

Title of the presentation: The dimension of social capital from participatory cultural policies / La dimensió del capital social des de les polítiques culturals participatives

Name of the authors: Nil Barutel, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, nil.barutel@upf.edu

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Introduction

This **presentation** is part of an Industrial PhD¹ about the relationship between cultural policies and social cohesion, a concept that has been adopted by the political agenda due to growing economic inequalities, the general economic and cultural globalisation and the flow of migrants across nation borders, among others (Larsen, 2014). In the view of the Council of Europe “social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation” (Council of Europe, 2010) and, from one of the latest revisions, it has the following characteristics: reciprocal loyalty and solidarity, strength of social relations and shared values, sense of belonging, trust among individuals of society (the community), and reduction of inequalities and exclusion (Fonseca et al., 2019, p. 235).

Within the concept there are embedded a number of dimensions, and one of the key components is social capital. For Putnam, one of the main researchers in this area, it is defined by “the networks of trust, solidarity and reciprocity that exist in a well-functioning community” (Putnam, 2000, in Keaney, 2006) and it is “generated by positive interactions with others”, where “people are willing to help out others” (Keaney, 2006, p.6). The concept is currently of interest among policymakers and researchers because it has emerged as a response to the aforementioned context and to the “growing recognition of the importance of engaged and active citizens, and of safe and vibrant communities” (Keaney, 2006, p.7). As stated by the same author, “active and engaged citizens are important factors for a functioning and stable democracy” and for “public services and institutions [to] work best” (ibid).

However, even though we know that social cohesion is a characteristic of resilient cities, where different people live together, the approach is not clear (Novy, Swiatek and Moolaert, 2012, in Fonseca et al, 2019). Also, the traditional approach to social cohesion or to permanent values like justice or equity has not always taken culture as the main policy opportunity, and it seems to play a crucial role along with an active participation of citizens. In fact, new policies involving culture, education and the community to enhance social cohesion are currently being designed by many city administrations, opening new fields of study for the academia. Thirdly, as literature claims, “a belief in the power of the arts to transform lives for the better represents something close to orthodoxy amongst advocates of the arts around the world” (Belfiore & Bennett, 2008, p.4), so there is the need for a more nuanced knowledge in this area.

It is for all these reasons that this presentation, mainly a theoretical literature review, relates the current strains of social cohesion with participatory cultural policies (the independent

¹ An industrial doctorate is a government scholarship programme where the student develops his/her research training in an institution or company, in collaboration with a university or research centre. In the case of this presentation's author, besides UPF, this research aims at helping the Barcelona City Council improve the quality of cultural policy-making in the area of social cohesion.

variable) and its relation to the dimension of social capital (the dependent variable). With the aim of *improving cultural public policy in the area of social cohesion*, this project poses the following hypothesis (H): *Participatory cultural policies favour a greater social cohesion by developing the values, attitudes and behaviours associated to citizenship*. These values, attitudes and behaviours are what Briony Hoskins claims “is needed to achieve a more desirable form of social cohesion” and it is referred as active citizenship: “participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy” (Hoskins, 2009).

Theory background and theoretical framework

The project-independent variable is **cultural policies**. Regarding its application circuits, this research focuses on the type of policies “relating to the uses of culture”, that is policies that aim at “creating the conditions for people to fully enjoy the cultural forms at their disposal, either as informed recipients or as potential creators more concerned with manifesting themselves culturally” (Coelho, 2009, p.245). And, in regards to its ideological form, this project analyses “culture democratisation policies”, which seek “to create conditions for equal access to culture for all, individuals and groups” (Coelho, 2009, p.246). Also, considering that “the interests of this model, derived from the usual classes in power, end up favouring the norms of superior culture, this research also analyses the “participative democracy” subtype”, which in addition to encouraging participation in the process, it seeks to encourage “forms of self-management of cultural initiatives” (Coelho, 2009, p.247).

Previous arguments are interrelated with **social cohesion**, the project-dependent variable. As outlined in the introduction, social cohesion was defined by the Council of Europe, among many other institutions and authors. In fact, due to its complexity, Fonseca et al. (2019, p.244) revisited the term, considering the “multiplicity of values and cultures found in current societies” in order to update the definition of the concept, and they added key aspects such as sense of belonging, participation or communities: “*The ongoing process of developing well-being, sense of belonging, and voluntary social participation of the members of society, while developing communities that tolerate and promote a multiplicity of values and cultures, and granting at the same time equal rights and opportunities in society*” (ibid, p. 246). François Matarasso (1997, p .37), a key source in the field community arts and participation, although including the community aspect, offers a broader definition of the term in relation to the arts: social cohesion as “a broad goal of public policy -the promotion of stable, co-operative and sustainable communities”.

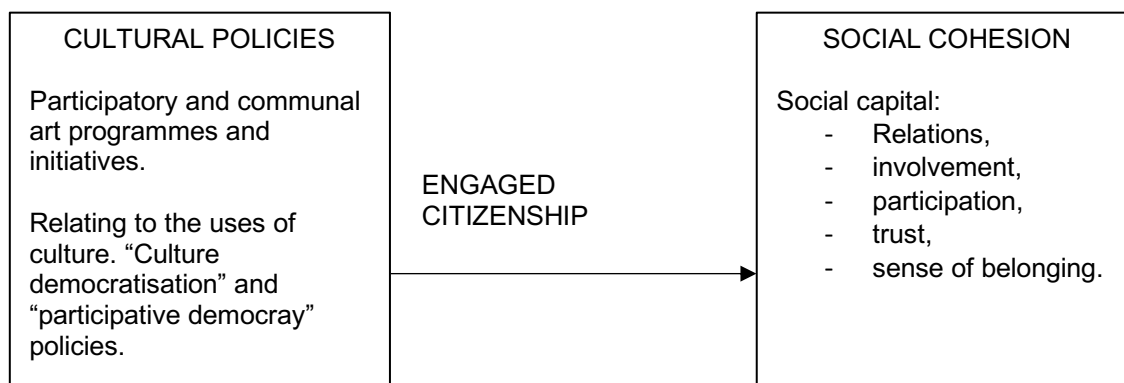
As the literature shows (Berger-Schmitt, 2000; Chan, To, & Chan, 2014; Fonseca et al., 2019; Hoskins, 2009; Larsen, 2014; Noll, 2009), it is a complex concept that has also evolved over time since the late nineteenth century, and that it has taken the interest of many disciplines, with various dimensions of analysis. Many authors have analysed them (Berger-Schmitt, 2000; Jenson, 1998), as well as the implications they might have for the global concept. Noll (2009), also according also to Berger-Schmitt (2000), when preparing the structuring of social cohesion for the European System of Social Indicators grouped the dimensions into two big groups: (a) the inequality dimension: concerning inequalities, exclusion, fragmentation and division; and (b) the dimension of social capital: social relations, identity, involvement, participation and a sense of belonging in the same

community. This research focuses on the latter, **social capital**, a concept that from De Tocqueville assumes that people acquire the skills necessary for "democratic participation and civic virtues such as trust, respect and recognition" through voluntary interaction. The concept of social capital has spread the social sciences and has convinced administrations of the importance of people having it (Zapata-Barrero, 2016, p. 9).

In the paper *Three visions on social capital: Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam*, the author analysis the meaning of the term from the perspective of the three authors who initially developed the concept the most. Although they share some general characteristics, such as a dynamic conception of the concept and the premise that "the social relations that people form among themselves can provide valuable resources for the achievement of certain ends", there are big differences among them (Plascencia, 2005, p.32). A first distinction is that while Bourdieu and Coleman focus on people, Putnam focuses on the group, on "larger social aggregates" (ibid., p.33). Another notable difference is that, while Coleman and Putnam give the concept a positive assessment, Bourdieu maintained an analytical position without value sense. The three authors also differ on whether social capital can be unequally distributed. While Bourdieu develops this aspect (Coleman does too), Putnam leaves it out of his considerations (ibid., p. 34).

Regarding Putnam's approach, he develops the concept of social capital in his book *Making Democracy Work*. Within the framework of analysis of the institutional development of the Italian regional governments, the author adds a new variable, the civic community, "one in which citizens have a high civic commitment, assume and act as political equals, are capable of high solidarity, trust and tolerance, and give a strong impetus to associationism in public life" (ibid., 86 on Plascencia, 2005, p.29). And it is at the end of the book that he connects the idea of "civility" with Coleman's concept of social capital, albeit to reformulate it (p.30). For Putnam, social capital is made up of networks of civic commitment (associations such as cooperatives, choral clubs,...), trust and norms of reciprocity, a characteristic referring to the community and the civic community. He, unlike Coleman, defends a type of more horizontal and free relationships, not so vertical (ibid., p.31). This research follows Putnam's school of thought.

The following figure summarises the abovementioned variables and factors:



Source: own elaboration

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