

ARTICLE

Transforming the territory: the importance of the Latin American Integration University for culture in the Brazil-Paraguay-Argentina triple frontier

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this work is on the reflection on the transformation process promoted by the installation of the Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana in the city of Foz do Iguaçu (PR), highlighting the transversality between educational and cultural policies and the impact on regional development. Borders are the subject of public policies, typically from the perspective of security and national sovereignty. Thus, the absence of policies aimed at the development of the cities that constitute the so-called Border Strip has only recently changed. The university established in 2010 is already questioned about its existence. This essay argues the importance of frontier cities for economic, educational, and cultural development, promoting diversity and sustainability. The article explores the concepts of territory, border, and cultural diversity, illustratively focusing on the experiences of independent cinema held in the region.

KEYWORDS

territory; border; culture; education; Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana; diversity.

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TRANSFORMANDO O TERRITÓRIO: A IMPORTÂNCIA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE INTEGRAÇÃO LATINO-AMERICANA PARA A CULTURA NA TRÍPLICE FRONTEIRA BRASIL-PARAGUAI-ARGENTINA

RESUMO

O foco deste trabalho está na reflexão sobre o processo de transformação promovido pela instalação da Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana na cidade de Foz do Iguaçu (PR), evidenciando a transversalidade entre políticas educacionais e culturais e o impacto no desenvolvimento regional. Fronteiras foram objeto de políticas públicas, na maioria das vezes, sob a ótica da segurança e da soberania nacional. Assim, a inexistência de políticas voltadas ao desenvolvimento das cidades que compõem a chamada faixa de fronteira só se alterou recentemente. A universidade, constituída em 2010, já sofre questionamentos quanto à sua existência. O ensaio argumenta a importância das cidades da fronteira para o desenvolvimento econômico, educacional e cultural, promovendo a diversidade e a sustentabilidade. No artigo são explorados os conceitos de território, fronteira e diversidade cultural, focando de modo ilustrativo em experiências do cinema independente realizado na região.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

território; fronteira; cultura; educação; Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana; diversidade.

TRANSFORMANDO EL TERRITORIO: LA IMPORTANCIA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE INTEGRACIÓN LATINOAMERICANA PARA LA CULTURA EN LA TRIPLE FRONTERA BRASIL-PARAGUAY-ARGENTINA

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es reflexionar sobre el proceso de transformación promovido por la instalación de la Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana en la ciudad de Foz do Iguazú (PR), destacando la transversalidad entre las políticas educativas y culturales y el impacto en el desarrollo regional. Las fronteras fueron objeto de políticas públicas, la mayoría de las veces, desde la perspectiva de la seguridad y la soberanía nacional. Recién en los últimos años aparecieron políticas destinadas al desarrollo de las ciudades que conforman la denominada Franja Fronteriza. La universidad establecida en 2010 ya sufre cuestionamientos sobre su existencia. El ensayo argumenta la importancia de las ciudades fronterizas para el desarrollo económico, educacional y cultural que promueve la diversidad y la sostenibilidad. El artículo explora los conceptos de territorio, frontera y diversidad cultural, enfocándose ilustrativamente en experiencias de cine independiente en la región.

PALABRAS CLAVE

territorio; frontera; cultura; educación; Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana; diversidad.

INTRODUCTION

Discussion about border policies is not recent, although for a long time they have been analyzed solely from the perspective of public security, that is, focused on independence and national sovereignty, as noted in Law 6634 of May 1979, which provides for the borderland and national security (Brazil, 1979). According to Krüger *et al.* (2017), the borderland underwent a historical process of marginalization of State development policies, and, only in 2004, it became the target of development public policies. In late 2008, the Commission for Education and Culture approved the creation of the Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana (UNILA), located in the city of Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná.

The creation of UNILA is directly related to Mercosur, which, since the 1990s, has considered that education has a strategic role in regional integration, establishing the Educational Sector of Mercosur (Anastásia *et al.*, 2008). At the core of this strategic role is the desire that “regional integration may lead to respect for the cultural diversity of Latin America peoples, as well as to the commitment with sustainable economic development, understood as inseparable from social justice and environmental balance” (Corazza, 2010, p. 83).

The Brazil-Paraguay-Argentina triple border region is marked by multiculturalism, representing a unique environment for interactions and cultural development, especially after the foundation of UNILA. Qualitative research that investigated the trajectories of independent film producers in the region (Oderich, 2019) has demonstrated the importance of UNILA in directly and indirectly helping film production and the access to culture to flourish in the triple border. From the start, UNILA took on a central role in advancing culture, evidencing the transversality between educational and cultural policies and allowing the territory to be transformed with its presence.

This paper is, therefore, a theoretical essay aiming to reflect on the importance of UNILA for the cultural development of the Brazil-Paraguay-Argentina triple border region. The identification of the impact of educational policies on culture substantiates the relevance of maintaining these public institutions as well as their actions and projects, in addition to inspiring new forms of support.

Creating an organizational structure focused on cultural management strategies and tactics in the university and developing public cultural policies targeted at the borderland, having the university as its epicenter, can strengthen the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity.

Considering that the promotion of culture contributes to giving visibility and recognition to cultural diversity, the university, either through education or investments in research and/or outreach projects, enables partnerships and regional integration.

The abundance of subjects in artistic and cultural productions means that communities in regions distant from large centers, such as those in the borderland, can have their characteristics and space valued. A reference in the study on new patterns of consumption and circulation of cultural goods,

Canclini (2013) argues that, through recomposition and alliances, the sequence of a few “art capitals” has been broken. The author states that economy, art, and politics are not bipolar but an unstable distribution of foci with the exertion of power.

Almeida (2018) claims that borderlands are no longer considered outskirts and can be seen as territories of cultural integration, with “singularities and cultural diversities, characterized by shared memory and cuisine, bilingualism, hybrid literature, and cross-border activities” (Almeida, 2018, p. 260). According to the author, this reality is not yet recognized enough to have integration policies, due to the centralization of policies in the capitals and the search for answers to the demands of infrastructure, economy, and security.

We must overcome the idea of border as a landmark, which limits and separates, embracing the idea of border as a territory. In other words, this idea is connected to territorialization, which, in the conception of Haesbaert (2004, p. 97), “means creating spatial mediations that provide us with effective ‘power’ over our reproduction as social groups (for some, also as individuals), a power that is always multiscaled and multidimensional, material and immaterial, of ‘domination’ and ‘appropriation’ at the same time”. Pesavento (2006) emphasizes that the concept of border relates to principles of recognition, perceived otherness, and identity.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND ACCESS TO CULTURE

The expression *cultural diversity* can have multiple meanings; for instance, it can be considered positive for representing an exchange of different cultures of the world in processes of union, trade, and dialogue. In contrast, these differences can be regarded as triggers of conflicts, making us lose sight of what unites us as human beings. In places with a wealth of cultural exchange, there is also room for tensions and search for identity. The UNESCO World Report of 2009 poses the challenge of a coherent perspective on cultural diversity as a key dimension of intercultural dialogue, potentially beneficial for the action of the international community.

Cultural diversity is above all a fact: there exists a wide range of distinct cultures, which can be readily distinguished on the basis of ethnographic observation, even if the contours delimiting a particular culture prove more difficult to establish than might at first sight appear. Awareness of this diversity has today become much more widespread, being facilitated by globalized communications and increased cultural contacts. While this greater awareness in no way guarantees the preservation of cultural diversity, it has given the topic greater visibility. (UNESCO, 2009, p. 5)

Dealing with culture and diversity requires a perspective of contexts historically and politically constructed, taking into account the diversity maintained in its difference, not in its suppression. According to the Convention on the

Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, whose text was ratified by Brazil through Legislative Decree 485/2006, cultural diversity refers to the “manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 6), which is passed on within and among groups and societies. The enrichment and transmission of world cultural heritage occur through many cultural expressions, in the modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution, and enjoyment, by various means and technologies. *Cultural content* represents the symbolic nature, the values, and art that originate from or express cultural identity, what we want to protect, in the attempt of preserving and valuing diversity.

“Cultural activities, goods and services” refers to those activities, goods and services, which at the time they are considered as a specific attribute, use or purpose, embody or convey cultural expressions, irrespective of the commercial value they may have. Cultural activities may be an end in themselves, or they may contribute to the production of cultural goods and services. (UNESCO, 2005, p. 7)

The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2002) described cultural diversity as the common heritage of humanity, taking different forms across time and space and manifesting itself in the originality and plurality of identities that characterize different groups and societies. Diversity can be a source of exchange, innovation, and creativity. The report also highlights the correlation of cultural pluralism with a democratic context and the defense of human dignity.

Thus, the Declaration promotes the defense of ethics and the respect for human rights, particularly of persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are those who lived in a territory prior to its colonization, or who do not identify with the colonizers, such as the native Guarani peoples of the triple border.

The document underlines that cultural rights are part of universal human rights, which means that every person can express themselves, create, and disseminate their works in the language of their choice; every person must (or should) have access to quality education that respects their cultural identity; every person can participate in the cultural life and cultural practices of their choice, within the limits of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 6 of the Declaration stresses the importance of freedom of expression in word and image, considering that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known, with media pluralism, as well as access to artistic expressions and to scientific and technological knowledge.

Article 6 – Towards access for all to cultural diversity

While ensuring the free flow of ideas by word and image care should be exercised that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known. Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal

access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3-4)

The same Declaration mentions, in Article 8, the importance of creative supply and due recognition of the rights of authors and artists and of cultural goods and services, which are vectors of identity, values, and meaning and, therefore, should not be regarded as mere commodities or consumer goods. This Article is a clear contrast to the view of the cultural industry when understood as the commodification of art.

Interestingly, Article 10 explains the imbalances in the flow and exchange of cultural goods on a global scale, reinforcing the relevance of international cooperation and solidarity to establish “cultural industries” that are viable and competitive at national and international levels, which, at first sight, treats these cultural goods as merchandise, that is, in apparent contradiction to Article 8. Article 11 stresses the significance of strengthening “public policy, in partnership with the private sector and civil society” (UNESCO, 2002, n.p.) for the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity.

We underline that this theme is complex, considering the very concept of *culture*. According to the consensus reached on the 1982 Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, culture is “the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group including not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs” (*apud* UNESCO, 2009, p. 6).

It is a broad definition of *culture*. The concept of *cultures* alludes to the idea of entities that tend to be defined when compared to others; the term *civilization* refers to cultures that regard their values or worldviews as universal and, therefore, take on an expansionary stance in relation to those who do not share their beliefs, which makes peaceful coexistence difficult in different *civilization centers*. The concept of *civilization* can be understood as an ongoing process of reconciliation of world cultures, with recognition of their equal dignity. Societies continue to change in a dynamic process, and the concept of difference is important because, even with changes, a given culture remains, and public policies should “give a positive slant to these *cultural differences* so that groups and individuals that come into contact, rather than withdrawing into closed identities, discover in this *difference* an incentive for continuing to evolve and change” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 6). Based on this perspective, defining policies reinforcing the respect for differences becomes crucial, even if the dynamic interaction is a mutual invitation to change.

Yet national identity is to some extent a construction, grounded in a sometimes reconstructed past and providing a focus for our sense of commonality. Cultural identity is a more fluid, self-transforming process, to be seen

less in terms of a past inheritance than of a future project. In a globalizing world, cultural identities often derive from multiple sources; the increasing plasticity of cultural identities reflects the growing complexity of the globalized flows of people, goods and information. In a multicultural context, some people will choose to adopt a particular form of identity, others to live in a dual mode, and still others to create for themselves hybrid identities. (UNESCO, 2009, p. 9)

Therefore, *culture* has two different and indivisible meanings: creative diversity in *specific cultures*, with expressions and traditions; and *culture as a creative instinct*, which is at the origin of cultural diversity. According to the UNESCO World Report (2009, p. 11), “to describe as fault lines the differences between cultures is to overlook the porosity of cultural boundaries and the creative potential of the individuals they encompass”. According to this outlook, *intercultural dialogue* is not a loss but a movement that can strengthen self-knowledge and empathy by recognizing their own cultural references, as well as accepting and understanding other groups of references, which can be positive in reinforcing an autonomy that enables interaction, without the loss of identity.

Public policies can help ensure the conditions necessary for the expression, dialogue, and awareness of human dignity, which contributes to the self-determination of peoples. The word *interculturality* refers to “the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 7).

UNILA IN THE TRIPLE BORDER REGION

The border between Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina, whose respective cities are Foz do Iguaçu, Ciudad Del Este, and Puerto Iguazú, is outside the major centers. The region hosts the beautiful confluence of the Paraná and Iguaçu rivers, which define the three banks, with bridges connecting the land of these countries. Since 1965, the Amizade Bridge unites Paraguay and Brazil, while the Fraternidade Bridge joins Brazil and Argentina. The words friendship (*amizade*) and fraternity (*fraternidade*) are present in the bridges connecting this territory of exuberant nature that, over time, became a scenario of sociability, a space for coexistence between Guarani peoples, locals from border cities, foreigners, and tourists.

From a sociocultural point of view, the region was formed, throughout history, with the arrival of individuals from different peoples and communities, totaling, currently, approximately 70 coexisting ethnic groups, such as Brazilians, Paraguayans, Argentinians, French citizens, Uruguayans, Asians, British individuals, Lebanese, and Latin Americans of various countries. As of 1989, the triple border has a binational company established by Brazil and Paraguay — the

Itaipu Dam —, as well as two beautiful tourist parks — the Iguaçú National Park in Brazil and the Iguazu National Park, in Argentina.

In the book *Foz do Iguaçú intercultural: cotidiano e narrativas da alteridade* (Intercultural Foz do Iguaçú: Quotidian and Narratives of the Otherness), Oliveira (2012) metaphorically presents the frontier city as an irregular polyhedron, expressing a phenomenon that has many faces, interpretations, and representations, and these faces are not only multiple but different. Multiple cultures, routines, temporalities, and specialities, “abandoning linearities or definite borders” (Oliveira, 2012, p. 17). The city would be a “non-place place,” opposing identity and historical places in their main meaning.

Considered an ideal location for the Mercosur Parliament headquarters, Foz do Iguaçú has proven to be more than a tourist and logistic center. “Once called the end of the line for being in one of the extremes of a continental country, the city today is considered a strategic point for the integration of other nations and peoples” (Paro, 2016, p. 210).

When we analyze how the city is presented by official authorities, such as the Foz do Iguaçú City Hall, the conception and construction of an image of cultural diversity stand out. They stress that “with approximately 260 thousand inhabitants, Foz do Iguaçú is known for its cultural diversity. It has approximately 80 nationalities” (Foz do Iguaçú, 2019). The city hall website also emphasizes, based on 2013 data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* — IBGE), that the city has 80 of the 192 existing nationalities, that is, almost 42% of the world nationalities are present in the city.

Nogueira and Clemente (2011, p. 6) state that “social history enabled the creation of a specific cultural setting, marked by intercultural contacts that allow thinking of hybridism, social interaction, and interethnic relations”. We emphasize that we are not confirming the existence of a social and interethnic harmony but of multiple cultures and ethnicities. This aspect is used by official authorities (as highlighted above), tourism websites, and businesses to raise financial resources and attract companies or persons to the city and region.

In 2010, UNILA was established in Foz do Iguaçú, aiming to “be a university that contributes to Latin American integration, with emphasis on Mercosur, by means of humanistic, scientific, and technological knowledge, as well as supportive cooperation among higher education institutions and governmental and international bodies” (UNILA, 2019). UNILA “is structured with an innovative organization and an academic-scientific concept open to current and future scientific, humanistic, and cultural advancements”, focused on the construction of sustainable societies, “grounded in the Latin American identity, its cultural diversity, and striving for economic development, social justice, and environmental sustainability” (UNILA, 2019). Thus, it aims to contribute to economic and cultural integration, as well as the scientific and technological exchange in the region, which is actually one of the reasons for the university to be physically located in the triple border, favoring these exchanges.

We defend reflecting on the border based on a new concept of territorialization, that is, the possibility of building territories “in and through movement, in discontinuous and overlapping ‘network-territories’, partly surpassing the more exclusivist political-territorial logic of the modern world” (Haesbaert, 2004, p. 97-98). Therefore, we attempted to understand the border as a political, economic, and cultural universe, which, for its own nature, has a community of agents that are at once similar and different. As Pesavento (2006, p. 11) states, it means “being one and two at the same time, being itself and being the other”.

Regarding the Filmmaking Program, the idea of cultural diversity, otherness, and identity is expressed in its pedagogical project, as highlighted below:

Its commitment transcends individualistic reductions, thus having *the intention of improving and becoming a reference to indicate and promote paths that lead to mutual respect and reciprocal expectations*. In a knowledge-based society, the university needs to *expand and strengthen its reference tradition*. And, the only way of accomplishing that is by reinventing and rebuilding itself to the extent of the uncertainties and insecurities that mark our time. In the Latin American context, this condition clearly emerges both as a result of its colonization history and as the role reserved for the continent in *advancing democracy and the culture of peace*. (UNILA, 2018, p. 5, our emphasis)

In this fashion, we can gradually observe the creation of — technical and human — conditions that significantly contribute to increasing the number of events, activities, courses, and cultural production in the region. The Pedagogical Project of the Filmmaking Program of UNILA emphasizes the culture of peace and democracy, that is, it encourages activities and projects that work with values such as mutual respect and reciprocity.

According to Klotzel (2006, p. 2), “cinema, as an industrial activity with cultural content, is the reconciliation between the objectivity of industry and the subjectivity of artistic creation”. The web of complex and contradictory relationships that constitutes the relations among the State, producers, distributors, and exhibitors is expressed in different ways, be it in the cultural policy, the debate of what is cinema, the modes of production, or the political role of filmmakers and other actors.

CINEMA AND TERRITORIAL TRANSFORMATION: MOVEMENTS BORN WITHIN UNILA

From a cultural point of view, an example of the network-territory movement in the border region that “was born” within UNILA was the *3 Margens Latin American Film Festival*, which assembled independent producers and the local community in screenings, workshops, and several activities focused on independent cinema. The festival had three editions so far — in

2017, 2018, and, more recently, in 2019. The expression “born” indicates that the festival originated from the meeting and the mobilization of academics from the Filmmaking Program at the time, now graduate professionals, who wanted to build an integrative cultural space to strengthen the independent cinema in the region.

The first edition took place from September 14 to 22, 2017, together with the 13th Brazilian Forum for Film and Audiovisual Education (*Fórum Brasileiro de Ensino de Cinema e Audiovisual* — FORCINE), an event that gathers and represents Brazilian institutions and professionals dedicated to film and audiovisual education, affiliated with the Brazilian Federation of Scientific and Academic Communication Associations, which occurred from September 20 to 23, 2017. Thus, the 3 Margens Festival was conceived in the UNILA environment from film academics, had various activities carried out in the physical campus of the university, and was supported by the institution, which was significantly present in this construction.

The festival has gratuitousness as its foundation and presents an original structure, since it occurs in partnership with parallel activities in the three countries, in the cities of Puerto Iguazu (Argentina), Ciudad del Este (Paraguay), and Foz do Iguazu (Brazil). In addition to the short film competition and the guest film screening, the festival offered, in its first two editions, courses, debates, and workshops in the area of cinema, as well as cultural events and get-togethers, becoming a place for dissemination, creation, and exchange of experiences between young filmmakers of regional and Latin American cinema. The objectives mentioned by the group include decentralizing the cinema from capitals, placing the triple border on the international scene of independent cinema. The third edition kept the concept of the festival, having students from the Filmmaking Program of UNILA as team members and professors as film curators. They received over 600 films from all Latin America, a number larger than that of 2018. Among them, 60 were selected and screened.

The university is the environment, space, and structure that allowed the contact between group members, and also of these members with professors, projects, sources of knowledge, and other professionals of related or complementary areas. In addition, it is a place for friendship, learning, professional references, search for affinities, and construction of professional roots and shared experiences.

The first edition had the so-called *Cine Bairro* (Neighborhood Movie Theater), with screenings, workshops, and discussions in schools and neighborhoods, seeking to broaden the population's access to the event. Another of its features was the *Cine Terminal* (Terminal Movie Theater), held at the urban public transport terminal with screenings of one-minute films, in partnership with *Festival do Minuto* (One Minute Festival), which was created in 1991 to practice synthesis in cinematographic works with a maximum duration of 60 seconds. These initiatives demonstrate the commitment of the event to both education and the democratization of movie access.

The second edition occurred between October 23 to 27, 2018, with the curatorship coordination of Maurício Ferreira. The festival itself was an independent production of 3 Margens in partnership with the movie theaters Cine Cataratas (Brazil), Cine Art! (Paraguay), and Espacio INCAA Iguazú (Argentina). This edition counted with the support from Sudacas Bar, Bad Ass Café, Sazonal Alimentos Naturais da Terra, Restaurant Rustiquiana, Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes (ESBA), Shopping Paris PY, Teko Hostel, Iguazú Turismo Ente Municipal (ITUREM), Instituto de Artes Audiovisuales de Misiones and Municipalidad de Puerto Iguazú (IAAviM). A total of 563 films were enrolled from all Latin America, of which 21 were selected and divided into three exhibitions: *Corpo Território* (Territory Body), *Entre Rios* (Between Rivers), and *Afluentes* (Tributaries).

The joint effort to hold the 3 Margens Festival resulted in friendships and working partnerships between producers of Argentina and Brazil. It also contributed to attracting viewers for the independent cinema of the three countries (Oderich, 2019). Considering that approximately 93% of people seek entertainment and leisure in movie theaters (Dahl, 2016), we can understand the restricted number of viewers for films with independent themes and styles that might require some references to be understood and discussed.

If on the one hand, Argentina is considered a country with some tradition in the culture, on the other, Paraguay was called “an island surrounded by earth” by writer Augusto Roa Bastos, according to Gamarra (2011), taking into account characteristics such as sociological and cultural introversion.

For instance, the only movie theaters regularly working in the inland of Paraguay until 2011 were in Ciudad del Este. Nonetheless, the country has advanced in the sector, particularly since June 2018, with the promulgation of the Law for Audiovisual Promotion, which producers labeled as the “Cinema Law”. The Paraguayan Law for Audiovisual Promotion No. 6,106 created the National Paraguayan Audiovisual Institute (*Instituto Nacional del Audiovisual Paraguayo* — INAP), the National Audiovisual Council, and the National Paraguayan Audiovisual Fund (*Fondo Nacional del Audiovisual Paraguayo* — FONAP). The country has also participated in the Specialized Meeting of Cinematographic and Audiovisual Authorities of Mercosur (*Reunião Especializada de Autoridades Cinematográficas e Audiovisuais do Mercosul* — RECAM).

Another example of integration was the production of the movie *Do amor: pequenas coisas* (2015), with professionals from the three countries, and directed by Fran Rebelatto, professor of the Filmmaking Program of UNILA. The film was shot in Foz do Iguazu and co-produced by Brazil (*VisionArt*) and Argentina (*Productora de la Tierra*).

These initiatives agree with the objectives of UNILA and its Filmmaking Program. The latter has an educational project grounded in “actions to promote academic exchange and supportive cooperation with Mercosur and Latin America countries” (UNILA, 2018, p. 5).

The Foz do Iguaçu Cultural Foundation (*Fundação Cultural de Foz do Iguaçu* — FCFI) has an important role in this analysis from the perspective of cultural management in the area. Law No. 3645 of December 10, 2009, established the Foz do Iguaçu Municipal Cultural System (*Sistema Municipal de Cultura de Foz do Iguaçu* — SMC), with guidelines for public policies. According to this law, FCFI would be responsible for creating a Committee composed of representatives of cultural entities to monitor and support Thematic Chambers with the intent of holding a Sectoral Forum.

In an interview, Joaquim Rodrigues da Costa, known as Juca Rodrigues, President and Director of the Cultural Foundation, explained that the National Cultural System determines the legal frameworks, conferences, and cultural councils to be created. Foz do Iguaçu has a City Arts Council constituted by institutions and the government. The contribution of art professionals has increased with the presence of the university, both due to professionals and professors who came to the region to work in UNILA and to the graduate professionals, many of whom chose to stay and seek work in the region.

The movement of integration between artists, professors, companies, and the public sector is the desired trajectory for the construction and development of cultural projects in the area. The still lacking physical and organizational structure for the expression of art and culture can also prove to be a stimulus to the sector, as occurred with the Foz do Iguaçu Municipal Theater and the Cultural Center. Moreover, the intent is to have projects that may attract cultural productions, as is the case of the Film Commission, in the cinema field.

The so-called Film Commission is a proposal that usually arises from the organization of local professionals and the public sector to draw film productions from outside, connected to the creation of jobs in the field, as well as financial support, training, or some physical, technological, or scenographic structure for the region, ensuring the survival, livelihood, and development of art professionals in areas outside the major production routes.

The triple border region has been gradually transformed into a fertile cultural environment. The banks form a location that is not one or the other, but something different, and connections between cultural agents are being slowly established. They can be identified in the relationships that seek integration, initiatives that create bonds for joint action. Rebelatto and Fonseca (2015) show the importance of the Forum Between Borders as an itinerant project that deals with transnational production processes and the creation of moving images, including the trinational teams of the co-production *Parceria entre fronteiras*, a series of four documentaries about the border. Characterized by a participatory and horizontal structure, the forum gathers professionals involved in film production in the Mercosur region, promoting cultural identification and the experience of independent co-production, aimed at political discussions for the construction of a trinational production space.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE PROMOTION OF THE TERRITORY AND ITS CULTURES

UNILA promotes movements through the training of professionals in the field of culture and the presence of professors and professionals in the city. In addition, research and outreach projects associated with university programs encourage the production and promotion of culture, helping to attract viewers who enjoy works that represent different movements and cultural diversity. Thus, we note the importance of resources, infrastructure creation, and professional training for the territorial expansion and decentralization of cultural options.

The specificity of a frontier region needs to be taken into account in the formulation of public policies, as “the complexity of these places directs the attention of the researcher and creator of public policies to a singularity that does not allow the vertical applicability of these policies” (Colvero, Severo and Melo, 2016, p. 675), requiring that they be constructed through the horizontal interaction of civil society, according to the peculiarities of each region. “In these regions, we cannot talk about homogeneity, since a country with continental dimensions like Brazil has variations along its borders” (Colvero, Severo and Melo, 2016, p. 679). In this scenario, the border is a spatial and symbolic area of multiplicity and mixture of identities. Although the border is “visible” in the tourist attractions that have the “landmarks” of the three countries, with a beautiful view of the three banks, or in the customs and bridges that connect these nations, we can also see the contact between different social actors and the cultural convergence in the region.

Cultural options as expressions and practices of otherness in relation to various groups, places, and realities are important spaces for creation, production, and enjoyment. At the border, cultural environments and events also represent opportunities for ratification and/or transformation, aiming at the growth of human dignity. Therefore, we can infer that the border region constitutes a space of limits and permeability that unites art, cultural policies, and diversity.

If we consider only the performance of UNILA in the Filmmaking Program and that its first graduate class was in 2016, the data from the creative industry mapping in Foz do Iguaçu elaborated by FIRJAN (2019) are quite expressive. The data reveal that the number of professionals working directly in the audiovisual sector in Foz do Iguaçu was 67 in 2012 (the first year of the program), increasing to 83 in 2017. The number of individuals working in advertising in the same periods rose from 65 to 133. The inclusion of advertising and marketing is due to the fact that many graduates also work in advertising films and agencies, given the difficulty of producing movies.

Even though we obviously cannot attribute this increase in professionals solely to the Filmmaking Program of UNILA or reduce the contribution of a university to economic data, we believe that underlining this growth in a hostile scenario is important because, as highlighted in the report of the 2019 mapping,

in the 2013–2015 biennium, the Creative Industry Mapping was elaborated amid an economic and social whirlwind. The international scenario was progressively more difficult, with the developed world still digesting the effects of the 2008/2009 Global Crisis and with the first signs of fatigue in major emerging economies (FIRJAN, 2019, p. 7).

The institution also stresses that the recession scenario persisted in the 2015–2017 biennium, accentuating its impact on unemployment and organizations.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

UNILA, within a few years of existence, has demonstrated its central role, becoming an agent that creates and triggers cultural actions in the triple border. However, the Amendment to the Provisional Measure No. 785 provides for, among other measures, the end of the university. Opposing the disassembly of the university, this essay defends the importance of border cities for economic and cultural development, promoting diversity and sustainability of this region. We highlight the relevance of the university for professional training, the elaboration and implementation of research and outreach projects, as well as the establishment of contacts and partnerships that can gradually expand the art and work fronts in the area of culture, increasingly connecting university and community. In this case, the transversality between educational, cultural, and economic public policies becomes evident, as the educational policies that make the work of UNILA a reality act in the transformation of the territory, affecting movements and cultural options in the region.

According to the Houaiss, Villar, and Franco Dictionary (2007), *epicenter* is the first point on the Earth's surface reached by a seismic wave. UNILA might be the epicenter of the structure and cultural advancements in the region, both for the contributions and opportunities it brought and brings to the territory and for the power of promoting a network of interconnections of cultural agents that can work in synergy.

Public policies must continue to exist to keep art and culture alive. Considering “the usefulness of the useless” (Ordine, 2016), we can question: How would a society without the art and culture that lead to reflections and transformations be? How would a society without a space for the expression and existence of a living culture be? The contact with universities, as is the case of UNILA, can broaden the references and options of communities outside major centers, grounded in the abundance of subjects in artistic and cultural productions.

The increasing visibility of the importance of decentralizing and broadening the horizons of cultural manifestations by itself is a valuable contribution to the community, as they can watch, participate, and even lead works with their identity. The appreciation of local identities represents the empowerment and promotion of diversity, opening a mosaic of possibilities that unfolds into something multishaped, into a field of relationships and daily transformations. Formulating public policies for the borderland that are not merely connected to public security is a recent event, and the survival of these policies is crucial for cultural and economic development.

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