

Urban cultural policies in Spain

Matadoiro & Fàbriques de Creació

The influence of public administration evaluation methodologies on heritage management (Case 3.1)

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GUIDING QUESTION

How and to what extent cultural administration methodologies of evaluation influence cultural production and heritage management?

OBJECTIVE

Analyze cultural administration methodologies of evaluation and their influence on cultural production and heritage fields, focusing on urban cultural policy actors and institutions articulations and dynamics.

HOW? → A CASE STUDY

- Selected under significant criteria, such as institutional context, welfare state configurations, cultural policy models and administrative levels.
- Analyzed concerning three analytical dimensions of values: recognition, legitimation, and promotion.
- Based on a qualitative strategy regarding data collection (10 in-depth interviews; 2 focus groups) and data analysis (thematic content; discourse analysis).

URBAN CULTURAL POLICIES IN SPAIN: CASE COMPOSITION AND BACKGROUND

FÀBRIQUES DE CREACIÓ* PROGRAM (2007)

Barcelona

- Located in renewed old industrial areas and emblematic buildings over 6 city neighborhoods.
- It is a network of 11 public-owned facilities devoted to promoting artistic creativity. The program was implemented in 2007 as a continuity of the Olympic games' big urban renewal.
- Non-lucrative organizations have a leading role in ruling the facilities. Each Factory is specialized in different artistic domains.
- Community and social intervention goals have been reinforced since the left-wing coalition Barcelona en Comú is governing the City Council (2015-present).

* Factories of Creation

CULTURAL CENTER MATADORIO (2016)

Santiago de Compostela

- Located in the site of the old city central slaughterhouse (XVII century) of the historical city.
- It is a Public-owned Experimental Cultural Center promoted by the Left-wing coalition Compostela Aberta in the City Council from 2015 to 2019 in cooperation with grassroots organizations.
- Self-managed facility, driven by grassroots associations. City Council participates in covering utilities. Activities and building maintenance are supported by private contributions.
- In 2020, the project was shut down as a consequence of the COVID lockdown and the breakdown of facility infrastructures which are still not renewed.

4 subunits of analysis were selected, based on governance model, cultural sectors, urban regeneration model and territorial context characteristics.

INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES

Levels of Formality, rational elaboration, publicity and salience

CASE/SECTOR | GOVERNANCE | URBAN REGENERATION MODEL

Ateneu Popular 9 Barris
Cirque

Public-private (Cultural Administration, grassroots organization)

Location: Residential area
Initial urban regeneration dynamic: Bottom-up.
Promoters: neighborhood movement.
Type of intervention: old asphalt factory rehabilitation in a working-class neighbor (Nou Barris)
Foundation and incorporation to the program: 1977; 2008

Hangar
Multisectorial

Public-private (Cultural Administration, Foundation)

Location: Creative urban district - 22@
Initial urban regeneration dynamic: Bottom-up.
Promoters: Self-organized group of artists.
Type of intervention: Renewal of a nineteenth century industrial complex in an old industrial and working-class neighbor (Sant Martí)
Foundation and incorporation to the program: 1977; 2008

Sala Beckett
Dramaturgic

Public-private (Local Cultural Administration, Foundation, experts' patronage)

Location: Creative urban district 22@
Initial urban regeneration dynamic: Bottom-up
Promoters: self-organized group of artists and playwrighters.
Type of intervention: renovation of a nineteenth century worker's Consumer Cooperative in an old industrial and working-class neighbor (Sant Martí).

Fabra i Coats
Contemporary visual arts

Public Management (Local Cultural Administration, MACBA and a curator's board)

Location: Residential area
Initial urban regeneration dynamic: Top-down
Promoters: City Council
Foundation: 2008
Type of intervention: renovation of a former nineteenth century textile factory in an old industrial and working-class neighbor (Sant Andreu).
Incorporation to the program: 2008

Main problems:

- Divergences in qualitative criteria capacity to grasp each Factory's specifics.
- The lack of resources, as well as the precariousness of the creative workers leads to an unequal access to debates and decisions on evaluation.
- Evaluation criteria tend to a short-sighted "trial and error" logic.

Main problems:

- Any official policy was established in this regard before 2019.
- Informal communication between representatives from the space assembly and the administration and informal reports concerning self-organized activities.

Value stabilization

In both cases the main stabilizer of the evaluation methodology is the flexible approach to the evaluation process. In the case of Factories of Creation, the centrality of social and participatory values favors a broad "aggregation of demands".

The focus on social value in public evaluation, approached from the rationale of self-management in Matadoiro, encountered more obstacles as a stabilizer due to "systemic constraints" (i.e., legal framework, political dispute, etc.)

TENSIONS AND THEIR DYNAMICS

BARCELONA FÀBRIQUES DE CREACIÓ PROGRAM

MAIN TYPES OF TENSIONS IN VALUES AND VALUATION PRACTICES

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA MATADOIRO

- Social and proximity values vs. aesthetic value (artistic elitism)
- Homogeneity vs. heterogeneity (concerning program standardization and diversity of orientations, disciplines, actors...)
- Quantitative vs. qualitative-driven valuation practices and the predominance of a results vs. a process approach in evaluating creativity.

- Bottom-up citizen participation and intersectional approach (gender, class, ethnicity) vs. implementation of accountability tools corresponding local administration procedures.
- Conflicts around the uses and conservation of the building, as well as the role of real estate sector in defining urban affairs.
- Lack of standardized procedures for reporting performance is a source of tensions.

STRUCTURE OF TENSIONS

Structured around the coordination of principles of artistic and managerial autonomy put it in motion in each facility

Structured around the communitarian principles ruling the project.

TENSIONS MITIGATION AND RESOLUTION

- Introduction of flexible evaluation criteria and categories.
- Recognition of the capacity of each facility to rule evaluation processes (preservation of autonomy).
- Recognition of the relevance of qualitative assessment and ongoing attempts to develop qualitative indicators.
- Promoting collective development of new approaches on evaluation where involved actors participate actively. Local Cultural Administration is leading these actions.

- The intervention of a mediators helps to mitigate tensions concerning the coordination of seeking autonomy, as a core principle of self-management, and bureaucratic accountability.
- The institutionalization of Matadoiro (2019) involved a reconfiguration between top-down and bottom-up articulation that improved coordination dynamics.
- Long-term political tensions were not totally solved but mitigated since Matadoiro was recognized by Local Administration.

HIGHLIGHTED FINDINGS

- Evaluation approaches and methodologies influence the practices of the whole constellation of actors involved in managing (from public and private sector) and creative practices in the of case urban cultural policies in Spain.
- Evaluation methodologies in the analyzed cases correspond to a "Bureaucratic-led evaluation ideal type": defined as a top-down, long-term, standardized and spatially-framed assessment of cultural institutions and heritage under the control of the administration, focusing on their average performance

- This influence is exerted through formal and informal or explicit and implicit mechanisms in shaping urban cultural policies.
- Evaluation methodologies present some common elements under similar social and political condition:
 - a broad criteria and methods that allow flexibility. This flexible evaluative framework entails adaptable qualitative justification frameworks
 - a high-level evaluation criteria framework, although not attached to strict standard requirements, reveals persuasive capacity in shaping entities' internal policies and practices. In

this regard, participation (discussions and protocols surrounding evaluation) may act as a tension-creating and solving strategy. The pivotal character and mediation tasks of spaces' managers, therefore, becomes central in this process. (3) evaluation methodologies operate as a stabilizing mechanism since establish policy grounds, often integrating actors' interests and specificities.

