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Analysis of the Secretariat of the Creative Economy Plan and the transformations in the relation of State and culture in Brazil

Leonardo De Marchi*

Abstract

The idea of creative economy has been adopted by different governments and international entities as a guideline for public policy for the sectors of Communication and culture. Implicit in its concept there is a perspective that rearticulates the relationship among culture, economy and society. In Brazil, the Ministry of Culture (MinC) created the Secretariat of the Creative Economy in order to implement cultural policies that foster a creative economy in the country. In this article, we make an analysis of the MinC's project for creative economy. Performing an analysis of the Plan of the Secretariat of the Creative Economy 2011-2014, the objective of this article is to highlight and understand the changes taking place in the use of the term "culture" by the Brazilian government and assess its consequences for the field of culture. The adoption of the term "creativity" involves a new approach to the field culture by the Brazilian State which demands a deep change in MinC's rationale and structure.

Keywords: Creative economy. Cultural policy. Brazilian Ministry of Culture. Secretariat of the Creative Economy.

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Introduction

In recent years, the idea of creative economy has been adopted by several governments around the world as well as by international organizations as a sort of guideline for public policy for the sectors of Communication and culture. Implicit in its concept there is a perspective that rearticulates the relationship among culture, economy and society. Assuming that creativity has become the key to the promotion of a new development, socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and economically sustained, the idea of creative industries or creative economy encompasses different productive sectors that have in common the ability to generate innovation from local knowledge, to add symbolic value to goods and services, and to generate and exploit intellectual property. These activities range from craft and arts to industry-related ones. Once this concept is translated into cultural policies, such activities become subordinated to the broader concept of “creativity”, which requires a revision of the approach of the State to the field of culture.

Recently, the Ministry of Culture of Brazil (MinC) created the Secretariat of the Creative Economy (SCE), whose goal is to formulate and implement policies to promote the creative economy in the country. A careful look at the intentions of the MinC/SCE reveals an effort to develop a particular concept of creative economy adjusted to the goals of the developmentalist policies of the Brazilian Worker's Party (*Partidos dos Trabalhadores*, acronym in Portuguese, PT), equating economic growth and social inclusion. This proposal includes not only a redefinition of the concept of culture, a term that was expanded by the government to be treated in an anthropological sense, but also brings with it a new conception of the role of culture in Brazilian society, locating it in the centre of a major development project for the country. This opens a new horizon of possibilities and challenges for cultural policies, putting into question the very rationale of the institutions devoted to culture.

This paper analyzes of the assumptions underlying the MinC *Plan of the Secretariat of the Creative Economy: policies, guidelines*

and actions 2011-2014 (PSCE) (MINC, 2011) and assesses its possible institutional consequences. It is argued here that a cultural policy based on the concept of creativity opens a new phase in the relationship between the Brazilian State and the field of culture, since the creative industries are now seen as a critical factor for promoting development. Created to protect national heritage and to support cultural activities, the MinC now becomes increasingly responsible for performing a leading role in a national development planning, which escapes both from its *raison d'être* as well as its operational capabilities.

The article is divided into three parts. Firstly, there is a discussion on the implications of the term “creative economy” for cultural policies, considering the British experience in the 1990’s and the UN agencies approach to the subject. Second, a brief history of the relationship between the State and culture in Brazil is presented. Finally, we analyze the discourse presented in the PSCE, highlighting the emergence of a new conception of culture and the changes that it requires from the Ministry of Culture itself.

The concept of the creative economy and its implications for cultural policies

With regard to cultural policies based on the idea of creative industries or creative economy, one can point to the Australian government project Creative Nation, implemented in the mid-1990s as being the origin. However, it was the experience conducted by the British Labour Party at the end of that decade that became paradigmatic. As a matter of fact, its analysis can provide a clearer understanding of the implications for cultural policies of the creative economy idea.

The cultural policies to support the creative industries in Britain are closely related to the reformulation of the Labour Party during the 1990s. When a group of reformers led by Tony Blair got to the party leadership in 1994, a redesign of the image and the speech of the party got initiated in order to create what would be a “New Labour”. In part, this was an answer to two

types of circumstantial political pressures. On the one hand, it was an attempt to create a moderate centre-left political agenda to rival that of the neoliberals at the Conservative Party (Tory) which persisted in power for a long period. On the other, this move was part of a general revision of the European left after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of globalization. As analysts conclude, the result of this effort was the accommodation of fundamental demands of traditional agenda of social democracy and socialism the centre-right principles, notably those of neoliberalism. This meant keeping the commitment to basic principles of social policies, however, subjecting them to the market laws (HESMONDHALGH, 2005).

The New Labour's cultural policies are a perfect example of this new spirit. As David HESMONDHALGH (2005) observes, Labor's concerns regarding Communication and culture were characterized historically by the defence of broad access to information and cultural goods, as it could help the representation and the participation of various social groups in the public sphere. As a result, public cultural policies paid more attention to the distribution and consumption phases than to the production one, understood as responsibility of private enterprises. The reforming group adopted a new approach to culture, with the intention of marking a different position within the party. In an emblematic way, they replaced the conception of "cultural industries", a key expression in the cultural policies of the party, for the new idea of "creative industries". Moreover, the government decided to create the Creative Industry Task Force (CITF) to map and measure the importance of these kinds of activities to the British economy.

More than a simple change of an adjective, the new expression contained another perspective on the role of culture in British economy and society. The resulting CITF report (DCMS, 1998) defined the creative industries as the union of several activities such as arts (performing arts, music, craft, and cinema), Communications (publishing, radio, television, and advertising), design (design, fashion, architecture) and information technology (internet content, electronic games, and software production).

Despite the specificities of each of these activities, it was stated that all communed of “creativity”, a term which was defined by the government as being originated from the individual skill and talent whose products had the potential to generate jobs and wealth through the exploitation of intellectual property. According to the British authorities, creative industries accounted for the most dynamic sector of the national economy, deserving more attention of the State (DCMS, 2008).

This proposal was quite daring. First of all, it extended the concept of “culture” to a series of activities that belonged once to trade and industry. Secondly, the reports highlighted the economic character of these activities, represented by the ability to generate and exploit intellectual property. This reframing of traditional concepts had a clear goal: they allowed the government to present such activities as the cutting-edge of a new economy, being a sort of solution to the problems of the British economy that was still suffering from the phenomenon of de-industrialization. While British companies exported their factories to countries where labour was cheaper, the creative industries seemed to offer a way of rebuilding the national economy through immaterial assets, delivering products, services and experiences with high added value and thereby creating jobs to highly skilled workers. In this perspective, the New Labourists considered urgent to perform a revision of the approach of the State to culture. As stated in one of the official documents on the subject, it would be necessary to bring the creative industries from the margins to the centre of economic and political thought (DCMS, 2008).

The resulting cultural policies on creative industries had its focus of attention shifted from the distribution and consumption of information and cultural goods to the production side. In this vein, the British State offered to be a kind of a facilitator for the creative industries, providing them with all the conditions they needed to become competitive in a global market of Communication and culture. This perspective even implied a redesign of the State’s bureaucracy devoted to culture in order to meet the needs of the creative sectors, as demonstrated by the transforma-

tion of the Department of National Heritage in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. This new attitude has drawn harsh criticism though. The New Labour reformers were accused not only of being neoliberals, by effecting a kind of “withdrawal of the State” from the cultural field, but also of Chelping large corporations of Communication and culture to the detriment of small and medium enterprises¹.

Although it was already widespread within English-speaking countries, the idea of creativity gained international acknowledgement through the reports on creative economy of the United Nations (UN) and its agencies. Of particular relevance is the report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2008). In some documents published on the subject, it was argued that the creative industries constituted a strategic means to achieve a fairer international trade. The emergence of globalization and the growing appreciation of immaterial assets created a unique opportunity for developing countries to access developed economies not through the export of commodities or unskilled labour, but rather offering goods and services with high added value. After all, for UNCTAD, the creative industries would be made of enterprises that depended on the ability to appropriate

¹ The most virulent criticism came from GARNHAM (2005), a notorious leftist intellectual, directly involved with the formulation of cultural policies of the “Old” Labour. Garnham pointed out, accurately, that the discourse on “creativity” subordinated cultural activities to economic imperatives. The vagueness of the concept “creativity” (in official documents, it was never clear defined what is and, especially, what is not “creativity”), allowed the government to include in the list of “creative industries” industrial and commercial activities strongly identified with leading industries sectors, such as design, biotechnology and information technology. As a result, the new policy would favor the more profitable activities (design, manufacturing or software production) instead of the more experimental ones (contemporary dance, artistic avant-garde, experimental music), decharacterizing the rationale of State intervention in the field of culture. HESMONDHALGH (2005) also notes that, in fact, the British government unreservedly supported corporations, notably Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp., understanding that in a context of globalization of culture via large media conglomerates it would be strategic for national vested interests to have a major “British” corporation with global reach.

the local culture of one region or country for development of new ideas to be applied to works of art and other cultural products as well as functional creations, scientific inventions and technological innovations. And as long as “creativity” is an immaterial resource that every country has *a priori*, it would be possible to promote development despite of the stage in which each national economy may be. As stated in the document:

In this context, the interface among creativity, culture, economics and technology, as expressed in the ability to create and circulate intellectual capital, has the potential to generate income, jobs and export earnings while at the same time promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development. This is what the emerging creative economy has already begun to do as a leading component of economic growth, employment, trade, innovation and social cohesion in most advanced economies. The creative economy also seems to be a feasible option for developing countries. If effective public policies are in place, the creative economy generates cross-cutting linkages with the overall economy at macro and micro levels. It thus fosters a development dimension, offering new opportunities for developing countries to leapfrog into emerging high-growth areas of the world economy (UNCTAD, 2008, p.3).

It should be noticed that in this statement there is an important shift in the UN agencies discourse on development. The creative economy is presented as an alternative to discredited development policies based on the intense industrialization and the “modernization” of local cultures, once considered an obstacle to the adoption of Western utilitarian calculus and thus an impediment to generate economic growth. Now it would be possible for developing countries to produce goods and services with high added value, and exportable to developed economies, taking advantage of their own local cultures (ways of life, arts and folklore, imagery, local knowledge) and without causing damage to the environment. To do so, it has become critical to treat “cultural diversity”, a key term in the lexicon of the organization, as a strategic resource for development. Here, the economist discourse of the UNCTAD meets the humanist one of the UNESCO (2001, 2005), whereby a fair globalization can only be achieved

with due respect (promotion and protection) to the different cultural people's identities all over the planet (STOCZKOWSKI, 2009). And the pragmatic way to achieve this would be by placing cultural diversity at the centre of an international planning on development that would be socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and economically sustained, to use terms of Ignacy SACHS (2005). In a way, it can be said that creative economy has become an idea that could bring together the interests of the UN agencies in a single redeeming project.

The New Labour experience and the discourse of the UN agencies played a very important role in the internationalization of the idea of creative industries/economy. What is seen today is a broad adherence of governments with different ideological trends to the concept of creativity as a guideline for cultural policies (CUNNINGHAM, 2009). To assess the consequences of this, however, one must take into account the historical and institutional characteristics of the relationship between the State and the field culture in each context. That is what is done in the following section, in which the Brazilian case is considered.

State and Culture in Brazil: cultural policies from the Vargas' New State to Lula's governments

"Discontinuity" is perhaps the most appropriate word to define the relationship between State and culture in Brazil. Swinging from authoritarian interventions to the complete disregard, the history of State interventions on culture presents several moments with different nuances. Considering the purpose of this article, we propose an approach divided into authoritarian and democratic regimes, emphasizing the connections between culture and development.

It is worth noting that it was over the authoritarian regimes that culture received systematic attention of the State. Understood as the locus for the creation of solidarity (in the Durkheimian sense of the word, as social cohesion), cultural activities were considered functionally as strategic means for political purposes.

Throughout his first mandate, the Brazilian president Getúlio Vargas wanted to overcome the regionalism that supported the alliance of the elites that ran the so called First Republic, diffusing a project of Brazil based on the idea of one strong Nation-State². To reinforce the centrality of his power, Vargas government adopted several measures to control Communications and culture, creating an institutional apparatus that is considered by Lia CALABRE (2009) as the beginning of the institutionalization of culture within the Brazilian State. So, in 1930, it was created the Ministry of Health and Education (MHE), whose duties were also extended to cultural activities. During the term of the minister Gustavo Capanema (1934-1945), the MHE created subordinated offices and secretariats that were responsible for the preservation of national historical heritage (Office for National Artistic and Historical Heritage), the support for the Fine Arts (National Museum of Art) and the educational action via cinema (National Institute of Educational Cinema) (SCHWARTZMAN, BOMENY, COSTA, 2000). Besides, the government was directly involved in the structuring a national broadcast system and supported unrestrictedly the formation of an incipient cultural industry at the Federal Capital then, the city of Rio de Janeiro.

² In 1889, after a coup d'état that overthrew the Constitutional Monarchy and led to the proclamation of a Federal Republic in Brazil, it was introduced a presidential system. Not with standing the possibility of voting for Brazilian citizens (who were only the free and literate men, what constituted at that time a minority of the population, basically white men), in practice this First Republic was characterized by the alternation in the presidency of oligarchies represented by politicians from the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais. Being the main producers of coffee and milk for export, respectively, the alternation of politicians from both states came to be pejoratively called by the population as "the Republic of coffee with milk". At the end of the 1920s, however, disagreements among the elites who controlled the State created a situation of tension that culminated in another coup d'état, nowadays known as the "Revolution of 1930", which would lead to the presidency of the interim government the southern politician Getúlio Vargas. In 1937, Vargas performed another coup and proclaimed a dictatorship, the "New State", characterized by nationalism, anti-communism, censorship and the veneration of the charismatic leader. The New State would last until 1945.

The military dictatorship (1964-1985) would continue this process. Also its *intelligentsia* conceived culture as a strategic means to implement its anti-communist National Security Doctrine. The military acted on two fronts. On the one hand, being committed to the spread of the capitalist spirit in Brazil, the government gave full support to private cultural industries (ORTIZ, 1994). The conservative sectors had vested interests in helping major Communication and culture corporations as they could perform a cultural integration nationwide with due respect to the laws of the market and at the same time displacing the cultural production of alternatives sites (as universities) where leftist intellectuals maintained a strong position. On the other, they continued the creation of offices and departments within the then Ministry of Education and Culture, contemplating various sectors of cultural activities from National Heritage to cinema (BOTELHO, 2000; CALABRE, 2009). Their most emblematic action was the publication of the National Plan of Culture, in 1973, which can be considered as the first cultural policy published in the country (and not a bunch of singular actions taken by diverse governments). As specialists asserts, that policy represented the insertion of “the field of culture among the goals of the government’s development policy” (MICELI, 1984, p.75); it was an attempt to extend to the field of culture the blessings of the so called Brazilian economic “miracle”.

With regard to the democratic regimes, in general, it can be said that negligence with culture was the norm. Indeed, it is only the period after the military dictatorship that deserves mention. Within it, three moments can be identified. The first one corresponds to the years between 1985 and 1990. This was the moment of the rebuilding of the relationship between the Brazilian State and the field of culture in the aftermath of the dictatorship. Then, there was an effort to move away from both the functionalist perspective on culture and the paternalism with content producers, characteristic features of the authoritarian regimes. One of the most striking actions was the creation of the Ministry of Culture (MinC). The existence of a specific ministry indicated that culture ceased to be seen only as the locus of the creation of solidarity

(and thus subject to manipulation) and started to be regarded as a driving force in the democratic reconstruction movement. As stated by one of its first ministers, the notorious economist Celso Furtado, in “a democratic society the functions of the State in the field of culture should be supplementary in nature” (cited in CALABRE, 2009, p.102). Lasting from 1986 to 1988, Furtado’s term deserves a special consideration.

The concern with culture in the political economy analysis is as an essential feature of the Celso Furtado’s work³. However, it gets specific contours in his later writings, in which he performed a critique of Latin American developmental experience. There is no space here to perform an analysis of his theory of “cultural dependence”, which can be found elsewhere (BARBALHO, 2011; BOLANO, 2011). It is only noteworthy that Furtado perceived the “culture” (in the anthropological sense of “a whole way of life”) of the people as being the key to the activation of “creativity”, defined as the inventiveness of a society on an additional surplus allowing that society not to worry about its material reproduction, but rather with the expansion of existing possibilities. In Furtado’s perspective, it was only the release and use of this creativity that would foster a new kind of development in underdeveloped countries, which economies were destroyed by the attempt to emulate the development experience of industrialized countries as it was a formula, based on the real needs of these populations (endogenous solution), freeing them from the dependence on technology, culture and economy of the developed countries (cultural dependence) and balancing economic growth with social inclusion (FURTADO, C. 1978). In other words, it will be only

³ Celso Monteiro Furtado’s (July 26, 1920 – November 20, 2004) work focused on the relation between of development and underdevelopment and on the persistence of poverty in peripheral countries throughout the world. He is viewed as one of the main formulators of economic structuralism, and was a key figure of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) which sought to stimulate economic development through governmental intervention. As a politician, Furtado was appointed Minister of Planning, in the 1960’s, and later Minister of Culture.

when the people become aware of their real needs and possibilities that their creativity will be used in order to get solutions to the state of underdevelopment.

As the Minister of Culture, Furtado sought to formulate a cultural policy that would free the creativity of the Brazilian people so that their local knowledge could generate wealth and affirm the cultural identities of different social groups at the same time. He actually argued that cultural policies should not be limited to the protection of national heritage or to facilitate the consumption of cultural goods. On the contrary, for the minister a “cultural policy which merely facilitates the consumption of cultural products tends to be inhibitory of creative activities and impose barriers to innovation”, and therefore “the central aim of cultural policy should be the release of creative forces of society” (FURTADO, C., 2012, p.41). Sure, for him the mere consumption of cultural products (produced mainly abroad, in the developed countries) would only make Brazilian awareness of their real situation of dependence goes numb. So it was necessary a cultural policy that would bestow the Brazilians to produce and to consume their own culture. Regardless of the discussion about the implicit concepts of an “authentic” local culture against an “inauthentic” international popular culture, it is worth noting that Furtado’s proposal accounted for a new perspective coming from the Brazilian government on the role of culture in society. For the first time, “culture” not only came to be defined in an anthropological sense (rather than simply “the arts”) but also became a key factor to engender innovation, economic growth and social inclusion.

This proposal was abandoned, however, over the period of the so called neoliberal governments. This was, as experts say, a period of “withdrawal of the State” from the cultural field. It started in the mandate of the President Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-1992), who promulgated a law lowering the MinC to a level of a mere secretariat and dissolving a number of departments subordinated. The recovery of the status of Ministry, in 1992, did not ensure a better luck though. During the term of Francisco Weffort

as the Minister of Culture (1995-2003), this absence of the State only deepened. Relying on tax incentive laws, the ministry has exempted itself to formulate a national cultural policy, hoping that the private sector became the main decision-maker for the use of public resources in culture (BOTELHO, 2001). Then, culture was presented as a “good deal”, in the words of the only document published by the MinC over this period (MINC, 1995), because it could generate profits for private business at the same time that exempted the State of taking care of it. The result of this attitude was dubious at best. Subsequent research demonstrated that the main companies fomenting cultural activities via tax exemption were State-owned enterprises (RUBIM, 2010). And it had a harmful consequence: cultural activities in the Rio-São Paulo axis (the richest region of the country) ended up being privileged by the private sector, leaving little options of cultural equipments and activities in other regions and thus exacerbating inequalities in the access to culture. As a result, the legitimacy of the MinC was seriously undermined, without being able to create an efficient system of private funding for cultural activities.

A third moment begins with the governments of Brazilian Worker's Party (PT). In clear opposition to the previous one this can be regarded as “bringing the State back”. The reading of the documents published by the MinC along the terms of Gilberto Gil (2003-2008) and Juca Ferreira (2008-2011) make clear the effort to render the ministry the central agent in the proposal and implementation of national cultural policies. To demonstrate the new attitude of ministry, it was started a direct dialogue with culture-producing agents to hear their views and demands. At the same time, the ministers favoured measures that would meet the goals of the PT government, combining economic growth and social inclusion. The result was the formulation of a brand new National Cultural Plan (*Plano Nacional de Cultura*) that presented a daring proposal of cultural policy, placing the MinC as an important agent of the PT planning for development. Doing so, little by little, the legitimacy of the ministry was being regained within and outside government.

The revitalization of MinC was accompanied by the expansion of its competencies. A critical move was the adoption of a new definition of “culture”. Based on the previous experience of the PT in the Secretariat of Culture of city of São Paulo, during the early 1990’s, also in the documents of the MinC “culture” came to be defined as “the collective inventiveness of symbols, values, ideas and behaviour in order to assert that all individuals and groups are cultural beings and cultural subjects” (CHAÚÍ, 1995). In this broad sense, the term was divided into three complementary dimensions: (a) as a symbolic expression, (b) as the right to citizenship, and (c) as a potential field for sustainable economic development. This *reconceptualization* of culture made possible for the ministry to support not only artistic activities but also to protect and promote cultural manifestations of minorities (from the protection of traditional cults of afro-Brazilians and native Brazilians to the support of homosexuals parades), besides acting in favour of expanding the access to information and Communication means (supporting digital culture, for instance). Regardless of the results, this new approach has created the conditions for the proposal of a policy devoted to the economic dimension of culture.

Culture as expediency for New Development: an analysis of the Plan of the Secretariat of the Creative Economy

Although experiences of cultural policies on creative economy can be found in some cities and states across the country, the *Plan of the Secretariat of the Creative Economy: policy, guidelines and actions 2011-2014* (PSCE) deserves special attention (MINC, 2011). In the midst of the revitalization of the ministry, this document “symbolizes a movement of the Ministry of Culture in redefining the role of culture in our country”, as stated incisively in its introduction (MINC, 2011, p.29). As a matter of fact, this publication contains a proposal for reframing of the relationship between the Brazilian State and the field of culture and as an extension a redefinition of the function of the MinC itself.

In her introductory words, the then Minister of Culture, Ana de Hollanda, observes that in many countries creativity has become a strategic means to engender economic growth hand in hand with social inclusion. Despite being recognized for its cultural diversity, the creativity input, Brazil did not appear in list of top exporters of creative goods and services. By creating the Secretariat of the Creative Economy (SCE), the MinC was trying to change this situation, assuming the task of leading the formulation, implementation and monitoring of public policies in the culture sector with the objective of generate a “new development based on social inclusion, sustainability, innovation and especially [the protection and promotion of] the Brazilian cultural diversity” (MINC 2011, p.1). This statement is quite important as it indicates not only a new attitude of the State towards culture but also affirms the leadership of the MinC in creating a Creative Brazil.

The perspective is fully developed, according to Claudia Leitão's article - first secretary of the SCE. The secretary begins underlining the failure of public policies based on a traditional view of development, in which economic growth was pursued even at the expense of collective welfare, only to assert emphatically that “development should mean, above all, quality of life and expanding choices” (MINC 2011, p.11). Endorsing the idea that development can only be justified on ethical grounds (SEN, 2010), she states that the creative economy is a privileged means to achieve so.

In general terms, the PSCE reproduces the arguments of the UNCTAD report, emphasizing cultural diversity as a resource for the creative industries. Nevertheless, it is important to note the mentions to the thought of Celso Furtado in order to justify the connection among cultural diversity, creative economy and development. His influence is expressed unequivocally as Leitão states that creativity should be based on “Brazilian regional cultural diversity”, that is, the local knowledge of the population, because only the awareness of the people about their real situation could leverage an endogenous and inclusive economic growth:

[...] four [are the] forces impelling the development: the production flexible

organization; the diffusion of innovations and knowledge; the change and adaptation of the institutions and the urban development of the territory. The interaction among such forces would produce the required synergy capable of provoking an endogenous development, which, in its turn, would allow Brazil a new economic growth alternative, no longer built outside in, but the result of a local economic dynamic. At the same time, such development would be grounded on the valour of the local cultural ethics and expressions, required to the consolidation of cooperative practices, to the growth of trust between individuals and groups, further to the protection to the cultural and environmental patrimony of the territories involved (MINC, 2011, p.13).

In a Durkheimian way, Leitão asserts that creative economy represents a new kind of economy that is able to generate solidarity based on respect for local cultural expressions and the protection of the environment. But to do so, cultural diversity should be perceived differently by public authorities:

Thus, the cultural diversity shall no longer be understood only as goods to be appreciated, but as a fundamental asset to a new understanding of the development. On the one side, it must be perceived as a social estate, capable of causing sympathies among individuals, communities, people, and countries; on the other, as an economic asset, capable of constructing alternatives and solutions to new businesses, for a new work, all in all, for new ways of producing wealth. Thus, whether producing experiences or survival, the cultural diversity has become the “cement” that shall create and consolidate, throughout this century, a new economy (MINC, 2011, p.30-31).

In this sense, culture must be treated as an expediency that can accomplish cultural functions (protection of historical heritage, social cohesion, encouraging artistic activities), economic functions (job creation and income generation) as well as political functions (social inclusion, protection of cultural diversity). The Creative Brazil project appears therefore not as a mere cultural policy but rather as a development policy based on culture.

Another distinctive aspect of the PSCE is its conceptualization of the creative economy. Unlike the British discourse, according to creative activities which are characterized by the ability to generate intellectual property (and which would result in a

posture of reinforcement of that type of legislation), the mentors PSCE understand that in the current stage of development of the country (with a poor educational structure, little skilled labour and low capacity of scientific production) broad access and easy flow of information, goods and innovation would be critical to the empowerment of local labour and the exercise of citizenship.

[...] the creative sectors are all those whose productive activities have as main process a creative act generator of symbolic value, central element of price formation, and which results in the production cultural and economic wealth (MINC, 2011, p.32).

As an extension, the creative economy would be the commerce of goods and services whose value is primarily symbolic. It should be noted that no emphasis is given to the ability to produce and exploit intellectual property.

To illustrate this loose definition, the example of painting is given. After all, this would be a creative activity because its value does not lie in the chemical quality of the inks used, or the price of the canvas used for painting, but in the specificity of knowledge and technique of the painter, or even, the creative imagination that the romantics preferred to call “genius”. Similarly, a designer can also be seen as a professional gifted with creative imagination as he/she adds economic value to a plastic chair just with the application of his/her ideas. The same reasoning applies to the computer engineer who produces software or a fashion designer who uses the folklore motifs in collections of clothing. These comparisons have important implications for cultural policies. In transferring the notion of creative imagination, before an exclusive property of the arts, to industry-related activities (architecture, design, fashion or electronic games) the MinC can claim them as objects of cultural policies. That is not a question of cultural activities that become industrialized, as happened to the cultural industries, but rather the cultural process of industrial ones. This conception requires a profound review of the functions of the ministry itself. Indeed, it is acknowledged when it is assumed that:

The Ministry of Culture retakes the difficult task of rethinking, re-conducting, leading debates and creating policies on the culture and development in Brazil, with the mission of transforming the Brazilian creativity into innovation, and the innovation into wealth: cultural wealth, economic wealth, social wealth. (MINC, 2011, p.24).

In this passage, the MinC/SCE claims the right to be the proponent of a socio-economic policy based on immaterial labour (creativity). But how can it be done? The answer lies in the strategic coordination with other ministries. This is qualified as a “transversal” policy (Figure 1).

This illustration is emblematic in that it puts the MinC/SCE literally at the centre of a network of ministries and secretariats, as a hub of a macro-policy on development, connecting it strategically to the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Cities, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science and Technology, and so forth.

This proposal is as bold as exciting. Nevertheless, it poses great challenges. By presenting a policy on creative economy that places itself at the centre of a national development planning, the MinC has subjected culture to the goals of innovation, sustainability and social inclusion. In a way, it can be said that Brazilian politicians also bring culture from the margins to the centre of the economic and political thought. But created to encourage the arts and to protect the national heritage, the MinC has no structure and competence to cope with the demands of different creative industries. Today, its budget is insufficient even for the promotion of cultural activities. So this new policy necessarily subverts the logic of the ministry itself, raising important questions: to what extent the MinC can safeguard its interests in front of other so powerful ministries? If the discourse of the SCE is to use culture as expediency for economic growth and social inclusion, there are activities that should be more or less granted? What are the parameters for this sort of choice? Considering that culture is now submitted to a broader concept, creativity, can we consider the SCE the germ of a new ministry dedicated to creativity and not to culture anymore?

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Concluding remarks

Such questions cannot be properly answered at this very moment. The SCE is still being structured and its measures are being timidly implemented. Moreover, due to the dynamics of the political life, running the PSCE as it was published is always an open question. Personnel changes in key sectors of government bureaucracy, budget constraints, and sovereignty disputes among the MinC and other ministries, among other factors, may put into danger the execution of this policy. Regardless of the circumstances, the creation of the SCE represents the emergence and the institutionalization of a new approach to culture that cannot be ignored.

As argued here, the adoption of the idea of creativity has important implications for cultural policies. Insofar as the creative industries are considered a means to promote a new development, the State perspective on culture changes: from the locus of solidarity, culture becomes an expediency to meet the needs in industry (goods, services and experiences) and in science as well (innovation). This perspective can require an institutional transformation of the State to approach culture, being the British case emblematic.

The recent initiative of the Brazilian PT government appears as a case to be carefully followed. After all, it is a Latin American developmentalist government whose preoccupation with economic growth is inseparable from social policies. Unlike the British case, it is meant that the State takes a more active participation in the organization and the regulation of the creative economy. Although entailing interesting specificities, it was argued that also the PT plan to foster the creative economy in Brazil submits the concept of culture to the idea of “creativity”, a term that is not limited to culture nor can be confused with it. Therefore, its Ministry of Culture appears as formulator and executor of a macro policy on development, which requires at its limit a complete transformation of its rationale and structure.

This analysis contains no axiological appraisal of the Creative Brazil project. On the contrary, the predominance of the debate on the creative economy in the cultural policy agenda internationally required the Brazilian government to recognize and deal with this issue, which seems to be done in a quite interesting way. However, one must recognize the range of possibilities and challenges. The changing status of culture requires a new conception of cultural policies. It is necessary to review the articulations among the protection of national heritage, ensuring access for the population to cultural goods and the promotion of creative industries. This is not an easy task. The fact of being endowed with great cultural diversity does not guarantee that cultural policies will be able to use it in order to generate economic growth and social inclusion smoothly. Economic, political and cultural interests can collide during the implementation of this policy and this would cause serious damages to a ministry created to defend certain goals that seem to be becoming obsolete now. Actually, the MinC stands at a crossroads in which the main issue is: how to deal with culture with the creation of a Creative Brazil?

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