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How does cultural diversity contribute to cultural creativity in Europe?

Short Version

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we want to examine, in a general and exploratory way, what academic literature has contributed so far to the clarification of the relationship between cultural diversity and creativity in Europe, highlighting the main aspects and the main problems that in this respect have been addressed. In the first part of the article, we identify studies addressing the issue of diversity and cultural encounters as a specific cultural phenomenon linked to processes of hybridization in different areas of cultural creation. In the second part of our analysis we identified academic and non-academic literature addressing the issue of diversity and cultural creativity in two specific territorial frameworks: the city and Europe. The contrast between the two types of inquiry -the first one about the more theoretically inspired knowledge and the second one about the more practically and politically connected knowledge- reveal some major gaps and some unexplored potential of the research on the subject.

PART I: CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS AND CULTURAL HYBRIDIZATION

In the first part of the paper, we make a brief assessment of the different existing views on cultural exchange and hybridization and then delineate, from there, a basic outline of the main elements to consider in the study of this topic. Following, we do a quick review through the research literature on this phenomenon, in distinct terrains and from different angles.

1. Conceptual framework and parameters for the analysis of cultural hybridization

We distinguish at least two types of thematic approaches in the conceptual frameworks that have addressed the analysis of cultural hybridization in the academic literature. First there is a descriptive, interpretive and critical approach, focusing on archetypes. And secondly, there is another more analytical and universal.

To the first kind of thematic approach belong, to begin with, a whole line of Ibero-American academics and intellectuals who in the first part of the XX century



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dedicated their work to analysing their own societies in terms of interweaving cultures and fusion. This tradition which coined the image of the characteristically hybrid cultures, particularly in Latin America, has been since redefined in more recent times, by authors such as Martín-Barbero (1987) and García Canclini (1990). The Second variety of thematic interpretation of cultural hybridization is the one of the postcolonial Anglo-Saxon tradition. Within it, authors such as Edward Said (1994), Homi Bhabha (1994), Paul Gilroy (1993) and Stuart Hall (1997) took the notion of hybridity as a point of departure to reflect critically upon the mestizo identity of the colonized ancestors and their descendants, between subordination, the resistance and the differential reinvention, from the perspective of the postcolonial world.

Beyond these important but scattered ideas that were distilled from previous approaches, more thorough analytical theming of cultural hybridization has been done in recent times about the problems of globalization and trans nationalization, which has homogenization as the main concern in this cultural field. Not all the participants in the debate over cultural globalization have spoken of hybridization¹. But in the context of this debate, some of the most influential authors have appeared, writing about cultural hybridization. One of them is the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996), who has argued that trends toward cultural heterogeneity that compensate for homogenizing tendencies in the contemporary world result in good measure of indigenization of the heterogeneous and badly adjusted global flows: from its multiple, practical and active local hybridization. His colleague Ulf Hannerz (1992, 1996), in turn, shares this vision, even though from his perspective the dynamics of the cultural flows appear more complexly organized. An analytical dimension to specify for Hannerz is, in that sense, the center-periphery structure articulation of these flows, which can go both ways. To this dimension he also adds another, one very important to him, one which he calls the organizational frameworks of culture: the state, the market, the way of life and movement.

Without reaching the influence of the above, the Dutch sociologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse also stands out in the debate on cultural globalization by stressing the

¹ Some justly conceive the phenomenon in terms strictly opposed to this idea, such as the defenders of the thesis of cultural imperialism (Schiller 1976; Mattelart 1979), supporters of the global-system theory (Sklair 1995; Taylor 1996) or neo-institutionalists (Meyer et al 1997;. Boli and Thomas 1997).



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analytical importance of cultural hybridization. In fact, for him hybridization it is the central prism through which globalization has to be seen, their most important key (Nederveen Pieterse 1994, 2004). In this sense, it aims to develop a complete taxonomy of hybridization. He identifies and ranks many aspects of the phenomenon, including the categories of mix (as cultures, nations or ethnicities), the modalities of hybridization (syncretism, migration *mélange*, intercultural crossover) or the type of relationship between components in the *mélange* (assimilationist hybridity, a hybridity that blurs or destabilizes). For his part, the historian Peter Burke, from a greater distance to the debate on globalization, but animated by a similar taxonomic ambition, has also recently dedicated a book to the subject of cultural hybridization (2009). For him, the defining categories of the phenomenon are: the diversity of objects that are mixed, the contact situations (equality or inequality, typical places, traditions of appropriation, etc.), the reactions aroused (adhesion, resistance, cultural purification, adaptation, etc.) and the producing results (homogenization, anti-globalization, cultural diglossia or creolization).

Finally, also from the framework of the study of migration and diversity, attention has been paid to the theme of cultural hybridization recently, concretely to outline a typology of cultural contact. In this regard, Chan Kowk-bun (2002) has proposed a classification that includes five alternatives: *essentializing*, which is the approach to preserving cultural purity; *alternating*, when individuals change their identity and behaviour depending on the cultural context in which they are; *conversion*, which means abandonment of own identity in order to assimilate to a dominant culture of others; *hybridizing*, when an entanglement and cultural mix is produced; and finally *innovating*, when the entanglement enlightens a creative cultural innovation. Paul DiMaggio and Patricia Fernandez-Kelly (2015), on the other hand, propose a classification in seven scenarios, which largely correspond to the above types: *isolation* (is a case that falls outside this correspondence as it does not represent a cultural encounter but rather the lack thereof); *core-periphery* (when immigrants take cover in their indigenous cultural forms), which is clearly related to the notion of *essentializing*; *permeable niche and selective representation*, which coincide approximately with the idea of *alternating* ranking by Kowk-bun, with different temporal displays in each case; *qualified assimilation* and *outside appropriation*, which correspond to various forms of *hybridizing* (be it action of the migrants themselves or from the host society); and finally *pan-ethnic synthesis*, which is the



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only modality that DiMaggio and Fernandez-Kelly conceived in terms of *innovating* (in this case it would be an innovation that merges diverse ethnic cultural repertoires foreign to the host society).

After this brief review of the visions and concepts that have been proposed so far to account for cultural encounters and hybridization, we can ask: what are the parameters under the different positions presented which allow us to study the phenomenon in a full and effective manner? To begin with, a basic dimension of the phenomenon lies in the results of the meeting. In this regard, the categories proposed by Kowk-bun and DiMaggio and Fernandez-Kelly that we just saw, are essentially attuned to, on the other hand, the *modalities of hybridization* of Pieterse Nederveen and the *results* of Burke, provide a good base. Another category to identify would be the elements that are intertwined, in which we would have on the one hand, cultural expressions that Burke designated as *objects* of hybridization and, secondly, cultural identities to which Nederveen Pieterse referred to as *categories of mix*.

Another category, a more complex one, that should be established, more precariously elaborated by the literature so far, would be one of *configurations* of the cultural meeting. Steven Vertovec uses this term in his schema of analytical domains for the study of diversity, alluding to the “structural conditions within which people carry out their lives”, in which are included political and economic structures of all kinds, also referring to, more generally still, “the external arrangements that enable or constrain people’s opportunities for action and social or physical mobility” (2015: 15). Vertovec formulation is too vague for the analysis of the phenomenon raised here, but correctly points to the structural determinants that influence the process of the encounter. In this sense, he harmonizes with the problem of the dimension of power in the relationship that is present in the postcolonial literature and refers to the center-periphery articulated in Hannerz’s scheme or equality-inequality structure that Burke acknowledges between *contact situations*.

Finally, there is a fundamental analytical parameter that is theorized even worse than that of the *configurations*: that of the *dynamics* of the processes of cultural encounter and hybridization. This is a particularly complex category, which can only be understood by breaking it down into different levels and considering the



diversity of processes in terms of what we used to call their results. The existing literature offers only a few hints in this respect, but they allow us a glimpse into its possible contours. Garcia Canclini (1990) and Burke (2009) note that the processes of hybridization result from de-contextualization and re-contextualization, pointing to, as a key, the changing cultural and social space of existence of the cultural element which hybridizes.

2. Cultural diversity and hybridization in investigative literature

Academic research in cultural diversity and hybridization is relatively broad and above all very varied. These issues have been given attention from multiple disciplinary perspectives: from the anthropologic (Marcus and Myers 1995; Feld 2000; Hannerz 1996); from the point of view of cultural and media studies, especially in Australia (Ang, Hawkins and Daboussy 2008; Papastergiadis 2012); the youth studies (Harris 2013; Bennett 2000); and the urban studies (Rath 2006; Lloyd 2010).

From the perspective of migration studies, which is dominated by the sociological approach, attention to these issues is quite recent. In the United States, some significant works within this line, which are scarce, have already been referred to (DiMaggio and Fernandez-Kelly 2010; Kasinitz 2014). In Europe, for its part, the development of this literature is even more incipient than in the United States. However, it must be said that, gaining awareness of the strategic importance of the topic, the interest in regard to it has been triggered in Europe in recent years. At the initiative of Marco Martiniello, a committee for research on Popular Arts, Diversity and Cultural Policies in Post-Migration Urban Settings was formed in 2010, within the IMISCOE (International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe) network, which is funded by the EU (Martiniello was 2014).

Within the interdisciplinary framework, on the other hand, the relevant literature on diversity and cultural hybridization is concentrated around different works on hybridization, of which there are many: images, literary texts, architectural constructions, furniture parts, culinary practices, religions, dances, music, languages, etc. (Burke 2009). Around these various fields of inquiry, specific literatures converge and incorporate a wide flow of specialized humanist scholarship (for example, in relation to popular music, a valuable ethno-musical



literature). Not all areas of hybridization are equally significant, in terms of their cultural relevance and social significance, and not all have been studied in an equivalent manner. The attention received by them, on the other hand, does not always correspond to their significance. The hybridization in the kitchen, for example, despite having gained great visibility by all parties, thanks to the global expansion of *ethnic cuisine*, has received little attention, especially in Europe. These multiple deficiencies and weaknesses that we found in the study of the diversity and culinary fusion are extensible to many other areas of cultural hybridization. Popular music, which is particularly significant, is on the contrary one of the most studied.

PART II: DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL CREATIVITY IN URBAN AND EUROPEAN CONTEXT

In this second part, we address the analysis of cultural hybridization processes in two specific territorial frameworks: the cities and Europe. What interests us is to identify the main issues, trends and limits, both in academic studies (theoretical and empirical) and in work on practical contexts of political intervention, where cultural diversity and creativity relate in specific policy frameworks. This line of inquiry allows us to identify academic and non-academic knowledge strengths and deficits on the subject and its relevance to various social problems. According to these objectives, the second part of this paper is divided into two main sections. The first section focus on the studies that examine the relationship between diversity and creativity in urban contexts. In the second section, we identify studies that address this kind of relationship in the European context.

1. Cities and Diversity under the Creativity paradigm

The centrality of culture in contemporaries societies led to a *renaissance* of many European cities through *cultural planning* (Evans, 2001). This new type of urban planning involved public-private intervention aimed at urban regeneration and economic development of the cities, where the notion of *creative cities* played a key role (Landry and Bianchini, 1998). Under this new scenario, *urban cultural diversity* - traditionally analysed from the point of view of *multiculturalism* - is understood as a key element to the creative development of cities in the context of inter-cultural policies (Wood and Landry, 2008; Zapata-Barrero, 2013). Within this framework,



this section of the article aims to identify the main trends, issues, limits and critiques in academic literature that relates to diversity (ethnic, social, gender, etc.) and the various processes of urban creativity.

1.1. Urban economic growth and diversity

Studies in economic geography were the first to pay attention to the relationship between urban diversity and creativity. From this point of view, creativity is understood as the first step of economic innovation and economic growth of cities. This trend traditionally focuses on the relationship between diversity and creativity in the context of general economic output (Zachary, 2000). However, with the emergence of the so-called *cognitive-cultural economy* (Scott, 2000, 2007), this field of studies started to focus on the relationship between creativity and urban diversity in relation to creative and knowledge industries (Florida, 2002, 2005; Pethe et al., 2010). This kind of studies generally understands diversity in terms of language, ethnicity and nationality of highly skilled workers. However, based on Richard Florida's works, this trend extends the concept of diversity beyond ethnic, national and linguistic differences to further address gender and cultural differences of the "talents" of the so-called "creative class" (Florida, 2002, 2005).

This approach pays more attention to diversity measurement techniques than focuses on the type of interaction between workers - with different cultural backgrounds - that are involved in creative and economic innovation processes. In this sense, the main objective of these kinds of studies is to design a *Diversity Index* (as Melting-pot Index, Foreign-born Index; Gay Index and Bohemian Index) and then to put it into a relationship with rates of innovation (Florida and Gates, 2001; Florida, 2005) or urban economic growth (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2004; Ottaviano and Peri, 2005).

Economic reductionism is the main shortcoming and limitation of this kind of critical approach. Analyst point out that diversity is understood and valued only as an input for innovation, economic development and the competition between cities (Bodirsky, 2011). In this sense, both the diversity and creativity are only discussed in the context of socio-economic interactions, leaving out other frameworks of (non-economic) interaction and creativity. The second limitation of this approach has to do with the understanding and treatment of diversity. While



this kind of study understands diversity from a broad perspective, ranging from ethno-linguistic factors, national origin, vocational and sexual orientation; it excludes social origin in its approach. Therefore, diversity is reduced to people with “talent” belonging to the so-called “creative class”, which means highly qualified workers from the middle and upper middle classes of society (Bodirsky, 2011; Eriksen, 2006). Finally, the third limitation stems from the scant treatment of the types of social interactions established between people of different cultural backgrounds and the kinds of hybrid production that is generated as a result of these interactions (as appear in the studies covered in part I of this paper).

1.2. Urban regeneration processes and diversity

The second kind of approach to the analysis of diversity in urban contexts comes from studies of urban and cultural planners. Unlike those related to economic geography, these studies have not addressed urban diversity with a prolific nor systematic approach. However, the work of Jane Jacobs (1961, 1969), about the importance of diversity in the development of cities in the sixties, represent an early approach to this issue. Jacobs inquires into the importance of urban diversity in American cities have been well received by urban and cultural planners in the twenty first century, and used to design strategies of urban regeneration in many American (Florida, 2005; Olfert and Partridge, 2011) (Florida, 2005; Olfert and Partridge, 2011) and European cities (Florida and Tinagli, 2004).

From this point of view, urban diversity includes *socio-cultural aspects* of the city's inhabitants (ethnic, linguistic, sexual orientation, etc.), *professional carriers* (which include activities related to the artistic, creative, and cultural life of a city) and *urban amenities* (which define the cultural offerings of a city: museums, galleries, cultural centers, tourist landmarks and nightlife spaces etc.) (Currid and Williams, 2010; Currid, 2007, 2009; Montgomery, 1995, 2003, 2004). This kind of analysis understands diversity as a key element that defines the vitality and dynamism of a city or neighbourhood as *buzz* (Currid and Williams, 2010) or *sinekism* (Soja, 2000). Based on this framework, both academics and policymakers have designed programs (Council of Europe, 2008) and recommendations (Wood and Landry, 2008) which highlighted the *interculturalism* and *cultural diversity* as a strategic element of the processes of urban regeneration and economic development of cities.



The main critiques of this approach are that the analysis and recommendations promote cultural diversity from a strictly economic point of view (Bodirsky, 2011) linked to cultural consumption. As Sharon Zukin has pointed early on to the problems of “planned aesthetic diversity” in cities such as New York. Namely, that privatization of public space, building a multicultural landscape artificially dissociated from their real social context (Zukin, 1992, 1995) and the problems of “gentrification” that generate these kind of processes (Zukin, 1987).

1.3. Cities, Migration and Intercultural policies of Diversity

A third trend of inquiry into creativity and diversity in cities comes from studies on migration. These studies aim to analyse and prevent discrimination, segregation and “ghettoization” processes among population groups of diverse national, ethnic and religious origins in urban areas. However, in recent times in the US, studies have emerged that analyse migratory diversity within the paradigm of cultural creativity (Di Maggio and Fernández-Kelly, 2010). This interest has spread to Europe with the studies promoted by Marco Martiniello (Martiniello and Lafleur, 2008; Martiniello, Puig and Suzanne, 2009; Martiniello, 2013), Nadia Hanna Kiwan and Ulrike Meinhof (2011).

Migration studies understand diversity as a socio-cultural background (which includes national, ethnic, linguistic, religious and social aspects) of migrant population. Some intercultural studies understand that the best way to achieve effective policies of interaction is through *cultural creativity*. In this sense, these kind of studies understand that interactions between population groups with different cultural backgrounds can solve specific problems together creatively (Zapata-Barrero, 2013). The main aim of this approach is, first, to avoid forced interactions among different groups, in order to reframe them in the contexts of specific objectives linked to development and innovation. Second, to achieve individual and social development of people that are involved in these kinds of interactions (Zapata-Barrero, 2013). This approach is recent and has not yet been developed. However, we can already identify possible lines of approach and development of cultural policies aimed to promote different ways of migrants’ integration within the paradigm of interculturalism and creativity.



2. European cultural diversity and new cultural forms

The organization of a common market within this administrative centralization process, entailed the necessary Europeanization of societies on the continent (Favell, Adrian, Guiraudon, 2011). This scenario raises questions about the sociocultural effects of the new artistic relations and cross-border cultural exchanges in Europe, including its impact on creativity and diversity. And, on the other hand, it induces interrogations into the cultural policies developed in the context of the current continental governance and its ability to reflect the new cultural forms and expressions of the territory. Seeking to analyze these topics we develop a *state of the art* concentrating on two questions: To what extent are cultural hybridity and cultural diversity promoted in Europe? Secondly, does increased artistic mobility in Europe contribute to cultural creativity?

2.1. Cultural policies and the development of a European cultural identity

EU cultural actions, most of all promoting multi-level cooperation between the cultural policies of each Member State (Austen, 2012; Sassatelli, 2009), have combined two big goals: European identity construction and diffusion (Dewey, 2010; Theiler, 2005) and the artistic promotion and economic development of the creative sector (Littoz-Monnet, 2007). Both EU cultural policy and cultural diplomacy never became methodical (Isar, 2015; Obuljen, 2004; Tomic, 2011). In this regard, these various cultural action mechanisms, although weak in budgetary terms (Theiler, 2005), have sought to shape the political project of unity in diversity from an inclusive approach to Europeanness (Sassatelli, 2009).

The literature highlights the potentialities and limitations of this mission with regard to the complex equilibrium between cultural homogenization and diversity, as well as between political centralization and subsidiarity. On the one hand, it has been indicated that this supranational cultural action contributed to the intellectual and artistic dissemination of European cultural diversity, stimulating creativity, intercultural exchange (Cock Buning, de, 2008) and heritage preservation (Mcmahon, 2004). On the other hand, it has been emphasized that the absence of major powers and of better coordination for the EU cultural policy affects citizens' cultural rights (Donders, 2003), and that the lack of an active policy and a clear legal framework for the protection of minority languages in the region, distresses



the existing diversity (De Witte B., 2004). Similarly, the interferences of European cultural regulations on state powers and the homogenizing potential of EU integration in cultural terms, have been warned against (Collins, 1994).

2.2. Artistic mobility and cultural creativity in the EU

While the involvement in specific artistic fields was historically considered a “source of creativity”, the literature points out that mobility has become a pivotal factor for the artistic process and the artists’ consecration (Barriendos Rodriguèz, 2012; De Morant, 2007; Klaić, 2007). So, collaborations between artists and the establishment of creative networks by means of regular displacements are presented as key assets for an artistic career (Farinha, 2011; Kern, 2012). These changes regarding the functioning of the traditional cultural field and its links to creativity (Scott, 2010) have gradually led us to reconsider the relationships between mobility and the creative processes (Farinha, 2012).

Artists’ mobility has, as a preferred destination, the big cities and capitals of Europe. In this sense, with the gradual supranationalisation of responsibilities and financial resources, cities have taken on a new cultural, social and economic importance (Bianchini, 1993). That is to say that cities function as communication and innovation nodes and gather economic and social capital, promoting artistic exchanges (Castells, 2004; Comunian, 2011). Accordingly, it has been suggested that artists, concentrated in large capitals, are important actors in the social construction of cultural forms (Favell, 2008) who contribute and stimulate local creativity (Meinhof, 2013).

Mobility has been characterized as a phenomenon that increasingly liberates individuals from the traditional, territorial (nation-state) and social constraints (family, clan, etc.) (Bauman, 2000; Beck, U., Grande, 2007). However, different authors have drawn attention to and emphasized the importance of the new political, economic and social boundaries, and their impact on these movements in Europe (Allemand, S., Asher, F., Lévy, 2004; Urry, 2007). So, despite the free movement of the people on the continent, the various legal, political and social conditions imposed on artists’ mobility have been exposed (Neisse, 2007; Poláček, 2007).



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Various reports have shown that the artists' mobility is not supported by the EU structural conditions (European Parliament, 1991, 1999, 2007). These documents point to a variety of legal and logistic problems; i.e. asymmetric social protections for its producers within each Member State, and the variety of tax fees and trade regimes. Also highlighted is the existence of a "continuing mismatch between resources and demands" (European Commission, 2008) linked to growth and diversification of displacements, as well as irregularities between European countries' policies (mainly north-south) in the area (ibid) and the need for the establishment of systematic sources of data on the subject (SPACE, 2011)².

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

Aiming to provide an answer to the central question that guided us: how does cultural diversity contribute to cultural creativity?, this article has examined and evaluated, in an exploratory manner, what the academic literature and political discourse have contributed so far to the clarification of the relationship between cultural diversity and creativity in Europe. For this purpose, we have highlighted major trends and issues in these analyses. In addition, we have identified limits, gaps and criticism in relation with this kind of studies.

Throughout our analysis, at the two levels that we have developed it, we found out the great importance attributed to the positive relationship between diversity and cultural creativity both in academic studies and in those related to public intervention. In the first part of this article, we have identified studies addressing the issue of diversity and cultural encounters as a specific cultural phenomenon linked to processes of hybridization in different areas of cultural creation. By contrast, in the second part of our analysis we have identified academic and non-academic literature addressing the issue of diversity and cultural creativity in two specific territorial frameworks: the city and Europe.

As regards limitations and criticisms, we can say, first, that studies analysing processes of cultural hybridization often adopt a case-by-case approach, where systematic comparison is usually absent. As for studies on diversity and creativity

² Given this informational fragmentation, a new "holistic" methodological approach to the artists' mobility study has been recommended (Obuljen, 2004).



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in urban contexts, we tend to find an economic reductionism in their interpretations and recommendations, either in relation to the importance of diversity for economic development or with respect to urban regeneration. Moreover, we have found out that there are few studies devoted to examine diversity and cultural creativity and its effects in relation to the cultural policy of the EU and cultural diplomacy. With regard to artistic mobility, finally, we have also found out an almost complete absence of academic literature and, correspondingly, the lack of any in depth knowledge about the topic going beyond the level of pure description. In this regard, it is noted the lack of research on the creative effects and identity processes that artistic mobility produce.

For the rest, in general we have seen that the academic studies examined in the first part of this article are mainly focused on processes of cultural encounter taking place in complex social environments characterized by high levels of diversity: on their configurations, dynamics, and especially on their effects in terms of hybrid identity and cultural production. By contrast, in the second part of this article predominate academic and non-academic studies that analyse diversity, and what it can generate, in terms of economic development, urban regeneration, social cohesion and mobility, i.e. in terms that are not intrinsically cultural. The main deficit of knowledge regarding the relationship between cultural diversity and cultural creativity in Europe lies here, in the distance and disconnection between these two kinds of approaches and literatures. Because only an integrated approach encompassing and addressing, in addition to the contexts, conditions and configurations of diversity, the intrinsically cultural dynamics that diversity prompts, the cultural creativity that diversity generates, only such an approach can help understand the contribution that diversity can make to social progress. This is our main conclusion.

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