

A call for a European Model of Culture

Recent events, such as the election of the provocateur Mr. Trump as President of United States, the increasing migrations phenomena or the rise of new forms of terrorism, ask for a concrete answer from Europe in one of most important characteristics of our political history: the role and the implementation of the so-called Welfare State.

When we talk about Welfare State we describe a set of policies, services and other actions that the public bodies of a Country set up in order to improve the life conditions of its own citizenship. Among the benefits that European Countries most frequently provide to citizens, Culture represents a peculiar object, not only for its structural characteristics (intangible assets and so on) but also for the different ways that governments are interpreting this important resource for human and social development.

The implementation of the welfare state often includes also culture and cultural policies, but in most of cases, there is no a common interpretation of how (and which) culture should be provided: this is, to our point of view, one of the central key tasks for the European Agenda.

Briefly, from one hand we have the most important traditions about cultural heritage but, on the other hand, Europe forgets that culture is, first of all, a contemporary matter of concern.

Since '50s Europe left to the U.S. the role cultural leader and from then, U.S. showed to the world the ideology of the western, developed countries. We divided the world in rich and poor countries, and our culture was the medium through which we stated that yes, we were in the right place of the world.

United States and the Western Developed Countries Ideology are based on a set of values that do not represent European countries or citizens. Maybe, we would like to, but US way of life is not similar to ours.

It is in this sense that Europe should act for creating a common meaning of what we indicate as Culture. By defining our vision of Culture, we define also our real vision of Welfare State because there is no welfare state without culture.

A recent report by UNESCO shows how culture is implemented throughout the world, with the intent of make places better: in the report we can find very important guidelines that could help us in defining what we believe culture (and cultural policies) should be. Public bodies (from municipal to central authorities) are engaged with culture in designing a development vector for heritage cities, a renewal driving force for poor neighborhood, or the way to create inclusive cities and societies.

We don't lack of best-practices. We just need to choose how Europe intends Culture (that is not a unique direction but a well-designed set of values) and act for creating and disseminating what we could define as the European model of Culture.

The authors of this number of Tafter Journal, try to investigate two aspects of this path.

Minucciani investigates the role that small museums have in promoting culture far from the most important

urban centres, while Di Bello shows scientific findings that illustrate how culture is not a generic good, but it has very specific impacts on our neurobiological development, influencing how we think, act, and create in our lives.

Minucciani discusses the way we could disseminate our culture within our territorial borders, giving us direction of intervention. Di Bello frees us from the greatest preconception about Culture: while the lack of measuring tools forced us to believe that Culture has mostly indirect effects, the proceeding in medical and psychological disciplines could help us in showing how culture generates direct and measurable impacts on our lives.

In this sense, culture is one of the key-factors in designing a new welfare for Europe and a new European Model. Western Developed Country Ideology is fading away, but we can show to the world that another set of values and meaning is possible.

Europe is asked for an action in this sense.



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