

Editorial

Broadening the Frame of Cultural Exploration

Culture is a concept as well as a social reality whose complex geometry is currently considered at least under three different perspectives: 1) an intellectual, spiritual, and esthetical development, (2) a way of life associated with social practices, and (3) specific areas of activities such as arts and sciences associated to esthetics and human values. Maybe the last line of understanding is the most present in people's minds, but all three aspects are increasingly more important for contemporary societies.

One observes that Culture has become a landmark not only in our everyday life as individuals, but also in the life of various organizations up to the governmental level, that until quite recently was conventionally seen as the main regulator and the main actor defining (in a top-down approach) what culture is and what culture should be, and how one is supposed to take part to this share of social life.

For individuals, culture tends not to be placed anymore on the upper levels of Maslow's pyramid of needs, but to descend towards the basic levels. Culture and cultural participation can also influence social wellbeing as well as enjoying health and education services, or the perceived level of personal security. For organizations, since several decades ago, economic and management studies speak insistently of interculturality, cultural adaptation, the impact of cultural values, cultural intelligence, etc. These discussions started mainly in the context of global business, but with the current changes in mentality and the removal of geographical barriers between employees of companies considered until recently local, they are relevant for extremely diverse organizations - and some aspects have an impact on all types of organizations. Even the newer and increasingly relevant concept of sustainability encompasses an increasingly more significant cultural dimension. For governments around the world, the paradigm also seems to rearrange. Being placed highest in the hierarchy of institutions that were actually inventing/defining cultural goods (e.g. the invention of cultural heritage) and cultural traditions during the XIX and the XX centuries, today governments reposition themselves, to being a partner in this process. Culture is increasingly more a tool of networking and soft advancement in an increasingly more complex global and local framework.

Besides the evident relevance for humans and communities, culture has an increased role in wellbeing and advancement. If it were to take a look at statistical data, culture has gained an increasing relevance for contemporary society, with the growing impact of many sectors placed at the cross-road between "culture" and activities "invented" by the modern/contemporary societies, such as creative industries and cultural tourism, just to name a few. The contribution of the creative and cultural industries to the economy is constantly increasing, globally, and this fact is more and more acknowledged. Furthermore, cultural tourism is the form of tourism that has registered the highest growth (before the pandemic).

Having the previous succinct framework in mind, one cannot study Culture without exploring the interdependent and intersecting social, economic, and political ecosystems. Therefore, we propose **Culture. Society. Economy. Politics**. It is designed as an interdisciplinary academic platform, aiming at providing both professionals and academics with an overview of the interactions and interdependencies of culture and society, economy, and politics, developing a transdisciplinary framework. It encourages investigations of the complex relationships between culture and the other elements of

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the contemporary ecosystem. The journal is designed to challenge researchers to test the boundaries between cultural, social, and political studies, between humanities and economics. It encourages both inter- and trans-disciplinary studies, contributing not only to the better understanding of the phenomena investigated but also proposing approaches leading to the development of cultural and creative sectors and contemporary society.

There is a wide diversity of lines of exploration that could be considered: the development of the cultural sector, stressing the current challenges and trends; the cultural dimension of humans, communities, and societies; the sociology of culture and knowledge; the economic dimension of culture and its role in sustainable development; culture and wellbeing; the management of cultural organizations; the cultural dimension of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations; the politics of culture, as well as the use of culture in political contexts; and many, many others. We look forward to publishing in this journal investigations not only in the broad fields of cultural studies, arts, architecture, and design, but also at the borders of sociology, anthropology, political studies, economics, business, and management.

The journal has a practical focus, encouraging submissions to be practice-oriented and relevant for the contemporary world. Not only academics but also practitioners are invited to present, as well as to analyze the specific situation and successful initiatives in emerging countries.

The Editors: Alexandra ZBUCHEA & Monica BÎRĂ

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