

Cultural Policies and Creative Cities: concept and approaches.

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SUMMARY

Currently, the informational economy has become a cultural economy, which has made culture a driving force for new market demands. A variety of projects, plans and urban policies that use culture as a main theme have been disseminated in the last three decades. The use of cultural aspects has several dimensions and should be used as an element of enrichment and not as a commodity which the intended result is only profit.

The article seeks to present introductory concepts regarding culture, the culturalization of cities, cultural policies and creative cities, in order to briefly discuss this very complex field of action.

KEYWORDS: Cultural Policy. Creative Cities. Culture.

INTRODUCTION

The etymological origin of the word dates back to the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the following, from the Germanic term Kultur, that symbolizes all aspects of a community. "Culture" is a concept of several conceptions, the most common being the generic definition¹ formulated in 1877 by Edward Tylor, who defines it as a complex set that encompasses knowledge, art, beliefs, morals, law, customs and all others. habits and skills acquired by man as a member of society (TYLOR, 1924).

Culture definitions were performed by several authors. Linton (1971) reports that, in general, culture is the social and total heritage of humanity. He complements by saying that, in a specific way, culture means a certain variant of the social heritage. Therefore, the culture as a whole is made up from several cultures (each of which reflects a characteristic of a certain group of individuals). According to Laraia (2001), the symbolic construction of man, when interpreting and modifying the world, is called culture.

In an in-depth study, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) found at least 167 different definitions for the term culture. Jacques Barzun denounces the conceptual saturation of the use of the word culture saying: "Culture – what a word! Until a few years ago, it meant two or three related things, easy to grasp and keep separate. Today, it is an all-purpose piece of jargon, covering a heteroclitic mix of things that overlap themselves" (BARZUN, 2002, p.14).

As it was strongly associated with the concept of civilization in the 18th century, culture is often confused with notions of education, good customs, development, etiquette and elite behavior. This fact occurred mainly in France and England in the 18th and 19th centuries, where culture referred to an elite ideal (ELIAS, 2000). In this way, the dichotomy between "high culture" and "popular culture" arises, best represented in the texts of Matthew Arnold (1994 - original 1869), still strongly present in the imagination of Western societies. Chauí (2000) associates this division of culture, specifically elite culture and popular culture, with the concepts of community and society. A community is a collectivity where people know each other, share the same feelings and ideas and have a common destiny. Society, on the other hand, is a collectivity internally divided into groups and social classes (which are related through the mediation of institutions such as the family, school, company, commerce, political parties, the State, among others), antagonistic to each other, and in which there are individuals isolated from one another.

1 CULTURALIZATION

The cultural incorporation into planning and urbanism, according to Vaz (2004), can be divided into two periods: when culture becomes part of the resources of urban practice, and at an extreme, when this culture becomes a commodity. The first, in the 60's and 70's, refers to the revitalization associated with memory, heritage, and local demands in which artistic and anthropological values stand out. The second, in the 80's and 90's, refers to commodification, globalization and the spectacularization of the city and culture, in which the greatest value is economic.

A variety of projects, plans and urban policies that use culture as a main theme have been disseminated in the last three decades. As demonstrated by Peter Hall (2001), the informational economy becomes a cultural economy, which makes culture “a driving force” (ARANTES, 1998) to the new demands of the market.

Whether dealing with the preservation of historic sites, the occupation of degraded areas or urban voids, the central revitalization or peripheral areas, or even urban expansion, the tonic of the interventions lies in the rehabilitation or recreation of historic environments, in the construction of cultural facilities in the careful design of public spaces, in the use of public art and cultural animation, among other resources. The results of this process have been criticized and discussed in the fields of architecture and urbanism, planning and the social sciences. The well-known processes of gentrification are criticized, but also new processes for which new terms are being coined.

The term “culturalization” has been widespread, referring both to revitalized spaces and to the planning and urbanism practice that engenders them. Related to it, according to Vaz (2004), new terms are being used, such as: aestheticization, patrimonialization, museification, mediatization and spectacularization. In the field of urban planning and urbanism, other expressions and terminologies were also used, such as: “cultural districts”, “places”, “poles”, “cultural engineering” (HAUMONT, 1996), “cultural planning” (EVANS, 2001), “cultural planning” (WERVIJNEN, 2000), “cultural regeneration” (WANSBOROUGH & MAGEEAN, 2000), “culturalization of the city” (MEYER, 1999 and HAUSSERMAN, 2000), among others.

Among the multiple approaches that deal with the relationship between Urbanism and Culture, researchers such as Harvey (1992), Arantes (1998 and 2007), Meyer (1999) and Vaz (2004) stand out.

2 CULTURAL POLICY

For Souza (2006), there is no single, or even better, definition of what public policy is, however, several authors try to define it. In a simplified definition, Dye (1984) describes that public policy is what the government chooses to do or not to do. For Lynn (1980) it is a set of government actions that will produce specific effects. Peters (1986) complements by arguing that it is the sum of the activities of governments, which act directly or through delegation, and which influence the lives of citizens. Through this thought, Laswell (1936) identifies that decisions and analyzes about public policy imply answering the following questions: who gets what, why and what difference does it make.

Cultural policies can be defined, according to Canclini (2001, p.65), as a set of interventions carried out by different agents, such as the State, civil institutions and organized community groups “in order to guide symbolic development, satisfy the needs of the population and to obtain consensus for a type of order or social transformation”. Teixeira Coelho Neto (1997, p. 292) complements this definition by stating that the initiatives of these agents aim to “promote the culture production, distribution and use, the historical heritage preservation and dissemination and the bureaucratic apparatus ordering responsible for them”. The author also considers cultural policy as a “cultural structures organization science” that aims to study the different modes of proposing and organizing these initiatives, as well as understanding their meanings in the most different social contexts (TEIXEIRA COELHO NETO, 1997).

According to Botelho (2001), culture can be divided into two dimensions from the public policy point of view: anthropological and sociological. In anthropology, “culture is produced through the social interaction of individuals, who elaborate their way of thinking and feeling, building their values, managing their identities and differences and establishing their routines” (BOTELHO, 2001, p. 21). Thus, individuals build a small world of meaning around them that provides them, as Certeau (2014, p.39-44) indicates, “symbolic balances, compatibility contracts and more or less temporary commitments”. These construction factors of the universe are supported by the regional origins of each individual, in function of diverse interests; professional, cultural, economic, sports, gender, ethnic origin, generation, etc. In this way, socialization is the fundamental key to this dimension. For such a culture to be included in public policies, a “reorganization of social structures and a distribution of economic resources” (BOTELHO, 2001, p.74) is necessary, which results in a great challenge for the reach of culture managers. The sociological dimension of the culture is a diverse set of professional, institutional, political and economic demands, which has visibility in itself. It composes a universe that generates, or intervenes, in an organizational circuit, whose complexity makes, generally, the focus of attention of cultural policies, that leaves the renegade anthropological plan simply to the discourse (BOTELHO, 2001).

Bianchini and Parkinson (1993) demonstrate the changes that have taken place in cultural policies, which reinforces the reflection on the increased use of cultural policies in recent decades. In the 50's and 60's, the theme was neutral, unimportant, non-politicized, however, after 68, when there was an association of cultural action with political action, transformations occurred. The cultural policies of the 1970s were marked by an emphasis on community development, participation, the democratization of public space, the revitalization of social life through cultural animation and urban redesign. In the 1980s, this more socially-oriented theme was left aside to focus on economic development, influenced by the climate of neoconservatism and neoliberalism. However, it was not just an instrument to diversify the local economic base or to achieve social cohesion, but subsidies gave way to incentives and exemptions for investments, social movements to partnerships, planning to urban design, revitalization to urban requalification. And this, to maximize the local economic potential, emphasized the urban image and emblematic cultural projects (festivals, exhibitions, annual promotion of European capital cities of culture, outstanding cultural buildings, etc.).

3 CREATIVE CITIES

The concept of creative cities has been spreading in the last twenty years due to a convergence of several factors, such as the search for a socio-economic paradigm suited to the post-industrial context; intense globalization and the appreciation of local identities and cultures; the dissemination of information and communications technologies; revealing urban statistics and the growing concern with urban sustainability (REIS, 2009).

This topic was addressed due to the fundamental role that culture exerts in actions related to the creative industries.

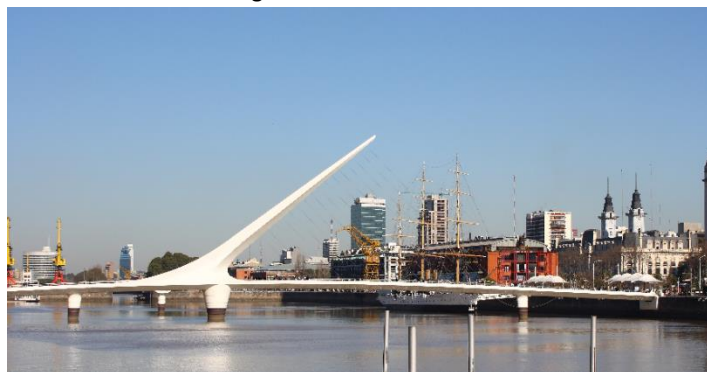
In addition to the obvious symbolic associations, also for the economic and social benefits that it materializes: as a result of economic sectors, as a dynamizer of traditional sectors, as a source of inspiration for society as a whole and for the indispensable formation of a belonging sense to the community (REIS, 2009, s.p).

While most authors dedicated to the topic do not present a clear definition of creative city, the definition coined by Canadian Policy Research Networks (2004) stands out:

Creative cities are places of experimentation and innovation, where new ideas flourish and people from all areas come together to make their communities better places to live, work and recreate. They are based on different types of knowledge, think holistically and act with the knowledge of economic, social, environmental and cultural interdependence; use public participation to address complex issues, [...] and perennial urban problems of housing, inclusion, preservation and development.

The objective of urban, economic and social revitalization policies has been strongly based on culture and creativity. Examples given by Australia (Sydney, Melbourne), Spain (Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao), England (London, Birmingham) and Buenos Aires, which invested in the recovery of the Puerto Madero region (Figure 01), implemented the Observatory of Industries Cultural Centers and applied for the title of City of Design, granted by UNESCO in 2005.

Figure 01: Puerto Madero



Source: Personal collection, 2010.

On the other side of the planet, the Queensland University, Australia, created the first degree course in Creative Industries. In 2003, the Osaka University, Japan, implemented a Postgraduate course in Creative Cities, with the objective of “developing leaders responsible for the economic and social development of metropolitan areas” (OSAKA CITY UNIVERSITY, 2009).

Several researchers are involved in this awakening about the city and culture. One can cite Charles Landry with his emblematic publication "The Creative City" in 2000 and the first doctoral thesis on the subject in Brazil by Ana Carla Fonseca Reis in 2011 entitled “Creative Cities: analysis of a concept in formation and the relevance of its application to the city of São Paulo”.

3.1 THE EXPANSION OF CREATIVE CITIES

The concept of creative cities arises driven by discussions about a new economy: the creative economy. This, on the one hand, draws on the sources of the knowledge economy, characterized by the knowledge centrality in regional generating competitiveness; in the global performance of economic sectors, markets and finance, made possible by new technologies; in the networks organization (CASTELLS, 2000).

In the early 1990s, Australia proposed the concept of creative industries and began to influence other countries, especially English-speaking ones, due to their socioeconomic potential. In this way, the United Kingdom becomes the biggest application supporter of the concept.

In England, in 1997, with the rise of New Labor, the newly elected Tony Blair determined that the creative industries would constitute a pillar of economic growth, in view of the decline in the global competitiveness of the British manufacturing sector. For this, the Labor government instituted the "Creative Industries Taskforce", which in 2001 coined the definition that creative cities are those that have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and that have the potential to create income and jobs through the generation of and exploitation of intellectual property. This includes advertising, architecture, art and antiques markets, crafts, design, fashion, film and video, leisure software, performing arts, publishing, computer games, television and radio (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2009).

The success of the program was celebrated in economic terms (the creative sector represents 8% of British GDP and accounts for around 2 million jobs, with 95% of companies having up to five employees) and social terms (increasing tolerance, increasing diversity, flourishing of innovative projects in the social sphere). Such results gave the government the ambition to transform the country into the most important creative center in the world (DEPARTAMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT, 2009).

In Brazil, the concept of creative industries is still under discussion. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) questions the emphasis on intellectual property adopted by the British government and proposes a debate on a more suitable version for developing countries, including folklore, cultural tourism, heritage and training (UNDP, 2006) . In both contexts, in developed and developing countries, the discussion is promoted regarding the creative economy potential to foster the social and economic development of urban regions, thus favoring the “creative cities” emergence.

A pioneering initiative related to cities appeared in the Scottish city of Glasgow, in 1994, when the “Creative City Workshop” was organized. It was the first step of what would become a long-term project to map and encourage research and practical initiatives to explore the creative potential of cities in the world (BIANCHINI and LANDRY, 1995).

The course of the debates concluded by the need to create hard (network of creative institutions and their physical spaces) and soft (social networks, human interactions and flow of ideas) infrastructure of a creative environment (creative milieu). In fact, recognition of the importance of experiences exchanging, information and processes between creative cities led to the formation of the Canadian Creative Cities Network, made up of officials from the country's city halls. According to the network, the benefits of investing in the creative sector permeate the economic sphere, but expand in favor of building self-esteem and community identity, improving quality of life and favoring personal and social development (CREATIVE CITY NETWORK OF CANADA, 2009).).

Another network was created by UNESCO. Gathered in seven creative centers (literature, music, cinema, folklore, design, media and gastronomy), the Creative Cities Network motivated the participation of cities in countries as diverse as Colombia, Egypt, Scotland, Argentina, Germany and the United States.

Sectors such as the cultural industries (audiovisual, music, photography, books and periodicals, etc.), as well as fashion, design, architecture, software and advertising, convey values and ideas, while generating a significant economic impact. Thus, creative products and services (including education and training, digital communication infrastructure, among others; necessary for the maintenance of the creative economy) are now defined by several countries and cities as the focus of their investment. Such is the case of the City of Vienna or the government of Singapore, which declared that the creative economy is one of their three priorities (MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE, 2009).

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to a study developed by the World Bank, regions that aspire to become creative must pay attention to four aspects: communications infrastructure and social services; social and cultural areas, such as parks, restaurants and shopping centers; tolerance for diversity, resulting in freedom of thought and expression and macroeconomic stability (WORLD BANK, 2003).

These actions, taken together, should favor the creation of an attractive environment for companies and creative entrepreneurs, be they a) artists, intellectuals, architects, scientists and other professionals who have creativity as their basic raw material, b) companies that transform this creativity in products and services (such as cultural industries, fashion, design, advertising, software, architecture) or even c) companies and institutions that feed the creativity chain (e.g. educational institutions, research centers, places of social interaction, cultural facilities), favoring the emergence of innovations. According to the City of Melbourne's 2030 strategy, the biggest attractive factors for creative people are a clean environment, a tolerant society, cultural wealth and a high level of education or training (AUSTRALIAN FABIAN SOCIETY, 2004).

Recognition of the potential for socio-economic inclusion (through the generation of new businesses and alternative models of organization) of human creativity, combined with its omnipresence in society, offers a wide range of opportunities for urban development. However, mapping the obstacles and opportunities offered by creativity and promoting an urban development policy that actually promotes creative regions represents an enormous challenge. This is due to three factors: a) the creativity intangibility, in a context of economic evaluation based on indexes that are already consolidated and unrelated to creativity; b) the topic novelty, especially in developing countries; c) the difficulty of isolating such complex variables as quality of life, regional attractiveness and level of innovation, which requires a transversal vision of urban policies, contemplating economic, social and cultural aspects.

The challenge proposed is, however, proportional to the potential for increasing regional competitiveness that it presents. In a global context in which competitiveness is no longer based on mere cost aspects and the advantages provided by new technologies greatly reduce entry barriers and innovation cycles, the great differential is in fact given by activities capable of generating greater aggregate value.

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