THE INTERACTION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURAL POLICY IN AN INTERNATIONAL ANTAGONISTIC ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to highlight the upgraded role of digital technology in the policy of each country participating in the modern international system. New forms of creation have influenced each country and have revolutionized entire industries such as the book publishing industry, music and cinema. The new technological environment has largely reformed the policy making strategies of the countries and has even influenced the sustainability of governance systems for culture. Technological inequalities between countries are a clear challenge in order to achieve a balanced flow of cultural goods and services between them.

Particular emphasis is placed on the role of the web as an area of creation, access and social participation. The web forms a space that gives new impetus to safeguarding and promoting freedom of expression, the right to privacy and the protection of human rights, in general. The impact of new technologies on the cultural policy of each state, despite having common features worldwide, maintains local and regional characteristics depending on variables such as language, legislation and infrastructure. Countries sharing the same language can be considered to also share a common "website" which accommodates particular opportunities and challenges. In this context, we analyze how digital technology can contribute to a much more effective way of spreading culture.

Finally, in addition to highlighting the impact of technology advancement on the cultural policy of each country, an important objective of this study is to emphasize the value of human creativity. Despite its evolution, digital technology does not substitute the human creation but it stimulates and opens up new horizons.

Keywords: Digital technology, cultural policy, development, culture.

1 INTRODUCTION

This objective of this study is to highlight the upgraded role of digital technology in shaping cultural strategy on behalf of states and also on behalf of international organizations such as UNESCO. The development of technology has dramatically influenced all areas of human activity, thus having a direct impact on culture. Digitization directly affected not only artistic creation but all cultural sectors as a whole. New technologies have a strong presence and influence in the field of culture, rennovating and refreshing the already existing artistic activity and revealing new approaches for the exploitation of the cultural heritage. States soon realized the existence of fruitful, innovative approaches for exploiting cultural heritage through new technologies. The new technological environment has diversified the policies of the states in the field of

culture and has even influenced the sustainability of the governance systems for culture. Technological inequalities between countries form a clear challenge as far as a balanced flow of cultural goods and services between them is concerned. The study focuses on how rapid advances in digital technology have influenced the process of shaping the cultural strategy of modern states.

2 DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURAL POLICY

Over the last two decades, the development of digital technology has radically changed the cultural scene. New forms of creation have emerged, bringing about a resolution in entire industries such as book publishing, music and cinema. UNESCO, recognizing the prominent presence of new technologies in various cultural fields, adopted, in 2005, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005). This Convention does not explicitly mention the digital issue; it actually includes only a rather general reference to the 'Information and Communication Technology "or" "new technologies". However, the principle of technological neutrality contained in Article 4.1 makes clear that the induced legal framework should apply to any environment, including digital. In this context, characterized by opportunities and challenges, the 2005 Convention bodies proceeded to the development of specific guidelines addressing the digital issue in particular. These guidelines clarify how the 2005 Convention must be interpreted regarding the case of the digital environment and provide clear principles for the implementation of new cultural policies. At the same time, the framework proposed in the Global Report on the review of the UNESCO cultural policies (UNESCO, 2015) proves significantly helpful in the assessment of the potential progress in protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions in the modern digital environment.

The new technological environment has largely reformed the policy of the states in the field of culture and has even influenced the sustainability of the governance systems for culture. Technological inequalities between countries form a clear challenge for a balanced flow of cultural goods and services between them. New technologies can contribute to the consolidation of the local economic and social fabric. What's more, the sudden emergence of large online e-commerce platforms in the trade of cultural goods and services can be challenging when culture follows a path of growth. The evolution of the World Wide Web to a space of creation, access and social participation opens up new horizons to the safeguarding and promoting freedom of expression, the right to privacy and, more generally, the safeguarding of human rights (Rogerio-Candelera, 2014).

The impact of new technologies on the cultural policy of each country, despite featuring a common global nature, still maintains local and regional specificities depending on variables such as language, legislation and infrastructure. Countries sharing the same language enjoy a kind of common digital "website" where particular opportunities and challenges arise. For example, countries that have spanish as their native language (about 470 million people) can make a very fertile ground for the development of new cultural strategies. It is indicative that cultural policies of spanish-speaking states increasingly exploit the World Wide Web in various forms and approaches (Fernández Vítores, 2015).

New technologies can also make a great asset regarding the access to culture. The World Wide Web and the Internet offer much more effective ways of promoting and disseminating culture all over a country, especially when it comes to nations with a large spatial spread. In addition, via the use of the Internet and the Web, there is now more than even before wide, free access to artistic and cultural creations. However, there are still restrictions that prevent full exploitation of the benefits of digital technology in the field of culture (Din, Wu, 2010). A digital gap arises between different socio-economic sectors. Despite the great progress that has been made in the last decade, there are still disparities in networking infrastructure and equipment. In this context, particular institutes and global platforms have proposed free - or very low-cost - programs so that access to the Internet becomes available for developing countries as well. However, such initiatives have often received criticism concerning applications and content distributed by the participating companies. Furthermore, in an attempt to respond to modern-age challenges, several policies for exploiting the benefits of building infrastructures for Internet access have been adopted by the public sector. As a result, a new type of cultural policy incorporating digital technology has been emerged and applied (Robles, 2003).

In addition to the impact of technological advances on cultural strategy, digitization has significantly influenced the heart of artistic creation as well as artists as individuals. Digital media can offer multilateral inspirations to artists providing them with new incentives and room for creativity. Furthermore, artists can enjoy increased visibility by directly reaching a wider audience. The available wider range of expressive forms makes digital culture an extremely dynamic space enriched with new data. However, it is worth mentioning that in the absence of experimentation, training and active use of digital tools, new technologies can even suspend development, leading to cultural decline. After all, digital technology does not substitute

for human creation; it assists human creation by opening up new horizons. Digital technology certainly provides creators with increased potential and opportunities, and countries with a new, extremely useful tool to be integrated into their cultural strategy (Holt, Cameron, 2010).

3 CONCLUSION

Our discussion and analysis so far clearly indicate that new, digital technologies and the rapid relevant advances have increasingly affected our lives, inducing a new environment for activity and creation. Digital technology has essentially affected all areas of individual and collective human activity. New technologies have been fully embedded in the sensitive area of culture, as well. Modern states have embedded new technologies in the field of cultural strategy, aiming to create new, more flexible ways of promoting and disseminating their cultural heritage. However, there is still plenty of room for imporovent and progress regarding the ways new technologies can be used to develop new strategies in the field of culture. States should collaborate, under the auspices of international organizations, for coming up with new ways of exploiting technology to preserve, promote and disseminate culture. Modern digital technology, appropriately managed and exploited, can certainly bring a wind of enormous, extremely beneficial changes to culture.

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