

CULTURAL POLICIES ON CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN LATIN AMERICA

The Challenge to Incorporate the Cultural Rights Approach

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Any cultural policy must take into account the deep and human sense of development. New paradigms are needed and they will be found in the educational and cultural fields.

Cultural aspect of development
(Mondiacult 1982)

Abstract: How does the cultural rights approach impact the formulation and design of policies on creative economy? From what perspective are cultural policies on creative economy formulated in Latin America? The present study aims at discussing cultural policies on creative economy in Latin America from the cultural rights viewpoint. It is assumed that they make sense if their impact can be measured beyond economic growth, focusing instead on the human and cultural development of the peoples and places they were designed for.

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For more than forty years now, much has been researched, discussed and written on the contribution of culture to development and, more specifically, on the purpose behind this research proposal, that is, on the contribution of creative economy and cultural industries to culture development and identity strengthening in regions where there is room for them.

Within the worldwide economic context, it is surprising to see how emblematic industry areas such as fishing and agriculture have been superseded by creative economy, not only in GDP contribution but also in job creation. This is why special emphasis has been placed on the production chain of the different areas of creative economy, as to identify and strengthen those characteristics that contribute to the economic enrichment of the regions where they are developed. For this reason, in general terms, the discussion approach to measure the contribution of creative economy to global economy is mostly based on quantitative data concerning the value chains of the different areas.

Nevertheless, for this study in particular, our interest is mostly on the last link of the production chain: consumption. We think that consumption, from the viewpoint of participation in and access to cultural goods and services, is crucially important as the economic richness, cultural development and identity strengthening of peoples is only possible when—hand in hand with the production of goods and services of high value and symbolic content—there are cultural citizens-consumers able to acknowledge and appropriate that value and symbolic content they identify with.

This is only possible when the design of cultural public policies makes them possible to dialogue with educational public policies. Then, how can the image of the consumer-prosumer-enjoyer of culture be strengthened through public policies? How are cultural policies being designed and implemented in our respective countries? Are there new paradigms for the design of cultural and creative industries?

A Glance at Cultural Policies in Latin America What Are We Measuring and Assessing?

Policies on creative industries in Latin America seem to be flanked by two paradigms, that is, certain fields of problems with their respective solutions (Kuhn, 1971)¹.

On the one hand, there is a classic growth paradigm², which intends to reinforce *creation*, *production* and *distribution* processes in order to increase circulation and participation volumes in the GDP as an indicator of the success of such policies. In that framework, there are efforts aiming at producing data on the production and circulation volumes of cultural goods.

This growing interest for this kind of industries—which have been considered for a long time as marginal industries—has implied the proliferation of analysis, statistics, mapping and studies on the relation between creative industries and economic development, providing the legislative bodies of different countries with necessary data and information for the development of public policies in this area (UNESCO, 2006:1).

¹ Although this term dates back to traditions prior to Kuhn's time, it is Kuhn himself who manages to give it a specific use when discussing the history and development of scientific knowledge.

² Economist paradigm focused on economic growth as distant from thoughts originated, for example, in political economy when analyzing similar processes. In the latter, contextual analysis are assumed—institutional and political ones—on market behaviors, among other elements.

This way of understanding and monitoring the impact of policies on creative industries is focused on data quality; that is, information biases and gaps distorting product value are attempted to be controlled.

We can see an example of the problem implied in establishing the value created by a cultural good in the production and distribution of a movie. Only one original is exported to destination markets and once there, it is copied and locally distributed. As a result, the value that appears on the exporting account of the country that produced the movie does not accurately reflect the value of the product distributed in the country that imported the movie (UNESCO, 2006:2).

Although it is an outstanding approach originated in the field of economy, it is increasingly attracting not only economists but also experts on different work fields.

The recent emergence of creative industries as a differentiated area of interest for economists, statistics specialists and cultural experts and leaders developing public policies, reflects the increasing awareness of the key role played by cultural industries in the current socio-economic context for both its economic potential and its potential to serve as a vehicle for fostering cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2006:7).

Despite this increasing interest, we are currently within an intellectual tradition that is still distant from the artistic-cultural field, which many times results in approaching these phenomena through distinctions and codes that do not necessarily reflect their complexity. By the way, it is the artistic field itself that stresses the theoretical frameworks of policy designers such as in the case of the notion of consumption³.

From the Notion of Consumption to the Notion of Cultural Citizenship

One of the aspects clearly ignored by the classic paradigm for designing policies on creative industries (and the programs that result from it) is the final aspect of the production chain: consumers. In this sense, thinking of the integration of *the cultural rights paradigm* in policies on creative industries represents a double challenge. On the one hand, shifting focus towards the circulation of goods while thinking of the perceiving subjects⁴ of such goods. On the other hand, *reconceptualizing the cycle* by generating new distinctions and codes that may make possible to think of these subjects.

In sum, it is about building a new paradigm for the creation of cultural policies on creative industries which, considering experience and the measurement and recording systems in progress, can allow for the visibility of a *cultural citizenship*, that is, subjects with full legal rights in the fields of culture and the arts.

We may surmise that this step is in the making, being a process that is intimately related to mobilization processes and the conquest of rights that can be traced back to international conventions on the matter. This is how we find ourselves in a long and gradual path to build and incorporate a new paradigm for cultural policies. Its milestone date (Harvey, 2008:4)⁵ was in 1970 when the first international intergovernmental conference was convened by

³ Something similar happens with the concepts of “audiences” and “publics” and, in its generic form, with the notion of “show.” In a more complex formula, we can see this discussion in approaches on formalist Aesthetics and relational Aesthetics in the work of Nicolas Bourriaud (1998).

⁴ The so-called “prosumers” and “enjoyers” of cultural goods are included in this conceptualization.

⁵ As Harvey claims: “The approval in 1966 in the bosom of the United Nations of the International Agreements on Civil and Political Rights, as well as on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, currently ratified as binding agreements by many countries in our region, has contributed to the normative exploitation of a wider aspect of cultural rights.”

UNESCO and held in Venice. This conference inaugurated an increasing viewpoint that may be referred to as “the anthropological vision in designing a cultural policy.” This trend was followed by a specialization process reflected in the conventions of 1982 (Mondiacult) and 2005 (Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions), as well as in the Freiburg Declaration on Cultural Rights, among others. In sum, these agreements foster the incorporation of citizen rights in the wide fields of culture and the arts, which progressively challenges the ability to design and implement policies on the part of the signatory states⁶. Thus, this perspective—leading to a certain paradigm for policy design—produces a response in statements that acknowledge the problem beyond economic growth:

Culture is a fundamental aspect of the development process and contributes to strengthen the independence, sovereignty and identity of nations. Development has frequently been conceived in quantitative terms, ignoring the necessary qualitative aspect, that is, a man's fulfillment of spiritual and cultural aspirations. Genuine development aims at the well-being and constant fulfillment of each and all. Cultural aspect of development. (Mondiacult, 1982).

Despite this movement at the transnational level, it is still possible to think of solutions for the problems observed from the classic paradigm such as the access gap to cultural consumption. Concerning this issue, we believe that the proposal for building a basic cultural consumption basket (Güell et al., 2010) is an effort to bring cultural rights closer to measurement systems of consumption access, which follows the metaphor “objects available in a basket for consumption.” It is an extreme and border version of the classic paradigm. It dialogues with the newly formed paradigm, which incorporates cultural and artistic goods as a right while keeping the notion of cultural consumption. We will cover this later.

Cultural Citizenship in a Class-Based Society

From the classic paradigm for designing policies on creative industries, the empowerment processes and gradual emergence of a cultural citizenship are soon conceptualized as an opening of new markets and consumers. In this field, Canclini posits a question: “The global distribution of goods and information makes central and peripheral countries come closer in consumption (...) Why doesn't this simultaneous access to material and symbolic goods go together with a global and fuller exercise of citizenship? (Canclini, 1995:6)

This remark, which can be addressed to both the reality between countries and the domestic reality of each of them, is an invitation to think of policies aiming at “taking art to excluded groups” so as to decrease access gaps. Nevertheless, there is a prior question to answer: if this is going to be the case, what art should be taken to these groups? Then, we find a relation between art and popular culture that is problematized not only when it comes to distribution but also when it comes to reception, that is, the assimilation and deciphering abilities of the receivers. Any art perception implies a conscious or unconscious deciphering operation. The problem was already illustrated by Bourdieu, who suggested that working classes tend to relate to realist art, establishing thereby a functional or identifying relation as with any other object.

If less cultured spectators in our societies are so prone to demand realism in representations is, among other reasons, because they lack specific perception

⁶ An analysis of the cultural policy implemented by the Chilean State between 2005 and 2010 showed that although 80% of the measures corresponded to contents of articles of the 2005 Convention, only 20% of such measures were completely implemented. The main reason for this low implementation is the multisector dependence on such measures (Parliament, Department of Education, Department of Foreign Affairs, etc.), which would make the task more difficult.

categories and cannot apply to the erudite culture no code but the one allowing them to grasp the objects of their daily surroundings as having meaning (Bourdieu, 1968:47).

The gap would then exist beyond codes of exposure and access to the work, a matter that becomes even clearer in strictly speaking abstract fields requiring deciphering such as dance⁷. Following this analysis, by counterpoint we will find a tendency to abstraction that would be much more common in the cultural capital of the upper classes. Ultimately, a person that has not been in contact with aesthetic experiences or who does not have a certain cultural capital will have great difficulties in relating to a work of art, especially because of the impossibility of the deciphering operation.

The Problem of Cultural and Artistic Enjoyment as a Focus of Cultural Policy

The problem raised above is the consequence of cultural policies that are not designed to teach to feel the arts and, thereby, are far from being in tune with cultural enjoyers. Probably because artists do not commonly design policies, development expectations are focused on the possibility that formal, not formal and informal education can provide excluded groups with a vocabulary, distinctions and codes that allow them to dialogue with a classic or modern work of art. Here there is a problem that is not easy to solve, as it seems easier to offer them more grotesque or more realist works. Part of this problem may be in the experiences of audience formations, the so-called school of spectators or other similar initiatives that open a path for the design of policies on creative industries by focusing on perceiving subjects and on the necessary fostering of cultural citizenship. Thus, how to generate better deciphering abilities in popular areas may seem to be a problem in need of specific participatory methodologies, where it is worth mentioning Latin American traditions such as Paulo Freire's (1970)⁸. Freire was a popular educator who dealt with a similar problem in times where the alphabet itself seemed to be an instrument of the elite. In this sense, it might be said that artistic activities are a way of social production where it is not trivial to wonder how social asymmetries and inequalities in today's society impact reception processes of both art and cultural goods and services.

So far we have made a brief journey through different approaches to the design of policies on creative industries, which results in the question on what we are measuring and assessing. Below we will present a brief synoptic table on the paradigms that would be in play when facing these questions:

Fig.1. Comparative Table on Paradigms for the Design and Implementation of Policies on Creative Industries:

ANALYSIS AIM	OF GROWTH (Classic)	OF RIGHTS
1. Distinctions and codes	Production Chain	Value Cycle
	Consumers	Prosumers
	Publics	Participants
2. Focus, goals and objectives	Volume of circulation of goods and participation in the GDP	Implementation of transnational agreements and treaties associated with cultural rights
3. Field of problems and	Creation and Production:	Distribution and

⁷ This problem is usually avoided, fostering the exposure of publics to folkloric popular music, theater and realist painting.

⁸ In Paulo Freire there is an interesting reflection and concern for developing a decoding process of reality and appropriating the alphabet by giving it sense from the real world. This process is achieved, among other aspects, through the so-called "generating words" within a "universal minimal vocabulary." See Pedagogy of the Oppressed. 1970.

solutions	Micro and macro- entrepreneurship.	Consumption: Mediation, Audience Formation, School of spectators.
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Astorga and Padilla (2012)

Latin America: New Approaches for the Design and Implementation of Policies on Cultural and Creative Industries

When taking a panoramic look at the evolution of cultural policies on cultural and creative industries in Latin America, we can see that, in general, the approach has mostly focused on promoting actual industries: Films, Books and Music, plus some other exceptions. In fact, Diana Rey Vásquez (2009) claims that it is possible to find three stages in the implementation of cultural public policies in Latin America. The first stage is the development of policies that made national artistic expressions visible such as the creation of national symphony orchestras (1928 in Mexico; 1952 in Colombia) or the promotion of national theater companies (1942 in Chile; 1971 in Costa Rica). In the second stage, in the mid-80s and the beginnings of the new century, Latin American governments focused on initiatives promoting copyright and related rights in order to help the commercial trade of cultural goods and services. In the third and last stage, whose border with the second stage is a bit blurry, Latin American governments started playing a leading role in considering culture as a development factor. This is why new policies based on the strengthening of cultural and creative policies are being created:

These concerns resulted from the interest of governments to defend the principles of Identity and Diversity. They began to develop mid- and long-term tools to tacitly acknowledge the value of cultural goods and services. It is through them that original solutions to face globalization and the strong concentration of the cultural offer are being analyzed (Rey Vasquez, 2009:71).

In this context, we find four cases where, at least in theory, cultural policies on creative economy have been designed from a viewpoint different to mere development. On the one hand, Ecuador, whose approach corresponds to the cultural rights perspective. On the other hand, Uruguay, whose approach is based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In addition to the above, specific examples to strengthen cultural consumption, we find in Chile, where a few researchers has undertaken a study to establish a basic cultural consumption basket (CBCC according to its acronym in Spanish); while in Brazil, private sector and State have committed to implement the “Vale Cultura” that involves a direct subsidy to demand.

Ecuador: A Cultural Policy Based on the Cultural Rights Approach

Ecuador’s cultural policy document—under the conspicuous title “Policies for a Cultural Revolution 2011”—has been in force since last year only. This document also includes a vision and a mission statement, which state that it is the Department of Culture’s responsibility to safeguard the full exercise of cultural rights and have a bearing on the symbolic integration of Ecuador and the cultural change of society. This change is based on interculturality and will contribute to the materialization of good living, as well as guaranteeing the observance of cultural rights through the fostering of the several cultural expressions coexisting in the country (Ecuador’s Department of Culture, 2011).

This navigation chart is structured around four aims. Two of them have called our attention: the one specifically referring to cultural rights and another where cultural undertakings are discussed. Regarding the aim of cultural rights, four scopes of activity are mentioned: (1)

Exercise of cultural rights; (2) The right to the development of artistic talent; (3) The right to information and knowledge; (4) The right to the access to and use of public spaces.

Within the aim of cultural undertakings, one of the challenges introduced is to reinforce identity and guarantee the fostering of cultural diversity by strengthening the radio, television and public press, especially the production of soap operas and series. Also, in order to counteract the industry of “canned culture,” it is deemed necessary to foster local technological development (Internet, software); to give people access to new technologies; and to promote regional alliances to reinforce creativity at a national level but with emphasis on local specificities.

It is significant to notice the degree of consistency between this aim in particular, the cultural policy document in general and the Freiburg Declaration on Cultural Rights, especially concerning the following articles: (9) Principles of democratic governance, as to how to develop ways of coordination and participation; (10) Insertion in the economy, so that cultural goods and services—as long as they have value, identity and sense—can be conceived, produced and used in such a way that they can safeguard cultural rights altogether; and (11) Responsibility of public agents when it comes to incorporating cultural rights into legislations and national practices (UNESCO, 1998)

Ecuador should soon provide some data concerning an initial evaluation of what it has meant to implement a new cultural policy from the cultural rights viewpoint. We expect positive results in both qualitative and quantitative terms, as this approach includes the well-being of a human being, considering the right to participate in and enjoy cultural life a basic need.

Viví Cultura – The Strengthening of Creative Industries in Uruguay

In macroeconomic terms, Uruguay has always been one of the countries with the highest levels of human development in Latin America. In fact, according to the 2007/2008 Report on Human Development, Uruguay has one of the lowest poverty and inequality rates in the region (PNUD, 2007). However, as it usually happens with “macro” indicators and figures, Uruguay also has problems caused by poverty and exclusion that increase the social differences between the different geographical areas of the country.

Uruguay realized that one of its main resources to reach economic, social and cultural development was its creative and innovative potential. Despite of the instability of world economy, this potential turned Uruguay’s cultural industries into one of the most dynamic sectors of economy, accounting for 1.66% of the GDP. And yet, Uruguayans believed that there were many issues that still prevented Uruguay from developing its full creative ability such as the weakness of public and private institutions in charge of promoting, supporting and regulating cultural production, the reduced scale of the domestic market and the insufficient abilities of cultural agents (producers, artists, etc.), among others (Stolovich, 2002).

In this scenario, the project “*Viví Cultura: Fortalecimiento de las Industrias Culturales y mejora de accesibilidad a los bienes y servicios culturales de Uruguay*” [*Live Culture: Strengthening of Cultural Industries and Improvement of Accessibility to Cultural Goods and Services of Uruguay*] came up in 2008. One year earlier, Uruguay had ratified the *Convención sobre la Protección y Promoción de la Diversidad de Expresiones Culturales* [Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions] as part of a sustainable development strategy to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UNESCO, 2005).

In general terms, Viví Cultura focused on “the promotion of cultural expressions and the development of cultural industries (based on local values and identities) in order to contribute to improve the economic insertion of the country, expand its domestic market, create new

quality jobs and strengthen the sense of belonging of Uruguayans, especially the youth.” (Proyecto Viví Cultura, 2008)

It is precisely the viewpoint on sustainable development, aimed at meeting the Millennium Development Goals, one of the most outstanding aspects of this project. The project specifically focuses on the following objectives: (1) Reduction of poverty and hunger; (3) Fostering of gender equality and women’s autonomy, and (8) Promotion of a worldwide association for development. Another important aspect for a project of the scope of Viví Cultura is to have combined the efforts of different government agencies (Department of Planning and Budget, Department of Education and Culture, Department of Industry, Energy and Mining), the private sector, international help and the civil society.

Having an estimated budget of U\$ 3,370,500, financed by Fondo España-PNUD for a 3-year period, Viví Cultura should have already fulfilled its three main goals, that is: (1) To strengthen the quality and competitiveness of cultural industries; (2) To provide vulnerable social groups with easier access to cultural goods and services; (3) To strengthen the abilities of cultural institutionality.

In a mid-term evaluation conducted one year and a half after the project started (July 2008), Sergio Lenci, a consultant for the Fondo-ODM pointed out the following, among other recommendations:

The program is very appropriate and relevant in its context. Its work hypothesis is solid and innovative and, despite of the delays in the implementation of activities, it is becoming very effective to contribute to meet the Millennium Development Goals (especially 1 and 3). Moreover, the Viví Cultura program is being conducted in a platform for the experimentation of policies that combine economic development and social inclusion within a frame of human development. The latter is understood not only as the widening of individual viewpoints and options, but also as the strengthening of collective identities in a mutual cooperation spirit. (Lenci, 2010:6)

We will have to wait for a final evaluation in order to really know the implications of Viví Cultura, a program that privileges the comprehensive development of citizens—improving their lives through the access to culture and the arts—over the economic growth of Uruguay’s creative industries. The final beneficiary of this project is the last link of the chain: the enjoyer of culture.

From the Vale Cultura Program to the Notion of the Basic Cultural Consumption Basket

Vale Cultura is basically a subsidy program for cultural demand and has been suggested as a tool to encourage the access of certain publics to cultural services and goods. In the case of Brazil, there is a program addressed at workers earning a wage lower than 5 minimal wages, amounting to 30 dollars per month for a total of 12 million people (Congresso Nacional de Brasil, 2009).

This program would be implemented through the companies currently employing the beneficiaries and intends to decrease access gaps. The program is also conceived as having a revitalizing effect on the creative industry in Brazil and it is estimated that it is contributing with an annual additional income of more than USD 4 million dollars, as well as creating more jobs in the area. Although the project is focused on the performing arts, visual arts, audiovisual sector, literature and humanities and music and cultural heritage, goods that would be market commodities are not distinguished; they can be domestic or foreign. However, the strengths of such an initiative are many, it is also necessary to refer to the weaknesses of its impact and measurement. What goods should be given access to? What

incentives should be given so that people may consume such goods? These and other questions come up and install the need to discuss and provide contents to the paradigm on which the design of the policy is based.

Considering the weaknesses of such an initiative, it is appropriate to mention the development of a project that might well be supplementary. It is the Basic Cultural Consumption Basket for Latin America (CBCC). We think that it is an attempt to operationalize and visualize in economic terms the access to cultural rights. In the words of the authors:

The Basic Cultural Consumption Basket (CBCC) attempts—as a normative horizon and as an analytical tool to implement public policies—to promote and ensure the access to cultural goods and services that may help strengthen the cultural basis of democracy and development. Establishing a minimum cultural access, determining the levels of cultural consumption and measuring the inequality levels in cultural consumption within countries contributes to a society that reflects and establishes new social horizons in all cultural aspects that make possible a sustainable and solid development in time (Güell et al., 2011:27).

As a methodological viewpoint that supports the idea of establishing minimum accesses to culture, the project builds a measurement system for the access to cultural rights. It is worth mentioning that this is an initiative that also answers the criticism about the scarce practical use of studies on cultural consumption, which are said to be just confined to the academia and have no bearing whatsoever on the formulation of cultural policies. This is why “a normative foundation of what constitutes a basic consumption of culture in different countries implies to operationalize the human right relating to the right to culture, which is understood as prior to the State” (Güell et al., 2011:28).

Technically speaking, the project aims at identifying a normal minimum cultural consumption that is statistically expected and presented in a basic cultural consumption basket (CBCC), which allows to create two main indexes: *the cultural consumption index* (ICC), that is, the percentage of the population that has access to the consumption of a certain cultural good and service at the nation level and the *cultural consumption inequality index* (IDCC). Concerning the identification of minimums, the authors point out the following:

Supported by the right to participate in the cultural development of the community where one belongs, this minimum can be normatively formulated as follows: any person has the right to access those goods that are usually accessed to by his/her fellow citizens that do not present restrictions to cultural consumption (Güell et al, 2011: 105).

Below is a sample of the results of the application of the cultural access index, according to the availability of data of Eurobarometer 2007 in comparison with two Latin American countries in respective cultural consumption surveys.

Fig.2. Application of Cultural Consumption Basket Project

Country	Cultural Consumption Index ICC
England	0.72
Germany	0.71
France	0.50
Mexico	0.38
Spain	0.31
Chile	0.02

Source: Extract of the actual table (Güell et al, 2011:120).

The results allow building a comparative image of nations, locating the relative position of some in comparison to others and showing the intensity of access to cultural consumption in each one of them.

In sum, this is a project that serves as an analysis tool to explore the possibilities offered by current data, but mostly moves forward from the common way to solve the problem and introduces the possibility of creating “more reflexive cultural policies aimed at concrete goals, as well as designing and implementing permanent systems of measurement and comparability between the different countries of the region” (Güell et al, 2011:135).

It is the definition of consumption provided by the anthropological tradition the one posing the appropriate challenges. Thus, one of the most influential researchers in this field conceives it as “that group of appropriation processes and product uses where symbolic value prevails over use and change values or where, at least, the latter are configured as subordinated to the symbolic aspect” (Canclini, 1999:89).

The authors themselves deal with this issue when they give account of the complexity of the phenomenon under study by acknowledging that this type of consumption “is produced in relatively differentiated circuits and requires certain specialized knowledge for its appropriation and use” (Güell et al, 2011: 48).

In sum, we are dealing with experiences that contribute to democratize the access to cultural goods and services. To be successful, they need to articulate with the ample space for construction of cultural citizenships in the region.

Conclusions

When we started this research, our objective was to prove that there was another way to face the design of policies on cultural and creative industries, shifting focus from the fostering of creation and production to the strengthening of participation from the perspective of cultural rights. However, we gradually realized that, in reality, it was not just a matter of looking differently; it was truly a paradigm shift, at least in some Latin American countries, as the cultural policies beginning to be implemented had their focus on the subject not only to increase access to cultural goods and services but also to make citizens aware of their cultural rights and the importance of culture in the comprehensive development of their lives, the only possible way to think of a society that can recognize itself in diversity.

It has not been our intention either to emphasize what has been done wrong these years, since, as in all, there were cycles that adjusted to different economic, political and sociocultural contexts in Latin America. Somehow it is logical to think that, at the beginning, cultural policies were focused on substituting artists and artistic production in general, that is, it was necessary to invest in symphonic orchestras, writers, theater companies and the incipient national cinema in order to have a quality cultural production, as well as to give people the chance to get acquainted with several artistic expressions. Later, it was necessary to protect the copyright of artists themselves as well as of other agents participating in the value cycle of cultural and creative industries. Finally, as it had to happen, we faced a scenario where the traditional way to design and implement cultural policies would face new needs of citizens who, thanks to several initiatives such as new information technologies, may become leading actors of their own cultural experience. It was these very technologies that made cultural public policy makers realize of the importance of revaluing and strengthening the local and the diverse, given the huge amount of foreign cultural goods and services present in our homes every day mainly through means of communication and the Internet.

Thus, we became interested in finding out more about those policies and programs in Latin America based on the cultural rights paradigm. For this purpose, the following experiences were chosen: Ecuador and its cultural policy; the Viví Cultura Project in Uruguay and its approach towards fulfilling Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the basic cultural consumption basket (CBCC) for Latin America proposed by Chilean researchers, and Brazil's Vale Cultura, which just like the case of Chile, incorporates the participation of both the State and private sectors so cultural enjoyment is not the privilege of a few anymore.

This research is just starting and there are many “different viewpoints” left to discuss about the new paradigm experienced by Latin America and glimpsed herein. This new paradigm necessarily demands a progressive incorporation of the cultural rights approach in the design of public policies, so these can become a guarantee to build societies where culture becomes a vital need—just like food and health—for the development of the human person. To achieve this, it is compulsory to delve into the trajectories and strategies used in the region, as well as examining the budgets allocated to the fostering and exercising of cultural rights and the measures to modify the inequality structure in our regions.

In this new scenario, cultural and creative industries could become as important as education to provide opportunities for economic, social and cultural development in the creation of fair and diverse societies where everyone is included and welcomed.

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