



Rétrospective / Retrospective / Retrospective

Changing sociocultural community development: a diachronic analysis of the articles (2010-2024)

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L'animation culturelle a connu de profondes transformations au cours des 15 dernières années. Ce dynamisme, nourri par l'essor des technologies de communication, l'évolution des publics et la redéfinition du rôle des politiques publiques, a suscité un foisonnement de pratiques et de réflexions théoriques. Une analyse diachronique de ces mutations, en s'appuyant sur les numéros parus dans la Revue, vous est proposée afin d'explorer l'évolution et les variations de ce contenu discursif autour de quatre axes : les nouveaux paradigmes découlant de l'ère numérique, la participation citoyenne, les enjeux territoriaux et le changement social. Loin d'être une simple technique de divertissement, l'animation culturelle repose sur une posture critique et engagée, au service de l'épanouissement des individus et des collectivités. C'est à cette condition qu'elle pourra contribuer à la construction d'un avenir plus juste et démocratique.

Mots-clés : animation, ère numérique, participation citoyenne, enjeux territoriaux, changement social.

Sociocultural community development has undergone profound changes over the past 15 years. This dynamism, fuelled by the rise of communication technologies, the evolution of audiences and the redefinition of the role of public policies, has given rise to a proliferation of practices and theoretical reflections. A diachronic analysis of these mutations, based on the articles published in the Journal, is proposed to explore the evolution and variations of this discursive content around four axes: the new paradigms arising from the digital age, citizen participation, territorial issues and social change. Sociocultural community development is not just a technique for entertainment, but rather a critical and committed posture that promotes the development of individuals and communities. It is only then that it can contribute to building a more just and democratic future.

Keywords: sociocultural community development, digital age, citizen participation, territorial issues, social change.

La animación cultural ha experimentado profundas transformaciones en los últimos 15 años. Este dinamismo, alimentado por el auge de las tecnologías de comunicación, la evolución de los públicos y la redefinición del papel de las políticas públicas, ha suscitado una abundancia de prácticas y reflexiones teóricas. Se propone un análisis diacrónico de estas mutaciones, basado en los números publicados en la Revista, para explorar la evolución y las variaciones de este contenido discursivo en torno a cuatro ejes: los nuevos paradigmas derivados de la era digital, la participación ciudadana, los retos territoriales y el cambio social. Lejos de ser una simple técnica de entretenimiento, la animación cultural se basa en una postura crítica y comprometida al servicio del desarrollo de los individuos y las comunidades. Es en esta condición que podrá contribuir a la construcción de un futuro más justo y democrático.

Palabras clave : animación, era digital, participación ciudadana, desafíos territoriales, cambio social.

Introduction

Sociocultural community development, as a field of practice aimed at democratizing access to culture and fostering citizen participation, has undergone profound transformations over the past 15 years. This dynamism, fueled by the rise of digital technologies, the evolution of audiences and the redefinition of the role of public policies, has given place to multiple initiatives and theoretical and practical reflections. A diachronic analysis of these mutations, based on the entire edition (1 to 25) of the Journal, is proposed to explore the evolution and variations of this discursive content during the period.

Because sociocultural community development is constantly changing where it has already been going on, sometimes for decades (Northern countries), and adaptively fits into the contexts where it is being implemented, characterized by different phases of industrialization and forms of democratization (Southern countries). The origin of the authors of the texts published since the creation of the Journal reveals the predominance of an Atlantic axis, the main area of influence of Europe during the last centuries, where sociocultural community development was established early and strongly institutionalized.

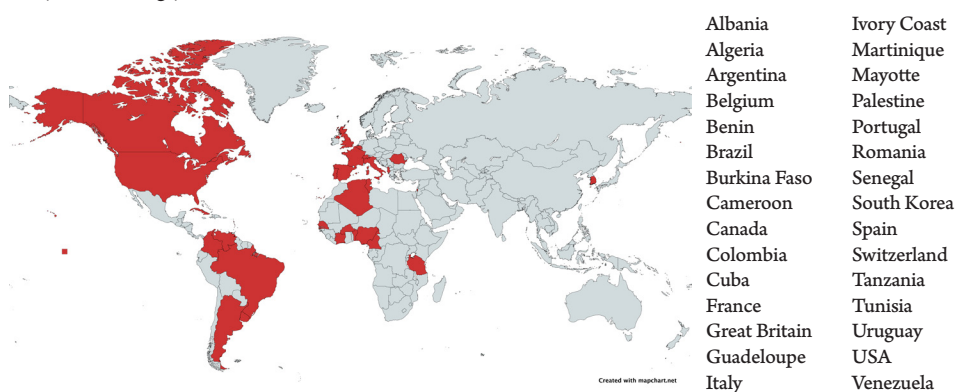


Figure 1 : Countries of origin of the authors of articles published in the issues 1-25

It is also observed that a wide variety of theoretical and methodological currents are deployed under the term “sociocultural community development” in the absence of a stabilized field, relying on established curricula and professional orders, even on the European continent. The disciplines of researchers and practitioners who have signed an article in the Journal bear witness to this. The following are listed: applied art, communication and media studies, economics, education and pedagogy, cultural studies, urban and tourist studies, geography, philosophy, psychology, political science, sociology, social work (see figure 2).

From the first issues published (2010-2014), the Journal shows an awareness of the impact of digital technology, not only as a tool for dissemination and cultural democratization, but also as a vector for new forms of expression and citizen engagement (Antoniadis, 2011; Lafortune et al., 2010). At the same time, emphasis is placed on the social and political dimension of sociocultural community development as a tool for emancipation and social transformation (Lafortune et al., 2010; Derungs-Ruhier, 2010; Aguilar Idáñez, 2010). Creativity, interculturality and citizen

participation are also identified as key dimensions of sociocultural community development (Della Croce, 2010).

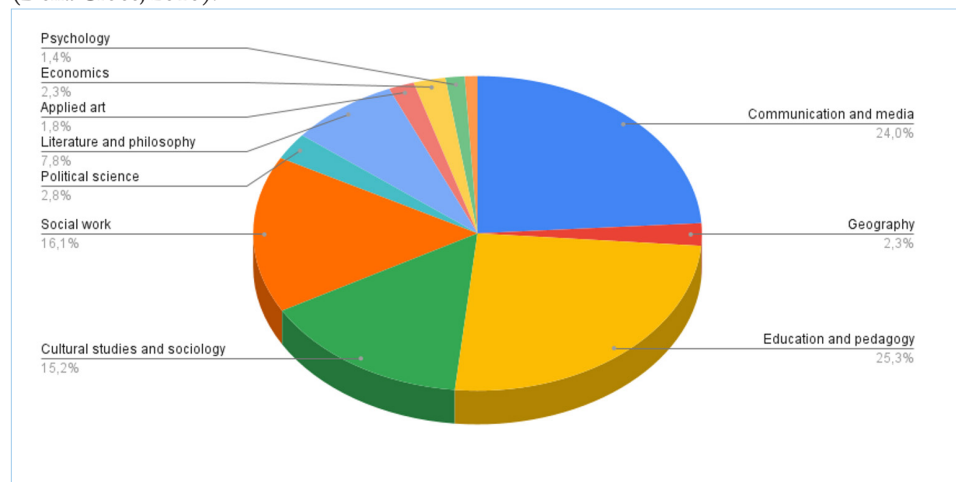


Figure 2 : Distribution of the disciplines from the authors of ATPS (2010-2024)

Over the years, the discourse on citizen participation has intensified (2015-2019), highlighting the need to actively involve citizens in the design and evaluation of cultural projects (Armbruster Elatifi et al., 2015; Ciraso-Calí et al., 2015; Soler et al., 2015). Sociocultural community development is then perceived as a means of promoting the exercise of “cultural citizenship” and strengthening social cohesion in a context of growing diversity.

The Journal also explores the territorial issues of sociocultural community development (2014-2018), highlighting the importance of local anchoring and development (Bestani and Zaoui, 2014; Moussaoui and Megherbi, 2014; Augustin, 2014). Sociocultural community development is thus conceived as a tool for revitalizing rural and urban areas and enhancing the value of cultural heritage.

The role of sociocultural community development in social transformation is affirmed throughout the period under study, through various approaches that touch on the areas of education, health and community development (Lemonchois and Ouvrard, 2016; Liot and Montero, 2018; Bellini, 2018). Sociocultural community development is presented as a tool for emancipation, the fight against discrimination and the promotion of social justice.

Finally, the most recent issues (2020-2024) highlight the challenges that communication poses to sociocultural community development in a context marked by the rise of digital media, the rise of disinformation and propaganda (Seraiocco, 2023; Motoi, 2023; Lamjid, 2023). Sociocultural community development is therefore called to play a role in media education and digital citizenship.

We propose to follow in detail this trajectory of sociocultural community development around these different issues and to examine how it continues to reinvent itself to respond to the challenges of a world in constant change.

Sociocultural community development in the digital age: towards new paradigms (2010-2014)

The first issues of the Journal (2010-2014) show a progressive awareness of the impact of digital technology on sociocultural community development. Internet, social networks and collaborative platforms are emerging as new tools to reach new audiences, diversify forms of artistic and cultural expression and encourage citizen engagement.

Antoniadis (2011) explores the use of Web 2.0 in sociocultural community development training, highlighting its potential to foster creativity, citizen engagement and networking. He notes that “Web 2.0 tools can help develop collaborative learning spaces and foster student engagement in their training” (Antoniadis, 2011, p. 125). The article highlights an educational experience where students used Web 2.0 tools to reflect on their future job, exploring the impact of Facebook on social relationships and the potential for community expression in blogs. This early reflection on the integration of digital in sociocultural community development practices demonstrates a willingness to adapt to new sociocultural realities.

In 2010, the manifest text of Lafortune et al. calls for the consolidation of a system of sociocultural community development at the international level, anchored in struggles for emancipation and social justice. As the authors point out, “sociocultural community development was built on the basis of social movements that fought for democracy and social justice” (Lafortune et al., 2010, p. 68). This plea for a committed and transformative sociocultural community development is found throughout the issues of the Journal, demonstrating a desire to contribute to the construction of a more just and democratic society. The text highlights the current challenges of sociocultural community development, including the need to develop reflective expertise and consider social and economic inequalities: “Sociocultural community developer must be able to analyze social contexts and take inequalities into account in his interventions” (ibid., p. 72). It advocates active citizen engagement and the creation of spaces for participation and dialogue. Finally, the text underlines the importance of international cooperation and networking among sociocultural community developers to strengthen this system and promote its values throughout the world.

Derungs-Ruhier’s (2010) article explores the concept of cross-cultural leadership by emphasizing its relevance in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. According to the author, “cross-cultural leadership requires an ability to transcend cultural boundaries and build bridges between different communities” (Derungs-Ruhier, 2010, p. 85). Cross-cultural leadership is presented as a transformational leadership approach that goes beyond simply adapting to diverse cultures. Rather, it is a dynamic process of creation and transformation that integrates diversity and fosters collaboration among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. The article underlines the importance of cultural awareness, self-reflection, social responsibility and continuous learning for cross-cultural leaders. It highlights the challenges and opportunities these leaders face in managing cultural differences and promoting positive change within organizations and communities. In sum, the article suggests that cross-cultural leadership is essential to navigate the complexity of today’s world and achieve sustainable success in a rapidly changing global context.

The use of visual sociology and participatory action-research (IAP) in sociocultural community development among migrants is the central subject of Aguilar Idáñez’s text (2010). She highlights the importance of involving social actors in the process of research and building a visual discourse

that gives them a voice: “Visual sociology allows social actors to express themselves and participate in the production of knowledge” (Aguilar Idáñez, 2010, p. 98). The author presents a case study of a group of Malian migrants in Albacete, Spain. Thanks to the making of a documentary film, migrants were able to show their reality and denounce the policies of exclusion they are victims of. This process has promoted their empowerment and recognition as a social actor. The article underlines the difficulties encountered, including resistance from local authorities and challenges related to managing a collective project. It also call attention to positive outcomes, such as increased self-esteem of migrants, their ability to critically analyze their situation and their active participation in the community. This case study shows how sociocultural community development can be a powerful tool for social inclusion and the fight against discrimination.

Creativity is also identified as an essential dimension of sociocultural community development (Della Croce, 2010). “Creativity enables facilitators to adapt to unforeseen situations and find innovative solutions to problems encountered” (Della Croce, 2010, p. 112). Art, as a vector of creativity and fulfilment, occupies an important place in sociocultural community development. This article explores the link between creativity and sociocultural community development, pointing out the importance of creativity in professional practices and training. The author highlights her essential role in adapting to changing situations and responding to diverse audiences’ needs. It also presents the approach of self-confrontation as a method for reflecting on professional practices and personal development. The text includes an example of a training module that incorporates a creative approach, with emphasis on cultural mediation and exploration of different forms of art. The objective is to train facilitators capable of fostering creative expression and active participation of individuals and communities.

The first years of the review show a desire to define the contours of sociocultural community development and position it as a full-fledged field of social intervention. The authors question the theoretical foundations of sociocultural community development, its methods of intervention and its aims. They stress the importance of training for facilitators, research and innovation in this area. They question the role of sociocultural community development in promoting citizenship, fighting discrimination and building a more just and inclusive society, associating their questioning with an ethical and political concern.

Sociocultural community development and citizen participation (2015-2019)

During the period 2015-2019, the Journal explores the link between sociocultural community development and citizen participation. Emphasis is placed on the importance of developing participatory practices and actively involving citizens in the design and implementation of cultural projects. This orientation is part of a social and political context marked by an increase in citizen demands and a crisis of confidence in traditional institutions. Sociocultural community development, by promoting dialogue, co-construction and citizen involvement, is positioned as a privileged tool to strengthen participatory democracy and promote a more just and inclusive society.

As Subirats (2013) points out, “public policies must evolve towards a more personalized and collaborative approach to social inclusion that recognizes the dignity and specificity of each individual” (p. 215). Cultural activities, by taking part in this process, can help create a social climate conducive to civic engagement and democratic participation.

Several articles explore the modalities and issues of citizen participation in the field of sociocultural community development. Armbruster Elatifi et al. (2015) advocate a re-appropriation of evaluation through participation, stressing that evaluation should not be limited to quantitative results measurement but also take processes into account, the perceptions of the actors involved and the qualitative impacts on individuals and the group. "Participatory evaluation is a way to give beneficiaries a voice and involve them in project improvement" (Armbruster Elatifi et al., 2015, p. 142). Involving the recipients from the beginning of the project and throughout its evaluation promotes their empowerment and makes the process more democratic. The author proposes a multi-step methodology to implement this approach, emphasizing the importance of co-constructing objectives, gathering views from all stakeholders and collectively analyzing results. This approach not only improves the quality of projects, but also strengthens social ties and empowers individuals.

Ciraso-Calí et al. (2015) explore the impact of a participatory evaluation process on community empowerment. By analyzing the discussions within a working group, the researchers identified a significant change in participants' perception of themselves and their roles. "Participatory evaluation has enabled community members to identify themselves as agents of change and develop their capacity for collective action" (Ciraso-Calí et al., 2015, p. 158). Participatory evaluation has helped to strengthen individuals' self-esteem, develop their critical sense and encourage their involvement in community life. It also facilitated the creation of a space for dialogue and exchange, thus strengthening the sense of belonging and social cohesion. The results of this research show that participatory evaluation is a powerful tool for promoting community development and individual empowerment. It offers the opportunity for community members to take control of their own destiny and actively contribute to improving their environment.

Soler et al. (2015) explore how to measure the impact of sociocultural outreach projects on the empowerment of individuals and communities. The authors developed a theoretical and methodological framework to assess empowerment in this context. They identified a series of indicators related to self-esteem, capacity to act, sense of belonging and ability to transform one's environment. These indicators were tested on the ground through sociocultural activities in Catalonia. The results show that participatory evaluation can be a powerful tool for empowering individuals and strengthening social cohesion within communities. This study thus provides a solid basis for developing evaluation tools adapted to the specificities of sociocultural community development projects and for measuring their long-term impact.

Sociocultural community development is thus called upon to play a key role in promoting participatory democracy, fostering citizen engagement and empowering individuals and communities to act on their environment. This participatory dimension of cultural animation is particularly important in a context of crisis of political representation and the rise of citizen movements. Cultural activities can help create spaces for dialogue and debate, as well as foster the emergence of new forms of governance that are more democratic and participatory.

This period also saw the emergence of the notion of "cultural citizenship", which emphasizes the active role of citizens in cultural life. Sociocultural community development is then perceived as a means of encouraging the exercise of this cultural citizenship, by enabling individuals to appropriate culture, participate in its creation and share it. As Pose (2015) points out, "culture must be a tool for strengthening social ties, fostering local development and promoting active citizenship" (p. 283).

This notion of cultural citizenship is part of a broader perspective of cultural democracy, which aims to guarantee access to culture for all and to promote citizens' participation in cultural life. Sociocultural community development, as a practice aimed at democratizing access to culture and fostering citizen participation, is therefore at the heart of this cultural democracy.

In a context of globalization and growing cultural diversity, sociocultural community development also plays an important role in promoting social cohesion. By encouraging people from different backgrounds and cultures to meet and exchange, it helps create social bonds and strengthen the sense of belonging to a community.

Cultural activities can also help prevent conflict and discrimination by promoting mutual understanding and respect for differences. It can also help marginalized individuals and groups to integrate into society and participate fully in social and cultural life. "Sociocultural community development is a powerful tool for promoting intercultural dialogue and peaceful cohabitation" (Munteanu, 2013, p. 238).

Despite the benefits of citizen participation in sociocultural community development, it is important to recognize the challenges associated with it. Citizen participation can be difficult to implement, especially due to social and cultural inequalities, lack of resources and the complexity of the issues addressed.

It is therefore important to develop appropriate methods and tools to promote citizen participation. It is also crucial to train the sociocultural community developers in participatory practices and to raise their awareness of the issues of cultural democracy. "The training of facilitators must include a critical and reflexive dimension in order to allow them to question their practices and adapt them to the challenges of citizen participation" (Lanaspà et Curto, 2015, p. 175).

Sociocultural community development and territorial issues (2014-2018)

The issues of the Review devoted to territorial dynamics of sociocultural community development (2014-2018) highlight a growing concern for the local anchoring of the practices. The analysis of territorial realities reveals the need to consider local specificities and develop projects rooted in specific sociocultural and geographical contexts. Sociocultural community development is thus conceived as a tool for local development, contributing to the dynamization of territories, the valorization of cultural heritage and the strengthening of social ties.

This attention to territorial issues is part of a context marked by an increasing awareness of the importance of local development and the need to take into account the specificities of each territory. Cultural activities, by being rooted in local realities, can help to strengthen the identity of communities, promote social cohesion and foster the economic and social development of territories. As Augustin (2014) points out, "sociocultural community development must be part of a process of co-construction of the city, in collaboration with the inhabitants and the various actors of the territory" (p. 105).

Several articles published in the Journal explore the role of sociocultural community development in development outside major urban centers. Bestani and Zaoui (2014) explore the participatory approach in the context of rural development policies in Algeria, highlighting the importance of a bottom-up approach that promotes local involvement. They analyze the historical challenges facing this development, characterized by a top-down approach and a lack of local

commitment: “Rural development in Algeria has long been characterized by a top-down approach, which has led to a lack of ownership of projects by local populations” (Bestani and Zaoui, 2014, p. 118). The text then traces the evolution of policies, from state interventionism to the promotion of participation through the National Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (SNDR). The IMDR project, which aims to adapt the European LEADER methodology to the Algerian context, is highlighted, emphasizing the importance of cooperation, training and local empowerment for the success of such projects. This text advocates rural development that is truly participatory and places the needs and aspirations of the local population at the heart of its concerns.

Moussaoui and Megherbi (2014) focus on the role of associations in local development also in Algeria, particularly in the wilaya of Bejaia. They highlight the potential of associations as agents of social change, while highlighting the challenges they face. The study reveals that although effective participation of associations is limited by a lack of coordination, collaboration and a restrictive institutional environment. “Associations have a crucial role to play in local development, but they need institutional support and an enabling environment to be able to act effectively” (Moussaoui and Megherbi, 2014, p. 132). The text stresses the importance of strengthening the involvement of associations and coordination between local actors to promote effective and sustainable local development. It advocates for greater recognition of the crucial role of associations in promoting local development in Algeria.

Cultural activities also play an important role in urban spaces, contributing to the revitalization of neighbourhoods, the creation of social links and the promotion of citizenship. Augustin (2014) analyses the evolution of sociocultural community development in France in relation to urban transformations and public policies. It highlights three successive urban benchmarks: the urban facilities (1960), the urban devices (1980) and urban projects (1990). Each reference has shaped the role of sociocultural community development, leading it from an institutional and centralized approach to a more decentralized approach, participatory and focused on the co-construction of the city. The text shows the tensions and challenges facing social and cultural leaders, while highlighting their crucial role in promoting social cohesion, the emergence of new forms of collective action in a constantly changing urban context.

Art plays an important role in sociocultural community development as a tool for expression, creation and social transformation. Many articles explore the links between art and sociocultural community development. Quintas (2012) presents the “Art au travail” program, a Quebec initiative that encourages collective creation in the workplace. The program connects artists and companies to realize collaborative projects involving employees. The study brings out the benefits of this approach, such as developing creativity, improving the company’s image, beautifying the workspace and strengthening team spirit. The evaluation of the program revealed positive results, including greater employee satisfaction and a more positive perception of art, work and colleagues. It is the factors of motivation and resistance to participation, highlighting the importance of company commitment, artist know-how and ability to create good connections between artists and companies. It also explores the potential of artistic processes as tools for managerial innovation and examines the impact of culture on creativity and innovation. It underscores the need for artists and companies to adapt to each other and collaborate effectively. The paper concludes by highlighting the importance of art and culture as drivers of innovation and social transformation and presents the “Art at Work” program as a successful example of this approach.

Cultural activities are increasingly seen as a tool for local development, contributing to the revitalization of territories, job creation and improvement of the quality of life of residents. Sociocultural community developers are called upon to work in partnership with local authorities, associations and companies to develop projects that meet the needs and challenges of the territories. “Sociocultural community development can be an important lever for the economic and social development of territories, by promoting cultural tourism, artistic creation, social and solidarity economy” (Arpaillange, 2017, p. 312).

The territorial anchoring raises many challenges. It is important to ensure that sociocultural community development projects are adapted to local specificities and take into account the needs and aspirations of the population. It is also crucial to encourage local participation in the design and implementation of projects, to ensure ownership and sustainability. “Sociocultural community development must be rooted in local realities and build on the resources and skills of the territory” (Diakhate, 2012, p. 48).

Sociocultural community development and social transformation (2011-2023)

Throughout the issues of the Journal, sociocultural community development is presented as a vector for social transformation. This speech, which crosses the different periods and themes discussed, demonstrates a desire to go beyond a limited vision of it as a leisure or entertainment activity. It is rather designed as a tool for emancipation, the fight against discrimination and the promotion of social justice. Social and cultural leaders are called to be agents of change, by engaging in projects that aim to transform social relations and promote a more just and equitable society.

This discourse on social transformation takes various forms depending on the contexts and themes addressed. In the field of education, cultural activities are used to promote the academic success of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Lemonchois and Ouvrard (2016) note that “participation in cultural projects enables students to develop their creativity, self-confidence and critical thinking skills, which are essential for academic success and personal development” (p. 295). In the health field, sociocultural community development contributes to improving patients’ quality of life and their social reintegration. Liot and Montero (2018) point out that “sociocultural community development, by promoting the well-being, socialization and self-expression of patients, contributes to a global management and an improvement in quality of life” (p. 342). In the area of community development, it promotes citizen participation and the construction of collective projects.

Zieglmeyer’s article (2018) offers a reflection on “radical empowerment” in sociocultural community development. The author stresses that it can be a powerful tool to challenge power structures and promote profound social change. “Critical sociocultural community development aims to develop the capacity of individuals and communities to act on their environment and transform social relationships” (Zieglmeyer, 2018, p. 328). It calls on sociocultural facilitators to adopt a critical stance and engage in transformative practices.

Márquez Herrera (2018) explores the political dimension of sociocultural community development and the role of the sociocultural community developer as an agent of change. The author emphasizes that practices are not neutral but carry values and objectives that aim to transform society. “The sociocultural community developer must be aware of the political dimension of his interventions and engage in practices that aim to promote social justice

and equality” (Márquez Herrera, 2018, p. 335). Social and cultural leaders contribute to the empowerment of individuals and communities by developing critical thinking, strengthening citizen participation and combating inequalities.

A longitudinal analysis shows that the discourse on social transformation in sociocultural community development has evolved over the years. At the beginning of the period under review (2010-2014), emphasis is placed on the emancipatory dimension of sociocultural community development and its role in promoting social justice. Over the years, discourse has become more radical and sociocultural community development is increasingly presented as a tool for challenging power structures and promoting profound social changes. This change in discourse reflects the social and political transformations that have marked recent years, including the rise of social movements and the social and economic crises that have affected many countries.

Sociocultural community development has close links with popular education, a pedagogical movement that aspires to the emancipation of individuals and social transformation. Popular education emphasizes the active participation of learners, the development of critical thinking and the collective construction of knowledge. Sociocultural community development, by drawing on these principles, can help create spaces for learning and critical thinking, as well as foster citizen engagement. “Popular education and sociocultural community development share common values such as participation, autonomy and solidarity” (Kouakou, 2017, p. 254).

Sociocultural community development can also play an important role in social movements, offering spaces for expression, meeting and organization. It can contribute to the mobilization of citizens, the dissemination of ideas and the construction of solidarity. “Sociocultural community development can be a powerful tool for social movements, enabling them to structure themselves, mobilize and bring their demands” (Bastien-Charlebois, 2013, p. 231).

Cultural activities are also often associated with community action, which aims to improve the living conditions of communities and promote their development. It can help strengthen social ties, encourage citizen participation and develop collective projects. “Sociocultural community development and community action are two complementary approaches that aim to promote the social and cultural development of communities” (Sirvent, Lomagno and Llosa, 2011, p. 138).

It is essential, however, to recognize the limitations of sociocultural community development as a tool for social transformation. It cannot solve complex social problems alone. It must be part of a broader social change process, involving other actors and levers of action. It is also important to ensure that cultural activities are not instrumentalized for political or ideological purposes. It must remain a space of freedom and creativity, serving the emancipation of individuals and communities. “Sociocultural community development must be critical and reflective, so as not to reproduce existing inequalities and dominations” (Ziegelmeier, 2018, p. 331).

Conclusion: sociocultural community development at the dawn of an uncertain world

The diachronic analysis of the articles published in the Journal reveals a significant evolution of socio-cultural community development over the last 15 years. The digital world, the evolution of audiences, territorial issues, social transformation and communication challenges have shaped the field of sociocultural community development and led to a thorough reflection on its foundations, practices and purposes.

In an increasingly complex world, marked by social, economic and environmental uncertainties, sociocultural community development is at a crossroads. It is called upon to play a crucial role in building a more just, inclusive and democratic future. But to do so, it must meet many challenges and adapt to the new realities of the contemporary world.

From a sociological point of view, cultural activities are seen as a privileged tool for strengthening social ties, promoting social cohesion and fostering the integration of individuals and communities. By providing spaces for meeting, exchange and creation, cultural activities help to create social bonds and strengthen the sense of belonging to a community. It also makes it possible to promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. In this context, it is interesting to note the emergence of new forms of sociocultural community development, such as the “third places”, which offer spaces for hybrid socialization and creation, both physical and virtual. As Grioui (2023) points out, “massively multiplayer online games can be considered digital third places because they provide a neutral and open space where players can meet, communicate and develop relationships” (p. 128).

In a context of rising social inequalities and social fragmentation, sociocultural community development has an important role to play in combating exclusion and promoting social justice. By promoting access to culture for all, it helps reduce inequalities in access to cultural resources and promotes equal opportunities. It also gives voice to marginalized individuals and groups and encourages their participation in social and cultural life. Sociocultural community development can thus be a powerful tool for combating discrimination and promoting social inclusion, as shown by the work of Aguilar Idáñez (2010) on practices among migrants. “Sociocultural community development can contribute to the empowerment of migrants by allowing them to express themselves, share their experiences and participate in social and cultural life” (Aguilar Idáñez, 2010, p. 102).

In the face of environmental challenges, cultural activities can help raise awareness among citizens about sustainable development issues and promote eco-responsible behavior. It can also foster the emergence of new cultural practices that are more environmentally friendly. The article by Vohlgemuth et al. (2021) on the integration of physical and natural sciences in the training of social and cultural facilitators illustrates this growing concern for environmental issues. “The integration of science into the training of sociocultural community developers allows them to become aware of environmental issues and equip them to develop eco-responsible projects” (Vohlgemuth et al., 2021, p. 87).

In an increasingly digital world, sociocultural community development must adapt to new technologies and new modes of communication. It must also be able to face the challenges of misinformation and manipulation of information. Media literacy and digital citizenship must become a priority for facilitators, as highlighted by Motoi’s article (2023) on learning critical thinking in relation to the media. “Sociocultural community development has a role to play in media education, teaching citizens how to decipher media messages and develop critical thinking” (Motoi, 2023, p. 135).

Sociocultural community development would therefore have a bright future ahead of it. But to fully realize its transformative potential, it must continue to adapt to the changing world and reinvent itself. The actors in this field must show creativity, adaptability and critical thinking to

face the challenges and seize the opportunities that are presented. Sociocultural community development has an essential role to play in building a more just, inclusive and democratic future.

Towards a reflective and committed sociocultural community development

In conclusion, we wish to stress the importance of developing a reflective and engaged sociocultural community development. Social and cultural leaders must be able to question their practices, contextualize them and adapt them to contemporary social and cultural issues. They must also be able to take a stand and engage in actions that aim at transforming society.

Sociocultural community development should not be a mere technique of activation or entertainment. It must be a critical and committed practice, serving the development of individuals and communities. Only then can it contribute to building a better future for everyone and all.

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