National branding and museums: the strategic administration of culture

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The Strategic Administration of Culture

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Abstract This article presents dimensions of museums, which go beyond considerations of diverse nations’ cultural heritage centers, but are instead related to the construction of local, national, and universal branding. The article addresses culture as a strategic national issue in times of crisis, treaty negotiation, or economic instability, and focuses on the relationship between museums and national branding as a strategic issue that affects the administration of culture.

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Introduction
Museums, spaces, and areas of specialized study within the patrimony sector of culture are deeply powerful cultural devices around the world, and have been transformed into national, international, and locally-known brands of varied and asymmetric magnitude. “Cultural devices are destined for the communication and interaction between human beings and the physical world. Cultural devices as a descriptive unit indicate, on one hand, the materiality of the device, as well as its symbolic aspect. In this way, the human environment is composed of cultural devices of dual “material” and “artificial” condition. (Cole 1990, p. 285). Cultural devices are involved in the constitution of psychological processes, when they are historically developed and when they have a practical purpose involving the subjects themselves.” (Ruggeroni, 2004: 333)

According to the power and interests of nations, museums hold a strategic position within cultural administration through the use and contents of their own and itinerant collections, their histories, and the constructive symbolism of the human condition.

Museums: something more than historic accumulations
The magnitude of ethical, aesthetic, economic, social, political, administrative, and cultural knowledge are such complex concepts, they do not admit the pure “encyclopedic” conception, and mediocre historic-anecdotic, with which many visitors approach the experience of visiting a museum. Fortunately, museums have aroused curiosity for their “rare and unique objects” found commonly in collections, in spite of being generically repeated: buildings, paintings, pictures, documents, mummies, clothes, tools, weapons, etc. Until now, museums are testimonials and hold remnants of the sciences and local and universal
technologies conceived and elaborated by men and women from communities in historic time and past social spaces, that update and question the present and future. It should be noted that, despite the different scopes and dimensions of cultural, economic, educational, and tourist policies, political and cultural systems ascribe to this approach. Museums, centers of individual and collective experience, acknowledge that the development and dissemination of their research and exhibition of objects are permanent tasks.

Museums, emerged “to classify and to make repertory knowledge (and to make thinkable their abstract sum), have a second mission [that is] even more important: to refer to their own history of man as producer of the world and to invent it as such, world transcendental, as humanity, as a species that affirms itself beyond all particularities – it is in this sense that Foucault said that ‘man’ was a recent invention. (...) The goal of the museum is the production of the universal collective subject, the production of the public itself, of its own ‘human condition’ as universal and preachable from all subjects of knowledge and experience.”

Museums: local brands, national brands, world brands
During the June 19, 2009 meeting of the International Council of the Museums (ICOM), Jacques Attali, writer and president of PlaNet Finance (ONG), imagined three tendencies in the future of museums:

- All the time, more museums as more nations are affirmed
- New roles and new audiences for museums
- New technologies for museums.

Jacques Attali’s perception of the future is quite appropriate because each town or village has historic locations whose preservation provides a connection with the past. Besides, “(...) the great museums and galleries around the world house valuable artistic treasures, historic cities, monuments and locations to which innumerable tourists go on pilgrimage, all represent an international heritage for which there is a growing demand.” (Throsby, 2001: 87)

Obviously, all the material and non-material heritage are distinctive seals that create not only local, national, and international brands, but also create an economy of culture. This culture does not require a cost-benefit analysis, nor justification for unknowable values, as Thorsby (2001) indicates. It does generate a value of existence (the pyramids of Teotihuacan, for example), and the value of option (the places can be visited by future generations), and the value of legacy (they can be transmitted from one generation to future generations). Moreover, those representations generate a cultural wealth of aesthetic, spiritual, social, historic, symbolic and authentic values. These values should be balanced with the study of preserving cultural heritage, including several diverse interests (governmental, private, and community) through different mechanisms.

The development of cultural brands in the heritage sector is promoted with greater force each day, by governmental and private organizations. The cultural branding is demonstrated by the growing acceptance and significant positioning by which the cities and nations compete, as the following:
UNESCO promotes the brand: Common Heritage of Mankind (introduced in the 1960s)

UNESCO promotes the brand: World Book Capital (launched in 2001)

European Union promotes the brand: European Capital of Culture (originated 1985, expanded 1999)

France created the seventeen-member International French Agency of Museums in order to promote its museums as brands, like museum d’Orsay; the new Musée du Quai Branly; Chateau de Versailles, and the Pompidou Center museums. In Abu Dhabi, a branch of the Louvre museum recently opened to great acclaim as part of the Saadiyat Island Cultural District. It is now the largest museum on the Arabian peninsula. (Agreement originated in 2007, museum opened in 2018.)

With the inauguration of the museum in Bilbao (Spain), the Guggenheim Foundation, through its former director Thomas Krens, initiated a strategy to found the first “branding” and “franchise” of the global museum at the international level, by establishing museums, first in Bilbao, followed by outposts in Berlin, Las Vegas, Soho (NYC) and, currently the building of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi has already commenced. Note: the Las Vegas and Soho locations have closed. Only three locations are currently open: the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Guggenheim Bilbao, and The Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, which opened in 1949.

Results of a national branding study are based on a survey carried out by the Global Market Insite, which surveyed 10,000 consumers from ten different countries (Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, United Kingdom and United States). Although individuals from only ten countries were surveyed, they were asked about twenty-five different nations. National branding is explained by evaluating six areas of a country, as demonstrated in the following figure:

[Image of National Brand Hexagon diagram]

Each area evaluates the following elements:

**Tourism.** The attractiveness of tourism is evaluated for each country.

**Products/exports.** The polled individuals were asked about their degree of satisfaction with the products and services produced by each country.

**Governance.** Survey participants answered questions about confidence in nations to make good decisions about peace and international security.

**Investment and Immigration.** Individuals were asked about their ability to live and work in each country for a period of time, and the likelihood countries would be welcome to new enterprise.

**Culture and Heritage.** The study evaluated the perception about cultural heritage and about national appreciation and consumption of the cultural heritage.

**People.** To see how one evaluates human capital, they survey asked about how to evaluate different countries' labor force and hospitality.\(^4\)

The following chart shows the ranking of the evaluated countries:

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<th>Country</th>
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<td>Australia</td>
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<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
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**Strategic management of cultures and national brands\(^5\)**

The characteristics of economies in *glocalization*\(^6\) find that the cultural sector aides negotiation. It does not only constitute transactional scenarios of strategic development for the sector, which is the most important element of national life, but it also highlights professional cultural strategists (policy makers, strategic thinkers) and managers of intra-sectorial cultural elements, which is an economic activity that generates wealth and
contributes to quality of life and national longevity. Competitive advantage between countries with regard to cultural administration is a matter of internal and external policy importance. Metrics relating to politics, the economy, and management of the social, hence cultural, sector, is symbolically important for asymmetrical market advantage. “In the United States of America, for instance, the ‘entertainment’ industry is the most significant exporter after the aerospace sector. It occupies people’s ‘spare time,’ transmits symbolic dimensions, and involves creative processes, even if this industry does not always have a high aesthetic and artistic level. According to the magazine *The Economist*, long-term growth will be around 10% per cent annually, due, in part, to the liberalization of radio and television, as well as the commercialization of the institutions of the cultural sector on an international scale, meaning it is higher than in many other industrial and commercial fields.” (UNESCO, 1996)7

In the Malraux Seminar about culture and creative industries, celebrated in Cartagena-Colombia in October 2010, it was reiterated, “In Colombia, according to a survey of the World Organization for the Intellectual Property (OMPI) in 2005, cultural industries generated more than one million direct employees, and also exported $2 million and imported $4 million.

In 2003, according to the World Bank, the cultural sector recorded a 7% share of the world’s GDP, and it is expected to increase an average of 10% annually. According to the UNESCO data, this sector grew 300% (in dollars) between 1980 and 1998.”8

There are many differences between people who construct concepts and negotiators, regarding actors and cultural promoters. In this respect, the state and social organizations develop initiatives and processes of various sizes and scope that impact the strategic success of culture as the carrier of a nation’s brand.

In a basic exploration of the concept national branding, for instance, “Natural Uruguay” is a good example. Supported by the government, the national branding is legally mandated and, adhered to similar to a private enterprise. As a national project, national branding receives significant support, as proposed by Daniel Bell (1989).

So, Uruguay is deemed Natural Uruguay, which is expressed in a logo and a seal. In July 2005, Argentina launched its own country brand that was promoted by President Kirshner, as a result of recommendations made by international organizations, to promote the moral sense of society after public scandals and social and economic catastrophes. Despite the apparent innovation, the term is old and similar to those in Italy, France, and Spain. It is important to mention that Catalans in Barcelona constitute several autonomies, and in such a way they are capable of integrating themselves within a Spanish brand. This experience, however, has contradictory and weak points that should be explained in the construction of this case. Thus, it is necessary to consider the comprehensive local historical context and its political and cultural process to define their autonomies, territories and expressions.

The national brand is a matter of strategic management of culture, because the brand takes part in the symbolic dimensions that sells distinction from other communities, differentiating cultural affairs (García, 2004). Although the cultural sector does not explicitly appear as mediator of this power, the national brand indicates ideological sublimity. It is assumed as an instrument, too, or indeed, it is considered a means to generate state self-esteem, during social and economic recovery process, because national brands, as many other cultural
expressions, participate in the market’s commercial exchange. It lifts the moral tone of societies with its public, private, and community organizations. Country brands involve the competitive and comparative advantages, whereas local ones become elements of strategic production for the improvement of the quality of life and the appropriation of what one is, what one has, what should be done, what can be done, and what is expected.

The strategic cultural management is also a made in the economy, made in the country, from the fact that nations reflect identity, belonging, and pertinence, not only as a commercial brand, but also as a quality of life for individuals and the collective community. It is an entry key that leads to the interlocution and interaction to be validated by what is meaningful. At the same time, it generates aggregated value shared among those that enjoy culture and those who present culture (Yudice, 2002).

Strategic cultural administration involves managing national branding, which consists in the identification and evaluation of the power of brands, of negotiable goods in the glocal economy; in this sense, all economic activity is mediated by the cultural features peculiar to contributors of aggregated value or ethos, which goes beyond of the simple value of usage and value of change. It involved symbolic values of confidence and cross-cultural paths towards the social realization in symbolic consumption. It is dialogical ethic of satisfaction in the transaction for collective self-fulfillment based on agreement in the search for an inclusive economy.

In the economic transaction game, the “made in” text plays an asymmetric normative role, because it can include or exclude products and services of a country, region, field, or an entrepreneurial or institutional organization from an agenda. For example, Andean Countries produces raw materials of the narco-trafficking black market. Preferences are renewed or postponed, and do co-exist with stigmatization and discrimination, which operate as social and cultural barriers. The imposed culture and the remaining cultures also suffer the effects of this asymmetry based on the regulation of the human rights treaties in the global environment, and with local impact. The strategic administration of culture is an emergent discipline in a new field of interdisciplinary work, not currently clearly outlined. The discipline does need precise factors to dynamically integrate products and cultural resources that are offered glocally.

**Cultural administration for integrated and lasting development**

Culture, as an complex expressive activity, is reflected in the diversity of products and multiple interconnected sectors that compose it, and that are related to each component of the productive chain: creation, production, distribution, circulation and consumption. Cultural administration is a field of intellectual work, meaning a field for scientific and pedagogical research, a function of the development of social and human capital, with culture as its foundation. It not only comprises the study of the subject, but also integrates the training of professional cultural administrators with interdisciplinary consideration. Strategists and cultural promoters are key for development, and are capable of strategically administrating cultural wealth and social capital (Kliksberg, 2000). Administration means strategic thinking and entrepreneurial management within creative fields.

**Strategic thinking in cultural management**
Productivity is one of the most problematic concepts or variables of the social, economic and, overall, cultural system, because of the interplay of interests in the results obtained, and the investment of resources for varied purposes. It is part of the generative circuits of symbolic values, values of use and exchange. There is a generation of products for the market, in addition to the application of learning and knowledge generation, or accumulated experience that promotes the cycles of the productive system and the social interrelation, as the objective of direction, organization and execution of the different resources. It is not only a matter of product generation with its incorporated profit.

Strategic thinking is of great importance at a time when innovation, the transformation of knowledge, and unpredictable changes are accelerating. Innovation does not consist of being part of the ideological and consumer boom of the moment, but in the appropriation of accumulated and a contextualized knowledge. Theoretical knowledge like epistemic and political suppositions, like the practical knowledge, feed experience, and constitutes basic elements of the administrative thinking. Strategic character derives from the comprehension of the historical time and the social spaces to which its execution indicates a lasting process, not as a transitory and ephemeral structured by social forces.

An actual need is the capacity and ability to survive in environments and contexts of limited expectations, as Krugman (1991) criticizes thinking in relation to the last decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, generalized as: the age of “the economy that goes up and down (...) this is what one finds in the business pages of the newspaper or on television (...) this type of economy has the reputation of being terribly boring, a reputation that is almost entirely justified (...) the economy of airport is the language of best sellers (...).” (Krugman, 1991:8) He predicts the complexity of the new conditions for the glocal society.

Facing this, a government’s task, which cannot be postponed, consists in assuring the future of the nation. In the same way, corporate leaders and directors are responsible for carrying out the missions and visions of their companies. Strategic thinking focuses on the human, the family, the local community and institutional and private sectors to imagine and make their proposals concrete, encouraging action, intention and interests that are related to survival and permanence. Strategic thinking focuses on the direct idea of ACTION, which translates into policies, standards, plans, programs, and projects for the long-term management of conventions, alliances, networks and cooperative compromises.

As it was planned in 1970s (Venice Conference), cultures need to be administered for the efficient, effective, social and economically sustainable use of their resources, and consequently for the societal and cultural products. These transformations of society in the context of cultural globalization mean a glocalization of culture as a strategic and negotiating strength.

**Challenges of the strategic administration of cultures**
The challenge culture faces is the need shift thinking and to generate and mediate cultural action between acquiring knowledge and know how. Knowing how to be and how to make things, according to the creation of the different national brands and their logo-symbols that help circulate products in the market, are related social and cultural constructs. A car or online software, artistic expression or intellectual production, gastronomy and ideological speeches, all require social and cultural constructs.
If it fails, a “globalization” of culture is required, in the way Renato Ortiz (1994) defines. The French political theory of the culture sector conceptualizes cultural industries, as opposed to something singular like the American entertainment industry. Culture is the object of management, and culture must strategically intervene to ensure sustainability in environments of intense multicultural activity, where it is necessary to positioning the national public home as a condition for its existence.

The strategic administration of culture is a challenge, and has resulted from what was learned in the 20th century, not only for the preservation of patrimony that today is a substantive product of local and worldwide economies viva domestic and international tourism, but also as a theoretical-practical instrument of the great development of culture that today is known as cyber-culture. Strategic cultural administration is a productive social and individual service, with technological asymmetric advances whose principle is to facilitate the construction and performance of organizations. It is also a challenge of culture to decide whether it remains exclusionary, or if it takes the opportunity to be a vehicle of inclusion for the sustainability of individual and social projects (Licona-Velez, 2004).

Strategic administration of culture is the necessary social outlet now that the world economy conducts symbolic transactions. Companies interact due to agreements supported by national culture. Because of this, the strategic administration of culture is an interdisciplinary competition. A country that does not manage its culture is subject to the hegemonic imposition in not establishing the power of its national brand. It is weak in negotiated international trade, a country without basic national differentiaition.

**Cultural power within economic powers**

Force, influence, control, direction, authority, regulation and domination, disagreements and consensus of the democratic praxis and power features in a society are not executed in abstract, but are expressed in the structuring construction of societies and their forms of organization and reorganization. This is legitimated through a speech and some relational actions that determine asymmetries, product of the developments, distributions and unequal assimilations, obviously of the same resources not only invested, although obtained by collection with destination to expenditure and income. The power is expressed not only in sense of force of imposition of arguments and actions in the game of the exchange. It is also expressed in the modernizing dynamics from ontological assumptions or those of social reality conceptions, on one hand, and human conceptions, on the other hand. They are determined as ideologies and doctrines, policies and provisions, decisions and directive actions characteristics of hegemony.

The economy is a structural force of social affairs. It is a social construct. As speech, it determines and conditions social life, from its premises to its logical principles. It is a language that establishes common rules of the game for human relationships with their own cultural characteristics. In globalization, the principles of competition and utilitarianism impose their presumptions, as far as possible, and the economy creates its own cultural spirit of negotiated exchange and rivalry, mixing up the essence of the economy. Confusion in the economy and in culture raises ruptures and separations within them, as a serious mistake within modern societies. Nowadays, this dichotomy has been acknowledged and academic sceneries are opened since the national and supranational organizations reinterpret the intrinsic relationship between economy and culture as a source of social
Culture, as a construct of human action, supports the institutional construction of power as it correlates to different external forces, in which different human and social groups are included or excluded in the search for a good quality of life. All international institutions have debated, understood and recommended from this premise, to empower culture and all its multiple expressions, as keys of development. Therefore, it is social and economic power recognition that also preserves and spreads culture.

Culture figures out its power via brand identity. Differentiated identities are relevant to the importance of culture acknowledged in the report named “Our Creative Diversity” (1996) by the World Commission of Culture and Development, and reaffirmed in the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Lecture of Stockholm (1998) about cultural policies for development, entitled “The Power of Culture.” In the dynamic of current economies, culture is an indispensable condition that acts as a force and a point of negotiation.

Culture in each country becomes a shield and barrier with regard to domestic and international negotiations. It can be the target of politics. Economic powers establish a framework apparently opposed to regional culture. Instead, they generate a world of business where utilitarian ethics is imposed. Culture, being the main element affected by this logic, is the strategic variable of this game in the current globalizing neoliberal world. Cultures are the vital interactive resource between societies of economic powers. It is the power of geo-culture for the economic development of all countries.

“In the two last decades, creative and entertainment industries have registered a growth in the trade of goods and services with an increasing impact in the world economy. As the World Bank indicates in its report 2003, a participation of the 7 per cent of the world GDP is registered and predicted that they shall grow 10 percent in an annual average. The cultural industries in Europe generate between 5.5 and 6 percent of the GDP, a figure that in the United States sits between 7 and 8 percent. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the average contribution is between 3.5 and 4 percent. In the case of Colombia, it is 3.3 percent according to a survey realized by the World Organization for the Intellectual Property (OMPI) in 2005.”

Cultural fields manifest social behavior, are strong participants in *glocalization*, determined in three variables that frame paradigmatic tendencies like science and technology with economic and social purposes, culture and aesthetics for the individual and collective groups, and the administration of interactive and strategic thinking based in creativity.

**Conclusions**

- There is an academic need to expand integrated research in order to explore surveys of the administration and management of the cultural field, from the perspective of museums and national branding, that comprise original and transcultural products. The reconstruction of heritage policies of country-region will help value social and cultural capital.

- The understanding of culture as a strategic variable within a country, and therefore as a transversal axe of the socioeconomic system, with all its social asymmetric formations that construct symbolic goods for exchange, implies cultural management requires
understanding and the means to generate the aggregated value that societies require, in each socio-economic process.

- Culture in general and museums in particular are the way in which societies of negotiated glocalization aggregate the value of differentiation, the sine qua non condition for this interaction. It is an indispensable tool for the construction of national branding. It is a transversal axe in human activity and a strategic variable in the permanent agendas of the social negotiation of agreements and provisions, for its sustainability and durability. Thus, the cultural field and its museums register an important contribution in the construction of the indicators or quality of life indexes general, and viable economic growth.

- The development of the cultural activity and the growth of surveys and classifications of the field, and the multiplicity of museums reflect the importance of this subject in the configuration of macro- and micro-policies, as well as the growth of projects that seek to articulate the sense of the interactive chain of these activities or brands.

- Reconfiguring the world cultural tectonics, according to economic dynamics in an asymmetric way, around the axes of power and the control of global relations among nations and communities, where the cultural activity and museums are particularly objects of great interest of intervention, summon an academic and political challenge for the heritage administration in Latin America.

Notes

1 See José Luis Brea. The Contemporary Museum and the Public Sphere. Available at http://aleph-arts.org/pens/public.html.


5 The following reports (Published in the Magazine Apuntes del CENES number 40, II Semestre of 2005. Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, of the Pedagogic and Technologic University of Colombia, pg. 155-70), belong to the works by professor Angel Rodrigo Velez Bedoya. With his cooperation, we are researching subjects of strategic administration of the cultures and the entrepreneurial reality, in the frame of the project of Sciences of the Direction of the Faculty of Administration of the University del Rosario.

6 Glocalization is a nelogism use throughout the text to describe the relation between the global and the local.


8 See: To invest in culture is an alternative before the economic crisis. Available at The Museum Review, Volume 3, Number 1 (2018)
Beach, winds and sea, rum and sound, salsa and rock, geocultural-gastronomic industry, patrimonial tourism, ecologic tourism, USA entertainment, industries of the idleness and the ancient civilizations, until the tourism in the modern cosmopolitan cities.

Read the works on strategic leadership and evolution of organization theory from the Mexican professor Luis Arturo Rivas Tovar.


References


