ART, CULTURE AND INNOVATIONS:
A SHIFT IN URBAN ENGINEERING?
PUBLIC POLICIES IN BOGOTA AND MEDELLIN
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Arte, cultura e innovaciones: ¿un cambio en la ingeniería urbana? Las políticas públicas en Bogotá y Medellín y el desarrollo de las comunidades locales

Karolina WERETA[1]

RESUMEN: El artículo es parte de una discusión más general sobre estrategias de desarrollo municipal basadas en cultura y capacidad para innovar. Analiza el potencial y las restricciones de este enfoque, indicando las condiciones favorables para su efectividad. Para explotar el fenómeno el autor utiliza los ejemplos de dos ciudades Colombianas, Bogotá y Medellín. Durante las últimas dos décadas estas han sido un área de gran transformación. Gracias a las políticas adaptadas, fue posible convertir su imagen de zonas de brutal guerra entre mafias a vibrantes metrópolis aspirando a una coexistencia social pacifica e inversión en infraestructura. Los casos escogidos sirven como trasfondo para la descripción sintética de estrategias de desarrollo basadas en cultura y capacidad para innovar. También ofrece varios puntos críticos, delineando algunos retos prácticos, sociales e institucionales que las ciudades que deseen adaptar soluciones similares pueden encontrar.

PALABRAS CLAVE: arte, cultura urbana, creatividad, innovaciones, desarrollo comunitario, Bogotá, Medellín.

ABSTRACT: The article is a part of a broader discussion about municipal development strategies based on culture and innovativeness. It analyzes the potential and constraints of the approach, indicating conditions favorable for its effectiveness. To exploit the phenomena the author uses the examples of two Colombian cities, Bogota and Medellin. Over last two decades they have been an area of huge transformation. Thanks to adapted policies, it was possible to convert their image from brutal gang-war zones to vibrating metropolis aiming at peaceful social co-

[1] Karolina WERETA – PhD student, Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Warsaw.

existence and infrastructural investments. The chosen cases serve as a background of synthetic description of developmental strategies based on culture and innovativeness. The analysis presents factors that are advantageous for their successful implementation. It also offers several points of critics, outlining some practical, social and institutional challenges that cities willing to adapt similar solutions may come across with.

KEYWORDS: art, urban culture, creativity, innovations, community development, Bogota, Medellin.

INTRODUCTION

To declare that the 21st century is the century of cities may sound somewhat trivial but it is difficult to argue with the facts: we are witnessing the largest wave of urban growth in history[2]. Nowadays, more than half of the world's population lives in towns and cities and it is estimated that by 2030 this number will increase to almost 5 billion[3]. The change is as much quantitative as qualitative: the urban structures inevitably grow in complexity, creating wealth and social polarization, unprecedented comfort of living and degradation at the same time. In such complex environment, municipal governors have to seek new patterns of strategies and objectives, as well as more adequate tools of city managing. It is a learning process of how to take advantage of all potential recourses and assets in order to make local communities more habitable. The number of all possibilities is as high as the number of constraints and risks.

The article focuses on one of the remedies for those inherent urban tensions: culture and innovations considered as an element of so-called "soft infrastructure". In the last few decades, creative industries have been among the most dynamic sectors of today's economy: between 2000 and 2005 its average growth rate was 8.7% and the export of art reached the level of US

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[2] F. Bianchini,"Remaking European Cities: The Role of Cultural Policies", in: F. Bianchini, M. Parkinson (ed.), *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: the West European Experience*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1993, pp. 1-19; C. Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit For Urban Innovators*, Earthscan, London 2000.
[3] *Linking Population, Poverty and Development*, https://www.unfpa.org/pds/urbanization.html (accessed: 8.10.2014).

424.4 billion in 2005[4]. There is a growing recognition, both among theoreticians of social change as well as urban practitioners, that they may serve as useful tools in delineating and supporting the paths of economic growth, social inclusion, environmental balance and, last but not least, community development. If managed with care, cultural rights may be used to address the problem of social inequalities, especially those pertaining to minorities such as indigenous populations, women, LGTB, etc.[5]. The main question is whether art, culture and innovativeness can gain a fully acknowledged position as an alternative platform processing, constructing and boosting the local progress. The article has two main objectives: first, to show the specific cases of development strategies based on art and innovations and second, to indicate conditions favorable for their effectiveness.

The opening section is a description of developmental policies adapted in Medellin and Bogota – the cities that throughout the last two decades have come a long way of metamorphosis from brutal gang-war zones to vibrating metropolis aiming at peaceful social co-existence. It will outline the modernization policies of three administrations of Colombian Antioquia region – Sergio Fajardo (2004-2007), Alfonso Salazar (2008-2011) and Anibal Gaviria (2012-2015). Their way of policy making, frequently called „urban acupuncture", primarily consisted of constructing and/or establishing public, commercial and infrastructural amenities in carefully chosen places of which intrinsic potential has barely been enhanced or liberated. The undertakings aimed at reducing the highly polarized structure of the city, mainly by creating new opportunities for both shanty towns' residents and the hip "creative class". Due to the efforts of Medellin governors, the city has recently been a hot topic in the media, especially after having been awarded a prize of the World Most Innovative City (March 2013), outrivaling such famous metropolises as New York and Tel Aviv[6].

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[4] UNCTAD, DITC, *Creative Economy Report – 2008: The Challenge of Assessing The Creative Economy Towards Informed Policy-Making,* UNCTAD/DITC/2008/2.
[5] R. Castro, "Retos de política pública en las industrias culturales y creativas de Colombia", in: *EGOB, Revista de Asuntos Públicos*, No. 3, Diciembre 2010.
[6] The prize is awarded by the experts from The Wall Street Journal, Citibank and the Urban Land Institute, which since 1936 leads a contest that chooses the most innovative city from over 200 cities of the world.

The following section shows the results of innovative solutions of urban policies adapted by two subsequent mayors of Bogota. Antanas Mockus (elected twice: in 1995 and 2001) transformed the streets of the city into a unique social experiment using outdoor art, humor and performance in an effort to transform the principles of social life, combining material incentives with normative change and participatory stakeholding[7]. Enrique Penalosa (1998-2001) complemented the unorthodox methods of his predecessor by focusing on revitalization of public spaces and returning them to the residents. This political mix of academic and technocrat reflection resulted in substantial improvement of safety and the quality of life in Bogota[8].

These two examples serve as a background of a synthetic description of developmental strategies based on culture and innovativeness. The analysis helps to distinguish factors that influence their effective implementation. The narration rests on a broader notion of creativity understood as an intentional usage of open-mindedness and imagination, which as such, constitutes an imminent component of the "creative city" conception. After Charles Landry and Richard Florida – authors of the creative city theory – it is assumed that each place has a potential that politicians and community leaders should identify and encourage to make use of[9].

In accordance with the stipulation, the author of the article discusses their potential, requirements and constraints, outlining some practical, social and institutional challenges that cities willing to adapt similar solutions may come across. At the same time, she also questions an overoptimistic belief in the approach capacities, stressing that strategies founded on culture and innovativeness can only be considered as a supplement, not a substitute of chief governing assignments. In other words, she believes they may catalyze a positive change in often fossilized political agendas, but no real progress happens without skillful administration, continuity in the execution of devel-

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[7] M. C. Caballero, "Academic Turns City into a Social Experiment", *Harvard Gazzette*, 2007, http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2004/03.11/01-mockus.html (accessed: 08.11.2014).
[8] Detailed description in a section *Livable Cities and Civic Capacities "Bogota Humana"*.
[9] R. L. Florida, *The Rise of The Creative Class, and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, Basic Books, New York 2002; C. Landry, *The Art of City-Making*, Earthscan, London 2006.

opmental programs, and an efficient penal and law-enforcement system, which is especially important in countries with an unstable security situation.

"THE BEST FOR THE POOREST": THROUGH ART AND INNOVATION
TOWARDS THE CITY OF CITIZENS

Local development is a multidimensional and a cross-sectoral issue. For decades it has been concentrated on so-called "hard infrastructure": functional house building, flourishing business districts, quality road networks, effective transport system etc. One cannot deny the importance of these factors. However, a new approach stresses out that this is not the ultimate objective but the beginning of the path. Soft assets are even more important in order to achieve a complete and final formula of urban life. It's a question of re-defining what local progress actually is and how important it is to listen intently to the needs of particular communities. For urban managers and municipal technocrats, sometimes the answer might not be obvious: for instance, a Nobel Prize Winner Amartya Sen affirms that there are two ways of perceiving the process of development in the contemporary world. One is characterized through economic growth, possibly influenced by a principle of fair distribution. The other is understood as a process that enriches the real freedom of those involved in the pursuit of their own values, where the people are those who name their needs and principles, without reducing them to the GDP *per capita*[10].

The case of the capital of Colombian Antioquia region is a good example illustrating a dexterous mix of both approaches. For years Medellin was mostly known for severe bloodsheds of Pablo Escobar cartel or brutal fights in the shanty towns of the poorest *comunas.* It was not easy to remove the stigma of the omnipresent problem of narcotrafficking and its consequences. However, Sergio Fajardo, Alfonso Salazar and Aníbal Gaviria managed to change this bitter image. Their focus was laid on re-inventing of the local developmental strategies in order to revitalize public spaces and

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[10] A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999.

empower local communities. Reintegrating the most marginalized and therefore very dangerous parts of the city was crucial to cast off the violent past of the city. The reconstruction was preceded by numerous workshops and consultations with and for local communities' members. Such "bottom-up" tactics allowed people to speak their minds and that consequently helped the governors tailor the changes according to their needs.

After having listened to the voices of the citizens, the mayors of Medellin decided to invest mostly in innovative architectural and urban solutions: „[I]t turned out that although people wanted to have more trees in their neighborhoods, what they really did want, was a built-up area what resulted from the conviction that any green area – sooner or later – will become a garbage dump", explains one of the recognized Colombian architects, Francisco Corsini[11].

Such and similar opinions fueled the climate of change. The goal of Medellin's governors was not exclusively the aesthetical revitalization of the neglected *barrios*, but poverty and crime rate reduction in particular. The main strategy was to support rigorously chosen infrastructural projects. The chain of new investments helped to glue together the rugged tissue of the city. Several key-institutions were constructed in vulnerable areas and then linked with the other parts of the city *via* functional and effective public transportation system such as metro cable or escalators. Another head project was a creation of increasingly attractive environment for foreign investment which positively influenced the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

> [i]n 2010 Medellín announced the creation of Ruta N, a nonprofit with the mission of strengthening the city's innovation ecosystem. As an independent institution, Ruta N serves many important purposes. First, its office space is fully equipped to host foreign or domestic companies that want to be based in the city. Through activities such as "Innovation Week", during which international technologists share their insights on technology trends, it has successfully attracted important outside agencies" – explain the authors of a handbook on innovative cities[12].

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[11] P. Zerka, *Nowe Miasto Medellin*, 2013, http://magazynkontakt.pl/nowe-miasto-medellin.html (accessed: 8.10.2014).

[12] C. Merin, A. Nikolov, A. Vidler, *Local Government Handbook: How to Create an Innovative City*, 2013, http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/local-government-handbook-create-innovative-city (accessed: 8.10.2014).

These ventures were supplemented with cosmetic, yet very important changes throughout the Antioquian capital: cultural parks, public squares, footbridges or various building renovations in most of the *comunas*. Sergio Fajardo named this kind of politics "social urbanism", describing the priority of his political strategy as "the best for the poorest". In Medellin it wasn't solely urban acupuncture: along with point-changes, it also brought several investments of country-wide recognition. The most re-known of them is an awarded Giancarlo Mazzanti's project – the Spanish Library (*Biblioteca de España*)[13]. What is the most significant about the building is not even its impressive shape but the precisely chosen location. To achieve optimal social impact, city planners decided to raise the institution in Santo Domingo, a *barrio* that was highly affected by the violence of the 80's. A shining façade of the Spanish Library is visible from most of the Medellin districts. Many claim that it fosters people's identification with the formerly neglected sector and develops a greater sense of communal belonging:

> if you build a beautiful library in a poor neighborhood, it gives people a sense of importance. It raises their dignity and gives them access to goods such as education. It also brings visitors from other parts of the city. This is what encourages social integration – explains Sergio Fajardo[14].

Popularity of similar cultural projects (e.g. there are now nine other *parques biblioteca*) was possible thanks to Participative Budgeting (*Presupuesto Participativo*) and Local Planning (*Planeación Local*) programs facilitating city-managing of Medellin. Thanks to the recognizable success of the initiative, between 2009-2013 it gained the institutional and financial support of the European Union as part of a "Community Involvement Project for Development Planning, Public Investment and Productivity 2011-2013" *(Proyecto de Participación Comunitaria para la planificación del desarrollo, la inversion pública y la productividad 2011-2013)*. It was a community involvement project with the aim to strengthen individual and institutional capacities for community developmental planning and to create ade-

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[13] The Sixth Ibero-American Biennale of Architecture and Planning, Lisbona 2008.

[14] J. P. Rathbone, *Medellin: transformed second city excites envy*, 8.05.2012, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/7d1d6866-92da-11e1-aa60-00144feab49a.html#axzz2T00GaoN7checked (accessed: 8.10.2014).

quate tools for its implementation. The objective of the actions was to benefit the most vulnerable populations of Medellin.

Under these particular "civic-pact" agreements city administrators and local neighborhoods collaborated yearly to redistribute 5% of the municipal budget and to implement locally designed plans of development of each *barrio*. Additionally, they form mechanisms and instruments of control. Consequently, community leaders and government officials jointly identified important initiatives and then signed agreements detailing the roles and responsibilities that each party would take on. To increase transparency and make the publicity more effective, the mayors use *telemedellin.tv*[15] channel to organize citywide spectacles in which the agreements would be discussed and shared publicly with the community.

One of the most famous grantees of the projects undertaken by Medellin governors is a cultural center in Moravia neighborhood, intently constructed in the very vicinity of a vast garbage dump as a beginning of multidimensional revitalization of the area. The center is an example of architectural refined simplicity, transparency, modesty and openness. It contains practice rooms, dance studio, outdoor-open theatre, library and a courtyard flanked by low ramps. The place provides a desperately needed safe and attractive public space, forming a repeated example of innovative social-engineering. It is worth citing how Armando Silva, a Colombian philosopher and an expert on "urban imaginaries", comments on the changes that occurred in the Antioquian city:

> It is very easy to get seduced with this spectacle: get seduced with a metro system, sky trains or modern buildings. But on the background of this spectacle, in the sphere that is invisible for a random observer, much deeper changes are going on: the changes in inhabitants' behaviors. It's mostly about one major transition: crime reduction. Because when the crime decreases, it means, that other mechanism as well work properly[16].

And indeed, in the last decade, the homicide rate in Medellin has dramatically decreased, with a 25% in 2012. In 1 991 the violent death rate

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[15] Tele Medellin is a local TV channel from Medellin. It's a nonprofit partnership between public bodies of the municipal order and it was created on August 13, 1996.
[16] P. Zerka, *Nowe Miasto Medellin*, op. cit.

reached an alarmed level of 381 per 100000 inhabitants and till 2012 the governors of Antioquian capital reduced this number to 70 people[17]. This once very dangerous city is nowadays being placed far behind the present most violent ones of San Pedro Sula, Honduras (159/100000), Ciudad Juarez, Mexico (148/100000) or Brazilian Maceio (135/100000)[18].

LIVABLE CITIES AND CIVIC CAPACITIES "BOGOTA HUMANA"

A case of Colombian capital city – Bogota – is also a broadly commented example of an unconventional usage of art and culture in urban transformation. Local policy makers of this Latin American metropolis decided to use them as an administrative tool in order to create and strengthen associative links, civic participation, and above all, regain the institutional trust and solidarity. Through symbols, metaphors and artistic expressions, it became possible to build a unique platform of communication between citizens and the local government. A new perception of culture formed a structural axis of social life visible in greater compliance with the basic standards of living, improved security, forced modernization and decentralization of development. These positive changes would not have been possible without a specific dialogue which the municipal authorities had initiated with the population of Bogota. Gradually, after years of fear and misery, people managed to regain trust and pride in their city. The task was not easy: in a similar way to Medellin, the Colombian capital was tormented by narco-terrorism and waves of common crime. Also for similar reasons, it got a shameful opinion of one of the most dangerous places in the world. Bomb-blasts, kidnappings and murders were an everyday reality. People were desperate for moral and institutional transition capable of transforming the climate of the place.

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[17] Ibídem.
[18] Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Central America/Mexico, 2013, http://ec.europa.-eu/echo/files/funding/decisions/2013/HIPs/central_america_en.pdf (accessed: 8.10.2014).

The change came along with Antanas Mockus, twice elected a mayor of Bogota (1995 and 2001). This eccentric mathematician, philosopher and keen professor at the National University decided to turn the city into a classroom consisting of 6,5 million people. "The distribution of knowledge is the key contemporary task", Mockus assured. "Knowledge empowers people. If people know the rules, and are sensitized by art, humor and creativity, they are much more likely to accept change"[19]. He kept affirming that in its essence, culture is communication and the essence of communication is language. That means, that a word can morph into art, image, technology, rituals, gestures or drama, and this way may influence both the ones that annihilate the human climate of a place and the ones that contribute to its harmonic existence. Language and art are almost an unlimited source of persuading tools that in a noninvasive, peaceful and democratic way can modify the perception and practices of societies. Mockus went a bit further: for him this tool served as a method of specific urban psychotherapy: "[A]rtistic acts bring out emotions, which explosive power is similar to terror acts but bring about positive effects", he claimed[20]. Consequently, symbols, metaphors and humor became a token of recognition in his style of governance. By his actions which too many seemed peculiar, he decided to transform people's mindsets and thereby tackle corruption, violence and social disorder.

Antanas Mockus didn't fear to go all the way: in a spandex suit emblazoned with a big "S" (for Supercitizen or *Superciudadano*), he appeared on the cluttered streets of Bogota, tidying up the neighborhoods. The message was simple: everything depends on you, everyone can change the reality, and everyone can be a local hero. Like Superman. His other ideas were just as surprising. One morning, half-naked mayor of Bogota appeared on TV while simply taking shower. The purpose was in no way to educate people about hygiene, but to teach them how to save water in day to day activities. Then, for several days in 1996, *Bogotanos* passing by the biggest avenues of the city, were coming across mimes controlling chaotic traffic of

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[19] M. C. Caballero, "Academic Turns City into a Social Experiment", *Harvard Gazzette*, 2007,   http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2004/03.11/01-mockus.html   (accessed: 8.11.2016).
[20] Ibídem.

the messy capital. The concept was to ridicule all reckless drivers and frequently suicidal pedestrians by imitating their irresponsible behavior; Mockus decided to go further and painted a star on every pavement where a pedestrian was killed in a car accident. Sometimes it formed mini-galaxies: intentionally a very persuasive sign. The mayor believed that being publicly mocked was a humiliation worse than paying a fine. Encouraged by popularity of his ideas, Mockus spread his wings and went with the flow: in order to mobilize people to protest against crime and terrorism he invented a "vaccine against violence". According to this yet another metaphorical initiative, citizens were asked to draw a face of a person that had once hurt them on a balloon that they then popped. The mayor tried to prove that for our minds a symbolic act can become an equivalent of a real one, *ergo*, destroying symbolically may hold us back from being literally aggressive. 50 000 people decided to participate in this campaign.

This way, Mockus tried to emphasize the core element of his political agenda: the importance of having respect for one's life. In one of the interviews he explained the background of his unusual strategies as follows:

> (…) our plans were: increasing voluntary rule-following, increasing people's capacity to kindly influence each other, to kindly correct each other in order to abide by the rules, (…) and, finally, increasing the capacity of expression and communication. Violence is in part a communication breakdown: creating good communication thus helps in reducing violence. But we also tried to generate the idea that order is important in the city (…), that order is a co-responsibility that belongs to me and you, that if we help each other, if you correct me kindly, and if I correct you kindly, then the city evolves in the right path[21].

By theatrical and performative means, Mockus wanted to show the importance of cultural regulations. Of course not all of the mayor's strategies were based on art and symbols. Nevertheless, metaphoric actions he designed were an original and low-cost facilitator of them. Along with his more traditional methods of city-governing, it formed an effective administrative tool shown by various statistics: during his administration Bogota saw a significant improvement in security (percentage of homicide decreased by

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[21] M. Negrón, *Nuestra estrategia fue cambiar primero la mentalidad y luego la infraestructura. Antanas Mockus: Ex-Alcalde de Bogotá*, 2004, http://www.planum.net/topics/main/m-caudo-mockus.html (accessed: 8.10.2014).

56), a notable reduction in traffic accidents (from 1,287 in 1995 to 585 in 2002), a 26% fall in the use of firearms and a 14% water usage drop-down within two months after Mockus' televised shower[22].

The next mayor of Bogota – Enrique Panalosa (1998-2001) – also deserves some credit for turning Bogotá into a safer and more habitable city. He staked on soft-infrastructure, mostly investing in the reformulation of public transportation system. His flag project was a network of bicycle paths which potential was augmented by designing a worldwide acclaimed program of *Ciclovia*– a community based project in which every Sunday and during holidays, streets were temporarily closed to motorized vehicles in order to exclusively allow the access for recreational activities, like biking, roller-skating, jogging, etc. The *Ciclovia* became a natural component of Bogota weekends, with 600 000 to 1 400 000 participants enjoying the circuit of 97 km of main avenues being closed. The results are very encouraging. According to the research performed by Andrea Torres from Georgia State University, it is believed that *Ciclovias* enhance social inclusion and interaction (the program has no restrictions based on cost, social class, age or recreation preference), recovery and revitalization of public space and the generation of new jobs created to meet the needs of the users[23].

CULTURE AND INNOVATIONS: AN ENGINE FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES

The examples of Bogota and Medellin illustrate a practical application of new philosophy of community development. In this approach, reforms of municipal policies are usually followed by a strong belief that en-

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[22] The decrease has finally reached 40% when people noticed significant saving in their home budgets. S. Imberton Hidalgo, El *fenómeno Mockus*, 2010, http://mediolleno.com.sv/medio-lleno_v4/opinion/1062/el-fenomeno-mockus (accessed: 8.10.2014); C. Quesada, *Bogotá at your service*, 2004, http://www.iadb.org/idbamerica/index.cfm?thisid=2929 (accessed: 8.10.2104).
[22] A. Torres, *et al.*, "The Ciclovia and Cicloruta Programs: Promising Interventions to Promote Physical Activity and Social Capital in Bogotá, Colombia", *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 103, No. 2, February 2013, pp. e23-e30.
[23] Ibidem.

gaging or at least provoking citizens to reflection constitutes one of the steps of achieving municipal goals. It is believed that through citizens' creativity it is possible to construct real "cities for citizens": more integrated, equal, democratized and inclusive. This requires new kinds of public places and initiatives that make people meet, stimulate them to act, exchange ideas, or simply relax. Policies adapted in these two Colombian cities express a symptomatic rejection of the developmental concept, reduced to economic factors and directs it towards people, their intrinsic capacities and innovativeness. It shows that the use of imagination can be a low-cost and effective way to achieve municipal goals and at the same time to generate the sense of belonging and pride in the community that (not only the engaged citizens) are part of[24].

The key assumption of the local developmental strategies based on broadly understood "creativity" is that ordinary people can change local environment if given a chance. The use of art and culture simply creates the right conditions to enable people to develop opportunities and address seemingly intractable urban problems. This is what Charles Landry, a protagonist of creative cities' studies, calls "the artistic mode of knowing and making": the mode that encourages community members to "take action"[25]. Unlike the formal rationality of planners, this "artistic mode of knowing" enhances intuitive processes of exploring and discovering. Through these non-linear processes such as learning-while-doing and thinking-while-doing, it fosters an ability to evolve, rather than enclose people in predefined ideological frames. And specifically among artists, this transformation moves them towards inter- and trans-disciplinary collaborations, leaving behind outdated modernist roles assigned to the artist in "white cube" art institutions[26].

The shift in the overall thinking about operational utility of culture and creativity may originate from many different motivations and interpretative dimensions. For local governors they are important because they add up various immanent parts of urban fabric: symbolism (culture is a part of local

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[24] R. L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class...*, op. cit.; J. Myerscough, *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain*, Policy Studies Institute, University of Virginia 1988.
[25] C. Landry, *The Creative City...*, op. cit.
[26] F. Bianchini, C. Landry, *The Creative City,* Demos 1995.

context and history); lifestyle (artists create a bohemian and artistic urban atmosphere); pace (tourism depends on cultural spaces, through the creation of atmosphere, customs or events); image (cultural activities market the city as an innovative, creative and dynamic place); industry (cultural activities are becoming one of the most important economic activities in the city, both by creating direct value and employment and by attracting visitors, as well as improving the tourist industry); and a city publicity tool (cultural facilities are often flagships in urban redevelopment projects).

> Many cities in North America, Europe, and a few in Britain (Glasgow, Liverpool) are turning to the arts as a means of `branding' or re-imaging the city, often away from a history of heavy industry and decline. In the process, tourists and visitors are attracted to cities they would not previously have considered visiting and senior business managers begin to consider such places as suitable locations[27].

Friendly environment, naturally rooted in an urban fabric of streets, buildings, parks and landmarks, not only creates a good atmosphere and attracts visitors but also sets soft regulatory regime in a not invasive way. Cultural actions build community organizational capacity, enhance active, engaged citizenship, and through participation, it becomes a method of comprehensive education. Acquired skills can subsequently be used in other areas of life. Access to the shaping of culture promotes dialogue, civil awareness and competence which are useful in public life[28].

There are many components facilitating the process of urban development (not necessarily *via* art and innovativeness): personal qualities, will and leadership, human diversity, organizational culture, local identity, broad networking, quality urban spaces and facilities. As Landry asserts, a city can work effectively without all of them but the lack of key factors – like genuine political will or skillful leadership – can lead urban development to a *fiasco.* Effective policy-making depends on sound management, planning and investment (in all sectors involved) which have the ability to shape the con-

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[27] J. Mongomery, "Upwave Cities, Creative Cities: The Case of London", in: Flew, Terry (ed.) *Creative Industries and Urban Development: Creative Cities in the 21st Century.* Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), London 2012, pp. 36-42.
[28] T. Majewski, *Kultura dobrej przestrzeni albo sztuka (prze)trwania miasta*, 2012, http://-www.kongres-kultury.pl/arttag-partycypacja/art-tomasz_majewski_kultura_dobrej_przestrze-ni_albo_sztuka_przetrwania_miasta.html (accessed: 8.10.2014).

ditions where creative practices may flourish. The biggest risk for the success of the approach is the specific dynamics of the political system itself. It is a conglomerate of various components that have to morph into one machine working perfectly. Logistics of all kind of political strategies must consolidate various institutional efforts of different public sectors within a unified agenda that would surpass one term of office[29]. Genuine political will and determination are thus demanded as much as (or more than) creativity and innovativeness of local communities. Subsequently, such complex machine cannot work without a keen manager who not only sets local policy-agenda but also finds ways to strengthen the urban life. A figurative example of charismatic mayors of Bogota or the innovative ones of Medellin, clearly show the importance of agile leadership.

The basic competences of a good city-leader can therefore be summarized as follows: a) "opening for debate" which enables getting an ample perspective of city needs and problems; b) "vision" which enables strategic thinking and actions; c) "curiosity and tolerance" which enable exploring and identification of new trends, social inclinations and opportunities; d) "ability to synthetize and analyse the information" which makes the existing powers and recourses work better; e) "transparency" which generates trust and sense of security; f) "good communication skills and charisma" which inspire, motivate and bring people together towards a common goal; g) "grit and determination" which, despite the set-backs - help to achieve predetermined objectives[30].

CONCLUSIONS

One could say that the authorities of Bogota and Medellin met these requirements: they developed loud media campaigns, played with vivid – or even eccentric (Mockus) – happenings, based their governance on academic professionals or experienced pragmatics. Keen PR strategies made of

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[29] R. Castro, "Retos de política…", op. cit., p. 15.
[30] C. Landry, *The Creative City...*, op. cit.

Mockus and Penalosa academia celebrities. Their unusual urban experiments resulted in numerous invitations from various universities, think-tanks and other similar institution. For the last few years they've been touring the world sharing their re-known ideas about reinventing (or for some "rescuing") fallen communities. Their improved popularity has also led to them being considered as one of the most important candidates for the presidential elections: Mockus in 2006 and Penalosa in the forthcoming ones of May 2014. Now, with Medellin called the most innovative city of the world, Colombia is regarded as one of the centers of successful urban engineering.

Can this be considered to be true? Obviously, the undoubted accomplishments of Bogota and Medellin cannot be attributed solely to the municipal governance of the cities. The transformations that occurred across Colombia might have equally influenced the transition: dismantling of the biggest cartels, right paramilitary groups demobilization and neutralizing of some of the crucial *guerrilla* leaders significantly have improved the security in the country. Moreover, the reasonable financial policy and ratification of the Free Tree Agreement with the USA, have notably contributed to economic stabilization. Nevertheless, the critics aptly point out a selective character of the reforms. Furthermore, the discontinuity of policies related to the change of governmental administrations in Bogota, squandered opportunities created by the visionary Mockus and Penaolsa. The upswing in the city transformation during their administrations was not repeated by the next mayors of the capital. There was no major continuation in their style of city governing and the "cultural economy" gave the reign back to the traditional political practices. It didn't mean stagnation but disillusioned many and negatively affected still shaky engagement of the inhabitants. The final nail in the coffin that drastically frayed a carefully elaborated social consensus was a massive corruption scandal of the administration of Samuel Moreno (2008-2011).

It prominently proved that in societies with a nepotism problem, lack of transparency and a weak law-enforcement system, the lack of continuation of positive developmental trends is still the biggest problem that threatens uneasily achieved accomplishments. And indeed, the same day when the Antioquian capital was awarded the Wall Street Journal prize, a representa-

tive of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights declared the city one of the most unequal in the world due to a high number of homicides, disappearances, unemployment and limited yet still ongoing wars between criminal gangs and their control over some neighborhoods. It proves that in a highly complicated and complex socio-political situation in a country like Colombia, deep structural changes (especially the military conflict end and the reduction of poverty and corruption) should be the first ones to be adopted. Without them, investing in culture and innovations can be a waste of energy, money and the hope of citizens.

Despite all of the unquestionable constrains and criticism, the two Colombian metropolises show that policies based on art and innovativeness foster economic gain, favor social cohesion, and most importantly, gradually transform the most vulnerable communities. It is important to remember, that in developing countries, creating spectacular artistic districts is not yet a priority but still a matter of distant future. At first, creativity and culture serve to perform necessary and highly needed "organic work". Secondly, in Bogota and Medellin, thanks to the adapted policies, it was possible to mobilize thousands of people to take part in events, social processes and festivities of neighborhood and communal character that indeed transformed the local reality. This social and political phenomenon needs further growth and is worth being continued.

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