From Creative Nations to Creative Cities: An example of center–periphery dynamic in cultural policies

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ABSTRACT

Based on the theoretical framework developed by Bonet and Négrier (2010), we will analyze the dialectic between cultural policies and the center–periphery dynamic: the tension between legitimization and efficiency on the one hand, and on the other, the combination of differentiation and standardization. In the second part, we will consider the tensions between the principles of legitimacy and of efficiency in cultural policies as they manifest themselves within the center–periphery dynamic. Here, we will also devote some time to studying the implementation of the arts council's model in Quebec and Catalonia. In the third part, we will expand upon factors such as the institutional system, the market, the non-profit sector, and the political strategies which influence the expansion of the concept of 'Creative Cities' revealing a general shift of cultural policies towards sub-national, regional and local policies, before concluding on a more general note.

Introduction

Since the 1990s, a number of countries have adopted the concept of 'Creative Nation' to renew their cultural policy framework. From Australia (1994) to England (1997), from New Zealand (2000) to Scotland (2009), these countries have promoted their cultural identity by branding their culture and extending their policy framework to include the creative economy: "In the past, the cultural policies of governments at all levels and in many countries were focused on the creative arts. In more recent times, the rise of the so-called creative economy and the growth of the cultural industries have shifted the policy emphasis towards the economic potential of the arts and culture sector. Rapid developments in information and communications technology have contributed significantly to this shift, as new means for the production, distribution and consumption of cultural goods and services come on stream." (Throsby, 2010, p. 134).

Radbourne (1997, p. 271) has identified the factors which support this shift in cultural policy: an elevation in status of arts and cultural development in government planning and policy priorities, a surge in economic impact studies and statistics, a new rationale for government investment that goes beyond the traditional "public good", the inclusion of the arts and cultural industries in a larger creativity concept, as well as an increased emphasis on audience development, marketing, sponsorships stimulation and international exportation development.

Propelled by the knowledge and information-based economy, the creative economy now includes architecture, art, communications, cuisine, design, entertainment, experience-based learning, fashion, film, literature, media, music, performing arts, photography, tourism and video games (Nielsen, 2008, p. 17).

During the same period, the concept of 'Creative Cities' has became, at the local and regional level, a new economic development strategy to position cities and regions in the global economy and boost cultural tourism. Both the 'Creative Nation' and the 'Creative Cities' concepts encompass the same conceptual framework, but as the 'Creative Nation' trend is slowly fading away, the concept of "Creative Cities" continues to expand in a number of countries.

We believe that the shift from 'Creative Nation' to 'Creative Cities' is a good example of center–periphery dynamics in cultural policy and we propose an analysis of Canadian and Spanish cultural policies to explain this shift. Indeed, both countries have a federal philosophy of shared responsibility for culture at the central (federal), regional

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(sub-national/provincial/autonomous communities) and local (municipal) levels. Even if the Spanish and Canadian cultural policies have evolved differently according to their respective historical context, they provide pertinent examples of the dynamic relationships between center and periphery in cultural terms.

To study the different aspects of these relationships, we will principally focus on three areas. The first is an institutional analysis, which will allow us to determine the place of each actor within the network of cultural policies as well as the horizontal and vertical interactions which link them within an historical perspective. The second is an analysis of the public financing of culture, which will permit us to measure the quantitative impact of cultural policies within the center–periphery dynamic. The third is an analysis of the growth of the 'Creative Cities' movement, which will propose a comparative approach to the dynamics of the regional and local communities.

Based on the theoretical framework developed by Bonet (2010), we will analyze the dialectic between cultural policies and the center–periphery dynamic: the tension between legitimization and efficiency on the one hand, and on the other, the combination of differentiation and standardization. In the second part, we will consider the tensions between the principles of legitimacy and of efficiency in cultural policies as they manifest themselves within the center–periphery dynamic. Here, we will also devote some time to studying the implementation of the arts council's model in Quebec and Catalonia. In the third part, we will expand upon factors such as the institutional system, the market, the non-profit sector, and the political strategies which influence the expansion of the concept of 'Creative Cities' revealing a general shift of cultural policies towards sub-national, regional and local policies, before concluding on a more general note.

Cultural policies and the center–periphery dynamic: a double dialectic

An analysis of center–periphery systems and their impact on cultural policies rests upon two fundamental questions. The first concerns the tension between legitimacy and efficiency, the two principles used to justify allocation of power within the cultural sphere; our analysis shows that legitimization (as a process) and legitimacy (as a goal) are permanent dimensions of center–periphery relationships.

The second question is one of calibrating the differentiation and standardization of policies within sub-national levels. Regardless of the constitutional regimes which define these relationships (devolution, federalism, regionalism, decentralization), the distribution of power between central and peripheral authorities implies a certain recognition of the differences within the system. But it also leads us to analyze the diverse forms of homogenization which this plurality of cultural policies can give rise to (see Fig. 1).

This dialectic between differentiation and standardization is not only the result of legislative design. It is influenced by four types of actors whose importance and impact on cultural policies must be weighed, as proposed by Bonet (2010).
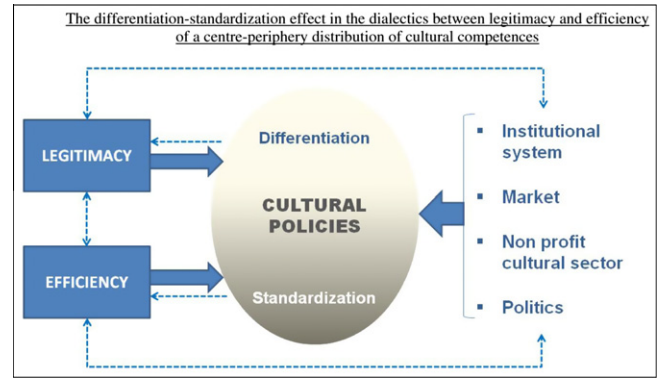

Fig. 1. The differentiation-standardization effect in the dialectics between legitimacy and efficiency of a centre-periphery distribution of cultural competences.

The first category of actors is that of *institutional systems*, such as ministries, departments, public agencies and arts councils, both central and peripheral, that intervene in the field of culture. Usually, they are seen as dedicated to the status quo, as they only integrate differences incrementally, through the impetus of new norms. The institutional variable apparently tends toward standardization. But this tendency is not systematic. The case of Scotland shows that the implementation of similar decentralized arts agencies inspired by the values of territorial equality (the Scottish Arts Council was established on the same model as the Arts Councils of England, Wales and Northern Ireland) can produce greater regional differences, as the arts council was merged in 2010 with Scottish Screen to form Creative Scotland (Galloway & Jones 2010).

The second category of actor is the *market* and, more generally, the private cultural organizations that participate in the commercial development of the sector. The existence of such a category of actor seems to pull the system toward a certain standardization of public policy. However, with the extension of culture to the creative sectors, many industries (such as fashion, publicity or electronic arts) have succeeded in securing tax breaks or subsidies, often for a specific geographical area or investment scheme. We can observe that, here again, governments do not necessarily demonstrate a standardization of cultural policies. For example, in countries such as Spain and Canada, language-based cultural enterprises tend to oppose homogenization. Thus, the market, so often considered as a tool for neutralizing differences, can also be a vector of differentiation in public policies.

The third category is the cultural *non-profit sector*. Demographically, it is much larger than the previous category, though weaker in its ability to act, notably because of its fragmentation. However, it can occasionally become more important, especially with the construction of advocacy coalitions (Sabatier 1999). As opposed to the two previous actors, its influence tends toward differentiation, because this vast non-profit sector intervenes for the most part on the local level. This sector also has certain tendencies toward standardization. Thus, the demands that it places upon local institutions can be considered as claims to a certain standard of cultural policy, as is frequently the case for localized demands for equipment.

The fourth and final category of actors is to be found in the *political sphere*. As with the preceding category, it is oriented toward differentiation. The existence of cultural policies is the historical result of a social consensus on the necessity of supporting the arts, but with a plurality of discourses, because culture cannot be outsourced and consequently reflect regional contexts (Florida 2002). Behind this discourse, however, one can ask if the effects of politics on the substance of cultural policies are as direct and linear as we are to believe. Once again, we shall see that Spain and Canada provide eloquent examples of this political ambivalence with respect to culture.

The formation of the cultural institutional system of Spain and Canada: tension between legitimacy and efficiency

Until well into the twentieth century, Spain retained a fairly heterogeneous regional (national) identity. Strong differentiated linguistic and cultural communities lived side-by-side with the dominant Castilian one. The 1978 constitution established cultural and linguistic pluralism as a guiding principle and recognized the right of nationalities and regions to self-governance.[1] In 1984, the Constitutional Court pronounced that "culture is something which is the responsibility of both the State and the autonomous communities, and, we could even say, of other communities."[2] The argument used was that culture, as an inherent manifestation of any human community, does not have its limits perfectly defined, and thus cannot be considered uniform and exclusive.

Canada has also gone through a revolution of its cultural policies since the 1950s: The Arts Councils model was the first to emerge through the establishment of the Saskatchewan Arts Board (1948), the Montreal Arts Council (1956) and the Canada Council (1957); these institutions were all modeled on the British mold and were implemented at the federal, provincial (except for Quebec) and municipal levels. Indeed, Quebec choose in 1961 the model of a Ministry of Culture, and this was followed in 1963 by the creation of a federal Secretary of State (known today as the Department of Canadian Heritage) reflecting a joint federal-provincial responsibility for culture and the arts. Most provinces have now established variations of ministries of Culture and major cities have specific departments for cultural development, establishing a third level of responsibility for cultural policy. The 1970s brought another type of support to the cultural industries (films, books, music, etc.) through tax credits, while non-profit organizations were proposed tax deductions for donations.

As shown in Graphic 1, in Spain, the overall cultural budget of the autonomous communities barely exceeded that of the national ministry of culture in 1987. In 2006, the autonomous communities' share grew from 21% to 30% of the total amount of governmental money (1807 million €)

because of a significant increase of budget allocations. The central ministry's share, on the other hand, was reduced to 14.6% of the whole, maintaining scarcely its contribution in constant terms (880 million € in 2006). Throughout these years, municipalities had been the largest donors to cultural activities, accounting for 45% of the total allocated by public bodies (2676 million € in 2006).

In Canada, the share of federal support to culture also decreased from 49% in 1990 to 43% in 2006 (3712 million C$) of the total public funds while the share of provincial and territorial governments remained stable at 29–30% (2557 million C$ in 2006). Even if municipalities are not the primary funder of culture in Canada, their share increased from 21% to 28% of total public funding (2385 million C$ in 2006), as Graphic 1 shows.

As public funding is shifting from the central (federal) level to autonomous and municipal levels in Canada and in Spain, this trend has not been uniform, as shown by the per capita expenditures at the local and regional levels. For example, in Spain, the Basque Country, Navarre, and the Canaries Island enjoy special tax systems which, particularly in the two first cases, allow them to spend much more money on cultural affairs. This trend toward differentiation is reinforced by the existence of more than one official language and the grants allocated to protect them. In Spain, the Basque Country spent 205 € per capita on culture in 2006, and Catalonia, 122 € per capita, compared to 112 € on average in Spain (Garcia Gracia et al., 2009). In Canada, 335 C$ were spent per capita on culture in Quebec in 2006 (including 164 C$ provided by the federal government), compared to a Canadian average of C$ 266 (Statistics Canada 2006).
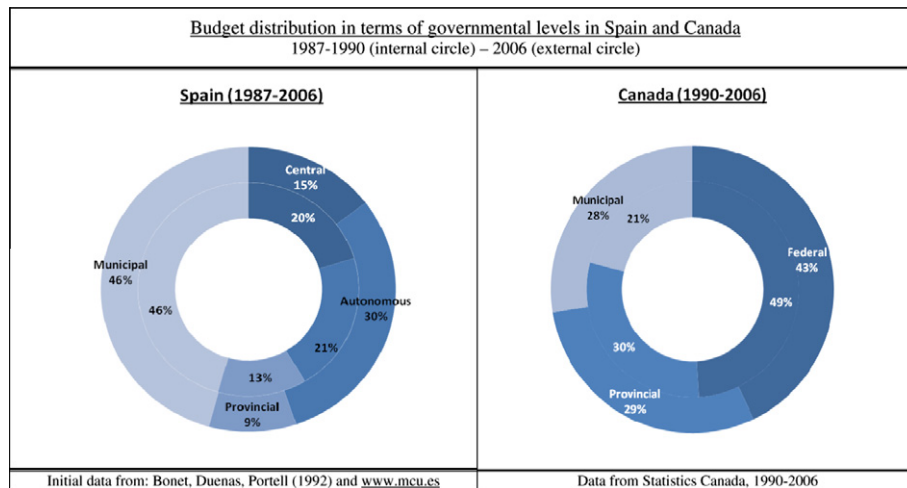
Beyond funding, one of the most interesting cases for understanding the battle between efficiency and legitimacy, as well as the tension between standardization and differentiation, is the creation in May 2008 of the Arts Council of Catalonia. It is the result of 4 years of debate in the Catalan Parliament among the main political parties under pressure from a very active group of cultural associations. The key argument of this long debate was over the legitimacy of grants distributed to artists and arts organizations. Is a democratically elected governmental department more legitimate than an independent and specialized arm's length body? Which is more efficient? Many institutional innovations are a result of a form of mimetic isomorphism, replicated from other sectors or from prestigious countries. The success of another arm's length body, the Catalan Council of the Audiovisual,[3] explains only part of the decision. Other reasons for the creation of the Catalan Arts Council in a country without this tradition of administration might be its marginal budget, the growing popularity of any form of participation from civil society, the growing prestige of the Anglo-Saxon management models, and fundamentally the unity of the cultural sector which has been pushing for it throughout this entire period. But, it is unclear that such a kind of institutional innovation will be easily reproduced in other Spanish regions.

In Canada, a similar situation arose in 1992 with the launch of Quebec's first cultural policy. Since 1961, Quebec

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[1] There is not a list, neither a clear conceptual legal differentiation between nationalities and regions, but the historic nationalities (Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, those with an Autonomous Statute during the Second Spanish Republic), obtained a stronger status (Art. 151of the Constitution) and the first two enjoyed a right to provisional government similar to the devolution model in 1978, before the approval of its respective Statutes of Autonomy.
[2] Sentence of the Constitutional Court 49/1984, April 5.

[3] The Catalan Council of the Audiovisual was created by law in 1996, and enjoyed enlarged responsibilities in 2000 and even later.

Graphic 1. Budget distribution in terms of governmental levels in Spain and Canada, 1987–1990 (internal circle) – 2006 (external circle).

has managed directly its funding to culture through a Ministry of Culture, designed on the French model; through the 1970s and 1980s, numerous reports have identified the support to the French language as a foundation of Quebec culture and a major component of its cultural policy. In 1992, Quebec adopted its first formal cultural policy: besides reaffirming the importance of language in defining identity, the policy introduced financial support to cities to implement their own cultural policies (De la Durantaye, 2001). The policy also recognized that arm's length agencies would better suit its objectives through the creation of the *Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec* to support the fine arts and of the *Société de développement des entreprises culturelles* to support cultural industries. Even if the arts council model was championed by the Quebec artistic community for 40 years (St-Pierre, 2003), its implementation in 1992 was done on the principle of a better efficiency in removing any political influence on the funding of artistic creation. The report also clarified the role of the Ministry of Culture as policy-driven instead of grant delivery, which brought more legitimacy to arts and culture funding.

Finally, a paradox in this tension between efficiency and legitimacy is to be found in the relationship between civil society and governmental institutions. In general, cultural associations are relatively weak and highly dependent on government grants in Spain (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 2006). Yet, in Spain, the leading actors of each sector have pushed for the creation of representative or lobby platforms, from the Network of Public Theatres and Auditoriums to the Federation of Associations of Publishers and the Spanish Film Academy. In Quebec, similar lobby associations were created during the nineties to represent labour or management interests, discipline-specific stakeholders as well as cultural lobby platforms, such as the *Mouvement des arts et des lettres* (MAL). These corporate associations are quite efficient in the defence of each sector's interest. Their influence reaches to the policy and program design, funding allocation and campaigns to support public funding to the arts. In these cases, we are again in the dialectic between efficiency (they are experts within their sector) and legitimacy (do they really look to the public or their own interest?).

The "Creative City movement: a comparative approach to the dynamics of the centre-periphery relationship

The dialectic between differentiation and standardization is a result of both political influences and their effect on programs and legislative design, and the lobby capacity of four categories of actors: the institutional agents, market forces, the non-profit sector, and the political sphere.

In the Spanish and Canadian cases, the institutional system tends more toward differentiation than standardization due to the share responsibility for culture between central and periphery institutions. Nevertheless, factors which appear to lead to differentiation can indeed be vectors of homogenization, and vice versa. Many local and regional politicians interested in their own success and in competition with their neighbors have a tendency to replicate the "good or popular practices" of other governments. Another factor leading to standardization is the values and general rules of public administrations.

The fight for responsibilities among levels of government, but essentially for a leading position in the definition of the main programs, results in a lack of political coordination among different levels of government. Each government (local, regional or central) backs its own programs. Nevertheless, as we said before, politicians replicate the most successful or trendy models around the country. Paradoxically, then, in countries where very few will accept the dominant role of any other administration, some local and regional strategies are quite similar everywhere.

A good example of a very successful strategy copied over the world at the local and regional level is the emergence of the concept of 'Creative Cities'. In 2004, the UNESCO recognized this trend and created a Creative Cities Network to promote the social, economic and cultural development of cities and share interest in UNESCO's mission towards cultural diversity.

The concept of 'Creative Cities' was largely influenced by the writings of Landry, Florida and Schuster. In 1989, Landry undertook a study of Glasgow and redefined how cities can envision their future beyond urban development by incorporating soft infrastructure to attract highly skilled

and flexible labour force; driven by technology and attracted to originality, this new labour force come together at 'creative hubs'; Creative Cities are a mix of heritage, which symbolize past cultural assets, and present cultural resources which includes talent, creativity, connectivity and distinctiveness (Landry, 2000, p. xxxvi). As Landry focused on assets and resources, Florida points to a creative class consisting of two components: "The Super-Creative Core of this new class includes scientists, engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers and architects, as well as the thought leadership of modern society: nonfiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts, and other opinion makers. [...] The Creative Class also includes 'creative professionals' who work in a wide range of knowledge-intensive industries such as high-tech sectors, financial services, the legal and healthcare professions, and business management" (Florida, 2002, p. 69).

In 2002, Schuster proposed that cultural policy making in the United States would shift from the national to the sub-national and local levels. He explained this shift as part of a larger devolution and decentralization in government policy, but also because cultural programs tend to further a wide variety of social aims (economic revitalization, social intervention, community development, tourism, etc.) which are better pursued at the local level. Schuster foresaw how this approach would be a 'variety generator' in terms of cultural policies (Schuster, 2002).

Based on this strategy, cities and regions have increased their support to local institutions and events, such as museums, theatres, heritage sites, festivals, arts and craft fairs, fashion weeks, communication and publicity trade fairs, electronic arts and video games conferences, etc. By investing in the cultural capital of a city or a region, in its prestige, this strategy aims to attract a larger number of trade conferences and tourists by increasing its cultural offer and branding itself as a unique, vibrant destination.

Both Barcelona and Montreal have adopted cultural policies based on the concept of 'Creative Cities'. Through a very successful conference in Montreal in 2007, 11 financial partners, representing three levels of government, the arts and business communities as well as the civil society, adopted a 10-year plan to develop Montreal as a cultural metropolis. The first step was the investment of 140 million C$ in a *Quartier des spectacles*, to provide the city with a central focus point for festival activities, and the second step was the adoption of Montreal's tourism strategic plan, which recognizes cultural tourism as a major driver of economic development (Tourisme Montréal, 2010).

In Spain, the latest conference on 'Creative Cities' was organized in 2010 in Zaragoza to promote exchange of ideas and good practices at the local level, to discuss the relationship between cultural and creative industries city competitiveness and to strength the role of culture within local policies. Also in 2010, Barcelona hosted an international conference on Creative Tourism to foster a new mobility trend among tourists who seek a creative experience from their travel. However, we can trace Barcelona own branding back to the 1992 Olympics, when the city redeveloped core areas and change its image by involving its own citizens (Puig, 2005). Barcelona has built its world-class reputation as a tourist destination by concentrating its

marketing efforts on events, festivals, fairs and world exhibitions to carry an image of creativity and innovation (Richards & Palmer, 2010, p. 250).

Cultural tourism remains a trade in identities, fostering a better understanding between cultures but also aiming at positioning a city brand in the global tourist market (Bonet, 2008). However, this commercial strategy could backfire by limiting the local access to culture through price increases and by homogenizing public spaces with commercial franchises and sponsorships. For many local and regional governments, the rationale for public support to culture is now larger than the traditional support to 'high culture'. Lee (2004) argues that a more inclusive concept of culture as a way of life involves a larger share of the population while increasing a sense of identity.

Conclusion

Center–periphery relationships raise another classic question – that of the intensity and limits of horizontal differences. We have shown that in order to understand these differentiations, one must also shine a light on the forms of standardization that are at times hidden behind the façade of diversity: if all Canadian or Spanish cities develop a 'Creative City' strategy, how will they succeed in attracting top events, ever-demanding tourists and sophisticated creative professionals? As the demand for the fine arts tend to level off in developed countries (Colbert, 2009), as the competition for leisure time has increased due to a larger offer of cultural events, will 'Creative Cities' strategies, with their appeal to popular art forms, be able to develop new audiences and extend market shares of cultural products?

We believe that the interplay between the four categories of actors we have identified may be successful in implementing a strategy of differentiation in "peripheral" cultural policies: the institutions, the market, the non-profit sector, and the political sphere. It is this dialectic that allows us to show how diverse public policies can be and how efficient could become their potential interactions. These interactions originate in the professionalization of cultural policies and the quality of the professional training of public administrators of culture.

As the evolution of the 'Creative Cities' concept has shown, it seems to us that the dialectic between differentiation and standardization is the principal mark of the modernity of cultural policies in the context of center–periphery relationships. Indeed, it is precisely because the standard set by these policies is also differentiation that this dialectic is one of our analytical resources.

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