

Building Bridges Through Culture: the role of arts festivals in Lille (France) and Belo Horizonte (Brazil)

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Abstract

Questions related to identity, place attachment and belonging are being put under reconsideration in the context of a globalised world and are elements being increasingly considered by cultural policies. In this article we will analyse two examples of cultural events organized by Lille (France) and Belo Horizonte (Brazil), leading-cities in the Agenda 21 for Culture (UNESCO), where cultural manifestations are being used as factors of social and territorial integration, constituting as bridges to cross politically demarcated borders. Those events are playing a key-role in democratising the local community access to culture (both in the production and consume ends) and promoting tourism.

Key-words: cultural events; Lille; Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai; Belo Horizonte; city marketing

1. Introduction

Understanding culture as everything that is constructed and understood in the collective experience, integrating body and mind, in addition to new creations and outputs for everyday problems (Meneses, 2006; Ingold, 2001), one can understand the "(...) inestimable role of intangible cultural heritage as a factor of approximation, exchange and understanding between human beings "(UNESCO, 2003, p. 3). When studying the cultural heritage of a society one should not separate an object from the other elements and subjects to which they belong, such as the environment in which they live and their conception of the world, since it is the set of the human condition in time and space that allows an understanding of the culture of the other, of discoveries or affirmation of identities (Alfonso, 2001). The lifestyles and consumption patterns of postmodernity expose the individual to the various possibilities of identities, sometimes fragmentary, temporary, ephemeral (Hall, 2015). However, these identities create opportunities for new articulations that can be perceived as bridges to narrow the gap between those who are well integrated with society and those who are not (Laclau, 1990).

The present research follows this lead, as we investigate how cultural manifestations are being used as factors of social and territorial integration, constituting as bridges to cross politically demarcated borders. With this purpose, a bibliographical search about the concepts of culture, identity, image and urban marketing was carried out, as well as a qualitative research on cultural events that occur periodically in two different places: the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (ELKT – France and Belgium) and in the metropolis of Belo Horizonte (Brazil). This choice is justified by the fact that both Lille and Belo Horizonte are references in cultural policy based on the guidelines of the Agenda 21 for Culture; the two cities have a common past of bi-lateral international cooperation in the cultural sphere and the festivals are perceived by the governors of both cities as a trigger for social and cultural integration, as well as a tool for promoting a sense of belonging and also to consolidate identities.

2. Literature Review

UNESCO (2002) reaffirms that culture should be considered as a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and affective traits that characterize a society or a social group and which encompasses – in addition to arts and letters – ways of life, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. The Agenda 21 for Culture (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2004), in its first principle, considers that: "Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity. (...) Culture takes different forms, which always respond to dynamic models of relationship between societies and territories" (p. 2). Calabre, Zimbrão, Siqueira and Libânio (2014) recognize several factors that

encompass the dimension of culture, including education, information, cultural production and fruition, and access to knowledge as factors of human development and a bridge to the appropriation of the city.

This contributes to the integration and exchange in the urban space and favours the expansion of access to the city through public policies that advocate cultural democracy and sometimes cultural democratization¹: it is initially hypothesized that, in fact, the dimension of existence is (or may be) an important tool, vehicle and process for the inclusion of the popular classes in urban space and expansion of real access to the city (Calabre *et al.*, 2014). Teixeira Coelho (2008, p. 63) adds that "The city is the first and decisive cultural sphere of the human being and translates culture into a vector of everyday life".

In turn, the identity – explains Stuart Hall (2015) – is an issue of discussion which gained new variables, especially in the last two or three decades, due to the intensification of a disruption process of "classic identities" caused by globalization. These changes are fragmenting social conceptions that once seemed solid, unshakable, and giving new tone to class cultural landscapes, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion and nationality today. A gradual change in the cultural traits of particular societies can be considered.

The changes observed in the world and in lifestyles and consumption patterns expose the individual to the various possibilities of identities, often contradictory to each other. This process "produces the postmodern subject, conceptualized as having no fixed, essential, or permanent identity" (Hall, 2015, p. 11). The subject starts to assume different identities at different moments, identities that are not unified around a single and coherent "self". It consists in the denial of uniformity for the valorisation of diversity (Faria & Monte-Mór, 2016).

The societies exposed to these changes are characterized by 'difference', argues Hall (2015), based on Laclau (1990); this is because they are crisscrossed by different visions and social antagonisms that produce a variety of different "subject positions" (or *identities*) for individuals. What prevents such societies from complete disintegration is not a will or project of identity standardization, but rather the acquiescence that, under certain circumstances, these different identities can be articulated.

Although this is a rather provisional conception of identity, one should not see it fearfully: this displacement of references, Laclau (1990) argues, has positive characteristics; it disarms the stable identities of the past and creates possibilities for new articulations. In this context, local identities can be seen as "hybrid identities": local re-readings of global and globalizing cultural inputs, serving as the "lowest common denominator", the core of what ultimately binds them together.

This type of identification is essentially political: it unites individuals – despite ethnic and cultural differences – from the social reality to which they are subjected by a process of cultural hierarchy. The intrinsic differences between the different ethnic groups that compose it do not cancel each other out, but are suspended – at least for a moment – while claiming social equality. This appeal to social equality is what validates this type of identification: they start from countless particularisms (ethnic, racial, gender issues) that alone – or alienated from the universal values – would not find validation. In other words, this validation is found only when those particularisms connect to the universalism of social equality (Laclau, 1992).

Fontanille and Zilberberg (1998) point out that there are cultures that see themselves as unity and others as a mixture. This means that there are at least two mechanisms to govern them: the principle of *exclusion* and that of *participation*, which create two major regimes of cultural functioning. The cultures regulated by the first regime, that of exclusion, confront the *pure* and the *impure*. The second regime leads to the comparison between the *equal* and the *unequal*. Equality presupposes interchangeable quantities; inequality implies magnitudes that oppose themselves as superior and inferior, an engendered hierarchy not always surpassed.

Considering that culture is the way of life of a society, expressed in different ways, revealing traces of its identity and considering cities as privileged *locus* of cultural making, how to intervene in cities with the purpose of stimulating the surge of identities, which by their turn, make possible new articulations between individuals?

According to Erick Braun (2008), city marketing is the coordinated use of marketing instruments endorsed by a philosophy oriented towards the creation, communication and exchange of urban offers that have value for the city's clientele (generally, private capital) as well as for their community and other stakeholders. The opening of the world to the reproduction of capital raises a locational war, which also follows the basic law of supply and demand. The more cities are sold (the greater the supply), the greater the competition between these places for capital. For Erick Braun (2008), it is precisely this competition – and the complexity that this brings to the challenges of regional development – that calls cities to adopt territory-centred marketing policies and practices: city marketing.

However, city marketing responds to one main goal: to work and rework an image and identity of a city. For Noisette and Vallerugo (1996), these two terms – image and identity – are not equivalent and come into tension in territorial communication operations: the *real identity* transmutes into *projected identity* (i.e. *image*), a desired representation of the territory that has monetary value (Thiard, 2007).

The festivals, as cultural manifestations held in different cities, have become an attractive alternative for governors and planners, since, besides being a recurrent form of diffusion of the culture – process by which the elements or systems of culture spread (Ortiz, 2000), festivals are used to bring countries closer together, to improve the flow of tourism and, consequently, the economy. According to Leguizamón, Moreno and Tibavizco (2013), in the contemporary times, the great cultural festivals seek to satisfy three objectives, namely: (i) the attraction of a large contingent of people; (ii) to conceive a new image to the place of the event and (iii) be a factor of creativity and progress for society. In this sense, festivals encourage the cultural traditions of a particular place, the development of tourism resources and the competitiveness of destinations. Bernick and Boo (2013) confirm this ability of festivals by mentioning that festivals provide a unique experience that exists only in real-life experiences and so they differentiate the places, revive the image and thus attract visitors, investors and sponsors. The attraction of different audiences makes it possible for festivals to play a different role: to build a bridge of understanding of the cultural diversity of different places.

Based on these concepts, two major cultural festivals will be analysed in the cities of Lille-France and Belo Horizonte-Brazil, based on the principles contained in Agenda 21 for Culture, emphasizing the role of culture as an agent of development, social justice and inclusion, "guaranteeing an active and not only contemplative city" (Pascual, 2008, p. 49), placing culture at the centre of local policies.

Chapter Notes:

¹ Cultural democratization aims to increase the supply of cultural services to motivate the cultural demand of the population, increase the number of spectators, visitors, readers, listeners, etc. Finally, to broaden the field of culture receptors. Cultural democracy aims to expand the cultural capital of a community. The public policy problem that must be addressed in the field of culture is not the expansion of the consumer population base, but who controls the mechanisms of cultural production and the viability of access to the production of culture. Public policies of cultural democracy would, then, not rely on cultural services to be provided to the population but on the broadening of the cultural capital of the community. Cf. Teixeira Coelho (2008).

3. Cultural bridges: A closer look at *NEXT* and *Virada Cultural*

3.1. *Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai*

The Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (ELKT) is a bi-national metropolitan area centred on the French city of Lille and the Belgian cities of Kortrijk and Tournai. It covers the Hauts-de-France region (Lille is its capital), the province of Flanders (Belgian region with Dutch as the main language) and Wallonia (where French predominates as a language). There are 147 municipalities in total and in 2008, when ELKT was officialised and institutionalized, it had 2,155,161 inhabitants (Figure 1). ELKT is considered a *European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation* (EGTC), a cooperation mechanism created in 2006 and coordinated by the European Parliament and the European Council.

Figure 1: Map of the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai with its main cities highlighted. The white line delimits the border between countries.



Source: adapted from Ducuing (2008)

The Eurometropolis was born with the intention of promoting the development and reconversion of the regional economy, departing from a past related to mining and metallurgy industries towards a service economy. In addition, it seeks to improve cross-border collaboration, bring together the actors and institutions involved in the project, develop a common development strategy and responding to everyday problems. Convinced that the creation of a transnational metropolis would be the best engine for local development, the political and economic actors of the three regions involved decided for the creation of the ELKT.

Durand (2015) points out in his study on the ELKT that the complete integration of a cross-border metropolitan area depends on a multidimensional integration: (i) structural, (ii) functional, (iii) institutional and (iv) ideational. Of these four dimensions, the one that most interests us in this paper is the last one – the "ideational" one, since it includes culture, language and symbolism, three of the main vectors of the conformation of an identity (Löfgren 1991; Cuche, 2010). The ideational dimension of cross-border integration is evaluated by the representation of its inhabitants and their impressions regarding the sharing of common elements (cultural, linguistic and symbolic).

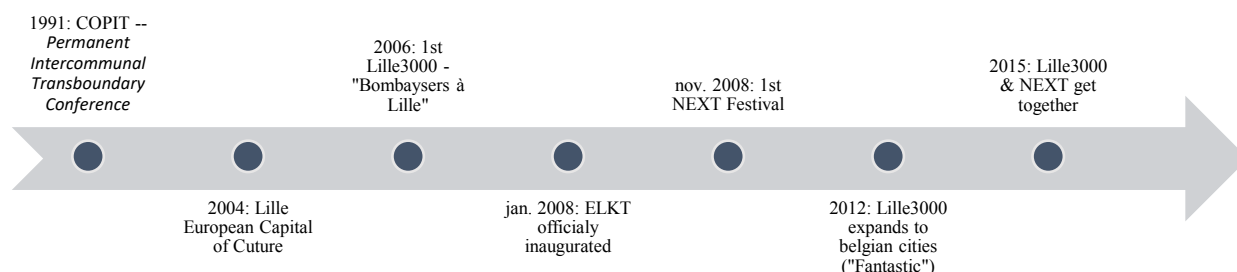
Furthermore, Durand (2015) indicates that, since 2001, some efforts have been made to create a sense of communion, of belonging, in the imagination of the population, especially from cartographic creations, due to their symbolic representativeness. We include in the same category the major artistic festivals: it is through them that the formation of an identity that provides certain social cohesion to the inhabitants of the ELKT (Siffert, 2016) is glimpsed. Therefore, we will analyse the major festival that contemplates the Eurometropolis and its surroundings: NEXT International Arts Festival.

3.1.1. *NEXT International Arts Festival*

Among the original political themes proposed by the Franco-Belgian parliamentary committee involved in the creation of the Eurometropolis, no major action in the cultural field had been envisaged.

However, artistic and cultural collaboration between organizations and actors on both sides of the border was something that had existed unofficially for many years, even preceding the formalization of ELKT's creation, encouraging international and interregional integration, though in a sporadic fashion – relatively dispersed and less systematized. Among these initiatives preceded the creation of NEXT, we can highlight *Lille2004—European Capital of Culture* and the *Lille3000 Festival*. Figure 2 presents a timeline of ELKT developments and related festivals.

Figure 2: Concurrent evolution of ELKT and the Lille2004, Lille3000 and NEXT festivals



Source: developed by the authors

Convinced that culture is an important instrument for strengthening the identity of the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, five cultural enterprises have decided to organize an annual large-scale festival of contemporary art and to encourage an increase in the circulation of the spectators and artists within the cross-border areas of ELKT. Such cooperation was only possible with the ratification and legal assistance of Interreg IV², a mechanism developed by the European Parliament to create political, institutional and economic bases to facilitate the management, integration and development of cross-border territories: "Therefore, and to contribute to the aforementioned purposes, NEXT Festival was created" (NEXT, 2008a, n.p.).

According to the brochure of the first edition of NEXT (2008b), the Festival presents itself as a totally new initiative, being "the first festival that laugh of the borders" (p. 3). In it, the audience is invited to cross the borders unlimitedly, as they are nothing more than attributes "inherited from history", and to overcome the barriers of language, considered "invisible borders of cultural differences" (NEXT, 2008b, p. 3) between the three regions.

In addition to this cultural and artistic ambition, NEXT was conceived, above all, as an important vector for "promoting the cultural identity of the common territory, both for its inhabitants and those outside the cross-border zone" (Interreg, 2011, p. 1). After all, "culture is one of the most efficient vectors, the most visible and spectacular related to the feeling of belonging to a common territory, to a common identity" (idem).

NEXT spreads through the entire Eurometropolis and, between 2008 and 2016, it offered 235 spectacles on both sides of the border in 25 structures (including theatres, museums, cultural houses, etc.) distributed among 12 component cities of ELKT (in addition to Valenciennes). Regarding the number of participants, between 2008 and 2016, there was a total audience of 89,320 (it can be observed an increase between the editions of 2008 and 2015, for example: in the first, there were 7,034 participants, in 2015 there were 16,391 – more than twice as high as the start in 2008) (NEXT, 2016).

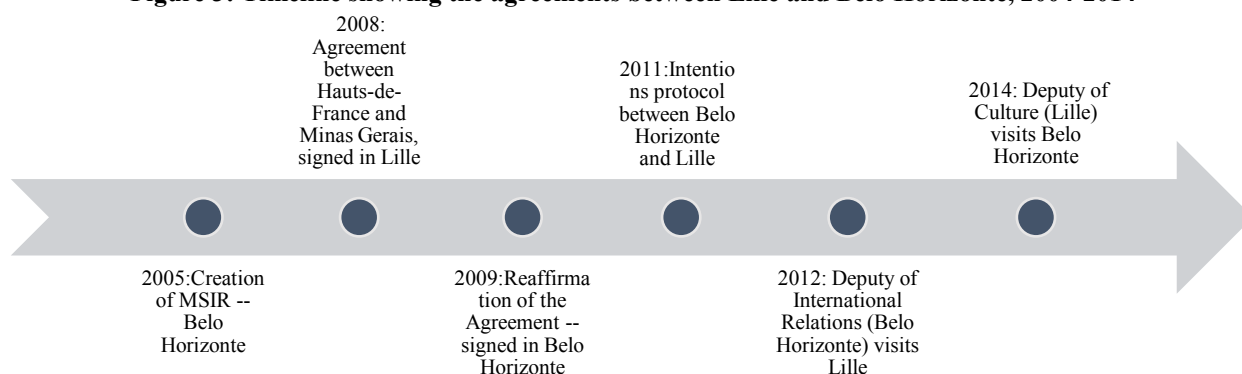
As important as offering the shows is ensuring the interurban (and inter-regional and international, in this case) transit of the festival audience. The displacement between cities is also a way for the inhabitants to know the region of the Eurometropolis and gradually create a sense of belonging. That is why, since the first festival, 23 buses were made available to the public free of charges, transferring between all cities that had NEXT events (NEXT, 2008a). In 2013, the number of free buses made available to the public jumped to 36 (NEXT, 2013). The 2014 numbers represent an advance: 13 cities were contemplated and – the most expressive number for our argument – 38 buses made available (NEXT, 2014).

3.2. *Virada Cultural* – Belo Horizonte

Belo Horizonte and Lille are considered leading cities in Agenda 21 for Culture, which proposes actions that correlate cities and cultures with a new idea of public policy, placing culture as a bridge for conviviality in cities, starting from a set of initiatives that respond to the demands of the different languages and visions of culture.

The international cooperation between the two cities influenced the public policies of Belo Horizonte and was the result of two actions that converged: on the Lille side, since 2004, when the French city was named European Capital of Culture, the cooperation initiatives with other localities aimed at implementing programmes, events and activities geared towards culture. On the other hand, the city of Belo Horizonte, at the same time, was in the process of strengthening its internationalization policy, which culminated in the creation of the Municipal Secretary for International Relations (MSIR). Several agreements and protocols of intentions were then signed by public authorities of both cities in the period between 2008 and 2014 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Timeline showing the agreements between Lille and Belo Horizonte, 2004-2014



Source: developed by the authors

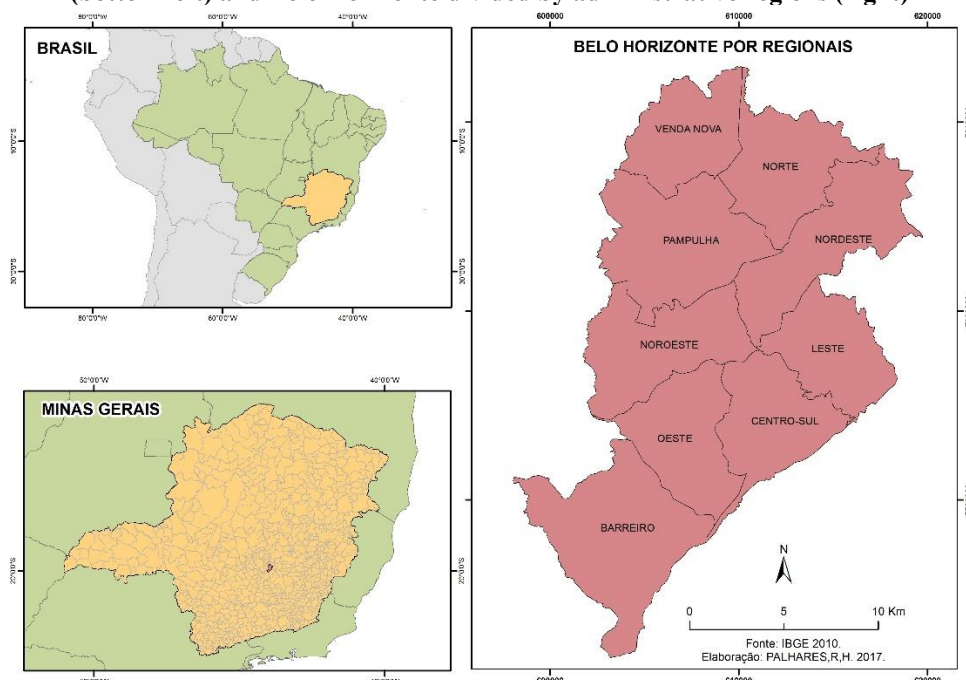
Like Lille, Belo Horizonte also invests in major festivals, such as the *International Theater Festival* (FIT, in Portuguese), whose first edition in 1994 established the format that currently exists, institutionalized in 2008 (in the form of a Municipal Law), the *Black Art Festival* (FAN, in Portuguese), which since 2003 has become biannual, and *Virada Cultural*, with its first edition in 2012, aiming to promote and stimulate culture. Those festivals were created to honour the commitment expressed in Article 37 of Agenda 21: “To endorse the public and collective character of the culture, promoting the contact of the public in the city in all the manifestations that facilitate the conviviality: live shows, cinema, parties, etc. ” (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2004, p. 7).

Belo Horizonte is located in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, with a population estimated at 2.5 million inhabitants for the year 2016 (IBGE, 2017). This is a population similar to that of the metropolitan region of Lille. Aiming to facilitate the planning and management of the city, the public authority divided the municipality into nine administrative regions, which contains approximately 300 thousand inhabitants in each of them (Figure 4). Furthermore, the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte contains 34 municipalities and roughly 5 million inhabitants

The *Virada Cultural* festival was created in 2012 by an Organic Law of the City Hall of Belo Horizonte, having public and private agents as partners. The event runs through 24 hours of uninterrupted cultural artistic programming: music, theatre, dance, circus, literature, visual arts, performance, fashion, gastronomy; it also proposes discussions on topics related to the daily life of the city: use of public space, sustainability, mobility, accessibility and new experiences. Its programme involves guest artists (local or not), selected by projects approved by the Municipal Culture Law, free

presentations on various stages of the city, associated programming in theatres, museums, cultural centres and open spaces. The intention was to preconize the experience in the city, encouraging its use by those who inhabit it.

Figure 4: Map showing the localisation of Minas Gerais State in Brazil (top left), Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais (bottom left) and Belo Horizonte divided by administrative regions (right)



Fonte: Palhares (2017)

The event privileges decentralization, promotes the democratization of culture and enables new forms of coexistence and appropriation of urban space. An important milestone for *Virada Cultural* and the city was set when it became a Municipal Law. The festival promotes public notices to select part of its local attractions, collaborating with cultural democracy. The initiative is growing year by year in public and in cultural production (as shown in Table 1).

Table 1: Informations about Virada Cultural in Belo Horizonte, 2013-2015

Virada Cultural Festival – Some Numbers			
	2013	2014	2015
Spectators	200.000	400.000	500.000
Attractions	439	461	600
Official Stages	6	8	8
Associated Spaces	16	20	70

Source: Adapted from Municipal Foundation of Culture – Belo Horizonte (2016)

Concerning the spatial dispersion of the festival in the city of Belo Horizonte, some regions of the city absorb most of the attractions and resources of *Virada Cultural* and attract, consequently, a larger audience. Although there is an effort to decentralize the attractions, there is a lack of participation of peripheral regions. Those attractions considered of greater value remained in the most valued areas of the city (*Centro-Sul* region), demonstrating preference for areas already consolidated in the ‘game’ of cultural supply and demand. According to the researcher and consultant of the Cultural Diversity Observatory, Oliveira Júnior (2016), factors such as accessibility, adequate infrastructure, artists' demands, visibility, among others, corroborate to the fact that most attractions focus on the most valued regions of Belo Horizonte, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Cultural attractions by Administrative Region of Belo Horizonte, 2014 and 2015

Virada Cultural Festival - Activities		
Administrative Region	2014	2015
Barreiro	3	-
Centro-Sul	290	592
Leste	5	-
Noroeste	3	-
Norte	8	-
Oeste	1	-
Pampulha	21	17
Total	331	609

Source: Adapted from Municipal Foundation of Culture – Belo Horizonte (2016)

The *Centro-Sul* region is conformed by the central area of the city and more upmarket neighbourhoods, presenting supremacy in the offer of cultural activities during the festival. For this region there are several transport modes, there is a greater offer of parks and cultural facilities (theatres, cinemas, cultural centres), easy access and adequate urbanization. In second place is the *Pampulha* region, known for housing the lake of the same name and buildings designed by the architect Oscar Niemayer, constituting an architectural complex inscribed in 2016 as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and known as "the postcard of the city".

In 2016, in its fourth edition, the *Virada Cultural* four other municipalities in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte (Vespasiano, Pedro Leopoldo, Lagoa Santa and Betim), in an attempt to fulfil its goal of cultural decentralization.

3.3 Discussion

Two researches conducted with local political actors in the years 2000 and 2001 (Tetra, 2000; 2001) sought to study their perceptions of what would become the Eurometropolis³. The conclusions indicate that, at that time, there were two quite different visions of the whole ELKT project, and these followed the nationalities of the actors involved. For the French, the Eurometropolitan project represented the possibility of gradually achieving the status of "international metropolis". However, for the Belgians, the results were more complex: it existed fear for the creation of a strong France-Wallonia axis, resulting in a lack of recognition mainly for Flanders, which would relegate the region to a background position.

In addition, the 2001 survey (Tetra, 2001, p. 61) suggested that the sense of belonging – on both sides of the national border – to the ELKT was "weak or non-existent." For Durand (2015), the lack of a strong symbol of cross-border integration (such as the *Øresund Bridge*⁴) plays a major role in this, hampering the development of a common identity with which the inhabitants could identify; and, as Kobena Mercer (1994) reminds us, "identity becomes an issue only when it is in crisis, when something that is supposed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (p. 43). Similar historical and cultural roots on both sides of the Franco-Belgian border facilitate collaboration and exchanges between the two populations. However, the linguistic barrier between Francophone and Flemish tends to pose obstacles both at the level of individual perceptions and spatial practices vis-à-vis neighbours (Hamez, 2004).

Also in the case of *Virada Cultural*, a strengthening of the regional metropolitan identities is sought, with the intention of creating a great tourism product and the consequent increase of investments in the cities of the metropolitan region: the festival begins to expand beyond the limits of Belo Horizonte, incorporating other municipalities in the area. The borders, be they international or

municipal, are crossed by the bridges built by the cultural expressions and an occupation of the public space in both endings of the bridge is encouraged.

However, the intention of a spatial decentralization of cultural events is a constant challenge. Although this is a desire of public authorities, Herrero-Prieto (2011) points out that factors associated with the economy of agglomeration and externalities make the most populous places, especially large cities, the preferred sites for the accomplishment of cultural manifestations, be it because they concentrate the demand (i.e. spectators), or they hold the best cultural facilities available, or host the companies specialised in the infrastructure arrangement for the shows and also because of the interaction between agents, artists and companies. Therefore, the concentration of attractions in the city of Lille, the most populous of the ELKT, or the *Centro-Sul* region, in Belo Horizonte, with its superior transport structure and cultural facilities, is not surprising.

The cultural proposal of the ELKT is a project of delineating a new identity, common to its inhabitants. Based on three different cultural matrices, we are led to conclude that the process of the Eurometropolitan identity project is intended to amalgamate differences – and avoid value judgments about what is *pure* or *impure* – in favour of a new cultural reference (to be marketed in the form of an image); is what Fontanille and Zilberberg (1998) call "culture as a mixture" – and this is also the case of the *Virada Cultural*.

Chapter Notes:

² One of the main objectives of Interreg is not only to stimulate international cooperation, but also to reduce the influence of national borders in favour of equal economic, social and cultural development of the whole set of territories within the European Union (Hamez, 2004).

³ Despite being institutionalized in 2008, the ELKT conformation process dates back to 1991, when the *Permanent Intercommunal Transboundary Conference* (COPIT, in French) was created.

⁴ The Øresund Bridge crosses the Øresund strait and links the cities of Malmö in Sweden and Copenhagen, the Danish capital, forming another transnational metropolitan region.

4. Conclusion

To what extent do these major events reduce the cultural distances of different social spheres, where socially heterogeneous individuals aim to live together and affirm themselves? Would not cities treated as stage shows be masking their social reality, their discrepancies and demarcating their borders? "Are we transforming cities through knowledge and culture, or have we turned cities into cultural spectacles without modifying structural disorders?" (Canclini, 2008, p.19).

Calabre *et al.* (2014) declare that culture is a primordial and fundamental element for access to the city and question how culture can contribute to integration and exchange in the metropolitan space. At one point it can be understood that festivals are part of this response when they are able to promote a sense of belonging: the "belonging through consumption of place" (Calabre *et al.*, 2014). The major cultural events held in different parts of Lille and Belo Horizonte are cultural products that provide for the strengthening of the sense of belonging of the individuals towards the city through its consumption, promoting a recognition through the cultural diversity. However, they also contribute to strengthening or even re-creating the image of the cities, promoting opportunities for new investors for cultural tourism to foster different economic sectors (Braun, 2008).

There is a distance between "image" and "identity" (Noisette & Vallerugo, 1996), where the urban image produced seems intangible, always referring to a "temporal and spatial elsewhere". The effects of distortion between representation and reality, previously meticulously avoided, seem to be

systematically sought after in marketing projects, since it is precisely the image of the city that is the saleable part of the urban product (Thiard, 2007).

Although permanent cultural initiatives have a preference in public policies (Oliveira Jr. 2016), the major events mobilize the various spheres of the city, and several initiatives have become visible, opening new fronts for discussion. The forms of cultural expressions used as a means of claiming the city and the democratization of the public space inspired the methodology used in the realization of the major cultural festivals. Events that grate the population with varied artistic performances, which conform various identities, should corroborate for social cohesion and dissemination of localities, as well as promoting the valorisation of local artists, their plurality of expressions of artistic genres and also the dialogue between artistic vocations.

However, in the NEXT festival and *Virada Cultural*, there is no information to corroborate these statements, due to a lack of research that contemplates the audience, in order to gauge the motivations for going to the festivals and the results perceived by the visitors. In this sense, the speeches prevail over the facts, and there is a need to deepen the knowledge about the effects and impacts of the festivals both on the image of the cities, as well as on the motivation and perception of their goers. However, a visible legacy of festivals is the use of public spaces by residents and visitors in a non-everyday or usual way, a greater appropriation of different points of the city by its regulars.

5. Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Foundation for Research Support of the State of Minas Gerais (FAPEMIG) and the Regional Council of Nord-Pas de Calais for the support in the joint project: *Projeto FAPEMIG/Conseil Régional NPDC - APQ-03544-15, "Wealth Through Sharing – Riquezas Compartilhadas"*.

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