

# DEFINITIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF “CREATIVE ECONOMY” FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

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## **Abstract**

The article presents a comprehensive study of the evolution of the “creative economy” concept in the context of contemporary transformations such as digitalisation and globalisation. The relevance of the topic is driven by the terminological ambiguity and scholarly divergence that hinder the formation of a unified conceptual framework. The aim is to analyse and systematise theoretical and methodological approaches to defining the creative economy across academic schools and international organisations, culminating in an integrated definition from a socio-geographical perspective. The study outlines nine key approaches: economic-functional, socio-urban, culture-centric, innovation-based, integrative, legal, culturally sustainable, critical, and socio-spatial. Each is examined through core concepts, scholars, and institutions. Special attention is paid to the socio-spatial approach, which views the creative economy as a spatially organised system with areas of concentrated creative activity (e.g., creative clusters and cities). The methodological base includes comparative and content analysis of definitions and policy documents (UNESCO, UNCTAD, EU, WIPO), and a review of works by key scholars (J. Howkins, R. Florida, C. Landry, D. Throsby, and others). As a result, the author formulates an integrated definition of the creative economy as a sector based on intellectual activity that generates value through the creation and commercialisation of culturally and intellectually enriched goods and services. It promotes economic growth, social inclusion, and regional identity. The article emphasises the need for interdisciplinary approaches and provides a theoretical basis for further applied research into the spatial dynamics and development potential of the creative economy.

**Key words:** creative economy, approaches to definition, conceptualisation, intellectual activity, creative activity, socio-spatial approach.

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# ДЕФІНІЦІЇ ПОНЯТТЯ “КРЕАТИВНА ЕКОНОМІКА” З ПОЗИЦІЇ СУСПІЛЬНОЇ ГЕОГРАФІЇ

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## Анотація

У статті представлено комплексне дослідження еволюції поняття «креативна економіка» в контексті сучасних трансформацій, зокрема цифровізації та глобалізації. Актуальність теми зумовлена термінологічною неоднозначністю та розбіжностями в наукових підходах, що ускладнює формування узгодженої концептуальної рамки. Метою дослідження є аналіз і систематизація теоретичних і методологічних підходів до визначення креативної економіки в контексті різних наукових шкіл і міжнародних організацій, із подальшим формулюванням інтегрованого визначення з позиції соціально-просторового підходу. У роботі виокремлено дев'ять ключових підходів: економіко-функціональний, соціально-урбаністичний, культуроцентричний, інноваційний, інтегративний, правовий, культурно-сталій, критичний і соціально-просторовий. Кожен з них проаналізовано через основні поняття, ключових дослідників і відповідні установи. Особливу увагу приділено соціально-просторовому підходу, який розглядає креативну економіку як просторово організовану систему з територіями концентрації творчої активності (наприклад, креативні кластери, міста). Методологічну основу становлять порівняльний аналіз визначень, аналіз документів міжнародних організацій (ЮНЕСКО, ЮНКТАД, ЄС, ВОІВ) та огляд праць провідних учених (Дж. Хокінс, Р. Флорида, С. Лендрі, Д. Тросбі та інші). Автор формулює інтегроване визначення креативної економіки як інтелектуально-орієнтованої сфери, що генерує додану вартість і культурну ідентичність через виробництво та комерціалізацію творчих продуктів, сприяє економічному зростанню, соціальній інтеграції та регіональній ідентичності. Наголошується на необхідності міждисциплінарних підходів та пропонується теоретична основа для подальших прикладних досліджень просторової динаміки та потенціалу розвитку креативної економіки.

**Ключові слова:** креативна економіка, підходи до визначення, концептуалізація, інтелектуальна діяльність, творча діяльність, соціально-просторовий підхід

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## **Introduction**

In the context of globalisation and the transformation of economic systems, the concept of the creative economy is gaining increasing significance. On the one hand, it serves as a strategic direction for the development of post-industrial society; on the other hand, it functions as one of the key factors in sustainable development, innovation, and territorial competitiveness. The shift from traditional forms of economic activity to an economy based on knowledge, innovation, and creativity has become a defining trend of the 21st century. The creative economy emerges at the intersection of culture, innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship, generating new models of economic growth grounded in intellectual capital and human creative potential.

The relevance of researching the conceptual foundations of the creative economy stems from the need to systematise and critically analyse existing theoretical and methodological approaches to defining this phenomenon. Despite the widespread use of the term “creative economy” in academic discourse, political strategies, and the programmatic documents of international organisations, there remains considerable terminological inconsistency and a diversity of interpretations. This multiplicity complicates the formation of a coherent understanding of the nature, structure, and functional characteristics of the creative economy as a socio-economic phenomenon.

The aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis and systematisation of theoretical and methodological approaches to defining the concept of creative economy from the perspectives of various academic schools and international organisations, in order to develop an integrated conceptual understanding of this phenomenon through the lens of social geography.

To achieve this objective, the following tasks have been identified: (1) to examine the genesis of the concept of creative economy and the evolution of theoretical and methodological approaches to its interpretation; (2) to carry out a comprehensive analysis of definitions of the creative economy proposed by various scholars and international organisations; (3) to propose an integrated definition of the creative economy from the standpoint of the social-geographical approach, based on the synthesis of existing theoretical concepts.

## **Literature review**

Over the past two decades, the issue of the creative economy has been at the center of attention for a wide range of scholars representing various academic disciplines and schools. The concept of the creative economy emerged as a means of highlighting the role of creativity as a driving force in contemporary economic life, asserting that economic and cultural development are not separate processes but can instead form part of a broader developmental trajectory (Nova Scotia..., 2013). A review of the academic literature reveals the

multidisciplinary nature of the research, encompassing economic, sociological, cultural, managerial, and political dimensions of the functioning of the creative economy.

The rise in popularity of the creative economy was preceded by a growing recognition of the role of culture in the socio-economic life of society. This recognition was grounded in the foundational work of scholars from the Frankfurt School of Economics (Kulturindustrie), notably Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who, in the first half of the 20th century, analysed mass production and the commercialisation of culture in capitalist society. The term “cultural industries” first appeared in the 1930s. The technological and IT revolutions, which introduced new tools for the production and communication of culture — as well as new forms of cultural activity — catalysed the transformation of cultural industries into creative ones. The traditional notion of “cultural industries” evolved into the broader term “creative industries”, and later into “cultural and creative industries”, a term adopted by the European Union to reflect the distinctions between these two categories of activity.

The term “creative industries” was first used in an Australian report titled *Creative Nation* in 1994, but gained widespread attention in 1997 when policymakers from the UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) established the Creative Industries Task Force. This terminology expanded the conventional scope of “cultural industries” beyond the arts to include their potential for commercial activity (Nova Scotia..., 2013). The term “creative industries” was officially introduced in 1998 in the DCMS report *The Creative Industries Mapping Document* (GOV.UK, 1998).

The concept of the “creative economy” emerged somewhat later. Its evolutionary development and conceptual understanding were shaped by the scholarly contributions of the foundational theorists in this field — John Howkins (concept of the creative economy) (Howkins, 2001), Richard Florida (concept of the creative class) (Florida, 2002, 2005), and Charles Landry (concept of the creative city) (Landry & Bianchini 1995; (Landry, 2000). Over time, the understanding of the creative economy has continued to evolve (Husieva & Niemets, 2025; Niemets, 2025).

An analysis of recent research and publications indicates the dynamic development of theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding the creative economy, along with the expansion of its research domain. At the same time, the issue of systematising and reconciling various conceptual approaches remains relevant, highlighting the need for continued theoretical and methodological advancement in this field.

## **Results: approaches and their description**

The concept of the creative economy is multifaceted and is examined from various perspectives by scholars, international organisations, and policymakers. Table 1 presents an overview of key theoretical and methodological approaches to defining this concept.

**Table 1. Theoretical and methodological approaches to defining the concept of creative economy (summarised and compiled by the author)**

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Essence and key characteristics</b>	<b>Key representatives</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
Economic-functional approach	The creative economy is viewed as a part of the economy composed of a set of clearly defined economic sectors and industries that generate added value through creative processes. The main emphasis is on the role of intellectual property and the measurable economic contributions and profitability of individual sectors.	John Howkins, United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), Richard Caves, John Newbigin, Peter Higgs etc.	economic sectors and industries, economic system, creativity, creative assets, innovation, intellectual property, economic value, economic growth
Socio-urban approach	The understanding of the creative economy is expanded to include not only traditional creative industries, but also other sectors where creativity is a key factor. The driving force of the creative economy is identified as the creative class. The primary centers of the creative class and the creative economy are cities.	Richard Florida, Charles Landry and others	economic system, creative class, new ideas, creative content, 3T (talent, technology, tolerance), creative city
Culture-centric approach	Emphasises the cultural dimension of the creative economy. The creative economy contributes to the development of identity, inclusivity, and sustainable development.	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), David Throsby, Ruth Towse, Walter Santagata and others	artistic and cultural goods and services, creative content of intangible and cultural nature, cultural self-expression, sustainable development, cultural capital, cultural value
Innovation-based approach	Emphasizes the innovative and digital nature of creative economies. The creative economy is seen as a foundation for innovation-driven economic development, with digital technologies integrated into the theory of the creative economy.	Stuart Cunningham, Janet Pagan, Peter Higgs, John Newbigin, United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) etc.	innovation, innovation system, creative economy 4.0, digital technologies, digital creative economy
Integrative approach	Integration of concepts from cultural and creative industries, cultural heritage, and digital technologies.	European Union (EU)	cultural and creative industries, cultural heritage, digital technologies
Legal approach	Emphasises the legal aspects of the creative economy.	World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)	intellectual property, copyright
Culturally sustainable approach	Highlights the link between the creative economy and sustainable development, focusing on cultural sustainability as an integral component of sustainable development and the potential of creative industries in addressing ecological and social challenges.	United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Joost Dessein, Katriina Soini, Inger Birkeland, Graham Fairclough and others	sustainable development, sustainable development goals, cultural sustainability, the role of culture in sustainable development
Critical approach	Analyses the creative economy from a critical socio-political perspective, rethinking the idea of the creative economy.	Kate Oakley, Jonathan Ward, David Lee, Justin O'Connor, Eleonora Belfiore, Dave O'Brien and others	over-commercialisation of culture, social inequality, precarious work, unequal and unfair labour distribution, high competition
Socio-spatial approach	Focuses on the relationship between urban development, creative industries, and the clustering of creative activity in metropolitan areas.	Richard Florida, Charles Landry, Allen Scott and others	creative cities, creativity index, urban development, creative clusters, creative industries

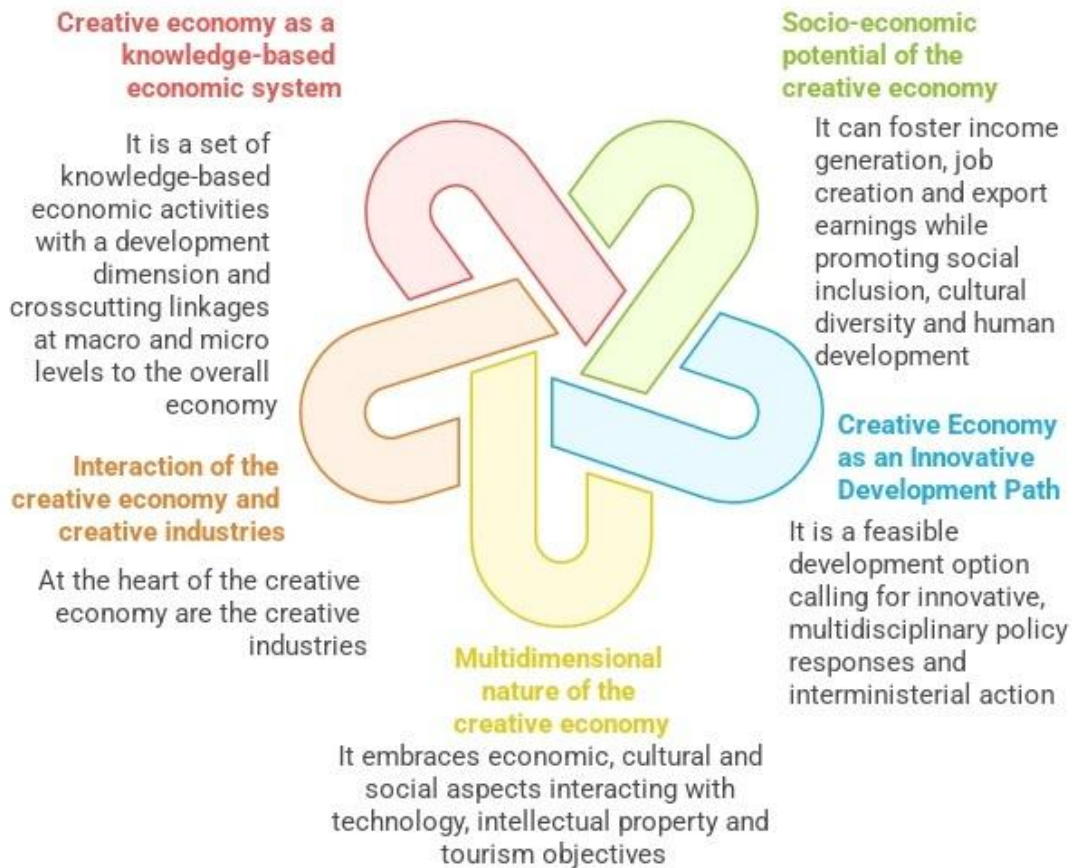
These approaches illustrate the diversity of perspectives on the creative economy, highlighting its importance not only for economic growth but also for social and cultural development. They also underscore the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach to policy-making in this field.

***Economic-functional approach (John Howkins, United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), Richard Caves, John Newbigin, Peter Higgs, etc.)***

John Howkins, often referred to as the “father” of the creative economy concept, in his seminal work *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas* (2001), described the creative economy as a new economic system in which value is determined not by traditional resources such as land or capital, but by originality and creativity. According to Howkins, the foundation of the creative economy lies in industries that produce and distribute creative products with economic value, protected by intellectual property laws. These encompass a wide range of sectors – from the arts and entertainment to design, fashion, and even technology (the author identified 15 creative sectors in total). He emphasised that creativity and innovation are the core drivers of these industries, leading to the creation of valuable intellectual property that can be protected and commercially exploited (Howkins, 2001).

Today, the most frequently cited definition of the creative economy comes from the UK’s Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). In its *Creative Industries Mapping Documents* (1998), the creative economy is defined as a set of economic sectors based on individual creativity, skill, and talent, with the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 1998). These principles were further developed by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) in the national review *Creative Economy Program* (GOV.UK.). This initiative accounts for greater differentiation both between and within creative economy sectors and focuses on identifying shared features – particularly the ways in which commercial value is created, where it originates, and how it can be enhanced. In this framework, creative industries are placed at the centre of a broader economy that increasingly relies on creative processes and services to maintain competitiveness (Nova Scotia..., 2013).

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the creative economy is an evolving concept based on creative assets that have the potential to generate economic growth and development (UNCTAD, 2024) (see Fig. 1). UNCTAD distinguishes between “upstream activities” – traditional cultural activities such as performing or visual arts – and “downstream activities”, which are closer to the market, such as advertising or publishing (Nova Scotia..., 2013).

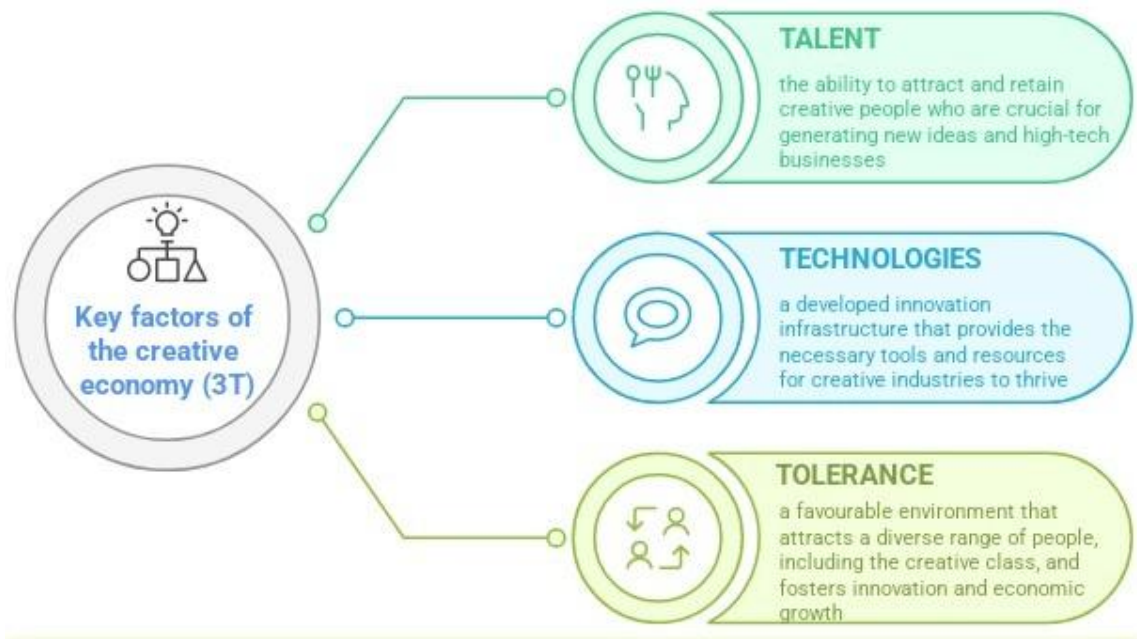


**Figure 1. The creative economy according to the approach of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (compiled by the author based on UNCTAD (2024))**

***Socio-urban approach (Richard Florida, Charles Landry, etc.)***

In his influential work *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (2002), Richard Florida proposed an alternative approach that focuses not on industries, but on human capital. He defined the creative economy as an economy driven by creative individuals – the “creative class” – whose work involves generating new ideas, technologies, and creative content. This class includes professionals in fields such as science and engineering, architecture and design, education, the arts, music, and entertainment, who create economic value through creativity (Florida, 2002).

A few years later, Florida expanded upon his ideas, suggesting that we are entering a “creative age” in which creativity becomes the primary driver of economic growth. He identified three key factors that contribute to the flourishing of the creative economy: talent, technology, and tolerance (see Fig. 2). These factors, often referred to as the “3T,” work together to attract and retain the creative class, which is vital for innovation and economic expansion. Florida viewed cities as the main centres of the creative class and, accordingly, as the hubs of the creative economy (Florida, 2002, 2005).



**Figure 2. Key factors in the development of the creative economy  
(compiled by the author based on Florida (2005))**

The idea of the creative economy is widely applied in urban economics and has led to the emergence of the concept of the creative city. Its author, Charles Landry, in his influential work *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* (2000), argues that cities possess one essential resource — people — whose creativity becomes the key driver of dynamic urban growth. As he writes: “*Human cleverness, desires, motivations, imagination and creativity are replacing location, natural resources and market access as urban resources. The creativity of those who live in and run cities will determine future success*” (Landry, 2000).

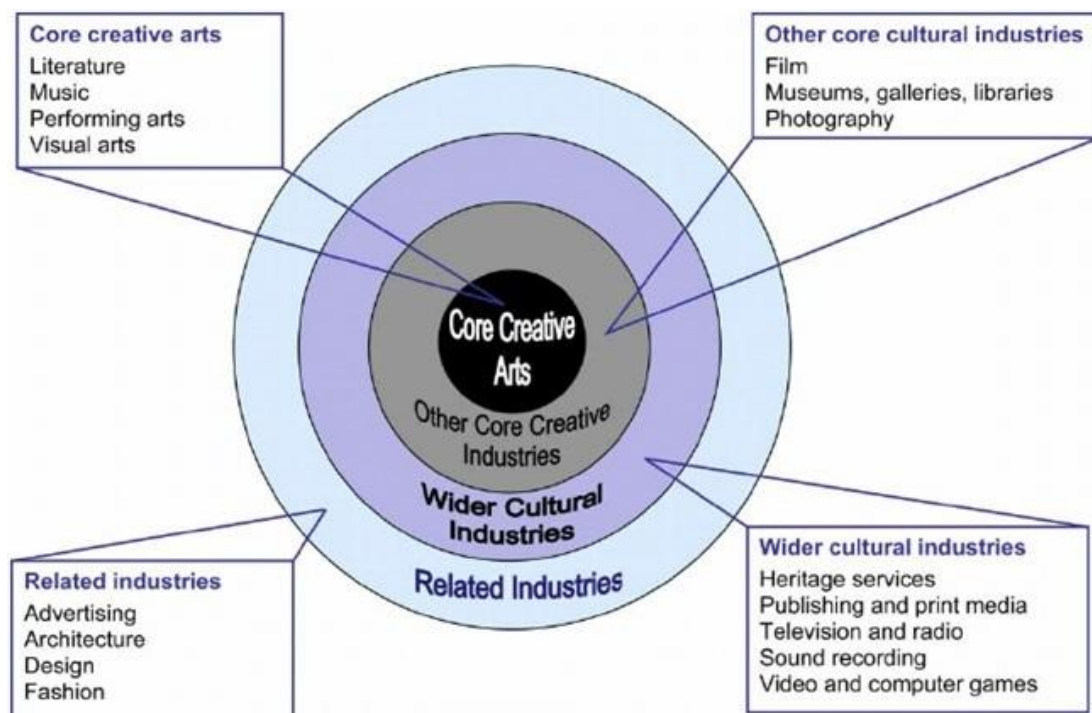
A city is considered creative when diverse cultural activity is an integral part of its economic and social functioning. Such cities are often built upon a strong social and cultural infrastructure, demonstrate relatively high levels of employment in creative sectors, and strive to attract domestic investment (Landry & Bianchini, 1995; Landry, 2000).

Thus, although Charles Landry did not provide a precise definition of the term “creative economy”, he strongly advocated the idea that the creative economy evolves within creative cities and is grounded in the ability of their residents to be creative — to generate new ideas, knowledge, and innovations — and to transform them into economic value.

***Culture-centric approach (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), David Throsby, Ruth Towse, Walter Santagata, etc.)***

UNESCO actively promotes the development of the creative economy — also referred to as the “Orange Economy” — as a driver of sustainable development, cultural diversity, inclusive

growth, and innovation. In its policy documents and initiatives, UNESCO emphasises the crucial role of the creative economy and creative industries in the contemporary world. For instance, the *2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* underscores the importance of diversity in forms of cultural expression as foundational to cultural and creative industries (UNESCO, 2005). The *UNESCO Global Report Re|Shaping Policies for Creativity – Addressing Culture as a Global Public Good* (2022) analyses policies that support the growth of the creative sector (UNESCO, 2022). The *UNESCO Creative Cities Network* (UCCN), established in 2004, fosters cooperation among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for their sustainable development (UNESCO, 2004).



**Figure 3. The concentric circles model of the cultural industries (Throsby, 2008)**

In summary, UNESCO defines the creative economy as one of the sectors of the global economy, founded on cultural and creative industries situated at the intersection of art, culture, commerce, and technology (UNESCO, 2021). Cultural and creative industries, in turn, encompass the creation, production, and commercialisation of creative content characterised by its intangible and cultural nature. This content – often protected by intellectual property rights – may take the form of goods or services, and includes not only artistic and cultural products, but also sectors such as architecture and advertising. Essentially, it is a knowledge-based sector of the economy that relies on creative and intellectual capital.

David Throsby, in his works *Economics and Culture* (Throsby, 2001) and *The Economics of Cultural Policy* (Throsby, 2010), developed a number of foundational concepts that shaped the modern understanding of the creative economy. He emphasised that cultural products possess dual value – economic and cultural. He drew a distinction between “cultural industries” and

“creative industries”, and advanced the concept of “cultural capital” as the fourth form of capital, alongside physical, human, and natural capital, defining it as an asset that embodies cultural value. As Throsby notes: *“Culture is not simply a sector of the economy – it is a foundation for social identity, cohesion and meaning. Its value goes beyond profit”*.

Of particular interest is Throsby’s model of concentric circles of cultural industries (Fig. 3). According to this model, creative ideas originate in the core of the creative arts – in the form of sound, text, and image – and then diffuse outward through a series of layers or concentric circles. As the distance from the centre increases, the proportion of cultural to commercial content decreases (Throsby, 1999). Throsby’s more recent publications focus on the relationship between cultural policy and the development of the creative economy under conditions of digital transformation (Throsby, 2010).

***Innovation-based approach (Stuart Cunningham, Janet Pagan, Peter Higgs, John Newbigin, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), etc.)***

Stuart Cunningham is one of the leading theorists and researchers in the field of the creative economy, particularly in the context of digital media, cultural globalisation, and innovation policy. Cunningham does not view the creative economy in isolation but rather as part of a broader innovation system that promotes economic growth through intangible intellectual output. This system interacts dynamically with the IT sector, education, research, and entrepreneurship, forming what is referred to as the “knowledge economy”. He argues that innovation in creative practices and business models is a key driver of growth. Cunningham proposes four models of the relationship between creative industries and the broader economy: (1) welfare, (2) competition, (3) growth, and (4) innovation (Higgs et al., 2007; Potts & Cunningham, 2010).

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and a number of other international organisations and researchers are actively developing the concept of “Creative Industries 4.0” and “Creative Economy 4.0.” The term “Creative Economy 4.0” refers to a developmental stage of the creative economy characterised by digitalisation (including the use of AI, big data, blockchain, AR/VR in creative processes), the deployment of networked platforms, co-creation (active consumer participation in content creation), globalisation and networked collaboration, as well as a strong emphasis on innovation, inclusivity, and sustainable development (UNCTAD, 2022; Escaith, 2022; Shkodina et al., 2023).

John Newbigin, one of the key architects of the creative economy concept in the United Kingdom, in his work *The Creative Economy: An Introductory Guide* (2010), highlights the central role of digital technologies in scaling the creative economy – from individual creators to global markets (Newbigin, 2010).

### ***Integrative approach (European Union)***

Within the framework of the *Creative Europe* programme (2021–2027), the European Commission has developed its own vision of the creative economy by integrating the concepts of cultural and creative industries, cultural heritage, and digital technologies (European Commission, 2021). It is important to note that the European Union uses the term “cultural and creative industries”, recognising the distinctions between these two categories of activity. Cultural industries are associated with “traditional” sectors such as cultural heritage, visual and performing arts, publishing, music, film, radio, television, print media, and photography. In contrast, the category of creative industries increasingly includes new sectors of the digital economy, such as software and IT services (Interreg EU, 2019).

Cultural and creative sectors consist of all industries whose activities are based on cultural values or other artistic, individual, or collective expressions of creativity, as defined in the legal framework of the *Creative Europe* Programme. These sectors are essential for the continuous development of society and are foundational to the creative economy. Being knowledge-intensive and rooted in individual creativity and talent, they generate substantial economic value. More importantly, they are crucial for fostering a shared sense of European identity, culture, and values.

From an economic perspective, these sectors demonstrate above-average growth rates and generate employment – particularly for young people – while also strengthening social cohesion (European Commission, 2024).

### ***Legal approach (World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO))***

At the core of the creative economy are creators who produce and deliver diverse forms of creative content. Public authorities and institutions bear responsibility for establishing a supportive infrastructure and implementing common rules that regulate the functioning of the creative economy. The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) plays a significant role in supporting the creative economy. It focuses on how intellectual property rights can be utilised to stimulate economic growth and development within this sector, particularly in developing countries. WIPO provides assistance to creative enterprises, helping them understand intellectual property, manage their intangible assets, and navigate the marketplace (WIPO, 2017).

According to WIPO's approach, the creative economy is based on industries that are directly or indirectly involved in the creation, production, manufacturing, broadcasting, and distribution of copyright-protected content. The emphasis is placed on intellectual property as the outcome of creative input embedded in goods and services. A distinction is made between industries that generate intellectual property and those that are primarily involved in the distribution of such goods and services to consumers. Additionally, a category of partially copyright-based industries is identified – those in which intellectual property constitutes only one component of their products and services (WIPO, 2003).

***Culturally sustainable approach (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Joost Dessein, Katriina Soini, Inger Birkeland, Graham Fairclough, etc.)***

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and a number of other international organisations and scholars are actively exploring the relationship between the creative economy and sustainable development. For example, the *International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development* (2021) highlighted the role of the creative economy in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNESCO, 2018).

In their publication *Culture in, for and as Sustainable Development* (2015), Joost Dessein, Katriina Soini, Inger Birkeland, and Graham Fairclough examine three roles that culture plays in sustainable development: culture in sustainable development, culture for sustainable development, and culture as sustainable development (Fig. 4). In all three roles, recognising that culture lies at the core of all human decisions and actions – and constitutes a comprehensive concern (even a new paradigm) in sustainability thinking – leads to an understanding of culture and sustainable development as mutually intertwined. As a result, the distinctions among the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability begin to blur (Dessein et al., 2015).

In her article *Exploring the Scientific Discourse on Cultural Sustainability* (2013), Inger Birkeland identifies seven major thematic strands in the academic discourse on cultural sustainability: heritage, vitality, economic viability, diversity, locality, eco-cultural resilience, and eco-cultural civilisation (Soini & Birkeland, 2014). These themes illustrate how culture can contribute to addressing ecological and social challenges through creative industries.

Thus, the research of Joost Dessein, Katriina Soini, Inger Birkeland, and Graham Fairclough confirms that a creative economy focused on cultural sustainability holds the potential to address the pressing environmental and social challenges of our time.



**Figure 4. Three Roles of Culture in Sustainable Development**  
(compiled by the author based on Dessein et al. (2015))

***Critical approach (Kate Oakley, Jonathan Ward, David Lee, Justin O'Connor, Eleonora Belfiore, Dave O'Brien, etc.)***

Kate Oakley, in her numerous works — particularly *Creative Economy, Critical Perspectives* (2018) — analyses the concept of the creative economy from a critical socio-political perspective. She explores ways to rethink the very idea of the creative economy and considers potential critical paths for its future. Oakley critiques the excessive commercialisation of culture, social inequality, precarious working conditions, and the uneven and unjust distribution of labour within the creative industries. She also points to the high entry barriers to labour markets faced by graduates of arts-related disciplines.

As Oakley notes, in some cases — especially in large cities — the enthusiasm for creative activity has diminished due to its overexposure, questionable return on investment, political reorganisation, and economic hardships triggered by financial crises. As she writes: “*There is a desire to reimagine what the creative economy can be if the benefits of good work are experienced evenly, and if the focus shifts from economic growth to foreground ethics, awareness of environmental limits, and a reinvigorated concern for the multiple values of culture*” (Oakley & Ward, 2018).

**Socio-spatial approach (Richard Florida, Charles Landry, Allen Scott, etc.)**

Significant contributions to the socio-spatial understanding of the creative economy were made by Richard Florida and Charles Landry who, although not formally geographers, developed spatially oriented concepts such as “creative cities” and “creative regions”. In his work *Cities and the Creative Class* (2005), Richard Florida established the connection between the spatial concentration of the creative class in cities and their economic development. He also introduced the “Creative Index” as a tool for assessing the creative potential of cities, regions, and countries (Florida, 2005).

Charles Landry, author of the creative city concept, promoted the idea — especially in his renowned work *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* (2000) — that the creative economy evolves within creative cities and is grounded in the capacity of urban residents to generate new ideas, knowledge, innovations, and to transform them into economic value (Landry, 2000).

Allen J. Scott, an American economic geographer and social theorist, has made substantial contributions to understanding the creative economy from the perspectives of economic geography, urban studies, and the spatial organisation of creative labour. His work is largely focused on the relationship between urban development, creative industries, and the clustering of creative activity in metropolitan areas. According to Scott, major cities — where creative clusters are formed — serve as key loci of the creative economy. This economy is based on the production of goods and services whose value is determined by their expressive or symbolic content, and it plays an increasingly important role in the economic growth of urban regions in the post-industrial world.

Regarding creative clusters, Scott wrote that by forming clusters, firms can economise on their spatial interrelations, gain numerous advantages from spatially concentrated labour markets, and leverage multiple information flows and innovation potentials that are present wherever a high concentration of diverse, specialised yet complementary producers exists (Scott, 2000).

Based on a comprehensive analysis of existing definitions, an integrated definition of the creative economy can be proposed: ***the creative economy is a specific sector of the economy based on intellectual activity that generates added value and new employment through the creation, production, and commercialisation of goods and services rooted in creative content, cultural value, and intellectual property.*** It integrates cultural industries, innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship, stimulating economic growth through intangible assets, fostering social inclusion and sustainable development, and shaping the unique identity of cities and regions.

Within the framework of the **socio-spatial approach**, the creative economy should be regarded as a territorially organised system characterised by several socio-geographical

features: spatial differentiation in the development of creative potential; territorial concentration of creative industries, resulting in distinct socio-geographical formations (creative clusters, cultural quarters, innovation cities, etc.); the influence of socio-geographical factors on the development of creative industries; and the cultural identity of regions.

## **Conclusions**

Despite substantial conceptual differences, several common features can be identified across most definitions of the creative economy. These include: the predominance of creativity in producing goods and services; recognition of the central role of intellectual and creative capital as drivers for creating economic value; intellectual and creative resources as key assets for enterprises across all forms of ownership; an emphasis on the interdisciplinary nature of the creative economy, which integrates cultural, economic, technological, and social aspects; attention to the intangible nature of creative products; acknowledgment of the human factor — creative abilities, talents, and skills — as fundamentally important; highlighting the innovative potential of the creative economy and its capacity to generate new ideas and concepts; and generating profit primarily from the consumer value (utility) of economic products, whose primary worth lies in intellectual rather than material components.

Among the conceptual challenges identified are terminological inconsistency (parallel usage of terms such as "creative economy", "cultural economy", "knowledge economy", "cultural industries", and "creative industries" without clear differentiation); methodological difficulties (complexity in measuring the "creative component" of economic activity and its economic effects); cultural specificity (variability in understanding creativity and its economic manifestations across different cultural contexts); dynamic nature (continuous transformation of forms of creative activity and business models within creative industries, complicating their characterisation); interdisciplinarity (gaps among economic, cultural, sociological, and geographical approaches to studying the creative economy); and the political context (use of the creative economy concept as a tool in political discourse and economic policy, which complicates objective analysis).

Thus, a comprehensive analysis of creative economy definitions reveals conceptual diversity and theoretical heterogeneity. Each of the examined approaches highlights specific aspects of the creative economy, yet none provides a complete understanding of the phenomenon. This underscores the complexity and multidimensionality of the creative economy, which cannot be adequately described within a single disciplinary paradigm. Future research prospects are linked to the study of the creative economy within the object-subject framework of social geography, the development of integrative approaches that synthesise diverse conceptual perspectives, and the consideration of the dynamic nature of the creative economy under conditions of digital transformation, globalisation, and ongoing sociocultural change.

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