Policing the People's Festival: Lessons for Cultural Policy Development

Th?nk Forum: Carnival and Multicultural Policy
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Overview

- Definitions of cultural policy
- Structure of the carnival complex
- Areas of convergence and divergence

Definition (Mercer, 2002)

- *'Cultural policy is about citizenship because it is about the resources which define, enable, constrain and shape (both positively & negatively) the most fundamental of human capacities ... identity'*

Cultural Policy

- Cultural policy has attracted a broad variety of definitions but they all embrace the notion of producing cultural citizens.

- Cultural policies animate institutions and practices and people. One of its main goals is to find, serve and nurture a sense of belonging, through educational institutions and cultural industries.

- Therefore, at in its purest form, CP is about re-shaping attitudes.

Why is it necessary?

- **ECONOMIC**
- 1. There are imperfect market conditions for the arts to thrive – market failure thesis
- 2. The higher labour costs associated with the arts have a harmful effect on output and productivity – cost disease thesis
- 3. The unequal distribution of income among various groups impedes equal access to cultural products – Equity thesis.
- 4. The cultural industries represent a high value added sector – generates income and employment
- 5. The cultural industries are inextricably linked to other economic sectors and promotes growth in ancillary industries.

Why is it necessary?

- **SOCIAL**
- 1. The arts & cultural industries leave a legacy to future generations.

- 2. Cultural products boost national identity and prestige – cultural confidence

- 3. The arts & culture confer indirect benefits to communities – merit argument

- 4. The arts & culture industries facilitate social improvement for producers & consumers – elevating influence.

- 5. The sector encourages artistic innovation & has the potential to facilitate diversity & democracy

Definitions

- As such, cultural policy can and should act as a bridge between the socio-political and economic registers of national development.

- This means that CP can be thought of and developed *simultaneously* as an economic policy, as a social policy and as an environmental policy.

- There is growing body of research & planning that underscores these 'joined up' ways of thinking about formulating and evaluating CP.

The Carnival Complex

- Can the Carnival complex then be used as a lens through which we can see and understand the state of play in art and cultural sector?

- In the main, the carnival celebrations can be used as a vista through which we can see, re-flect and re-formulate or re-set our approaches towards the arts and cultural industries.

- Both from the socio-cultural, geo-political and economic space, carnival gives insight into country's overall development in general and the cultural industries in particular.

The Magical Mirror

- Socio-cultural: through its products and practices, carnival shows us who we are as a society:
  - Creole art forms – hybridity of music for instance
  - Plurality – social sections that 'mix but do not combine' – even in the masquerade – Cambouley and Mardi Gras traditions in the carnival.

- Political Economy – recent emphasis on economic value has amplified inherent economic inequalities in society.
  - For example, the increasing commodification of carnival means that many in society cannot afford to participate – marginalising some in society.
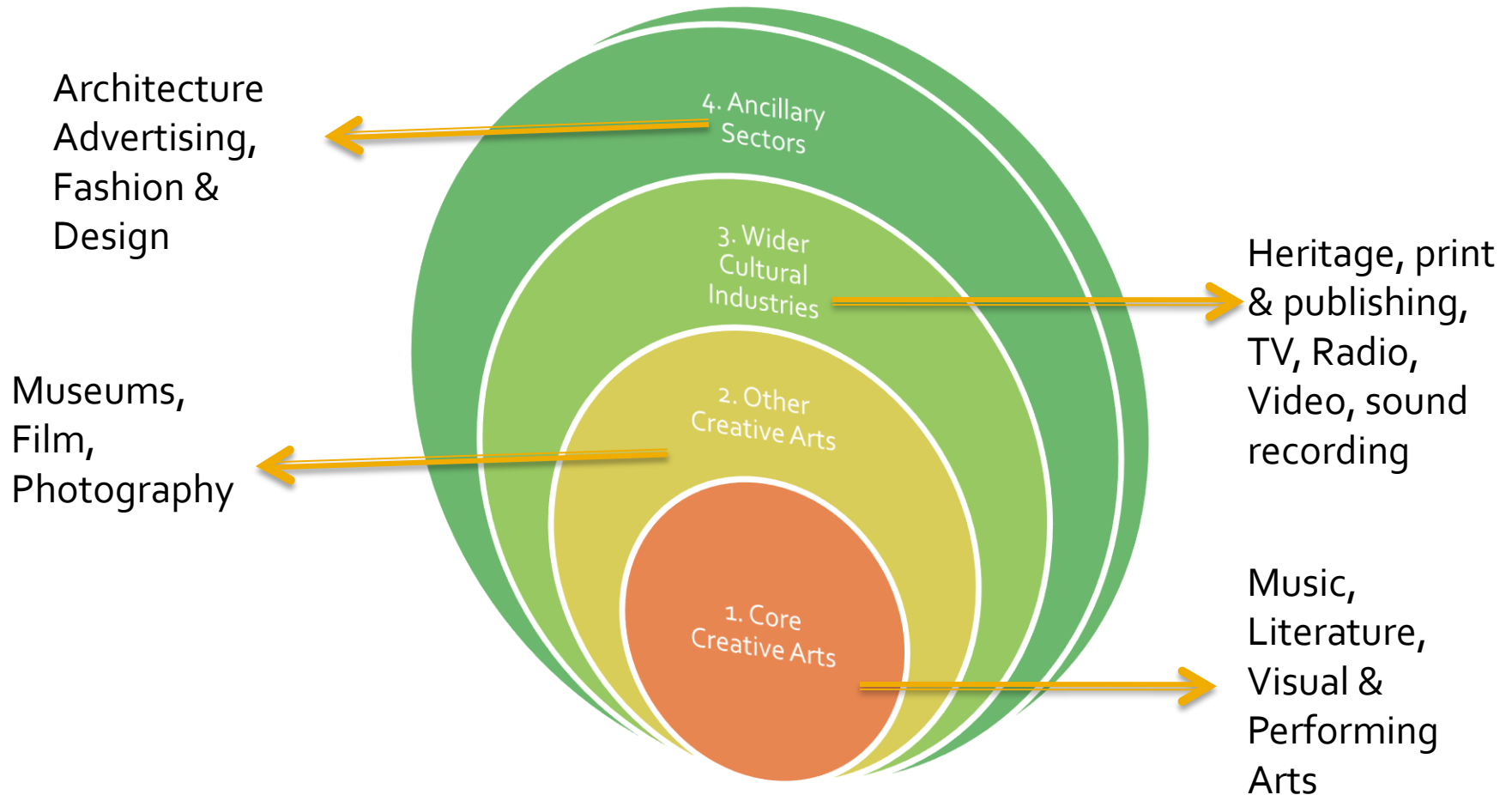
The Magical Mirror

- Geo- politics – relative to our place in the world. Carnival, like other cultural expressions (i.e. Jamaica's reggae & Bahamas' Jonkonnu) has aided in the branding of the Caribbean space and place in the world – incursions into the global cultural milieu. Over 50 carnivals world over are modeled after Trinidad's.

  - Plantation Economy – system of co-dependence in economic structure whereby the plantation economies depend on countries in the global north for inputs including labour, technology & capital. Even with these incursions, we are still net importers of cultural goods and services.

Areas of convergence

- Structure encompassing many fields from what is known as core creative arts to creative/media industries.

- Transnational – straddles home and host countries in diaspora.

- Most enterprises are nascent concerns, (SMEs),& informal

- Lacking basic infrastructure – legal and regulation, training & education, investment, IOS, R&D.

- Uneven infrastructural development at stage one of value chain means value added for cultural products is generally at the bottom of the production chain when they enter the international market
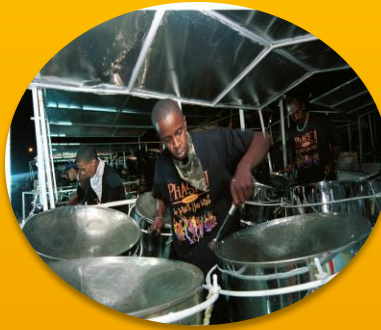
Throsby's Model

Architecture
Advertising,
Fashion &
Design

4. Ancillary
Sectors

3. Wider
Cultural
Industries

Heritage, print
& publishing,
TV, Radio,
Video, sound
recording

Museums,
Film,
Photography

2. Other
Creative Arts

1. Core
Creative Arts

Music,
Literature,
Visual &
Performing
Arts

Areas of convergence

Ancillary Economy

Events, Food & Drink, Tourism support services

Core Creative economy

Mas, Pan, Kaiso/Soca

Creative Economy

Media & Advertising Photography, Graphic Design

Carnival and state policy

- Carnival has been subject to formal state policy since the formation of the CDC in 1957. Revised in 1991 with the formation of NCC.

- Main objectives (revised 2006):
  - To make Carnival a viable, national, cultural and commercial enterprise;
  - To provide the necessary managerial and organisational infrastructure for the efficient and effective presentation and marketing of the cultural products of Carnival; and
  - To establish arrangements for ongoing research, the preservation and permanent display of the annual accumulation of Carnival products created each year by the craftsmen, musicians, composers and designers of Carnival.

Carnival and state policy

ക Focus on the socio/economic values of carnival in 1990's can be positioned within:

  ക The pressing need to find alternative vectors for socio-economic development (SAPs).
  ക The increased politicisation of country's ethnic diversity.

ക Therefore the policy problems identified as:
   കDiversity of the country (race, ethnicity, class, gender)
  കNew avenues of economic development – tourism, cultural industries
  കPeripheral nature of Trinidad & Tobago's geopolitical power in global environment.

ക Carnival seen as a policy solution for all these developmental problems, and not an autonomous sphere of policy focus.

Carnival and state policy

- Objective One: Developing the socio-cultural value of carnival.

  - Carnival marketed internally as a springboard for national unity, a safety valve and a model for promoting unity and togetherness – 'all ah we is one' meta-narrative.

  - Encouraging diversity at the community level – NCC conducts regional workshops throughout the island. In 2007-2008 period they conducted 55 workshops in 53 communities and trained 1375 participants. In 2011 budget of TTD$ 7 million for regional carnivals.

  - Promoting pride and ownership in carnival as 'we ting' through more robust IP regimes (appeal of US pan patent)

Carnival and state policy

- Objective Two – developing economic potential
  - Increase expenditure on carnival (NCC's subvention grew from $TT 12m in 1996, $TT 70m in 2008 and $TT 120m+ in 2011)
  - Increased visitors (1977 – 20,000; 1997 – 27,414; 2008 – 43,000) who spend an average of $TT 306/dy
  - Incentives for businesses investing in cultural activities (businesses investing up to $2m get back their investment)
  - Develop system to accrue revenue for broadcast rights for NCC related events
  - Invite and host overseas journalists (TDC/TIDCO) to assist marketing drive

Summary of policy impact

- Carnival is increasingly being left to business concerns while the social agenda (inclusion & diversity) is seen as secondary.

- The social inequities in the society are simply being recreated by this approach. New & old business classes are more capable of exploiting opportunities by instrumentalisation of carnival of than working classes.

- In fact the business community has been increasingly ignoring the role of these IOSs (namely the NCC) in facilitating or shaping the festival.

- So every year band launches occur before the NCC 'officially' launches carnival.

- Major band launches from the month of July, in 2008 one of them 'Evolutions' did so without calypso/soca music

Summary of policy impact

- Policy, when taken to mean a framework for action seems to be in stasis.

- This is linked to the authority, expertise & politics of the primary and secondary stakeholders and choice of policy gatekeepers in fashioning the carnival.

- - Within the NCC the stasis related to institutional factors:
  - Seeming dissonance between two stated objectives, exacerbated by the unequal power base between the stakeholder groups who promote the various interests. Result is ambivalence.
  - High dependency on state funding
  - Human resource capacity – (who makes the decisions? how are they chosen, what is their training?)
  - Embeddedness & politicisation of structure that frames (in)action, which then recreates structure (Giddens, 1994)

Policy stasis

CREATIVE ARTS POLICY

Statecentric

*Constitution based & centralised

*Audience – gov't & artists/artisans

*Traditional elite

*Emphasis on production of culture

CREATIVE INDUSTRY POLICY

* Transnational/local

*Industry based & decentralised

Audience – trade & industry

New business elite

*Emphasis on consumption of culture

1. Policy conflicts with other policies (trade & industry; media)

1. Social stratification & power relations in the country that recreates inequality – carnival as the magic mirror.

2. The tension between **old** 'arts policy: *enracinement* where focus is on nation state & maintenance of national cultural identity & **new** creative industry policy: *ouverture* where focus is on openess, trade and diversity within & outside national borders.

Concluding remarks

- Many similarities between the carnival complex and the general arts and cultural sector.

- Same structure as these relate to strategic and operational norms.

- Same policy tensions between the traditional (core) and contemporary (peripheral) sub sectors.

- But we can learn from over 50 yrs of carnival policy and avoid same problematique

Concluding Remarks

- Explore and develop a new way to 'police' the arts & cultural sector that is dedicated to achieve balance points between the various objectives & strategies rather than separate, incoherent approaches that currently abide.

- Widen stakeholder groups who will each bring different values and interests to the table. Increased contestation & negotiation in keeping with carnival tradition.

- Draw from the triple bottom line (TBL) model for events (Hede, 2007), I have developed the 'multiple bottom line model' (MBL) that also involves the diaspora in cultural industry development.

- Integrate discourse on global trade in cultural goods and services

MBL Stakeholder Map

Economic

- Gov't, IOS, Trade Associations

- Business, stockholders

- Media & sponsors

- Employees

- NGOs & residents

Social

- Gov't, IOS, SIGs

- Tourists, returning residents

- Citizens & NGOs

- Business, sponsors, media

Volunteers

Arts & Cultural Industry Sector

Environmental

- NGOs

- Government

- Residents

- Tourists & returning residents

Geo-political

- Government

- Returning residents

- Business & media

- Employees

Conclusion
(ACT)

*A*dvocacy and action by various interest groups within and outside Trinidad & Tobago to increase number & type of stakeholders.

*C*onduct more expansive research on sector (beyond EIS) and communicate those findings to wide range of audiences (gov'ts, academe, NGOs, diaspora).

ACCESS model of research - Edinburgh Festivals (Arts, Culture, Community, Economy, Society, Stakeholders) – Carlsen et al, 2007.

*T*arget specific programmes & projects that encapsulate all these imperatives and ideas.