



Cultural industries at crossroads

The author analyzes the transition period public management of the existing cultural industries in Spain are going through and how they fit in the productive model.

In order not to go too far in time, I shall start by contextualizing our cultural system. On one hand, Spain is heir to cultural policies carried out in France during the decades of the eighties and, on the other hand, has taken example from the Anglo-Saxon area marked by American cultural sponsorship, combined with a powerful entertainment industry and the European Anglo-Saxon model, developed in Great Britain in the last two decades, through Arts Councils.

These are two ways of understanding the institutionalization of culture in society which have existed up till now.

Better still, until yesterday. These ways of understanding culture, of understanding its public management model and how it fits in the productive process has one characteristic: both are vertical models and, while they are looking to expand and integrate citizen participation, they are strengthening a set intermediary institutions that can be defined as cultural industry.

In the last 50 years it has evolved and functioned reasonably well, within a model that could be transmitted, explained and understood, a model that has, little by little rewarding business and popularity results, has been penalizing or relocating and, in some cases, popularizing, those proposals which were known then as “high culture”.

The management is marked by the sophistication of economic taxing of public policies and has caused the evolution of the concept of application of expenditures in the cultural area, to the creation of financial reports in which the return on investment is essential. This has been translated in the interest for the preservation of the historical heritage in bargaining chip for “cultural tourism”, in automatic subsidies to box offices in the cinema sector and in an endless number of investments in the distribution





sector in the case of the book industry. And this also includes the level of maturity we have probably reached in the aspect of cultural infrastructures.

We are at the point of return on investment. This is where the consumer, the customer, the citizen has gained vital importance like in the case of companies and new the new management model. As it could be expressed in the client management tools used by companies: the client has been placed on the vertex of the pyramid, on the main link on the value chain.

From the élites we have moved to the popularization, which are both to a greater or less extent vertical ways, and thus the final segmentation leads us to the client, as an horizontal way. In this moment, it has been assumed that it has found its interaction tool in the technology: mobile phones, instant messaging, emailing, surfing the net and what is known today as social networks.

It is obvious that looking back to the past is more accurate than reflecting on the present and, marking the future is an almost uncertain task, but a compulsory one.

When contributing ideas we go further on the way of commitment and projection. Culture and cultural industry shall find an effective support from institutions, the ideas we have put forward and to which we are committed.

Let's remember that we have come from the past with two management models that have been embedded with the implementation of public policies in the cultural area based on intermediaries, the division of roles (creators, producers and distributors,) hardware as well as models based on popularity. And that this has successfully worked.

If Spain invests in cultural industries 4% of the GDP and directly employs 700,000 people from these activities, Great Britain is close to 10% and employs almost 1.2 million workers (as the labor Premier Gordon Brown mentions in his cultural manifesto "Creative Britain".)

The cornerstones of a system based on the development of cultural industries has been the recognition of intellectual rights and the behavior of the public, the consumer, the audience, the receiver who, even if up till now has been "passive", he is in the process of being active for a decade now.

We are going through a period of transition and hybridization, in which the "old" that has shaped "the new" is plunged in a transformation process. As for the cultural industry, for any industry, it more urgent than never to locate the key to the new relations and find the exact value assigned to each link





on the chain, and come across to the public again, the viewer and to tale from him the necessary drive to place the right products on the market, at the right time and the right way.

it is probable that the current conditions offer an extreme challenge since the fundamental “historic”, data to held start the traditional five-year business plans are in this moment distorted by the impact of the financial crisis. It is useless to project the medium term, like we have done so far. It is possible that difficulties in the access to credit are calling into question the implementation of investments and, it is sure that the consumer does not incorporate in the previous rhythms and we are faced with the doubt of whether it is going to happen the same way and on the same path.

it is likely to overcome the difficulties and the challenges posed will place us on the new path and we are able to propose a sensible hybridization with models that can face transition, decline and re-launching, in accordance with the norms of the Rule of Law, the responsibility of taking the right decisions to strengthen what is valid, help in the evolution of what can be saved and offer alternatives to change what we see as irredeemably obsolete.

The massive digitalization processes, in the area of culture and cultural industries being carried out in France and Great Britain, and which are starting in Spain, should encourage the cultural industry to strengthen its position and find proposals and arguments able to help project them into the future.

the horizon for the transformation of the production model, focused in our environment towards sustainability, through the knowledge society cannot not be more promising for cultural industries, clean industries, sustainable industries based on knowledge, talent and able to provide social cohesion and sustainable, quality, versatile and interdisciplinary employment.

These are a set of opportunities that require ideas for this re-launching to take place in a fair, harmonious and constructive way.

