

Call for Papers – European Journal of Cultural Studies – Special Issue

Submission Deadline: 31st December 2010

Cultural Intermediaries in Context: Locating Identity and Practice in the Formation of Value

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There has been an increase in research around cultural intermediaries in recent years, jumping off from Special Issues in Cultural Studies in 2002, and Consumption, Markets and Culture in 2004. This Special Issue is intended to move the field forward by foregrounding the issue of context: how does location (across and within cultural fields; across and within societies; across and within time periods) impact on the identities and practices of cultural intermediaries? The Special Issue will offer a timely collection that examines the present understanding of the cultural intermediary, and the materiality of their cultural work in the formation of value.

The operations of cultural intermediaries in commodity chains have developed as a recent focus of attention for the sociology of culture and cultural studies. Rooted in the work of Bourdieu (1984), and taken up within discussions of a radically new stage of capitalism (e.g. Featherstone 1991; Lash & Urry 1987), cultural intermediaries have more recently been the focus of a range of studies loosely grouped under the banner of 'cultural economy' (e.g. du Gay and Pryke, 2002). This body of research has examined the role of cultural intermediaries in mediating between the production and consumption of cultural goods, and their place more generally within the organization of economic and cultural life. However, attention to cultural intermediaries' identities and lifestyles has yet to be fully integrated with close investigation of their material practices of mediation. Furthermore, research has thus far focused largely on single case studies of occupations, despite the clear significance of cultural location and context for the formation of value—for example, at different stages within the 'career' (Méadel and Rabeharisoa 2001) of a product, or for the same occupation operating within different fields. Thus, the interconnections of various intermediaries operating in and across various fields, and how such cultural work can be conceptualised generally remain fertile areas for further study, discussion and debate.

Empirically-grounded contributions might consider a range of issues including, but not confined to:

- theoretical conceptualizations of the cultural intermediary and the intersection of identity and practice (including the tensions and synergies present in definitions of the cultural intermediary and their work, as offered by Bourdieu and later cultural economy studies);
- the role of context (including education, patterns of professionalization, class habitus) in the formation of cultural intermediary 'dispositions' and the tensions that arise between objective credentials and subjective dispositions, intuition, aesthetic sensibilities and so forth in the performance of authority;
- the role of cultural location in the selection and deployment of 'devices' for the formation of value (including the specific, material practices involved in bringing goods to market, identifying (with) and understanding the intended market, performing credibility—for themselves and their goods—via the mobilization of different forms of capital, and so forth);
- the ecology of cultural intermediaries within commodity chains (the 'regimes of mediation' (Cronin 2004), and the status, relative weight and interconnections of cultural intermediaries operating within the same and across fields);
- cross-cultural comparisons of cultural intermediaries operating within the same field, and cross-field comparisons of cultural intermediaries operating at comparable positions in different commodity chains (calling attention to the relative universality, or cultural- or field- specificity, of particular forms of value and their production);
- comparisons of cultural intermediaries operating in the same field, but working with goods that occupy different status positions (calling attention to the question of autonomy for those working with goods of restricted production compared with those working with goods of mass production).

Submissions:

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If you have any queries regarding the suitability of your potential contribution please contact either of the guest co-editors:

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Submissions should be sent electronically as Word documents to Jennifer Smith Maguire (email: jbs7@le.ac.uk). If this is not possible, then please send five copies to Jennifer Smith Maguire, Department of Media & Communication, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH, UK.

Papers, in English, should include an abstract of 100-150 words, with a suggested target of about 7,000 words (including notes and references). For specific manuscript submission guidelines, please go to: <http://www.uk.sagepub.com/journalsProdManSub.nav?prodId=Journal200898&crossRegion=antiPod>