

Building Bridges through Culture

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Abstract

Considering the idea of culture, through an anthropological perspective, as all that is built and seized in collective living, and as the creations and solutions to new everyday problems (Meneses, 2006; Ingold, 2001), it is possible to understand the "(...) invaluable role of the intangible cultural heritage as a factor of convergence, exchange and understanding between human beings" (UNESCO, 2003: 3). However, when studying the cultural heritage of a society there should be no separation between an object from the other elements and subjects to which they belong, such as the environment where they sit or their conception about the world. At last it is the set of the human condition in time and space that allows one to understand the other's culture, to discover and affirm identities (Alfonso, 2001). From the postmodern conditions, identities can be fragmentary, temporary, ephemeral (Hall, 1996), but can also create the possibility for new articulations that can be perceived as a bridge to lessen the gap between those who are well integrated to society and those who are not (Laclau, 1990).

In this sense is made the research, which seeks to understand the culture as a bridge to bring people together, overcoming political or operational borders. For this paper, apart from using bibliography that discusses the concepts of culture and identity, we will focus on the experiences of big cultural events that take place periodically in two cities: Belo Horizonte (Brazil) and Lille (France). Those events are perceived by the local governments as a trigger for social and cultural integration as well as a way to generate attachment to the place and consolidate identity. In France we focus in Lille3000 and NEXT, festivals that aim to promote a sense of identity for the newly created cross-border metropolis of Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (France and Belgium). Through a public policy of encouraging culture, the "Virada Cultural" Festival in Belo Horizonte eeks a dialogue between cultural producers and consumers in various parts of the metropolis. The culture appears as an integration bridge, coping with conflicts and networking. The legacy of festivals receive criticism, however deserves recognition as source and integrator of cultural riches.

References

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