P143 / Culture and Territories: Attractiveness, Inequalities and Power Relations in Local Cultural Policies

Topic : Policy Change/Continuity/Dynamics

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Local cultural policies involve a wide range of actors (elected officials, public institutions, cultural professionals, associations, artistic collectives, citizen initiatives), from neighborhood projects to flagship international events. This panel examines how local cultural action helps produce and transform territories, identities and social relations, by bringing together three purposes often studied separately:

- culture as a tool for territorial promotion, through marketing, attractiveness and the showcasing of heritage that builds territorial identity (García, 2004);
- culture as a factor of social cohesion and a space for mobilization and collective capacities to act (Arnaud, 2018);
- culture as a stake in ecological transformation, through adapting facilities to climate constraints and the emergence of new priorities, funding criteria and inequalities (Oakley & Ward, 2018).

These purposes are not simply juxtaposed: actors mobilize them differently depending on the arenas and audiences they address. They may also compete, notably when cultural promotion strengthens attractiveness without benefiting those who produce a territory's wealth, or when environmental requirements change access to public resources. How do local cultural actors reconcile artistic, heritage and social objectives with the imperatives of development and attractiveness? What power relations structure these trade-offs, and with what consequences for resource distribution, territorial inequalities and residents' capacity to act?

The panel is organized around three axes:

1.Legitimation. How are the same cultural initiatives justified in terms of attractiveness, cohesion, territorial identity or ecological transition, depending on the audience (elected officials, economic and tourism stakeholders, residents, European funders)? We hypothesize that this versatility lets sometimes contradictory objectives coexist, at the cost of ambiguous evaluation.
2.Trade-offs, governance and territorial inequalities. Under budgetary constraint, which actors and priorities shape the allocation of cultural resources? Are projects enhancing metropolitan prestige favored, at the risk of reinforcing territorial inequalities (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993)?
3.Participation, cultural rights and collective capacities to act. Beyond participatory discourse, to what extent can residents define their priorities and control their resources (Carrel, 2013)? How do associations and collectives build their capacities for action, between institutional cooperation and autonomy?

Scientific relevance. By combining research on territorial attractiveness, social cohesion, cultural rights and ecological transition, the panel examines the power relations running through local cultural action and how public, private and voluntary-sector actors manage contradictory objectives. Open to qualitative, quantitative and comparative approaches, it aims to contribute to a political sociology of cultural action attentive to tensions between institutional logics, territorial transformations and actors' autonomy.

References

-Arnaud, L. (2018). Agir par la culture : Acteurs, enjeux et mutations des mouvements culturels. Éditions de l'Attribut.

-Bianchini, F., Parkinson, M. (dir.). (1993). Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: The West European Experience, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

-Carrel, M. (2013). Faire participer les habitants ? Citoyenneté et pouvoir d'agir dans les quartiers populaires, Lyon, ENS Éditions.

-García, B. (2004). Cultural policy and urban regeneration in Western European cities: Lessons from

experience, prospects for the future. Local Economy, 19(4), 312–326.

-Oakley, K., & Ward, J. (2018). The art of the good life: Culture and sustainable prosperity. Cultural Trends, 27(1), 4-17.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Cities and regions increasingly expect culture to fulfill several functions at once: improving their image and economic attractiveness, strengthening social ties and, more recently, contributing to the ecological transition. Festivals, heritage sites, museums and community-based artistic projects are commonly justified by this twofold promise. But how are these sometimes contradictory objectives reconciled in practice? Who decides on priorities, and who actually benefits from the cultural transformation of territories?

This panel invites contributions that examine local cultural policies as spaces where the logics of attractiveness, social cohesion and the autonomy of cultural actors are negotiated, but also confronted. Particular attention will be paid to the relations between public institutions, economic actors, associations and artistic collectives, as well as to the effects of new environmental requirements on the priorities and resources of cultural action.

We particularly welcome proposals addressing:

- the legitimation of cultural projects to different audiences (elected officials, economic and tourism stakeholders, residents, funders) and the evolution of the registers of justification mobilized;
- the governance of trade-offs: coalitions of actors, budgetary constraints, and the unequal distribution of cultural resources among territories, institutions and local initiatives;
- resident participation and cultural rights, questioning the capacity of associations and artistic collectives to define their priorities, control their resources and preserve their autonomy in the face of institutional logics;
- the role of events, heritage facilities and community-level schemes in the construction of territorial identities, urban transformations and processes of social and spatial polarization;
- the evaluation of the effects of cultural action on territorial inequalities, the distribution of the benefits of attractiveness, and collective capacities to act.

We welcome empirical, theoretical and comparative papers drawing on the sociology of public policy, political sociology, cultural policy studies or urban studies. Comparative studies and work based on interviews or observation are particularly encouraged, as are contributions from early-career researchers and from practitioners engaged in reflexive analysis.