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# Spanish cooperation in culture and communication: An overview of a decade of exchanges with Ibero-America

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## Spanish Cooperation in Culture and Communication between 1997 and 2007: An Overview of a Decade of Exchanges with Ibero-America

### ABSTRACT

This article presents the main results of the investigation ‘Current Situation and Prospects of Spanish Cooperation in Culture and Communication with the Rest of Ibero-America, 1997–2007’. The text offers an overview of the initiatives which took place during the period studied by country, cultural sector, agents involved, and type of activity. Spain’s role in terms of cooperation in culture and communication is analysed, and a reflection on the possibility of creating and building an Ibero-American cultural space appropriate to the new digital scene is also included.

### KEYWORDS

Cooperation / Culture / Communication / Ibero-America / Spain

Ibero-American cultural cooperation from Spain<sup>1</sup> – as well as from other countries in the region – has faced many different obstacles, with abrupt changes and periodic lapses depending on the governments in power. Public actions have generally focused on the arts, ignoring the multiple relations that exist with the cultural industries, as well as the enormous influence of these on the population’s cultural habits, uses, and consumption.

Consequently, during 2008 and 2009 the Fundación Alternativas Observatory of Culture and Communication, with support and funding from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), promoted the investigation ‘Current Situation and Prospects of Spanish Cooperation in Culture and Communication with the Rest of Ibero-America, 1997–2007’. This

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<sup>1</sup> The word Ibero-America, as understood by the Ibero-American Summit, refers to those countries in the Americas that were former colonies of Spain and Portugal, being both also included in the definition.

inquiry aimed to record the keys of Spanish international cooperation in culture and communication with another eight Ibero-American countries, based on the creation of two reports carried out by a network of academics from different countries.

Among the main characteristics of cooperation in culture and communication in the decade studied, it can be highlighted that, although Ibero-America has traditionally been a privileged geopolitical space for Spanish cooperation policy, this was not developed until well into the new millennium, evolving from simplistic and rhetorical visions based on instrumental conceptions of culture driven by unequal relationships, to a gradual recognition of the fact that cooperation is much more than the classical actions of dissemination and promotion of Spanish culture and direct aid.

### **Conceptual and Methodological Considerations**

Two processes have come together to create a unique scenario in the history of international development cooperation in the heart of the Ibero-American nations. Firstly, there is the political and institutional consolidation of the Ibero-American Community of Nations (CIN), whose beacon is the Ibero-American Summits of Heads of State and Government, which were strengthened with the creation in 2004 of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB). Secondly, there has been the sustained growth of official development aid (ODA) contributed by the Spanish Government to the fight against poverty over the last decade: in 1997 this figure accounted for 0.23 % of GDP, while in 2007 it had grown to 0.37 % (over 3.7 billion euros). Spain has thus become the fifth largest donor from the European Union, and the seventh largest in the world.

In the specific sphere of culture and communication, Spanish cooperation has also experienced some important changes. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation (2005–08) incorporated the cultural dimension in its strategic lines; moreover, in 2007 a Culture and Development Strategy was drawn up for the first time. This Strategy states that working in cultural cooperation entails contributing to an improvement in the freedoms of the people, increasing both individual and collective opportunities, and planning action for the Latin American region based on support for the main public policies and poverty reduction strategies. It also concludes that cooperation should include support for local cultural industries and training for human resources in the cultural sector.

Coupled with this on a regional level, the Ibero-American Cultural Charter approved during the 10<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Conference of Culture Ministers in 2007 is considered to be an integrating instrument designed to convert culture into one of the basic axes of current regional relations. This innovative document strengthens and updates the legal mandates contained in other documents such as the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Among its objectives are the following:

- To promote and protect cultural diversity, the origin and foundation of Ibero-American culture, as well as the multiplicity of identities, languages and traditions that it comprises.
- To consolidate the Ibero-American cultural space as a unique, individual sphere based on solidarity, mutual respect, sovereignty, plural access to knowledge and culture, and intercultural exchange.
- To facilitate the exchange of cultural goods and services in the Ibero-American cultural space.

As regards the definition of the terms culture, communication, cooperation, and development, and the relationships between them, taking the UNESCO Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation as a starting point, if ODA is defined as the flow of human and material public resources destined for multilateral countries and institutions, it is necessary to define cooperation more precisely as the process of working with others towards the same end. Therefore, discussing cooperation means overcoming ideas of centralized exterior action focused on the dissemination of a particular culture, as well as the isolated importing of exogenous cultural elements, instead replacing these with the concept of equal exchange, whether or not it may be linked to ODA.

In other words, rather than a linear and vertical movement, cooperation is in fact a horizontal and reticular action which is redefined in the words of Martín Barbero (2007) as an ‘intercultural practice’ (a relation between cultures which is not unidirectional and paternalistic but interactive and reciprocal), and described by Getino (2007) as ‘a two-way exchange’ (as opposed to the situation in which some give and others receive, which echoes the ‘centre/periphery’ relationships). International cultural cooperation is a world of activities, exchanges, dialogue, promotion, agreements, instruments, etc. (Interarts, 2006).

This proposal is therefore based on a concept of culture inextricably linked to the notion of communication, a marriage of ideas which still features paradoxical relationships which are sometimes considered in an anachronistic way (Bustamante, 2006; Martín Barbero, 2007), but are firmly linked to the idea of development. In this respect, the input of the cultural element to development, and the fight against poverty and in favour of solidarity represents a fundamental contribution to contemporary reality (Martinell, 2006), although many of the expectations generated by culture’s new role in development might have disappointing results (García Canclini, 2009).

It is clear that envisioning the reach over the medium and long term of the set of changes examined up to now requires systematic and rigorous studies. This is the spirit which has inspired the present investigation, the dual objective of which is:

- To study Spanish bilateral and multilateral cooperation with a selected set of Ibero-American countries in terms of heritage and traditional forms of art (visual arts, performing arts) and cultural industries (including the media new digital networks) between 1997 and 2007.
- To discover the opinions of renowned experts (managers, academics, and artists) on future lines for cooperation policies and strategies in culture and communication in Ibero-America.

With regard to methodology, the country selection process was carried out taking the countries' historical relationships with Spain and their influence within the CIN into account. The following countries were chosen: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Portugal, and Uruguay. An International taskforce was then created which was in charge of producing two reports for each country.<sup>2</sup>

The first report, produced between January and August 2008, presented a panoramic and synthetic vision of the main cooperative actions carried out by Spain during the period 1997–2007 in each of the selected countries. In order to create this report, the researchers identified both the main documents on cooperation between Spain and the respective countries, and the main public and private agents involved in cooperative actions.

Therefore, it was necessary to recognize the actions of public organizations (AECID; the Organization of Ibero-American States for Science, Education, and Culture, OEI; the International Cultural Cooperation section of the Spanish Ministry of Culture; and the Cervantes Institute in the case of Portuguese speaking countries), as well as private ones.

This report encompassed the following thematic fields: heritage, fine arts, the film industry, television, publishing, the music industry, copyright, and any other relevant sectors (such as radio and videogames). It also took into account the different phases of the economic cycle affected by cooperative actions: creation/production, distribution/broadcast, consumption (sales, public influence) and others (festivals, competitions, etc.). Finally, the agents involved in both bilateral and multilateral exchanges were identified: public sector, private companies, NGOs, foundations, rights management societies, and so on.

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<sup>2</sup> The taskforce was coordinated by Luis A. Albornoz (Carlos III University) and audited by Enrique Bustamante (Complutense University of Madrid). The team also comprised the following members: M<sup>a</sup> Trinidad García Leiva in Spain (Carlos III University); Guillermo Mastrini (University of Buenos Aires) and Raúl de Mora (Complutense University of Madrid) in Argentina; Sayonara Leal and Murilo César Ramos in Brazil (both from the University of Brasilia); Claudio Avendaño (Diego Portales University) in Chile; Ancízar Narváez (National Teaching University) in Colombia; Rosario Nájjar Ortega (University of Lima) in Peru; Delia Crovi Druetta (National Autonomous University of Mexico) in Mexico, Alberto Pena Rodríguez (University of Vigo) in Portugal, and Gustavo Buquet (National Directorate of Culture of the Ministry of Education and Culture) in Uruguay.

Following on from this first report, a second was produced based on a series of interviews of key players involved in the cultural scene of each country with the aim of discovering their views on the current situation and future of cooperation. Thus, between October 2008 and January 2009, the opinions of 58 relevant agents in the world of culture and communication in nine countries were gathered. At every stage the team sought to consult representatives of three different complementary spheres: politics (cultural managers), academia (university researchers with aims and scientific production in line with the objectives of the project), and the professional world (creators, artists, and businesspeople in cultural industries).

Whenever possible the researchers interviewed the chosen experts in person using a semi-structured questionnaire organized around the following subjects: the state of Spanish cooperation in culture and communication, the legal framework of Spanish cooperation with the rest of Ibero-America, the action of the agents involved in cooperation, the geographic priorities of Spanish ODA, the dominant fields of action and cultural sectors of cooperation, the support tools and mechanisms utilized, and a general perspective.

It is worth pointing out that there were two main difficulties that had to be dealt with when it came to carrying the investigation project forward: identifying the set of initiatives which had really formed part of cooperation was a complicated matter, and determining the details of the financial sums invested corresponding to the different years, agents, and actions was also an arduous task, even impossible to a certain extent. Consequently, the first set of reports have a more qualitative than quantitative nature, taking into account the background of cultural and communication cooperation with Spain.

### **Overview of Cooperation: a Changing Scenario**

The following is a summary of the main characteristics that define the period 1997–2007:

- Ibero-America has traditionally been – and still is – a privileged geopolitical space for Spanish cultural cooperation policy. There are no indicators suggesting that this situation will change in the near future.
- There is a great number and diversity of public and private agents involved (AECID/the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Ministry of Culture, the Cervantes Institute, Casa de América, Fundación Carolina, the State Corporation for Spanish Cultural Action Abroad (SEACEX), OEI, autonomous communities, foundations, NGOs, and so on).
- The bilateral and multilateral actions and mechanisms employed are also diverse, including tenders for aid, programmes, festivals and exhibitions, prizes, competitions, and so on.

- In general terms – as highlighted by the Spanish investigation – Spanish cooperation policy in culture and communication has evolved from simplistic and rhetorical visions to a position in which the cultural dimension of development aid tries to find its own space within the context of the common objective of fighting poverty. This has led to the gradual recognition of cooperation as much more than the classical actions of dissemination and promotion of Spanish culture and direct aid.
- Neither Spain nor Portugal has shown an interest in creating a joint collaboration strategy of a cultural nature for the rest of the Ibero-American countries. With the exception of Brazil (which receives 82% of the Portuguese ODA allocated to Latin America), Ibero-America has not been a priority for the Portuguese Government.
- Spanish cooperation in culture and communication in Latin America has been focused on the recovery and conservation of historical heritage and the functioning of Spanish cultural offices. In this respect, various findings highlight positive changes in the management of these centres situated in medium and large urban areas since 2005: from being essentially a space for the dissemination of Spanish cultural expression, they have become new spaces for local creators and artists to display their work.
- In a parallel movement, in the middle of the present decade the cultural activities promoted and organized by agents of Spanish cooperation abroad began to have a counterpart in the Ibero-American presence in Spain.
- The consolidation and expansion of the Cervantes Institute in Portuguese-speaking countries in the region can be observed. The definition of a common Cultural Action Plan for all centres in 2005 is worth mentioning, as is the opening of new centres in Brazil.
- The work which AECID has carried out with local non-governmental organizations, such as those in Brazil (Açougue Cultural T-Bone, Bagunçaço, Centro Luis Freire), or Mexico (The Latin American Council of Indigenous People's Film and Communication, CLACPI/Ojo de Agua Comunicación) are also worth highlighting. This kind of dynamic allows cultural cooperation actions to ensure that the protagonists and beneficiaries of these actions are marginalized sectors or indigenous populations.
- Nevertheless, in some cases (such as Chile), it has been demonstrated that the national Government and local NGOs come into conflict over the allocation of Spanish ODA funding.
- With regard to the private sector, it is significant that the international expansion of Spanish companies during the last few years has put Spain in the position of the second-largest investor in Ibero-American countries behind the United States, with companies such

as Telefónica, BBVA, Santander, Repsol–YPF and PRISA. However, this strong business presence fails to generally translate into solid and transparent cooperative actions or consolidated strategic alliances between public organisms, private companies, and civil society.

- In this respect, the actions developed by companies in the context of their policies of social corporate responsibility have been regarded as a new form of business public relations.
- Historical heritage and traditional art forms are clearly dominant. The latter of these includes arts and crafts, literature, and theatre as being of primary importance, with dance and live musical performance in second place.
- Cinema has a successful instrument of multilateral cooperation in the form of the Ibermedia programme (1997), and has been the object of a rich tradition of bilateral agreements and joint production between Spain, Argentina, and Mexico. The aforementioned programme's positive impact has led SEGIB to work on the consolidation or creation of similar initiatives (Iberescena, Ibermúsica, Ibermuseos, Iberorquestas).
- Other cultural industries have received little or no attention from cooperation in general. Other than a few timid attempts which have had limited success (the Ibero-American Television Organization, OTI; the Ibero-American Educational Television Association, ATEI), radio and television, publishing, and the music industry (production and distribution) have been almost entirely governed by the market.
- Initiatives in the sphere of new information and communication technologies have been decidedly scarce. The main exception to this rule is the Ibero-American Cultural Management Portal, which specializes in cultural information, dissemination, and reflection online.
- With regards to copyright law, which is a cross-cutting issue to cultural industries as a whole, it can be seen that corporate actions in the region have been carried out by the most important collective management associations from Spain (CEDRO and SGAE).

Beyond this synthesis, national analyses go into the particular characteristics of each country in more depth. These are presented below through the overviews written by each of the authors on the investigation team.

## **Evolution of the Spanish Position**

- *Progress in theory and multilateral action in relation to the objectives and geographical orientation of cooperation*

The Spanish position as depicted by García Leiva was subject to a significant change from 2005 onwards, demonstrating a greater and more decided support for balanced intercultural exchanges: when Spanish foreign policy began to give cultural cooperation policy a more important role, it started to move from an outreach to an exchange policy. Progress has nevertheless been tentative, as evidenced in the case of dialogue (the Master Plan, the Culture and Development Strategy); although more encouraging in the multilateral dimension (consolidation of Ibero-American programmes).

True Spanish cooperation in culture and communication towards the rest of Ibero-America has become more consistent over the course of the decade on a regional level, albeit hindered by two significant obstacles: the difficulty of articulating relations with Portugal in the heart of the CIN, and the inability of both countries to build bridges allowing Euro-American cooperation.

- *The multiplicity and heterogeneity of the type and characteristics of the agents involved*

There have been essential changes in the public systems for planning, implementation, and evaluation of cooperative actions, and efforts have certainly been made to improve transparency. But the coherence and coordination of agents and objectives have yet to be achieved in terms of cultural policy and the rest of state policy (trade, industry, foreign affairs, etc.), and the incorporation of cooperation strategy in the mandate of each of the agents involved, as well as within their relations. In general terms, the dispersion of interventions has been partially solved by planning geographically (country strategy) and sectorally (culture, gender, and so on). Nevertheless, the lack of coordination continues to be an issue, particularly in terms of the number and heterogeneity of the organizations involved.

During the period analyzed, a complex network of state organizations were consolidated in parallel with the increase in participation on the part of the private sector and the decentralization seen in Spanish cooperative action. With regard to the multilateral sphere, Spain's presence in many Ibero-American organizations and support for cooperation by means of the 'family' of the United Nations has on many occasions led to a duplication of efforts. Nevertheless, the overall picture of the sphere of communication and culture depicts a healthy tendency to place the Ibero-American system at the centre of the articulation of initiatives, above all with regard to the changes consolidated during the 15<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit in Salamanca and the appearance of the SEGIB.



- *The difficult and incipient transition from the arts to the cultural industries, and from the analogical to the digital world*

Between 1997 and 2007 Ibero-American cooperation was dominated by the traditional forms of arts (in turn hierarchized into arts and crafts, and literature and theatre, with dance and live music given less importance), and, exceptionally, by cinema. Whole sectors of cultural industry have been only paid attention to sporadically (audiovisual in general, publishing), if not entirely ignored (the music industry, new media), or left in corporate hands (copyright). The strong expansion process of Spanish communication groups in the region, and the protectionist or autarchic orientation of national policies (Bustamante, 2007), have added to the difficulties posed by a necessary transition in cooperation from traditional culture to cultural industry and media, from the analogue logic to the new digital age, and from the traditional to the modern forms of expression.

Therefore, it is clear that there has been no comprehensive action plan for Ibero-American cultural cooperation both within and between each sector in a global sense. This can also be seen in the main phases of the economic cycle which have been affected: principally dissemination and promotion, in the case of public recognition; and, to a lesser extent, creation/co-production.

- *Awards as a constant, the erratic presence of aid, and results of multilateral funds stand out as the most commonly-used tools and mechanisms.*

In terms of the mechanisms chosen to implement cooperation, non-repayable funding dominates the landscape, whether by means of bilateral ODA for projects (AECID), the budgets afforded to the organizations to carry out missions (Cervantes Institute, SEACEX, Fundación Carolina), specific registered and non-registered support which is not necessarily awarded in a systematic way (AECID, Ministry of Culture, National Institute of Music and Performing Arts, the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts), or other prizes and awards (Ministry of Culture, AECID, Casa de América). The first and the second of these, traditionally linked to the dissemination and promotion of Spanish culture in the rest of Ibero-America, are managed from a new perspective by means of the Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation.

In the case of aid, political flip-flopping, changing priorities, and the nature of contributing organizations have ended up creating a very irregular panorama, although there are some surprising ongoing initiatives (the film festivals in Huelva and Cádiz). This tendency has proved to be seamless in the case of awards, whether these be traditional prizes from Spanish cultural cooperation with Ibero-America (the Cervantes Awards), minority sectors (radio playwright, graphic humour), or the ‘innocuous’ format which gives legitimacy to the action (Tirso de Molina Prize, as well as the Velázquez Prize).

In the strictly multilateral sphere, and not forgetting voluntary donations and contributions to Ibero-American or cultural organizations for the execution of the majority of its objectives, the constitution of funding to which Spain has contributed in a sustained manner has proved to be a valuable instrument for cooperation which has led to the most tangible results (IBERMEDIA; Ibero-American Educational Television, TEIb; The Ibero-American Books in Print, RiLVi). Finally, it is worth mentioning that the materiality of cooperation, boosted by economic flow, has meant the systematic provision of technical and human resources in all cultural sectors without which more than one initiative would have seen its implementation compromised.

### **Characteristics of the Larger Markets: Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico**

Cooperative relations with Argentina, boosted by the economic scope of both countries and the migratory and commercial flows between the two, have been sustained throughout the decade. Nevertheless, Spanish cultural cooperation in this country is relatively low in comparison with cultural exchanges between the two countries and cooperation as a whole. Mastrini and De Mora describe other distinctive features of the period as follows:

- Spanish cultural cooperation has more often been channelled through multilateral initiatives than bilateral ones: Ibero-American initiatives such as Ibermedia and Iberescena demonstrate the vitality of co-productions which in some way contribute to sectoral commercial exchanges.
- The arena of Spanish cultural cooperation in Argentina is expansive and decentralized, and is accompanied by a strong institutional cultural presence. Cooperation has tended towards the creation of centres and foundations as a demonstration of continuity but also as a way to gain higher visibility.
- Bilateral cooperation has been very fruitful in the sphere of cinema, both in co-production and distribution, as well as in the publishing sector, especially in terms of distribution. These are the sectors that have received the most attention in terms of signing agreements and treaties which have seen a greater cultural exchange (as in the case of publishing), and co-production (as in the case of cinema). Nevertheless, there is a lack of agreements and treaties on cooperation between cultural businesses, and in particular in the sphere of television.

Considering the case of Brazil, which is the Ibero-American country with the largest number of inhabitants, and which has been experiencing sustained growth both on an economic and political

level in an international context, there have been important changes in relation to Spanish cooperation. Real and Ramos make the following points:

- Spanish cooperation in culture and communication has moved from being focused almost exclusively on the teaching and promotion of the Spanish language, Spanish culture, and the preservation of heritage, to an important diversification of the set of actions and arenas taken into consideration. Cultural exchanges between both nations, and projects which promote creativity, diversity, and cultural training in this expansive South American country represent the new face of Spanish cooperation.
- Currently, AECID and the Cervantes Institute are the actors with the strongest presence in the field of development cooperation. AECID opened its cultural centre in Sao Paulo in 2007, and the action of the Cervantes Institute has been energized by the expansion of the network of centres.
- Relations between Spain and Brazil have shifted in the educational and cultural plains since the enforcement in 2005 of the so-called 'Spanish law', which obliges all secondary schools to offer teaching of the Spanish language within the school timetable.

In the case of Mexico, the ODA provided by Spain changed radically between 1997 and 2007, with a quantitative reduction directly related to the Spanish redefinition of geographical priorities for cooperation. With regard to the industrial sectors covered, the investigation led by Crovi Druetta highlights the following:

- The Ibermedia programme allocates resources to cooperation in an ordered and systematic way in a context in which the audiovisual sector as a whole prioritizes the distribution of cinema and television materials.
- Although the publishing industry is a very dynamic area in terms of commercial exchanges between the two countries, this has not been translated into sustained cooperative actions.
- With regard to the photography industry, cooperation has been restricted to its indirect reflection in the treatment of copyright and specific support actions for cultural events.
- The wide range of Spanish investments in Mexico deserves a special mention, since these have led to the strengthening of economic groups with a strong presence in the spheres of finance and telecommunications. The foundations which these sectors have incorporated have nevertheless not been included in cooperation agreements which are reviewed on a regular basis by mixed binational commissions.

## **New Panorama and Difficulties in Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Uruguay**

Cultural and communication relations between Chile and Spain have a long history, and Spanish cooperation with this country has intensified since 1980, in particular by means of NGOs and institutions focusing on these matters. The following deserve a special mention: the Centre for Cultural Research and Expression, the Latin American Social Sciences Faculty (FLACSO), and the Latin American Institute of Transnational Studies (ILET).

Nevertheless, Avendaño notes that there are no cooperative exchanges in the field of publishing between the two nations, that the solutions established for the music industry are produced only for institutions with common objectives, and, despite a long Chilean tradition in the field of television, the country does not actively participate in the educational ATEI project and has not promoted collaboration with Spain via the National Television Council (despite the creation some years ago of the educational channel *Novasur*). On the contrary, it is in the sphere of cinema where there is the most active and visible area of cooperation.

According to Narváez, cooperative relations with Colombia are conditioned by centralist aspirations which look to not only manage but also channel all international aid, both to frame it within the official policy of 'democratic security' and to neutralize aid which might be targeted at NGOs or sectors critical of the government. Thus, in a generalized context in which the priorities of ODA for Colombia are dictated by conflict, the most pressing needs are not defined as being within the cultural sphere.

Within the traditional sectors of culture, cooperation mainly takes place in two of these: arts and heritage. Meanwhile, in the sphere of cultural industries, apart from the specific cooperative projects in radio (community and indigenous stations), and a few more recent attempts related to new technologies, continuity in cinematographic cooperation has been made possible by the Ibermedia programme, and the few initiatives found in the publishing sector can be attributed to the non-commercial private sector (foundations).

The overview of the situation in Peru offered by Nájjar is unequivocal: interventions in the fields of culture and communication have been carried out by means of the Cultural Heritage Cooperation Programme, the Spanish Cultural Centre in Lima, the Ibermedia programme, and more recently Iberescena. Nevertheless, the work carried out has encompassed more traditional or classical cultural sectors, ignoring cultural industries except in the case of cooperation with community radio stations which develop political communication and citizen participation programmes.

Although companies and the private sector have generally been absent from cooperative exchanges, Spanish NGOs prioritize interventions in interior regions of the country, seeking to benefit the most vulnerable sectors. The analysis also reveals that some local groups not only regard cooperative initiatives as a philanthropic activity: in some cases neglect on the Peruvian side has caused bureaucracy and inefficiency when it comes to energizing projects.

Finally, the statistics on Spanish cooperation in Uruguay offered by Buquet indicate that during the period spanning 1998 to 2005, cooperation targeted specifically at the cultural sphere accounted for 15% of cooperation, and that the area which most benefited was heritage protection, following the resources allocated to the Spanish Cultural Centre in Montevideo. The remaining funds were earmarked for libraries and museums, grants and technical assistance for the cultural sector. If the funds allocated for cultural cooperation by means of the aforementioned centre contributed to exponential growth from 2004 onwards, the change has also been qualitative: should the ratio be inverted, it could be said that Uruguayan artists now occupy 80% of the cultural spaces managed by Spanish cooperation in Uruguay.

### **Tentative Progress in and with Portugal**

The investigation carried out by Pena Rodríguez under the dual vision of cooperation between Spain and Portugal, and that of Portugal with the rest of the Ibero-American nations indicates that cultural cooperation has been increasing in line with decreasing historical mistrust, and thanks to the necessary policy of rapprochement which was promoted with the entrance of both countries into the EU in 1986 and the resulting need to protect joint interests within this new context. Nevertheless, both countries have designed their strategies for cooperation with Ibero-America for the most part independently, and language – divorced from any other competitive element – has been a determining factor in this failing. Portugal almost exclusively channels its support in Latin America in Brazil; moreover, its priorities lie outside of the Ibero-American space, in former Portuguese colonies in Africa.

In general, cooperative actions in culture and communication between Spain and Portugal follow a path which attempts to situate the two countries within a collaborative framework, although beyond the contents of agreements, each acts according to a strategy of promoting their culture in the neighbouring country. Portuguese participation in Ibero-American programmes and initiatives was limited during the last few years of the period studied: although Portugal is the promoter of the recent Iberescena programme, their best results and efforts have been concentrated in Ibermedia, since the representation of their Ministry of Education in TEIb has not been particularly visible. In other words, as in many of the national cases portrayed here, cinema is one

of the few sectors which has generated a genuine multilateral partnership with public and private funding.

### **Prospects for Cooperation: a Promising but Challenging Future**

The second reports based on interviews with key sources produced interesting appraisals and conclusions which might contribute to the debate on future lines of cooperation in culture and communication in Ibero-America. The following are some of the most consensual opinions:

- Cooperation in culture and communication in the Ibero-American space essentially means cooperation with Spain as its protagonist. Plans and mechanisms of cooperation in terms of culture and communication between the rest of the Ibero-American countries is almost non-existent.
- The Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation 2005-8 and the Ibero-American Cultural Charter, supported by the established legal framework, are generally regarded as positive factors. Nevertheless, it has been alerted to the fact that the desired implementation of the legislative framework will depend to a great extent on its effective adaptation to the particular characteristics of each Ibero-American sub region. The factors which might work against this would be: the cultural diversity of the Ibero-American space (it is not possible to apply a universal solution which does not take the multiple regional, national, and sub regional characteristics into account), and the unequal levels of development of nations and poverty in Latin America.
- The Spanish Government is regarded in a positive light as the main figure in cooperation in terms of culture and communication. Nevertheless, some see their actions as the promotion of Spanish companies in their eagerness to break into various markets in the region.
- Moreover, Spanish autonomous communities and city councils have been acquiring increasing importance in the sphere of international development cooperation in culture and communication with certain countries (Argentina and Chile). In some cases, the interest in strengthening ties and mechanisms of cooperation has been obvious (Argentina, Uruguay). In this respect, investigations must be carried out in the future which might provide a vision of the overall situation of cooperation between Autonomous Communities and Ibero-American countries.
- With regard to the Spanish private sector present in Latin America and Portugal, many experts point out the difficulties of reconciling corporate interests defended by companies with desirable mutual benefits which should accompany any cooperative action.

- Some experts mentioned customs problems (taxes) suffered in the circulation of cultural goods between Ibero-American countries.
- The sphere of cinema has been highlighted as the sector which has seen the greatest achievements in terms of cooperation, thanks to the Ibermedia multilateral programme.
- With regard to the publishing sector, one of the interviewees highlighted the shared perception in the Latin American literature sector that Spain had destroyed regional production.
- Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in relation to new information and communication technologies represents an attractive space for future definition. It is an essential priority to work in this direction.
- Instruments for both bilateral and multilateral cooperation must be in line with the value chain (from creation processes to the consumption phase) and special attention must be paid to technological innovation (digitalization) and new social practices and uses.

### **Final Considerations**

According to Bustamante (2009), in spite of the qualitative leap registered in Spanish cooperation in Ibero-America from 2004 onwards, the fact remains that one of its general defects has been the neglect of communication and its enormous potential for the construction of a common cultural space. This has meant that boosted by a more progressive mentality, although culture has entered definitively into the Spanish and Ibero-American agendas for cooperation with relative ease, there is still a long way to go.

In order to deal with this challenge, the following points must be recognized:

- The concept of the intended unity of Ibero-America should be formed less as a common identity than as a socio-cultural space, since ‘Ibero-America can be defined as a cultural space with a high level of diversity, the fruit of its historical and political background, but with little awareness of what it means in the modern world’ (García Canclini and Martinell, 2009).
- Until now, regional cultural cooperation both within the EU and in integration processes in Latin America or Ibero-America has been regarded ‘as a complement of lesser importance and a luxury, a suitable element of internal cultural policies’ (Bustamante, 2009).
- The so-called Ibero-American Cooperation System has been characterized in the majority of cases by an ‘asymmetrical multilateralism’, or hegemonic unilateral leadership. The

political and economic weight of Spain has been decisive, and from time to time it has been indicated that initiatives could be turned into programmes when the Government detects a Latin American need, and, using its technical and financial means, brings the proposal to the Summits (Sanahuja, 2005). On a cultural level, the statistics demonstrate that the continuation of more than one programme is due to the Spanish contribution.

- In the words of Mallo (2005), and in direct connection with the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the actors involved in cooperation initiatives, over the last few years there has been a movement from a strategic/diplomatic state multilateralism to a state/societal one, which is, nevertheless, still not well articulated or deinstitutionalized. In other words, multilateralism also stopped being state-driven in order to boast a growing participation which would not only be decentralized but also originate from civil society.
- Coupled with this, the subjects of international and cooperative relations with sub state and sub national spheres – regions with or without their own institutions, provinces, and local communities – should also be attended and taken into account (Zallo, 2009).

Secondly, strategies should be designed and implemented allowing for the construction of this Ibero-American cultural space, above all when faced with the new digital scene. The proposals put forward in recent publications (Bustamante, 2007; García Canclini and Martinell, 2009) which receive our total agreement, will not be repeated here. It should only be added that everything mentioned until now demonstrates the necessary and unavoidable obligation to make a commitment with a spirit of solidarity.

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