Points of Culture as a social movement: a netnographic research

Julio César Pedroso e Carlos José Martins

Abstract

Using as a starting point the creation of a network of Cultural Spots as a public politics, this article aims to investigate the possible configuration of it as a social movement. To do so, it has been realized a bibliographic research on classical and contemporary theories about social movements, in order to address adequately the inclusion of this issue in the specific field of investigation. Moreover, it has been done a netnography through the insertion of the researcher's e-mail into a representative list in which participate several cultural actors tied to Points of Culture of the state São Paulo. Beyond this list it has been analyzed forums, encounters, meetings, groups and interviews with network articulators. From the analysis made, can be concluded that the network of the Culture Spots sustain a significant potential to catalyze expanding social movements. In this process, the digital culture and the free software play a prominent role.

Keywords

Social Movement. Points of Culture. Netnography.

Julio César Pedroso | julio.pedroso83@gmail.com
Masters' degree student in Human Development and Technologies at Paulist State University – (Unesp). Scholarship from São Paulo State Research Support Foundation (Fapesp).

Carlos José Martins | c.j.martins@uol.com.br
PhD in Philosophy from Rio de Janeiro Federal University (UFRJ). Professor at the Human Development and Technologies Program at Paulist State University (Unesp).

1 Introduction

Points of culture emerged in Brazil almost a decade ago promising to "unhide" Brazilian culture. In an attempt to address the desires of social segments involved in the field of culture, a government program called *Programa Nacional de Cultura, Educação e Cidadania – Cultura Viva* (Cultural, Educational and Citizenship Program – Culture Alive) was implemented with the purpose of developing a new vision on the concept of culture, as well as on the relationship between the state and civil society. The starting point was the creation of a network of points of culture as part of a public policy. This article is aimed at researching the possible configuration of this network as social movements.

To begin with, we assess the *Cultura Viva* program with respect to its theoretical conceptions and the organization of cultural actors. Then we develop some considerations about classical and contemporary theories of social movements to construct an appropriate theoretical field for our object of study. The

methodology used is presented as well as the justification to use it. The complete research process is described from the theory to the selected field of study. Finally, we analyze the data obtained through empirical material and present our final considerations.

2 *Cultura Viva* program

When we talk about *Cultura Viva* program, we are referring to a public policy devised by the Ministry of Culture in 2004, encompassing many theoretical concepts and procedures as a result of practical experiences of Brazilian society. This program was not created overnight, but through a social and cultural process shared by the managers at the Ministry of Culture led by Gilberto Gil, the Minister at that time. In his inaugural speech as Minister of Culture, Gil defined the *Cultura Viva* program as an action aimed at cultural citizenship. Researcher Liliana Sousa e Silva (2007) demonstrates that the concept of cultural citizenship used by Gil originated during the first public administration of culture by *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers party) (1989-1992). She is referring to the municipal government of the city of São Paulo, whose secretary of culture was philosopher Marilena Chauí. At the end of her term, Chauí (1992) made an assessment in which she "presents a definition of cultural citizenship based on previous political experiences, especially those of Mário de Andrade and Sábato Magaldi" (SOUSA E SILVA, 2007, p. 22).

As stated by Chauí, cultural citizenship means that culture must be understood as the right of each citizen in a definition that goes far beyond fine arts, capturing in its conception all symbolic and dynamic production that exists in a society. If culture is understood as a right (within this wider scope) the state does not assume the role of cultural producer, but as an agent responsible for providing the right conditions to implement society´s cultural projects (CHAUÍ, 2006).

For program designers the notion of life introduces another inflexion linked to the notion of culture. For them the life of culture alive refers to the potentials created through experiences, mainly collective experience. Such a possibility creates life potentials that are disseminated with networking: "*Cultura Viva* program has been devised as an organic network of cultural management, excitement and creation" (TURINO, 2009). All this dynamic perspective on life production encompasses the idea of culture being alive.

That organic network is formed by points of culture acting as the main connectors and disseminators of the culture alive concept. Political activity at that time needed, above all, a critical diagnosis of Brazilian cultural activity. *Cultura Viva* program puts forth that the process should take place through the points of culture: cultural and art groups, small or large, that act and are recognized by their communities. Those groups receive government funding with the purpose of strengthening their

2/18

Revista da Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação | E-compós, Brasília, v.16, n.2, maio/ago. 2013.

activities. Strengthening also means expanding collective cultural activities in a network. The points of culture do not have a single model, neither physical facilities or a program nor any specific activity. A common element to all of them is transversality of culture and shared management between public power and the community. (BRASIL, 2012)

Cultura Viva program and the points of culture have been the focus of several academic studies in recent years, showing a broader scope in the field of critical analysis that goes far beyond the official discourse. According to Lacerda, Marques and Rocha (2010) the points of culture are characterized by simplicity, which is one of their great merits. On the other hand, they face difficulties caused by inefficiency and strong state bureaucracy. This is worsened by the fragility of civil society´s knowledge of the tools that give access to public structures.

Liliana Sousa e Silva (2007) proposes the creation of cultural indicators, which are very important to enable a public policy of culture to reach society´s real demands. According to the researcher, *Cultura Viva* program is a crucial agent of transformation, not only due to the actions implemented by the points of culture, but also because it contributes to collect those demands and indicators for the creation of future public policies aimed at being close to citizens' daily problems.

As stated by Maria Cristina Brasil Magnani (2011) *Cultura Viva* program gives the opportunity to pursue research in order to understand better the theories of Information Science, analyzing the usefulness of an information regime as an approach to understanding the policy of information. In line with the author, "an information regime is always a space of debate between different positions" (MAGNANI, 2001, p. 138). Thus, *Cultura Viva* program becomes a fertile field of analysis, thanks to networking, the use of digital tools and the struggles that take place.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the notion of digital culture as a significant conceptual tool to question what has been mentioned before as "organic body of culture" is crucial to be able to question the citizenship statute related to it. As researcher Frederico A. Barbosa da Silva (2011) highlighted, the digital inclusion must be discussed in the sphere of the right to information. Therefore, when we examine the Brazilian process, it is relevant to question the extent in which *Cultura Viva* program has been useful as a public strategy to build and strengthen local cultural practices and citizenship.

3 Theories of Social Movements – the construction of a paradigm

The main theoretical debates about social movements suggest the existence of not just a single concept about it, but many, according to the paradigm used by the researcher and in which the

object of study has been interposed. Thus, we will highlight our analysis within the Latin American paradigm, for we think it is the one encompassing observations closer to the characteristics of our object of study. Nevertheless:

> To speak about the Latin American theoretical paradigm on social movements is more strategic than real. What we do have is a well differentiated paradigm of real struggles and social movements compared to European, North American, Canadian, etc. movements, but not a true theoretical paradigm (GOHN, 1997, p. 211).

The paragraph above sheds light on the context we are referring to when we talk about a Latin American paradigm. Furthermore, according to Gohn (1997), in the last decades of the 20th century there was a large diversity of social movements known as contemporary movements. In Latin America there are new movements (those struggling for urban equipments in general) and old popular movements (neighborhood associations, etc.) where patronage was practiced. In this way, the main difference between contemporary movements is the political practice implemented, mainly in reference to relationships that have always existed, such as the ones with the church, trade unions and political parties.

With regard to political parties, Gohn (1997) points out that they were always linked to social movements in Latin America through a political connection, not an economic one. That connection took place based on the same interests focused on actions and structural

changes. Latin American countries had no governments with democratic traditions, so social movements always had the role of putting pressure towards a democratic opening. In recent years, several Latin American governments have undergone processes of democratization. In spite of that, movements continue pressing for popular participation. This new scenario has changed the relationships between social movements with the state and with political parties.

According to Gohn (1997), social movements underwent great changes that must be taken into account from the 90´s onwards. There was a weakening of movements dealing with territorial issues that did not connect to larger networks. On the other hand, local movements dealing with more global issues became stronger thanks to their networking. As a result, there was a decrease in the number of social movements whereas they grew quantitatively through ONGs and technological capacity building.

Gohn (2008) claims that the changes social movements suffered in the 90´s intensified in the 21st century and became contradictory. In many countries movements gained the ability to organize themselves thanks to the progress of democracy. In other countries movements lost strength in people´s eyes, mostly as a result of the lack of credibility in politicians demonstrated by civil society and how sectarian squabbles are solved. In Brazil there was a weakening of social movements in this century, which may be related

to lack of autonomy, since the main strategy of society to respond to social movements has been institutionalizing them, either by creating public sectors responsible for them or by creating laws. This factor may or may not be favorable to movements, depending on how the processes to create these legal bodies are implemented.

The analysis of social movements based on relationships between social classes and popular movements, which had as main subject of social changes the working class, ebbed away in this millennium. There was an enlargement of that subject´s spectrum observed in other social layers beside the popular ones. ONGs have revealed themselves as strong social actors in this context, and that change of focus led many scholars to use approaches that are concerned with social organization, participation and mobilization. It is in this current contradictory context that some other authors become important for our theoretical design.

Christian Adel Mirza (2006), a researcher from the Latin America Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), studied social movements taking as a starting point this new relationship with the existing policy including the dependency created by and with the United States. From a methodological standpoint, Mirza (2006) made a major contribution when he concluded that social movements in the new millennium are not becoming stronger due to the existing cultural policy inherited from the 20th century that

undermines their autonomy. Speaking of that, Touraine (1989, p. 182) had already claimed that "the subordination of social movements to the action of the state represents the most serious limitation to their autonomous collective action".

Mexican researcher Rafael Sandoval Alvarez (2000) examined the political aspects involved in the configuration of subjects who belong to social movements. According to him, this configuration occurs based on the place the subject occupies in the social, political and cultural levels, as well as in the symbolic representation of other subjects. It is a process that takes place mainly due to the tensions caused by differences among the actors of a movement. As a result, within a group there is nothing pre constructed or given, definitions of the existing political culture are in a process of construction. That construction is mainly relational and although there might be structures larger than actions they also suffer changes. A social movement does not assume a pre constructed identity just because it has certain ethnicity or gender, etc., but the political identity is formed in the process of struggle.

One of the innovations of this millennium regarding discursive arguments and the analysis of social movements has been the use of the "social mobilization" category. According to political science, social mobilization refers to activations causing behavioral changes, adherence and access to social projects and programs, and, as a result, changes in values (BOBBIO;

MATEUCCI; PASQUINO, 1986). In Latina America, Colombian researcher José Bernardo Toro (2007) developed a methodology for the so called social "producers and reeditors", those citizens who are active in their local realities and develop participative processes through mobilizing projects. The methodology is based on the involvement of producers and reeditors with daily problems, through communicative networking, as well as the creation of forums and other mechanisms of mobilization. According to Toro, the movement arises as a result of the mobilization process. There is no deep analysis about the cultural, political and historical causes that are the genesis of the problems faced in a certain situation. In that methodology, problems are raised and people are mobilized to solve them. However, that approach is based on many theoretical concepts founded on utilitarian and pragmatic conceptions.

4 Data collection – a netnographic study

The right methodology of research to tackle the field of culture arises from Anthropology, especially ethnography. The trends to use that methodology are initially related to the object of study: nothing could be more relevant than using a methodology describing a culture to study a network of points of culture. This in turn connects through social networks and other digital media. Those facts led us to think about a methodology that would respond to those desires, combining ethnographic elements to digital technologies and media.

Like Anthropology itself, one of the ways of researching social actors, which are part of the virtual imaginary, is through observation. Based on this premise, we considered possible studies in cyberspace with the ethnographic methodology. However, the great issues permeating the development of reflections are related to the practice of participant observation on-line.

Netnography has been recently developed as a methodology aimed at answering those issues. According to Braga (2007, p. 6):

> The appropriation of the ethnographic technique elicited an epistemological issue as for the advance of reflection on the methods dealing with Internet's emerging objects. In methodological terms, ethnography is founded on participant observation, because it is impossible in a face to face situation a non participant observation. Furthermore, CMC international environments are characterized by the physical absence of visitors, making it possible to become 'invisible'. So, would it be possible to learn the culture of a group without participating just by observing it? Would a 'non-participant observation' be possible?' It seems impossible to observe without participating, in other words, this would also be a form of participation. However, what really matters is that it is a very special participation because the researcher can become invisible, being able to see without being seen, not interfering, in principle, with the dynamic of the observed interaction [...] That participation (although invisible) in the group will assure the apprehension of aspects of that culture making possible to prepare afterwards a dense description that demands a detailed understanding of shared meanings by their members, as well as the network of meanings under scrutiny.

Therefore, virtual media transposition of participant observation seems to be one of the main elements to be considered in this methodology. Another important point raised by the author has to do with the need of having an ethnomethodological perspective on the use of netnography. Ethnomethodology, contrary to what the term suggests, does not refer to the method used but to the field of observation. In this way the focus lies on tacit knowledge of individuals, ways of understanding based on common sense, daily practice and routine activities that shape the behavior of social actors, discovering the "methods" people use in their everyday lives to understand the reality that surrounds them (ANDRÉ, 2003). Braga (2007) uses this concept to highlight the importance the netnographic researcher takes into account the specificities of each field of study, each group to which the methodology is being applied because "in methodological terms the ethnomethodology operates with the notion of "unique suitability requirement", a skill the researcher of the concerned activity must have" (BRAGA, 2009, p. 8).

Furthermore, the author calls our attention to another important factor that should be considered in the netnograhpic research: according to her, a *log file* – defined as a file in which all activities performed during one session on-line or one program are recorded, seems to be an excellent solution to capture data, but it should not be used as the only source, for it presents a general overview of the problem and might "snatch

the researcher´s opportunity to perceive the senses intersubjectively shared by the group under examination" (BRAGA, 2009, p. 14).

Robert Kozinets (2007) suggests 4 practical specific actions to recover the basic procedures of methodology to transpose from ethnography to netnography: "Cultural entrée, data collection and analysis, ethic of research and checking information with group members".

Cultural entrée means getting prepared for field work. In this phase the researcher identifies the issues the research will cover and chooses the virtual groups in which those issues might be validated and/or understood. For collection and analysis three kinds of data uptake are considered effective: 1) the amount of information supplied by virtual media can be extremely large, therefore the researcher must use filters to pick out truly relevant information, for example, to collect data directly from community members; 2) it refers to researcher´s information regarding existing communication practices in the researched groups, even considering his/her own participation; 3) data collected in interviews with group members using e-mails, chats, texting, etc. The ethical standard recommended by the author involves identifying the researcher as well as the purpose of the research to all those involved, because it is controversial to which extent data is public in a virtual community. Another important action involving the ethic of research is to mention participants, in writing, using pseudonyms or names which do not identify

them completely. Checking information with group members is part of the ethical guideline, and it adds credibility to the research.

Field work

Preparation for field work started with a theory review presented in previous items, where we found aspects that we think should be taken into account to assess the network of points of culture as a social movement. Considering that one of the premises of the *Cultura Viva* program is the connection of points of culture in a network through digital culture, several virtual groups could provide great field of research. The chosen group was an e-mail list called *pontossp.* This list was chosen basically for two reasons: firstly because the researcher had already been participating in this list for some time, which would facilitate his participatory observation and the identification of distinctive features of this group for possible adaptations and applications of the netnography as suggested by Braga (2007), in addition to having a certain degree of credibility regarding the network and its authors, as underlined by Kozinets (1997); and secondly because we find it interesting to choose one group that gathered subjects/agents from a closer area to facilitate potential face-to-face encounters, as it was the case.

The *pontossp* list includes e-mails from people participating in the São Paulo state point of culture network and also from other people interested in *Points of Culture*, currently including 743 members.[1] The researcher analyzed all the e-mails sent to the list in March, April, May and June 2012. Over this period, a total of 1,718 e-mails sent to the list were analyzed, resulting in the issue raised by Kozinets (2007) when he said that information volume can be overwhelming. Therefore, having the elements to be analyzed, we applied a filter based on the experience of the researcher with the group, choosing strategic information that characterizes the actions. Thus, a log file was assembled including around 30 e-mails sent during this period, which in itself provides ample content for analysis. We would like to highlight that the application of this filter was a process related to the researcher's perception of feelings that are intersubjectively shared by the group, which included him.

We think data should also be collected in face-to-face meetings. Based on newsletters and arrangements made within the e-mail list we witnessed three meetings between people and groups participating in the network of São Paulo state points of culture:

• The first one was a meeting of the São Paulo Commission of *Points of Culture* (CPPC). The São Paulo Commission is established through a system of representative election, with every state macroregion (politically, the state is divided into nine macroregions, one

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[1] Available at: https://lists.riseup.net/www/info/pontossp. Access on: July 3, 2012.

of them is the city of Campinas) electing their representatives to the São Paulo commission. Therefore, we understand that the Commission is extremely important in our studies because in addition to discussing the demands from points of culture, it also gathers its main leaders.

• The second meeting had the participation of some points of culture from the greater São Paulo area with *Caravana por la Vida* – this time comprising points of culture from several Latin American countries that were in Brazil to attend the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20.

• The third meeting was held in the context of the regional training of São Paulo state points of culture – Campinas macroregion, organized through a partnership between the São Paulo Commission of Points of Culture and the state Department of Culture. These point of culture training sessions are important places of gathering because all points of the São Paulo network participate. During this meeting the regional forum was held where demands were put forward, questions were asked and issues discussed.

We also conducted interviews to consolidate a data survey. Two cultural agents who work at points of culture were chosen. The first of them, called here E1, is the coordinator of the Pontão de Cultura point of culture in the city of São Carlos, São Paulo state, who for many years has been participating in the main discussion

on culture in Brazil. The second one, called here E2, manages cultural projects in the city of Rio Claro and is an active participant in discussions on the Cultura Viva program (Live Culture Program). Both interviewees have broad experience with the Cultura Viva program, participating in hierarchical structures such as the commission since their inception. The choice of the interviewees was strategic, firstly because both are physically close to the researcher -the interviewer lives in the city of Rio Claro, which is also close to São Carlos-, and because it is easy to contact them, as the researcher had already met them in other meetings and events. Secondly, the work done by both network agents seems to be closely connected to the Cultura Viva program and to the proposal of this work. The Pontão de Cultura point of culture, which is coordinated by the first interviewee, is designed to connect actions in the area of digital culture with other points of culture, always in order to work as a network. The second interviewee has been actively participating in collegiate discussion forums, both virtual and face-to-face, of this so-called network of points of culture. These two experiences are key to our field of analysis.

We would like to stress that we have asked permission to use the texts written within the e-mail list and the statements made at the face-to-face meetings which were later transcribed. The names and e-mail addresses of the list members are not mentioned in order not to disclose their identities and the same applied to the name of

the interviewees, who in this paper are identified through the aliases E1 and E2.

5 Data analysis

We concluded that it is hard to consider points of culture as one single large entity. One of the proposals of the Program is to establish a network of points of culture, but we were not able to identify such a network, either at the ideological, activist or virtual level. There is not even a large e-mail list or a virtual space for debate with the participation of all points of culture; such a space has never been established, as described by interviewee E2:

> Even regarding the digital culture movement, a space for communication including all points of culture of the country has never been established, either by the government, other groups or whoever.

This first approach to the current configuration of the groups that constitute points of culture demands some reflections. One of them is due to the process through which a group becomes a point of culture and thus is included in our analysis. This occurs through a public bidding process opened by the government. There are three possible models of public bids: those established by the Ministry of Culture, those established by the states and those established by the cities. These two latter models are used to form the so-called state and municipal networks of points of culture. Through public bids, groups can draft and apply with their projects in order

to become a point of culture. For this purpose the group must be a legal entity following some rules set forth in the public bid. As the group (entity) becomes a point of culture, it has to follow regulations on the transfer of public funds to civil society organizations.

The public bid system is generally considered fair and democratic, since it enables any group to participate in the process; however, when we look at the whole picture there may be some disagreements. The groups that become points of culture not always share the same ideologies, thus making it difficult or impossible for all groups to be part of the same network. Here we have identified an important characteristic regarding points of culture: many small networks have been established and consolidated, which work very well due to the affinities between the groups, either geographical, ideological, of artistic language or even personal affinities of the group leaders.

The e-mail network that has been assessed for this study is an example of that. Although the goal behind the establishment of the *pontossp* discussion group network is to bring together all São Paulo state points of culture, only a number of representatives of some groups actually participate. We believe that being part of a network is actually related to issues of affinity between the groups and the CPPC. We have come to this conclusion because by looking at the e-mails in our log file we found that most agents of this network belong to the CPPC.

These agents see this small network as a movement and call themselves as such, as we can see in several e-mails:

> The next meeting of the movement will be held on 4/14/12 at the Point of Culture of the V. Maria Samba School, São Paulo.

> ....São Paulo and the other states strengthen the movement of Points of Culture and surely also the Cultura Viva program!

> The first step for the Cultura Viva Movement March!

> ...space for dialogue will be the meeting of the Movement of Points of Culture on April 14th.

However, we can also have an idea of what this network means by movement:

> We have invited the Points to participate in the meeting to discuss the possibility of establishing the São Paulo Federation of Points of Culture, which will be held on May 26th at 3:00 pm at the headquarters of the Vila Prudente Point of Culture Rua Baia Grande n°456, Vila Prudente ,São Paulo, Capital.

> Now it's for real

> We Statutes, a corporate tax number and thus... representativeness?

> Yes, I agree, that is why I have extensively discussed here the idea of establishing a MPC – Movement of Points of Culture. A Federation is complicated, first we have to establish unions in order to have a FEDERATION. Additionally, establishing a FEDERATION is not cheap, because it has to be registered as an official Union, etc.

> Why not – it is about time – the National Association of Points of Culture?

> An Association shaped like OSCIP (although, in my humble opinion, the idea of a Movement is more coherent with the principles of the Program).

We found that there is an idea to formally establish a movement and an attempt of mobilization is taking place for this to happen, fitting the category of social mobilization outlined by Toro (2007) and discussed in social movement theories. There is also a movement by the state to capture this social mobilization. The government tries to organize and control the Brazilian cultural movement by means of public bids. One of the principles of the *Cultura Viva* program is shared management; however this guideline has led to various conflicts, which can be clearly seen in the statement by interviewee E1:

> the Program was established at a time when there was no recognition -and I actually don't know if there is today- of the cultural community, meaning cultural producers, artists, generally speaking in Brazil, as a group with common interests, established as a class or something of the sorts. Therefore, if we don't have such a thing, the concept, which was very good, is faced with a significant problem, namely the idea of shared management. When we speak of shared management, we mean sharing the management between the government, who owns the management, and the other party, who is the someone else. But who is this someone else?

Shared management is a principle that is supported and advocated by points of culture, but in practice this relationship becomes indefinite, since the

"other side" of this management is not determined. Therefore, what often happen are relationships of proximity with certain groups and people, which gives the impression of favoritism. At this point, we present another important observation: the strong influence of political parties.

Statements made by the interviewees agree in many points, one of them is related to the co-optation of the structures of power set at the *Cultura Viva* program with political parties. According to them, the hierarchization of decision-making regarding the civil society (the points of culture groups) took place through the establishment of (national and state) commissions. This model leads to disputes of spaces and power and would have been structured with this purpose. In this context, political parties that support the government would have great influence and would ultimately dispute these spaces when these guidelines are first developed.

In the face-to-face meetings we could see the extent to which political parties participate in such decision-making processes. In the CPPC meeting we attended there were some party members who stated their relations with a number of politicians. This did not cause any tension in the meeting, which led us to think that Commission members might relate to party ideologies. However, not every point of culture shares this characteristic, as we could see in the Training Session for São Paulo state *Points of Culture* held in the city of Americana.

This Training Session brings very interesting elements to our analysis. Firstly because the São Paulo state network of *Points of Culture* is established by the state Government through the state Department of Culture (SEC), in clear opposition to the Federal Administration. Secondly, because the SEC "forces" all points of culture to participate in these training activities. The participation of all points of culture – there are over 500 spots in the state of São Paulo – causes a certain estrangement among the participating groups. For simplification purposes, we have divided the participation of the groups in this session into some categories.

The first one is made up of groups that relate to progressive ideologies and approach parties that call themselves left or center-left and participate in the Federal governing coalition. This does not mean that they all belong to a party, but they approach the struggle to advocate for some interests, such as the demands of social movements, the belief in popular participation and in participatory democracy.

The second one is made up of the groups that identify with the state government and believe that there should be an establishment above the points of culture. Thus, the meeting was organized in a vertical fashion (contrary to the discourse). This became evident when we observed the activities of the training session which were very well described by interviewee E2:

One example is the training sessions, in which the state government has always called other people who have knowledge and wisdom to teach at the Points of Culture. This does not mean that there is nothing for the other Spots to learn, quite the contrary, there is always a lot to be learned, as for example in the fund-raising training. However, the cultural groups also have their own expertise and deep knowledge. Instead of capitalizing on that, an outside lecturer was always invited. Training was provided in areas in which the spots were already knowledgeable, for example, an outsider would be invited to give a lecture about traditional culture, in spite of the fact that there are Points of Culture that have been working on this subject for over fifty years.

A third category is made up of those groups that are not interested in political disputes and that were there clearly fulfilling their role as administrator of public funds. According to interviewee E1:

We think public bids cause this type of problem. At first those who access the public bid process are the already engaged groups. However, considering public policies and extension of rights, the purpose would be to have an impact on the whole Brazilian society with the Points of Culture. Thus, the guidelines of this policy are designed to increase the number of groups, which makes groups that are less engaged and with different operating modes, such as groups that work with an internal structure in which all are contracted according to all formal labor law specifications with clearly established management roles, etc. also apply for the bids. It is a work style that does not exactly fit the style of the groups seeking autonomy, conducting joint discussions, establishing their own way forward. It is a different format. Some of these groups might even perform well within the network and be influenced by this discussion in the network, but some of them cannot do that.

They just apply for the bids, win them and make undue use of public funds, follow the initial work plan and send their reports.

This difference in political stance created tensions which were observed during the Training Session. An example of that was the Forum which was the last activity of the Session; many groups had already left and were not interested in participating. Of the groups that stayed, many gave it up and left in the middle of the discussions. At the end, only those groups that fit the first category described above stayed. The Forum discussions were conducted by CPPC members.

However, some themes mobilize the whole network of points of culture. The cultural scenario proposed by the *Cultura Viva* program (Live Culture Program) is unanimously accepted by all the groups and they all agree that this public policy should be made into a law. In addition to this discussion, another common cause among the groups is the need to change the law governing the transfer of public funds to civil society organizations (Law number 8666). Financial issues were a key factor in all our observations. In 2012, the annual transfer of funds to the groups was executed late and our observation of the *pontossp* e-mail list at that period found that the main discussions were around this fund issue. We concluded from this context that the groups designated as points of culture consider culture funding a constitutional guarantee. According to this model, these groups should be funded by the state. Another consensus in the network

13/18

Revista da Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação | E-compós, Brasília, v.16, n.2, maio/ago. 2013.

as a whole is that public policy concerning points of culture should apply to civil society organizations in order to ensure their autonomy from the government. This guideline is a sign that, consciously or unconsciously the network perceives a potential movement.

We should stress that these cross-sectional definitions, that are discussed here as consensual within the whole network of points of culture, are, in fact, constructed. Generally speaking, they go beyond the hierarchical structures established in the Program, since no commission has made the decision to have these "flags" raised by the whole group. In relation to this subject, interviewee E1 tells us how this happens:

> *It happens through the network connection it-self. Based on what is discussed in person, by e-mail, through the social media, this is a pro-cess that is consolidated differently from the typical structure of commission, representative, region, etc. This network has a different format and maybe a new, more contemporary under-standing of what a social movement is.*

6 Final Remarks

Points of Culture are organized in large institutionalizing networks following the trend presented by Gohn (1997) of social movements starting in the 1990's. The tendency to co-optation by the state machinery also happens in the network of points of culture. Many activist leaders in the cultural field have been hired by the state to manage public policies. As underlined by Gohn

(2008), on the one hand this can strengthen public policies that favor popular action, but on the other hand it can weaken the mobilization of a broader and more emphatic social movement.

The strong relationship between the network, on the one hand, and political parties and the government machinery, on the other hand, which is present within the network because this latter was established based on a government policy, together with the hierarchized forms of representation and the decision-making forms, remind us of the above mentioned political culture of dependence referred by Mirza (2006). In our view, these factors seem to be a key reason why the network of points of culture is not actually an autonomous social movement, something that Touraine (1989) considers a serious limitation of its ability to take collective action.

However, Alvarez' (2000) remarks about the establishment of a political identify for the movement are quite interesting in this regard. Considering the large national network of points of culture, generally speaking there is an identity difference among the groups and, as a result, among the players in the cultural process. Tensions generated by these differences can result in a future social movement, and even if structures are wider than actions -such as the state- they too can be changed: it became clear that the *Cultura Viva* program had to change the way public funds are transferred to cultural groups and the trend is that this change continues with the discussion by

the network of Law number 8666 and the approval of the Live Culture Law.

We think that in spite of the lack of affinity among some groups, there are some networks emerging in this whole process. These networks provide foundation and support for the establishment of more comprehensive social movements, particularly when considering the importance of the use of digital tools for the connection among the groups. Therefore, digital culture and free software play a key role, enabling other forms of political organization, thus establishing cross-sectional forms through alliances among different groups. It is in these emerging dynamics of organization within the network of points of culture that we see a power of transformation, either of movements themselves or of society as a whole.

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15/18

Revista da Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação | E-compós, Brasília, v.16, n.2, maio/ago. 2013.

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Pontos de Cultura enquanto movimento social: uma pesquisa netnográfica

Resumo

Tomando como ponto de partida a formação de uma rede de pontos de cultura enquanto política pública, este artigo visa investigar sua possível configuração como um movimento social. Para tanto, foi realizada uma pesquisa bibliográfica sobre teorias clássicas e contemporâneas dos movimentos sociais, de modo a tratar de forma adequada a inserção dessa problemática na especificidade do campo investigado. Ademais, foi feita uma netnografia através da inserção do pesquisador em uma lista de e-mails representativa da qual participam diversos atores culturais ligados a pontos de cultura do Estado de São Paulo. Além dessa lista foram analisados espaços presenciais de participação, formação de grupos e entrevistas com articuladores da rede. A partir das análises realizadas, pôde-se concluir que a rede dos pontos de cultura comporta um potencial significativo de catalisação de movimentos sociais em fase de expansão. Nesse processo, a cultura digital e o software livre possuem um papel de destaque.

Palavras-chave

Movimento social. Pontos de Cultura. Netnografia.

Puntos de Cultura como un movimiento social: un estudio netnográfico

Resumen

Tomando como punto de partida para la formación de una red de Puntos de Cultura como una política pública, este artículo tiene como objetivo investigar la posible configuración de este como un movimiento social. Por lo tanto, se realizó una búsqueda bibliográfica en las teorías clásicas y contemporáneas de los movimientos sociales, con el fin de abordar de forma adecuada la inclusión de este tema en el campo específico de la investigación. Por otra parte, hubo una netnografía mediante la inserción de los investigadores en una lista de e-mails representant de los cuales participan varios actores vinculados a los puntos culturales de Cultura del Estado de São Paulo. Además de esta lista fueron analizados en el aula espacios de participación para los grupos de capacitación, y entrevistas con los organizadores de la red. A partir de los análisis, se concluyó que los puntos de la red de la Cultura tiene un gran potencial para catalizar movimientos sociales en la fase de expansión. En este proceso, la cultura Digital y el Software Livre, cumplen un papel destacado.

Palabras-clave

Movimiento social. Puntos de Cultura. Netnografia.

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