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Local policies for cultural diversity
Executive summary

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United Cities and Local Governments
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Study commissioned by the Division of Cultural
Policies and Intercultural Dialogue of UNESCO to
the Institute for Culture, Barcelona City Council,
as Chair of United Cities and Local
Governments' Committee on culture

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1. Introduction

The Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue of UNESCO commissioned a study on local policies for cultural diversity to the Institute for Culture – Barcelona City Council, as Chair of the Committee on culture of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). UCLG forms the largest association of local governments in the world and has a decentralised structure with regional sections in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Euro-Asia, Middle East – West Asia, Latin America and North America. UCLG's Committee on culture was constituted in Beijing on 9 June 2005 as the meeting point for cities and local governments that place culture at the heart of their development processes. UCLG's Committee on culture is chaired by Barcelona City Council and vice-chaired by the city councils of Stockholm and Buenos Aires. The Committee on culture is made up of cities such as Amman, Brazzaville, Córdoba, Diyarbakir, Essaouira, Kazan, London, Porto Alegre, Quito, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Toronto, Turin and Venice, as well as several associations of municipalities.

2. Object of the study and methodology

The main aim of the study was to investigate what types of public policies at a local level support the diversity of cultural expressions. The study mainly analysed the policies and programmes developed by departments for culture, although the enhanced role culture plays in local policies also allowed the inclusion of policies and programmes developed by other municipal departments.

The study was developed following to three strands: the writing of several reports, the desk-analysis of case studies, and the desk-analysis of websites/portals. The World Secretariat of UCLG sent a Circular whose aim was to involve as many member cities of the Committee on culture in the study as possible, offering the cities an opportunity to provide case studies dealing with "local policies for cultural diversity". The Circular included a brief template to be used by cities to elaborate a case study. In parallel, three reports were commissioned and written by three well-known researchers on cultural policies and governance, in alphabetical order, Nancy Duxbury (with Derek Simons and Katie Warfield, Creative City Network of Canada), Annamari Laaksonen (Interarts Foundation), and Colin Mercer (Cultural Capital Ltd); each researcher covered a number of thematic and geographical areas. A synthesis report was written by Jordi Pascual. The full study can be downloaded from the websites.[1] We strongly recommend reading the four papers that compose the study.

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[1]The full study is downloadable from:
- http://www.cities-localgovernments.org
- http://www.agenda21culture.net

3. Novelty and difficulties

"Cultural diversity" appeared as a keyword in the international debates on culture at the end of the 1990s. The concept is not yet adopted by a vast majority of cities, but today cities and local governments use concepts such as "cultural development", "cultural participation" or "cultural vitality" (popular during the 1980s), or "democratisation of culture" or "cultural democracy" (appeared during the 1960s or 1970s). The approval of UNESCO's Declaration (2001) and Convention (2005) on Cultural Diversity, and the approval of the Agenda 21 for culture (2004) have created a diversity *momentum*. A growing number of citgies express a concern for cultural diversity, especially those which have undergone a cultural planning process during the last months.

The reaction to the appearance of cultural diversity in the urban policy debate is generally positive but the difficulties it entails are not neglected. Dorothea Kolland states that "we are asked to celebrate diversity, difference and richness of difference while growing urban centres struggle with problems of discrimination, segregation and cultural conflicts. Although many of these problems are many times more social in nature than cultural, the cultural and religious tensions are part of our daily life. (...) The metropolis of the world gather together people guided by widely differing ethnical notions and fundamental values, ideas and values with deep societal and often religious roots, instilled as self-evident cultural traditions" (quoted from the paper written by Annamari Laaksonen, 2006, 7). Cultural diversity is still a very difficult concept that can lead to many misunderstandings.

Conditions to understand cultural diversity are not equal. The "local basis" to undertake actions to support cultural diversity varies: history, geography, characteristics of the population and vitality of the civil society, among other factors, differ from one city to another. Furthermore, cities have different levels of legal competencies, that is, national and/or regional juridical frameworks; the founding conception of the nation-state (unitary state, decentralised state, federal state) as well as the definition of national policies (laws and regulations that recognise, protect or promote the cultural diversity) are of paramount importance for local cultural policies, as these create the conditions and legitimise local governments to implement policies for cultural diversity. Some nation-states restrict or prevent the possibilities of local governments in the deployment of policies for cultural diversity. UNDP's Human Development Report 2004 *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World* has recently made a strong call to "recognize differences, champion diversity and promote cultural freedoms, so that all people can choose to speak their language, practice their religion, and participate in shaping their culture so that all people can choose to be who they are".

Cultural diversity is a new and difficult concept but many cities and local governments have already taken it into account, with diverse meanings.

4. Manifold meanings

An attempt can be made to classify the manifold meanings cultural diversity can have at a local level.

1. The "cultural diversity" considerations that are found in municipal departments for culture are related to "sizes" (cities have searched for a balance in the sizes of cultural agents, from small to large) and "sub-sectors" (from heritage to contemporary creation). With regard to

the sizes, many cities explain the cultural life is based on a "dynamic system" in which small-scale neighbourhood-based or experimental initiatives, often non-institutional, live together with large projects conceived for international projection or purely consumption purposes, the concept urban "cultural ecology" could be used. With regard to the sub-sectors, and although the cultural resources of the cities differ, at least three main cultural sub-sectors have been present in local cultural policies: heritage, libraries and the arts. Recent concern for local identity and cultural diversity has led to cities paying attention to the "traditional culture", often referred to as folklore of the city, the region or the nation, and new media and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), as they attract the genuine interest of young people, have also become new sub-sectors, or a transversal dimension, of local cultural policies.

2. Another way to understand "cultural diversity", more recently included in local cultural policy-making, is the involvement of a diversity of actors (public, NGO, private) in the local cultural system. Many cities have evolved from the direct provision of cultural services to an enabling / relational stance, keeping a core number of cultural services in the public administration and fostering a range of partnerships with private and social agents, sometimes leading to the creation of new bodies / instances to allow for a more efficient management of cultural policies. The participation of non-public agents reaches the elaboration and sometimes the monitoring and evaluation of cultural policies through, for example, local councils for culture. It seems that gender does not (yet?) appear as a crucial dimension of cultural policies, al least not the importance it has achieved in many other public policies.

3. Finally, the appearance of the "cultural diversity" framework, understood in anthropological / ethnic terms, is changing the ways cities support local culture, with more attention paid to the presence of "minorities" in the cultural ecosystem of the city. A balance is sought between "native" cultural agents (if they still exist / recognised as such in the city), the "national culture" agents, and those agents that are the direct or indirect result of immigration. This consideration of cultural diversity is extremely difficult because the terms used are not satisfactory to all agents concerned, and because terms "freeze" a dynamic reality: urban culture. Sometimes, due to repression of freedom of speech or, more generally, lack of democracy, the cultural production of the city does not allow the continuity (preservation and promotion) of original / native / first cultures that were born in that territory, and prevent the development of (as the Agenda 21 for culture states), "indigenous local cultures, which are bearers of a historic and interactive relation with the territory". In other cities, it might happen that new inhabitants, direct or indirect result of immigration processes, and that have some of their cultural roots in other territories, are not yet recognised as "cultural citizens", and that the cultural diversity they bring is either not legitimised by official discourses and/or marginalised from democratic governance and funding mechanisms.

Many cities are undertaking "mapping" and "diagnosis" exercises to know more about their cultural diversity. Cities can more easily than nation-states adapt the cultural diversity concern to their policies. There are many examples of cities that think and re-think their "official" histories, in exhibition or multimedia projects, such as the MIME (Malmoe, Tampere and Nottingham in 2001), or in large urban events, such as "Rotterdam 2001 European Capital of Culture".

Analysing diversity in a historical perspective, all cities have undergone (and are undergoing) intercultural / hybridisation processes. Cities are the places where persons from different origins meet, interact and create new cultural expressions. It seems that interculturality (see the recent book of Jude Bloomfield and Franco Bianchini) and hybridisation (see the paper written by Nancy Duxbury) are today the answers of many cities to the (local) challenges of cultural diversity; this is specially happening in those cities in industrial and post-industrial countries whose population is growing in ethnic diversity as a result of recent immigration and that, today, "read" their cultural diversity as mainly "ethnic". Other cities, however, respond to their (local) cultural diversity challenges with policies to create the basis to produce and distribute their cultural content, and foster the development of local cultural industries that can ensure the presence of these cities / cultures in the world; the focus of cultural diversity in these emerging cities (from Asia to Latin America) is rather "content diversity in the global market". Further research is needed to identify, understand and disseminate the cultural policies of these cities and local governments, which are under-represented in this study.

The concepts of a "local cultural ecosystem" or "cultural ecology" (although not yet widely used) are growing as keywords (Nancy Duxbury, Derek Simons and Katie Warfield, 2006; Jordi Martí, 2006; Colin Mercer, 2006). Many cities think these concepts facilitate the understanding of cultural diversity, allow the implementation of cultural diversity considerations into policies and place the ethnic understanding of cultural diversity in a broader context.

It is crucial to state, as Colin Mercer writes in his paper, that "diversity is actively *constitutive* of culture, not an element of 'additionality' to it. In spite of the homogenising tendencies of national cultures in the modern period, especially since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Europe and elsewhere, it is clear from the historical evidence and reality, that all cultures are diverse and hybrid in their formation – if not in the ways in which they are *retrospectively* constructed and imagined by nation states and their citizens" (Mercer, 2006, 1).

These considerations just illustrate that, also at a local level, cultural diversity is a concept to be handled with care. And point to the democratic governance of cultural policies as a crucial point.

5. Squaring the sustainability triangle

Culture is becoming, more than ever, at the centre of urban policies, partly thanks to the cultural diversity *momentum*, but also due to other factors: expectations on exporting capacities of creative industries, the debate on intellectual rights, the society *du spectacle*, the concern for human rights...

A "triangle" of sustainable development (economic growth + social inclusion + environment) was developed in the second half of the 1980s (Brundtland's report as the most well-known document) and was successfully consolidated in the 1990s. This triangle is used today in local / national / global strategies as a pattern for analysis and public action for sustainable development.

Many people have advocated for culture to "square" this triangle. The intrinsic values of culture, as memories, creativity, excellence, critical knowledge, rituality (and maybe others), are becoming more important for human development, democratic governance and global understanding. There is a strong basis to make such a claim, and many come from non-cultural sectors.

The cultural sectors need strong images to raise awareness on the cultural dimension of human development, and to secure a role for culture in public action. Today, it is difficult to advocate for culture without creating solid bridges with the other spheres of governance. The "fourth pillar" offers a strong image and creates those solid bridges. The fourth pillar argument has its origins in the work of Jon Hawkes *The fourth pillar of sustainability. Culture's essential role in public planning.*

The diversity of uses, meanings and understandings of cultural diversity need a unifying force, and the local departments for culture have a crucial role to play, in order to make the case for the intrinsic values of culture, and to create bridges with other spheres of governance.

6. Local policies

The aforementioned papers that compose this study account for several policies and programmes that support cultural diversity at a local level. It has been found interesting to classify these policies and programmes as follows, in five sub-chapters. This scheme squares the sustainability triangle and adds governance as a connecting concept.

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS AND THE INTRINSIC VALUES OF CULTURE. As Annamari Laaksonen states in her paper, "the rights-based approach to policy planning is essential since it provides the normative framework for parameters in which any activity by public administration should be conducted to the policy-making. (...) The ambit of cultural rights is larger than themes related to artistic expression and creativity, and therefore illustrates the necessity of finding defining mechanisms to uphold and promote social responsibility, and ways of assuring participation, access to culture, the right to express and interpret culture, and preservation and education as principles in policy-making". Although cultural rights are often said to be very abstract, the Agenda 21 for culture can be considered as a Declaration of cultural rights at a local level; in fact, a municipal council that adheres to the Agenda 21 for culture makes a commitment with the citizenry to promote cultural rights and its local implementation through policies and programmes. A local cultural strategy could also be based on cultural rights. Departments for culture have a crucial role to play in order to promote cultural rights and to relate these concepts into specific policies and programmes; the intrinsic values of culture, as memories, creativity, excellence, critical knowledge, rituality (and maybe others) can be interesting ways.

2. CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION. Urban policies understand cultural participation in several ways; while some cities understand it as an increase in the number of visitors to cultural institutions and events, some cities widen these concepts to promote the involvement of citizens in cultural production and/or cultural mediation processes. In an increasingly diverse society, education in cultural diversity and fostering intercultural competencies become priorities, not only for the department for culture, but also for the educational authorities. Furthermore, the growing importance of cultural diversity has increased the need to link cultural policies to social policies: departments for social inclusion are including culture as a dimension in their programmes, and do not take for granted existing differences in knowledge, language and values of the population. The role of grass roots civil society initiatives is crucial; very often policies have a stronger impact when there is a sincere co-operation

between the administration and leading grass roots agents and NGOs. There is a wide range of activities that contribute to "greater public awareness and knowledge of cultural diversity and culturally diverse arts initiatives", as Nancy Duxbury, Derek Simons and Katie Warfield (2006, 11) describe in their paper.

3. PUBLIC SPACES AS AREAS OF CONVIVIALITY AND INTERACTION. Diversity has reinforced the use of public spaces for cultural activities. The concept of "public space", somehow neglected in the late XXth century, is again important, although its "cultural" management is more difficult than ever. Societies have created all kind of ritual "events", traditionally linked to seasonalness and the religious calendar but today, globalisation is producing new "events" with a strong physical presence in public spaces (like urban parades / carnivals). Moreover, during the last two decades, a new generation of cultural spaces have appeared in brownfield areas, with seeds in grass roots social and cultural associations very highly committed to the diversity of cultural expressions. The discussion of the brief of any new cultural facility / event with a broad range of (diverse) stakeholders, and the co-operation between, at least, the Department for Culture, the Department for Urban Planning and the neighbourhood, in a deliberative approach, becomes crucial to provide responses to the challenges of public space, cultural practices and conviviality.

4. CULTURE, THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND THE ECONOMY. Job growth in the cultural sectors has been significantly above the average during the last decade. Leisure management, creative industries and cultural tourism are sectors of exceptional growth. Cultural content is at the centre of the knowledge society. The concept of "productive diversity" is extremely appealing. "Cultural diversity – of people, of skills and practices, of products, of markets and tastes – is good for innovation and building the capacity for sustainability in a creative knowledge economy" states Colin Mercer. "For immigrants involved in transnational activities and their home country counterparts, success does not so much depend on abandoning their culture and language to embrace those of another society as on preserving their original cultural endowments, while adapting instrumentally to a second (...). Cultural diversity can be a vital stimulus to cultural entrepreneurship, opening up new cultural and creative markets", states Kevin Robbins. Some cities have developed specific programmes to promote employment of ethnic minorities, as well as the creation of specific places or facilities (cultural districts, incubator sites...), to promote new projects, especially in the areas of audio-visual, but also in cultural tourism, events management, design, fashion or crafts. There is a growing co-operation between municipal departments for economic development and culture. Diversity is productive.

5. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE AT A LOCAL LEVEL. As the study illustrates, cultural considerations are growing in several departments in a City Council (education, social inclusion, economic development...). Co-ordination is of paramount importance, and this is compatible with a leading municipal Department for Culture, the explicit formulation of the municipal cultural policies, the support for culture from the higher levels of the municipal government (Mayor, Plenary Council) and the partnerships with a civil society committed to and active in cultural projects. Cultural diversity deserves a strong policy architecture, in which all citizens can participate in the elaboration of deliberative cultural policies (Bogota, Genoa, Montreal), and a co-

ordination between agencies and spheres of government (as the Australian ILAP) is ensured. Cultural planning and a local cultural strategy have proved to be suitable to: (a) create a cartography of the cultural resources of the city, and ideas to enhance their role in urban vitality, (b) foster cohesiveness in the cultural sector, (c) generate new partnerships and shared responsibility between the cultural sector and other urban agents. The Agenda 21 for culture could be the starting point of a local cultural strategy, a local council on culture or other instruments. The governance of culture at a local level is also related to a "relational" approach chosen by many public authorities, in which involving all stakeholders and inhabitants is a priority.

7. Indicators

The interest in cultural indicators has grown in recent years. A vast number of reports have been written, at local, national and international levels. At local level, the research in cultural indicators is especially active in the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. At national and international level, IFACCA, the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies, published the report "Statistical Indicators for Arts Policy" which provides a very good conceptual basis for further research. The research for local cultural indicators is an urgent task that needs to find space in the agenda of international networks of cities in order to, at least, connect existing initiatives, avoid duplication of work, understand frameworks in other countries and contribute to refining policy objectives.

This study could not analyse in detail the cultural indicators already implemented by cities, as this aim clearly surpasses the existing possibilities. Limitations of time and resources are directly correlated to the weakness of structures dealing with cultural indicators, and inversely correlated to the pressure from a growing number of agents to "find the good" cultural indicators as soon as possible. The current situation prevents this study from suggesting a set of indicators of local cultural development, and to select, among these indicators, which could be used to evaluate the support to the diversity of forms of cultural expressions

This study, though, suggests a framework to describe local cultural policies. This framework will be presented to the UCLG's Committee on culture in October 2006. The framework is conceived to emphasise the importance of qualitative information on cultural policies. This framework aims to be a step in the search for suitable indicators of local cultural development that includes cultural diversity as a constitutive element. This will necessarily be a long-term process.

8. Conclusions

Diversity is constitutive of culture. It challenges many of the official discourses on culture and cultural policies, especially those that were based on homogeneity and/or have democratic deficits. Diversity provides a new set of conceptual lenses to describe current local policies; and it will probably articulate new cultural policies. We are probably living a situation in which the paradigm that articulates cultural policies is changing.

Cities are including cultural diversity considerations in their local policies, while diversity has manifold meanings: contents, actors or ethnic. The concepts of a "local cultural ecosystem" or "cultural ecology" facilitate the understanding and allow the implementation of cultural diversity considerations into policies.

Governance becomes a crucial priority; between the local government and the citizens, with a "relational" approach that allows citizens to participate in cultural life, and in deliberative cultural policies; between a leading municipal department for culture that bases its work on the intrinsic values of culture and co-operates with those departments/agencies (education, social inclusion, economic development...) that include cultural considerations in their work; between the several tiers of government (international organisations, national governments, local governments) in long-term accountable programmes.

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