CCS generates a significant number of jobs. In 2021, the European Union had nearly 4 million jobs in this sector, while Poland had close to 250,000. The proportion of employees in the CCS relative to the total number of employees in the non-financial sector was similar in Poland and France, at 2.2% and 2.5%, respectively.

The role of the CCS in the economy is also indicated by its contribution to value added. Analyses revealed a relatively high level of variation in this regard among European countries, with a coefficient of variation of 41%. Cyprus had the highest share of value added from the CCS relative to the total value added of non-financial sector enterprises (5.14%), while Slovakia had the lowest (1.01%). In Poland, the Culture and Creative Sector generated €5.6 billion in value added, which accounted for 1.71% of the total value added. The value added per employee in Polish enterprises in this sector was €40,600, nearly three times lower than the leader in this regard, Belgium. It was also below the European Union average of €72,900. However,

it is important to note that the value added of the CCS declined during the pandemic in most of the countries surveyed. According to UNESCO estimates, the overall contribution of the CCS to global value added dropped by 20-40% in 2020 (BPO Consulting, 2023). The total turnover of the CCS in the European Union also fell by over 30% (Święcicki, Ilnicki, Krawczyk, Biega, Wojnar, 2023). This trend was also observed in Poland, where the sector's share decreased from 2.1% in 2010 to 1.4% in 2019 (Święcicki, Ilnicki, Krawczyk, Biega, Wojnar, 2023). The shift to online activities did not allow sector entities to maintain their revenue at previous levels. According to K. Czyżewski, difficulties in operating online stemmed from a lack of skills to fully utilize digital tools and informational chaos leading to audience fatigue from content overload (Czyżewski, 2020).

It is worth noting the activity related to video game production, which generated a value added of €255.4 million in 2021. The dynamic growth of this activity is evidenced by the increase in the value of the video game market in Poland from PLN 2.38 billion in 2018 to PLN 6.03 billion in 2022 (Marszałkowski, 2023). Not all companies in this sector report high revenues. According to a PARP report, in 2022 there were 494 video game producers and publishers operating in Poland, but less than one-third recorded significant profits (Marszałkowski, 2023). This is largely due to the specifics of this market, particularly the production and publication cycle of a game. Preparing a game and its entire lifecycle can take several years, whereas revenues and costs are unevenly distributed over time (Marszałkowski, 2023). For many firms in this industry, this presents a significant barrier to their development. In this context, it is worth considering public support for such ventures, not in the form of non-repayable grants or various types of subsidies, but on the basis of later state participation in the profits achieved by the companies. This would, of course, require consideration of the potential risks associated with implementing such a project.

Video games created in Poland are known and appreciated beyond the country's borders, as reflected in the fact that 97% of production is exported to foreign markets. In 2021, Poland ranked prominently on the Top200 Steam wishlist (a ranking of the most anticipated titles) globally and was a leader in PC game production, particularly on the Steam platform. An analysis of the demand structure for games on the Top200 Steam list by country of origin revealed that 38% of the demand was for games developed by Polish creators. Poland outperformed the United States in this regard, where the share was 35% (Marszałkowski, Biedermann, Rutkowski, 2021). This indicates the immense growth potential of this industry.

Among the countries surveyed, France, Sweden, and Finland are leaders in terms of value added in the video game industry (see Figure 3). Poland ranked 7th, with the value added in this sector being similar to that of Spain (see Figure 3).

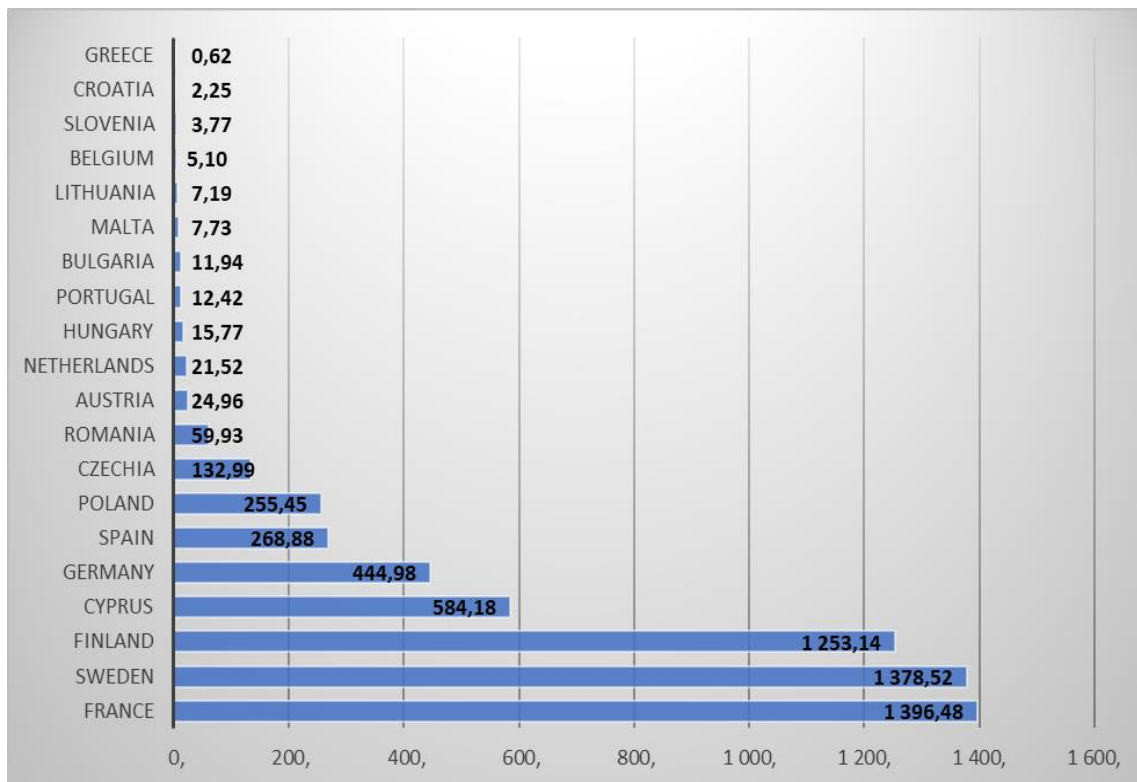


Figure 3. Value added in publishing of computer games (million euro) in European Countries in 2021. Source: Eurostat.

The high level of development of the CCS in France is also confirmed by statistical data on the share of export products of this sector in the total export of the country. In 2022, this share was 1.65%, the highest among the countries surveyed. Poland ranked 3rd in terms of this share, which was 0.98%. France also distinguished itself with the highest share—over 19%—of CCS products in the total export of the European Union. Poland's share was also significant, at 6.7%.

5. Conclusion

The author's research findings revealed significant variations in the level of development of the culture and creative sector among the European countries studied. France stands out as the clear leader in this area. The CCS plays a crucial role in the French economy, and the French government is aware of its growing importance on the international stage. This is reflected in the "Acceleration Strategy for the Culture and Creative Sector" for 2021-2025, which has a budget of EUR 400 million. The goal of this strategy is to create conditions for the emergence of so-called "unicorns," i.e., innovative companies with high market value, and to promote the export of CCS products and services. Additionally, the "France 2030" plan envisions France achieving a leading role in the production of cultural and creative content. This will be supported by investments in film studios and post-production facilities and by fostering virtual

reality technology. These efforts will be complemented by training courses for professions related to CCS.

It is important to note the unique nature of CCS products: unlike traditional material goods, they do not diminish through use. On the contrary, their utilization often leads to their enhancement and proliferation (Hausner, Karwińska, Purchala, 2017).

In this context, it appears that France, as a country with a significant share of CCS in the EU market, has already gained a substantial competitive advantage over many European countries and is likely to continue expanding it.

Similar to France, Sweden is also taking measures to develop the CCS, as evidenced by its “Creative Sweden” strategy. This strategy highlights, among other things, the significant export potential of CCS and the necessity of supporting it. The study also addressed issues of copyright.

Research has shown that Poland exhibits a relatively high level of CCS development, with its goods and services having the potential to become recognizable symbols of the country, as exemplified by the game “The Witcher”. However, achieving this requires a range of comprehensive actions.

In Poland’s economic development strategies, it is crucial to emphasize the economic role of activities in the field of culture and the arts. Despite ongoing debates about the negative effects of the commercialization of culture, this process is a reality, evident in the intensification of international competition in CCS and the actions taken by countries to support its development. Establishing the Creative Industries Development Centre by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in 2022 appears to be a positive step. The Centre's tasks focus on supporting the development of Polish creative industries, particularly game development, film, music, fashion, and visual and applied arts. Its objectives include: building an effective public support system for Polish creative industries; creating conditions for leveraging the potential of collaboration among different creative sectors and between Polish creative industries and other sectors; promoting understanding of the significance of creative industries for socio-economic development as well as for Polish culture and heritage; supporting Polish creative industries in the face of increasing international competition (Centrum Rozwoju Przemysłów Kreatywnych, 2022).

In the context of pro-development activities in CCS, it would be worth considering the creation of public financial support programs for particularly promising CCS sectors, based on subsequent state participation in the profits, which could then be reinvested in further projects.

Given the complex nature of formal matters in the culture and creative sector—especially regarding copyright and related rights—experts highlight the need for legal support for creators. The importance of this support is increasing, particularly with the development of streaming platforms and artificial intelligence (Święcicki, Ilnicki, Krawczyk, Biega, Wojnar, 2023). The importance of this support is particularly pronounced in the context of the development of streaming platforms and artificial intelligence. Unfortunately, the lack of implementation by

Poland of the EU Digital Single Market Directive (the so-called DSM Directive) is detrimental to this. Poland remains the only EU country that has not yet implemented this directive, despite the deadline having expired in 2021. According to the creators of the directive, the Copyright and Related Rights in the Digital Single Market Directive represents an opportunity to strengthen their position in negotiations with major digital platforms that impose their own favourable terms. Without bearing the costs of content creation, these platforms fully utilize and profit from it (Stawiany, 2024).

The development of artificial intelligence presents another challenge for CCS. It could radically transform this sector. In March 2024, the European Union adopted the AI Act (European Parliament, 2024), which aims, among other things, to create regulatory frameworks to ensure the safety and fair use of this technology. Creators are particularly concerned about the use of their works (databases, works of artists, writers, scientists, etc.) in the process of AI learning.

Poland's relatively high level of CCS development provides an opportunity to turn it into a promising source of building a lasting competitive advantage in the international market. However, this requires a series of significant economic, legal, and educational solutions.

The diversity in understanding the concepts of creativity and culture, and the complex nature of interactions between culture and creativity are limitations in research on the cultural and creative sector. This requires unification of definitions and indication of activities included in the sector cultural and creative industries.

This article is part of the ongoing research efforts to create coherent conceptual foundations for defining the cultural and creative sector and understanding its mechanisms of influence on the economy. The presented research may also contribute to further, more in-depth analyses of the impact of the cultural and creative sector on the socio-economic development of European countries.

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