Re-thinking the creative economy through informality and social inclusion: changing policy directions from Latin America

Cecilia Dinardi

Goldsmiths, University of London

c.dinardi@gold.ac.uk

Introduction: the promise and failure of the creative economy

In recent decades, the creative economy, comprising the so-called cultural and creative industries, has risen as the new global orthodoxy (Schlesinger, 2017) with the potential to produce direct and indirect effects that would allegedly revive declining cities and boost growth in post-industrial contexts. Across the globe new incubation schemes, observatories, districts and tax-reduction initiatives for the creative industries have been created to support the new economy at municipal, state and national levels. The allure of creative industries for public policy, particularly their promise for urban regeneration, city branding and tourism, became institutionalized in new governmental agencies, industry organisations and support schemes. Originally constructed as a concept and an area of policy intervention in the global North, the promise of the creative economy was defined by its bohemian, cool, entrepreneurial, open and meritocratic image, according to Richard Florida's script, where anyone could in principle benefit from this new economy. The UK appeared at the forefront of the academic debates and policy developments in this area, which originally encouraged the use of creativity as a tool for social inclusion and innovation in cities, as proposed by Charles Landry in 2000.

However, evidence of the existence of racial, class and gender inequalities within and between the cultural and the creative industries is ever-growing (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011; Gill, 2014; Conor, Gill, and Taylor, 2015; O'Brien and Oakley, 2015; Saha, 2017), and so is the need to shed light on the *informal* creative economy that develops outside the radars of formal measurements and public regulation and support. The informal creative economy is diverse by definition – including for profit and non-profit cultural activities, public and private actors, individuals and organisations – and is interdependent and intertwined with the formal economy, making it difficult to draw clear boundaries between the two. As such, it is outside of reach of most public policies. Over 60% of the world's population work in the informal economy (as a whole), the majority in emerging and developing countries, lacking decent working conditions, social protection and work rights (International Labour Organisation, 2018). Examples include non- taxed or monitored activities that are not covered by

formal arrangements, such as busking and street performances, community radios, underground small music venues orsquatted arts spaces, among others. There is striking evidence of the precariousness, exploitation, uncertainty, work insecurity, low or no pay, and short-term contracts that affect those working in the cultural and creative industries Banks, 2007; Gill and Pratt, 2008; Curtin, and Sanson, 2016; O'Brien et al, 2016; Merkel, 2018), which despite the myth of meritocracy, they benefit the already privileged in society (Littler, 2017; Brook et al, 2018). Research conducted in this area has equally shown the need to develop situated and historical analyses of the conditions of production in the creative sector (Banks, Gill and Taylor, 2013), and this includes the production that takes place in peripheral areas such as informal settlements. Yet such rich, dispersed but economically and socially significant cultural production has been largely overlooked in dominant policy and academic accounts.

In Latin America, the creative economy has been a rapidly emerging area of cultural, economic and urban policy development. The work of international organisations such as UNESCO and UNCTAD, particularly their Creative Economy Report Series (2008, 2010) with follow-up special editions and outlooks (2013 and 2018), has been pivotal in encouraging the creation of new institutional frameworks in support of the cultural and creative industries, especially in developing countries. Equally, municipal and national governments have been investing in the construction of new cultural indicators with the hope that these demonstrate the economic contributions of the creative sector. Despite recent publications on the creative economy in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the Orange Economy commissioned by the Inter-American Development Bank in 2013, existing data are not sufficient, accurate, up-to-date or comprehensive to provide the necessary evidence to support the design of new creative economy policies in the region. Nonetheless, there are a range of freshly designed initiatives: cultural cards containing monthly public credit for young people in high school to spend in cultural consumption (i.e. cinema, theatre, museums, concerts, books, etc.) in Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina, public-private sector coalitions in Colombia, digital platforms in Mexico, specialised markets and districts in Argentina, technology hubs in Peru, creative economy fora in Nicaragua, and creative industry mapping documents in Chile, among many others.

Despite these new developments, the social conditions of creative labour in Latin America suffer from limited or no access to public infrastructure and work opportunities; insecurity and violence in marginalized areas; a large proportion of cultural and creative workers in the informal economy; and generally limited public funds available to support cultural and artistic production. In terms of data, the contribution of the creative sector to employment and national economies remains largely invisible to the general public and to the official government measurements (Buitrago and Duque, 2013).

This chapter examines the extent to which a focus on the informal creative economy can support peripheral cultural scenes that remain invisible to policy and society. The first part briefly outlines the key features of informal settlements in Latin America; the second looks at policy initiatives in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires that have sought to develop, encourage and support creative economies in disadvantaged or peripheral areas; the third part reflects on how these initiatives might help expand, challenge or rethink predominant views and policies on the creative economy from other contexts, assessing whether they might also help overcome 'creative injustice' (Banks, 2017) in the sector. Overall, the chapter shows how Latin American countries are starting to launch initiatives for the creative sector that are motivated by concerns with social inclusion and development in marginalised locations. However, these goals can be at odds with the frameworks from which the programmes develop, as they are often underpinned by a market-oriented logic based on individualistic entrepreneurialism and commercialisation.

Creative economies in disadvantaged and peripheral areas

With a strikingly large concentration of informal settlements in the cities of the global South, Latin America and the Caribbean remain amongst the most urbanised and unequal regions on the planet (UN-Habitat, 2012). This shows both the incredible resilience of urban dwellers, expressed in their self-made constructions and community-led undertakings, and the major deficit that exists in public policy provision of decent housing and public services, which has historically been insufficient, failing to address existing basic needs from the poorest sectors of the population.

In Latin America and the Caribbean one third of the population lives in slums. These informal houses are more prone to suffer climate-related natural disasters, as housing is one of the most affected sectors in the aftermath of earthquakes, floods, fires and landslides (Palma and Garcia Lozano, 2017). Informal settlements are usually stigmatised as spaces of violence, poverty and crime, and characterised through their absences, precariousness, lacks and dissonant aspects in relation to existing formal urban patterns (De Souza e Silva, 2014: 61). Yet they have also been embraced and, to some extent, romanticised, for their resilient, sustainable and entrepreneurial spirit that generates innovation, creativity and social experimentation, making 'permanent' that which is 'in process' (Jauregui, 2011). Learnings can be drawn from these locations in terms of sustainable urban design: from self-made housing constructions, collaborative undertakings and the economy of resources, to energy efficiency, recycling mechanisms and resilience and adaptation. In other words, this evokes an image of the 'city as a high-tech favela':

> 'An urban zone that avoids rigid solutions and fosters reversible structures that can be dismantled and transformed, accommodating new, unforeseen activities. Imagine a

perpetually unfinished city. Buildings are mixed-use: workshops, light industry and agriculture are interlaced with residences, sports fields, schools and markets… The city is alive 24 hours a day. If this seems like the ultimate nightmare, we see a potential mode of sustainability and tolerance' (Brillembourg, Klumpner and Kalagas, 2015:102)

Equally, a different model of urban creativity emerges from these harsh contexts where young artists and cultural producers, together with local NGOs and co-operatives, are organising and participating of cultural activities that challenge common stereotypes that associate them with poverty, violence and criminality. In contexts of urban extremes, these creative spaces of cultural production contribute to the vitality of informal urbanisms and, in so doing, unsettle dominant representations that depict them as sites of infrastructural poverty and social exclusion (Mbaye and Dinardi, 2019). Community-led and self-managed, these activities range from orchestras, ballet, break dance, circus and photography, to hip hop, ceramics, cinema and theatre, among many others. As part of a wider enchantment with the creative economy, local governments have launched programmes in support of artistic and cultural activities specifically targeted at shanty towns and slums. This section analyses two ongoing examples, from Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires.

If the future resilient city is in the global South (Brillembourg, Klumpner and Kalagas, 2015), the prospects of sustainable creative economies might well be located in the informal city, in the cultural and artistic production that takes place in slums, shanty-towns and impoverished neighbourhoods, based on networks of collaboration, solidarity economies, adaptation, and inventiveness in the use of limited resources. Urban informality involves a relational process of cultural, urban and political contestation that can affect the whole city – being constituted by kinetic, in motion, temporary, spontaneous, flexible, recycled and reinvented spaces (Mehrotra, 2010), 'a new way of life' that spreads beyond the poor or the marginalised (Alsayyad, 2004). This poses a major challenge for urban cultural policy – to what extent can these informal economies of creativity be supported with novel outlooks, rather than simply subjecting them to formalisation and entrepreneurship schemes that are oriented towards commercialising individual products?

Favela Criativa, Rio de Janeiro

In Brazil the creative economy has been rapidly developing, experiencing continuous growth and investment, despite the recent severe institutional and economic crises. A stepping stone in the institutional consolidation of the field was the creation of the Secretariat of Creative Economy (SEC) in 2011 as part of the Ministry of Culture, and the launch of several editions of official documents mapping the performance of the creative industries and measuring its economic value (FIRJAN, 2008, and updates every two years). The latest mapping document (FIRJAN, 2019) shows a slow recovery

from the crises, with a stable participation of creative industry workers in the formal labour market, who receive salaries 2.45 higher than the average of the rest of the economy, and with São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro concentrating 50% of the creative jobs in the country. The state of Rio de Janeiro has been at the forefront of producing innovative developmental policies in support of the creative economy, particularly in favelas. After São Paulo, Rio has the largest 'creative GDP' and of all the businesses within the state, it has the largest number of creative organisations in comparison to the rest of the country (Firjan, 2016).

The existence of more than 1,000 favelas makes Rio de Janeiro a symbol of the informal city, concentrating some of the highest levels of income inequality in the planet. Since its origin, favelas have been the target of stigmatisation, persecution and rejection from the 'formal city' that has sought to remove them (Perlman, 2010). Although they have specific features and different topography, morphology and history (Varley, 2013), favelas or informal settlements can be broadly characterised by an inefficient state provision of basic services and infrastructure; informal relations of work and income generation; self-built and highly dense housing in environmentally vulnerable locations; lower-than-average economic and educational indicators; and a plurality of identities and strong social conviviality, with a presence of black, indigenous and migrant populations (Observatorio de Favelas, 2009). Despite their rich diversity, media and political discourses present them homogeneously as sites of violence, criminality and poverty (Valladares, 2005) in constant war between drug gangs and police.

Creative economy initiatives in peripheral areas have focused on providing entrepreneurial and business training to young people, as in the case of São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro. With the aim of tackling informal practices in the cultural sector, the Cultural Secretariat of the State of Rio de Janeiro created in 2009 a new incubation agency called Rio Criativo, working with small creative enterprises through training in business and performance monitoring. In 2014, Rio Criativo launched a programme, Favela Criativa – with support from the private sector and the Inter-American Development Bank – specifically designed to provide arts training, particularly to those aged 15-29, and support cultural entrepreneurship in slums and shanty towns. New funding calls were launched, and business fairs and cultural events with artistic performances were organised. Over a hundred artistic activities took place, involving crafts, cinema, music, theatre and dance performances, fashion and poetry.

Re-branded as Cultural Territories Programme[1], the scheme has focused on cultural development for social inclusion in the wide area of the Rio de Janeiro state, and it claims over 2,500 young people have taken part. Formalisation training was at the heart of the programme, which offered consultation and advice on how to improve finance, communications and marketing for small enterprises in the city's peripheries. Temporary cultural infrastructure, such as samba schools, public libraries and sports courts, were set up across various locations in the city's periphery, involving favela-based cultural staff, producers and technicians.

The particularity of Favela Criativa is that instead of excluding informal cultural practices, as most official cultural policies tend to do, it rendered them the target of the programme with the aim to formalise them. Cultural work in favelas, however, has been carried out for long without the need of formalisation. In the last two decades the cultural work of Rio-based NGOs such as Nós do Morro, CUFA and AfroReggae, apart from re-claiming the right to the city and the right to produce culture, has embraced life in the favelas, produced new cultural and urban imaginaries that contest predominant negative social representations about these territories, and in so doing, reconstituted the relationship between the city and its peripheries. Cultural work in favelas is also central to the reaffirmation of identities in a deeply unequal cartography of cultural infrastructure: 'the creative place of young people from favelas is not a circumstantial act or wandering curiosity, but rather, a way of making culture and making oneself a subject in the city' (Barbosa, 2013:23) [author's translation].

Incorporating individuals and small organisations in the programme also presented difficulties and a lack of administrative resources when it comes to account for the financial support received by the programme. Similarly, the Cultura Viva programme, implemented in 2004 under Gilberto Gil's administration as a tool for democratising cultural policies in Brazil, with its Pontos de Cultura network which were aimed at decentralising resources, supporting cultural diversity and putting culture at the service of social inclusion, also operated in peripheral locations, facing similar challenges in post-funding accounting when working with small and informal civil society organisations.

Does the existence of a creative economy programme specifically designed for favelas imply the ultimate subjection of culture and creativity to neoliberal market forces? Most likely yes, in its enactment of a global orthodoxy that equates culture to creativity, creativity to the creative economy and the creative economy to capitalist commercial exchanges. The programme is underpinned by a concern with entrepreneurialism, individual talent and business training, highlighting the need to

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[1] The programme was expanded so as to include a diversity of locations beyond favelas: rural spaces, urban spaces as a whole and 'quilombos' communities (Secretaria de Cultura RJ, 2016). Although the latter originally provided shelter for escaped African slaves, over 3,500 still exist in Brasil (Fundação Cultural Palmares, 2016).

'discover' and give value to unexploited' creativity. As former Rio State's Culture Secretary Adriana Rattes stated: 'The programme departs from the premise that there is a great and valuable talent pool for arts and culture and for creativity in those places [favelas]. And we want to offer the opportunity for them to develop and excel' (original in Portuguese, cited in Gandra, 2014).I No doubt favela residents are highly entrepreneurial and programmes such as Favela Criativa acknowledged such entrepreneurialism, yet the celebration of ordinary entrepreneurialism is in line with the long history of romanticising the entrepreneurial flair of slum residents (McFarlane, 2012:2798), particularly when it has the potential of expanding and developing new markets.

A relevant example is also the recent music festival 'Rock in Rio 2019', which through the SEBRAE service network that supports entrepreneurialism, innovation and formalisation of small enterprises across Brazil, announced it would be training 10,000 small and medium creative entrepreneurs from the city's favelas to operate at the festival. In the words of SEBRAE's president Guilherme Afif Domingos: 'Let's show the value of that [favela] society. It is pointless to make an intervention without promoting social development. The country cannot continue living with the apartheid that exists between the hill [the favela] and the asphalt [the rest of the city], and the way to change this reality is the creative economy" (original in Portuguese, author's translation, SEBRAE 2018). The hopes attributed to the creative economy as a remedy to existing social and economic exclusions are particularly high in contexts of poverty and deprivation.

The evidence of how sustainable and effective these projects are in the long term remains to be produced. Some of the shortcomings of official initiatives in support of entrepreneurship in favelas, such as Rocinha in Rio, resulted from SEBRAE's prescriptions and entrepreneurship training resources being far from the reality of microentrepreneurs, for they follow different logics, i.e. the importance of developing a business plan, carefully decide the business location or work towards growth and expansion, were not among the concerns of entrepreneurs from low-income areas (Pereira et al, 2017).

Creative entrepreneurialism in the favela is also underpinned by political and social goals, seeking to challenge dominant, negative social representations of residents that associate them only with drug-dealing and crime. As Marcus Faustini, the founder of the favela-based NGO Agencia Redes, stated, it is time to start politicising entrepreneurship instead of adapting creativity to middle-class start up culture (Faustini, in Costa and Agustini, 2014:169), making an important distinction between the white, middle-class, university-trained artist from a wealthy part of the city and the young, poor, black cultural worker who lives in a favela, and use cultural production and the arts 'to reclaim identity and

reposition the ideas, visions, perspectives and experiences… in the agenda of Brazilian society' (Jovchelovitch and Priego-Hernandez, 2013:52).

Despite existing challenges, Favela Criativa has widened the public visibility of the cultural work of favelas, gathered financial support for popular cultural forms, and provided training to young artists and cultural producers, working with and around informality. 'Formalising' participants remained a key goal of the programme, which in practice meant participants needed to be on time and work within fixed hours, attend meetings regularly, submit receipts, familiarise themselves with the various tasks involved in cultural production, and learning (formal) patterns of work. While the official support to creativity in informal settlements promotes individual entrepreneurialism, by resorting to a commercial rhetoric as well as managerial and subjectivising discourses of enterprise (Banks, 2007), it might also create work opportunities. Formalisation, then, can facilitate access to funding and resources, but still has a long way to guarantee a stable job in the highly precarious and informal Brazilian creative economy market.

Arte en Barrios, Buenos Aires

In Argentina, the development of creative economy policies has been present in the public agenda since 2005, when the government of the City of Buenos Aires created the Metropolitan Design Centre (CMD) in a former fish market dating from 1934 in the Barracas neighbourhood. This established a precedent for a number organisations and initiatives that were then developed at local, national and regional levels, such as the Creative Industries General Direction, the Creative Economy National Secretary, the specialised market for Argentina's creative industries (MICA) and its regional version MICSUR (the creative industries market of MERCOSUR's countries), and the more recent Creative Cities network as well as the Creative Neighbourhoods programme, inspired by initiatives in the UK. Being creative – in spite of or because of the country's myriad economic crises – became part of the official policy rhetoric and public agenda and informed a range of fragmented policies, aimed at developing entrepreneurialism in artists, cultural producers and citizens more widely, through workshops, training and business accelerator schemes (Mérola, 2017; Del Río, 2016).

The Buenos Aires municipal government's approach to urban creativity is motivated by urban marketing and economic development goals. It is epitomised in the launch of the 'creative districts' policy through the creation of special institutional framework to address existing inequality in urban infrastructure and resources between the city's wealthier North and its poorer South. Four districts were created between 2005 and 2011 (audio-visual, technology, arts, and design) involving the

upgrading of physical infrastructure, the organisation of events and festivals, and the provision of some trades and technical training free of charge. The districts are expected to function as key tools for economic development as well as urban marketing mechanisms to create, promote and rebrand city areas as geographical clusters of similar economic activity. The government claims that with the relocation of over a hundred IT companies in a specially designated area in Parque Patricios, the Technology District has led to the creation of 11,000 jobs and a range of physical improvements in urban infrastructure, including the expansion of the underground network and the provision of lighting, new trees and security in the area (Buenos Aires Ciudad, 2019).

Although welcome in their improvement of decayed physical infrastructure, these strategies have essentially benefited private companies through a system of public subsidies and tax-exemptions to encourage their relocation. They are driven more by a desire to attract real estate investment and tourism than to pay close attention to the needs of local residents (Bayardo, 2013). Similarly, urban regeneration initiatives in the Southern neighbourhoods have mainly focused on embellishment strategies for tourism promotion leading to gentrification, such as in the case of the Arts District in La Boca, where many local artists and activists opposed the municipal government's plans and higher land values and the displacement of the urban poor have been evidenced (Lederman, 2015), favouring investors or businesses at the expense of social actors with low purchasing power (Thomasz, 2016). As noted by Serafini in her analysis of the cultural and creative industries in Argentina from a post-extractivist perspective, included in the current volume, there is a need to 'move away from understandings of culture that are heavily based on its economic value and be concerned with social and environmental justice', decolonising production and decentralising activities from the city of Buenos Aires. Undoubtedly the creative districts policy faces challenges to better integrate the already established local communities into the planning process and make them the main beneficiaries through education and job opportunities.

A well-known story, this highlights the need to investigate how and whether the promotion of urban creativity can be put at the heart of social justice redistributive agendas, ensuring access and participation as well as a distribution of resources, power and opportunities among local communities. Despite critiques to the instrumental nature of cultural policy approaches that use arts projects as agents for social change (Belfiore, 2002), access and participation in cultural activities as well as the creative industries have the potential to offer valuable training, develop new skills, create employment opportunities and promote social inclusion (European Commission, 2005). In a Southern, Argentinian context this is of particular relevance, where poverty and indigence levels have increased

in the last decade (33.6% and 6.1%, respectively, compared to 25.9% and 4.2% in 2011) (Vera and Salvia, 2019), and cultural, artistic and creative activities might help tackle some of the existing economic exclusions, social inequalities and spatial injustices.

In this sense, a new programme for cultural development specifically targeting slums and shanty towns was launched in Buenos Aires in 2016 under the name of 'Arte en Barrios' (Art in Neighbourhoods) by the Under Secretariat of Cultural Management from the City's Culture Ministry. Argentina has over 4,400 shanty towns where more than 3 million people live (according to the Registro Nacional de Barrios Populares, 2018) and the City of Buenos Aires has 42 informal settlements, dating 32 years old in average, and housing 82,585 families (TECHO, 2016). Most of these settlements have no formal access to the public network of electricity, drinking water or drains. Despite these harsh circumstances, bottom-up, self-managed and collaborative civil society initiatives have created social and cultural engagement initiatives in these territories.

The Arte en Barrios programme, which is a partnership between the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Human Development and Habitat, the Secretariat of Social and Urban Integration, and the Housing Institute of the City, has started to develop creative economy and artistic programmes in several informal settlements of the city, particularly in the Southern areas. It has targeted twenty two underprivileged neighbourhoods (i.e. Villa 21-24, Lugano, Soldati, Piedra Buena, Ciudad Oculta, among others) and the aim is to deliver weekly trades and artistic workshops, provide training and capacity-building in cultural management, and organise events and cultural visits to museums and theatres located outside the shanty towns (600 per year approximately, according to official sources). The programme, which mainly attracts women and young people, has planned 1350 activities in total (including events, projects, visits) to be developed during 2019 (personal interview with programme Coordinator, 2019). Both the trades and the artistic workshops have an encompassing scope, covering diverse areas from music production, literature, dance and hairdressing for theatre, to make up, design and serigraphy, alongside cultural forms such as cinema, orchestras, percussion and photojournalism. In the words of the city's Culture Minister, Enrique Avogadro: 'Art in Neighbourhoods starts from the premise that, as in all big cities, there is also inequity here. To provide equal opportunities the programme offers training and workshops for 150,000 people living in slums and shanty-towns in the city' (Infobae, 2019).

Even though the main objective of Arte en Barrios has been described as 'to guarantee universal access to culture, bringing the offer closer to all neighbourhoods of the City of Buenos Aires' (Clarín, 2017),

this underplays its entrepreneurial component as a mechanism to create and strengthen the cultural labour force of the slums. The work carried out under 'Cultural Management' targets individuals and social organisations that have a particular idea and want to develop it commercially, and the programme provides support and disseminates information about available public funding resources with which the projects could be funded. It is also aimed at the professionalization of artists. In this regard, scholarships are currently being negotiated with a number of educational and cultural institutions (i.e. Teatro Colón, Paula Shapiro's Musical Theatre School, Sign Language Music School and Julio Boca's Foundation). Rather than adopting a strictly top-down view that brings the official cultural offer to vulnerable groups living in underprivileged settings, the programme puts an emphasis on building capacity and providing trade and professional training hoping it will improve the insertion of the participants into the cultural labour market.

Culture as a tool for social transformation is the underpinning slogan of Arte en Barrios. It was designed building on the existing territorial work of SECHI, the Secretariat of Habitat and Inclusion from the City Government, which was created in 2011 as part of the Ministry of Economic Development to coordinate the urbanisation policies in shanty towns as well as social, cultural and sports initiatives, previously undertaken by other institutions. Based on ideas of social urbanism and community participation, SECHI collaborated with the Arts in Neighbourhoods programme by providing contacts on the ground and the knowledge and experience of having previously run a community cultural programme ('Cultura Viva') in shantytowns.

The history of public policies for shanty towns in the city of Buenos Aires can be described though three key moments (Brikman, 2016:4): eradication policies (1950-1983) since the establishment of shanty towns until the end of the dictatorship; settlement policies (until early 1990s) supporting dwellers to remain in the territory and to be integrated with the rest of society; and urbanisation policies (since 1991 up to the present) seeking to improve living conditions through upgrading initiatives. This is in line with public policy in Latin America and the Caribbean, where informal settlements have been largely accepted and legitimised and subjected to different degrees of improvements (UN-Habitat, 2012). While initiatives have included physical interventions in public spaces and community venues, housing upgrading, paving of streets, increased circulation, and basic service provision (mains, electricity, water, etc.), a large proportion have focused on 'urban acupuncture' seeking to improve the aesthetic features of the neighbourhoods. The programme for the urbanisation of Villa 31 has also included the opening of a new school and the recent creation of a new cultural venue, Casa de Cultura. More structural and integral responses are needed if policies

are to tackle the marginality and precarious access to basic public services and infrastructures in these parts of the city.

The severe economic crisis and state of social emergency that is once again hitting Argentina after its slow recovery from the 2001-02 crises, which had infamously given the country global attention, might lead to redefinitions in urban cultural policy, particularly after the presidential elections in October 2019. Controversially turning to another loan from the International Monetary Fund has resulted in the shrinking of the state, the further plummeting of the national currency, cuts in public spending and labour strikes and street protests – from scientists to transport workers and teachers – all of which resonates with past discontents resulting from high levels of poverty, rocketing inflation (of 30%), greater social exclusion and urban violence. While this difficult context presents the creative economy field with greater challenges, equally it reinforces the need for public policy to support and further develop cultural initiatives for social and economic inclusion in underprivileged areas with the potential to ameliorate the negative impact of the crises.

Conclusion: Supporting *informal* creative economies in times of crises

Visions of the future creative economy are overshadowed by academic pessimism in the North and celebrated by policymakers in the South. In the last two decades, Latin American governments have come to 'discover' the enormous potential that culture and creativity offer for urban and economic development. Many top-down initiatives are following known trajectories, languages and prescriptions from elsewhere; however, there are also some innovative programmes under development, specifically designed for vulnerable groups in informal settlements. Public data, monitoring or evaluation are still very limited in this regard, and it is therefore hard to estimate how many jobs have actually been created as part of the examined programmes.

Engaging with, rather than denying the existence of, the informal economy of culture and creativity offers a good starting point for public policy to develop more inclusive programmes for the sector. Programmes such as Favela Criativa in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Arte en Barrios in Buenos Aires, Argentina, demonstrate that creative economy initiatives can also be designed around social inclusion, socio-economic development and urban cohesion, even though their politics might derive from an entrepreneurial ethos valuing personal development, self-realisation and enterprise discourses (Banks, 2007). Still in early phases of implementation, these programmes have effectively engaged slum and shanty town residents through arts, cultural and crafts training, workshops, visits to cultural

institutions, fairs and events. They have also created links with companies and enterprises operating outside the favela to connect programme participants with potential employers.

Despite substantial critiques of the creative economy pointing to how the creative sector can be exclusionary, non-diverse and elitist, and in so doing reproduce gender, class and racial/ethnic inequalities, this chapter has presented another dimension to the question of exclusion in the creative sector: in Southern contexts of extreme poverty and deprivation, mobilising the idea of the creative economy can actually generate resources, interest and support that would otherwise not exist, opening up greater possibilities for cultural producers and artists from informal settlements. Their focus on creativity for social inclusion might provide the basis for an alternative model based on skills training, specifically targeting women and young people, support for community cultural activities and events, and facilitating participation in established cultural circuits to develop connections with institutions outside the informal settlements. The creative economy of favelas is one based on social innovation, driven by social change and activities that promote citizenship through arts and traditional cultural expressions, and dependent on networks of small initiatives and enterprises, rather than high technologies, high educational levels and large infrastructures (Schiray, Carvalho and Afonso, 2017).

Although in the future these programmes might not be able to escape a commercial and managerial logic that equates creativity to profit-making - some participants might actually welcome such approach- , these initiatives can potentially expand understandings of the creative economy towards promoting social and solidarity economies, based on collaboration between cultural policy and grassroots organisations. More research is needed to understand how these informal economies develop from the bottom-up and to identify ways for public policy to support or strengthen them outside normative and preconceived approaches to the creative economy. For 'what constitutes the economy is a contested terrain, as is the way we see it working to enable or constrain life' (St Martin, Roelvink and Gibson-Graham, 2015:1). Certainly, Favela Criativa's or Arte en Barrios' incipient work alone is not enough and has a long way to go to tackle the injustices of cultural work or change the structural conditions of cultural production in shanty towns and slums.

Elsewhere (Dinardi, 2019) I have shown how investing in the informal creative economy can serve three key functions: from a policy perspective, it can be valued as a market where 'peripheral' cultural forms are given increased market value and are praised as a brand (i.e. 'Favela Criativa'); from a social perspective, it can lead to a reconsideration of creativity as social enterprise (McRobbie, 2016) based on forms of collective entrepreneurship in the margins and articulated through the significant work carried out by local NGOs on the ground; and finally, it can serve as a reminder of the political nature of creative work seen as a labour of resistance and radical action, where informality, instead of merely

acting as an obstacle or a source of individualisation and self-exploitation, inspires creativity, organisation and activism. This can be related to the notion of creative justice (Banks, 2017) as it sheds light on the prevailing injustices in the cultural and creative industries through a consideration of the values and qualities of cultural objects and, of relevance here, cultural work. Understood as an ethical practice socially-embedded in the community, cultural work is part of the moral economy in involving ethical concerns and a normative judgement about their potentially good contributions to society.

Finally, the creative economy in Latin America relies on a cultural sector that is torn by major economic and political crises alongside disputes over long-standing unmet needs, such as low or no pay, informality of job contracts, insufficient public and private sector support, and lack of communication with governmental bodies. It remains to be seen whether the examined policy initiatives in support of the creativity of the less privileged will be able to resist Argentina's severe economic crisis and the political far-right forces of Bolsonaro's administration in Brazil, which have aimed to dissolve the Ministry of Culture, restructure cultural funding and censor artists and cultural diversity. Ultimately, the cultural and artistic production of marginalised territories, either through its formal or informal practices, might serve as a platform from which to conceptualise alternative modes of organisation and sustainable models of creative economies that support collective entrepreneurship, while also challenging existing forms of exclusion in times of crises.

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