
Consumers, non consumers, cultural agents and cultural policies¹

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I. Introduction².

Cultural policies are very relatively recent phenomena in Spain. So in some way in this last 25 years we have had the possibility to see the building of this process from zero to the current level, that is not too far away from the normal practise in Europe. For other European countries the relevant problem is not to understand the origins of cultural policies but to explain the present realities of the cultural sectors and which role the State plays in this frame. Despite that this is not an empirical paper about the cultural policies in Spain, in some sense, the Spanish historical circumstances and data could bias the theoretical approach of this paper. Anyway, we use this historical proximity, to arrive at certain microfoundations of cultural policies, (and we do that in a not very usual way), that could be more hidden in other consolidated and experienced realities. And this goal “must be” useful in a more generalised realm. If this “must be” is not accomplished then the exercise won’t deserve the efforts.

We begin with some consideration about tastes and preferences trying to determine the linkages between both in order to analyse the special case where we express preferences to goods that dislike us. With the development of this approach we deduce the concept of decomposed demand, where one part of our preferences reflect our tastes and the other one our “mental models”. And we define two types of goods (embarrassing and reputable), depending on which effect plays the “mental models” in the expression of the preferences over them. At this point we can build a demand function for cultural goods as the addition of the demand of cultural consumers and the non consumers. And moreover, we defend there that the preferences not expressed in the market of the non-consumers are the basis of the “demand for cultural policies”. Finally we consider that in this framework the State is faced to a dilemma that could be solved in different ways.

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² In this paper we use and develop some ideas that were “created” in a previous paper, presented at the X EAPE Conference in 1999 in Lisbon. Our acknowledge to Salvador Carrasco co-author of this previous paper. We thank too the comments of Asensi Descalç from the University of València.

II. Tastes, the boundary of economics?.

What cultural economics can do best for economic science is certainly to improve the question about how preferences are shaped. The dangers of this process of improvement are that it could bring out of the boundaries of economics itself. It is true that the first steps that contradicted the supposed stability of tastes come from the analysis of cultural goods. In the realm of cultural goods and services (to enjoy a painting, to listen to a piece of music or to attend a theatre performance) training of tastes is a relevant topic and as Marshall already wrote: "It is that we do not suppose time to be allowed for any alteration in the character of tastes of the man himself. It is therefore no exception to the law that the more good music a man hears, the stronger is his taste for it likely to become"³. But if we can not find ontological differences between cultural goods and other kind of goods, we must reintroduce the cultural consumption into the ordinary consumption⁴. And then, in the other way, trying to explain "the usual anomalies" detected in cultural consumption, could be useful to explain the general consumption.

Perhaps the question about how preferences are determined is the most important challenge that Cultural Economics throw over general economics. And tastes play here, a very relevant role. The first trial about changing tastes in cultural consumption was partially solved with the contribution of Stigler and Becker (1977) "Gustibus non est Disputandum". Through their formulation it is possible to get the conclusion that changes in goods consumption are not explained by tastes variations but to the reduction of the shadow price of artistic consumption. This reduction is mainly caused by previous expositions, due to the fact that marginal utility of the used time increases with these expositions, yet considering that tastes remain stable. Anyway, at least as Throsby (1994) wrote "it is clear that the endogeneization of tastes in economics models is likely to be essential if any progress is to be made in explaining demand for the arts". In another perspective endogeneization of tastes is one of the most common claims by the non conventional streams in economics (Barceló, A.1998).

Anyway the aim of this paper is not to deal with the problem of changing tastes, but with the gap between "true tastes" and expressed preferences.

³ Cited in Villani, 1992

⁴ In a more sociological approach; "The science of taste and of cultural consumption begins with a transgression that is in no way aesthetic: it has to abolish the sacred frontier which makes legitimate culture a separate universe, in order to discover the intelligible relations which unite apparently incommensurable 'choices', such as preferences in music and food, painting and sport, literature and hairstyle. This barbarous reintegration of aesthetic consumption into the world of ordinary consumption abolishes the opposition, which has been the basis of high aesthetics since Kant, between the 'taste of sense' and the 'taste of reflection', and between facile pleasure, pleasure reduced to a pleasure of the senses, and pure pleasure, pleasure purified of pleasure, which is predisposed to become a symbol of moral excellence and a measure of the capacity for sublimation which defines the truly human man. The culture which results from this magical division is sacred. (cultural consecration does indeed confer on the objects, persons and situations it touches, a sort of ontological promotion akin to a transubstantiation".

The Irene's effect

One aspect of the problem is the linkage between tastes and preferences. To illustrate this issue, it can be useful the Irene's example; a 4 year-old girl. The first time she tasted a pottage of lentils, she liked it a lot, but among their ingredients there were some few beets. Without detecting their presence in the spoon, immediately after putting it in her mouth, Irene showed her most expressive displeasure and the whole content of the tablespoon was spit on the carpet. Although her linguistic resources are quite limited it was clear that she didn't like beets. During some time her father was devoted to elaborate a discourse in which he connected the ingestion of beets with the possibility of becoming taller her school companions. A couple of weeks after her father sometimes got her to eat beets and even sometimes herself demanded to eat beets, while for her expression it was undoubtedly clear that she didn't like them.

The basic problem is that the conversion of tastes, understood exclusively as a process of reward of emotions or sensations (sight, ear, touch, smell and taste), in preferences, can only be carried out in a tautological way. That is to say, that if we express, direct or indirectly our preferences on some type of goods or services is because "we like them". And there is not way of measurement of our tastes in an independent way to our expression on them. So, sometimes we can hide our "true taste" not only towards others but also towards ourselves

Two main aspects can follow of this unsuitability. In first place the question appears about whether or not is possible "to prefer" goods that we don't like. Or on the contrary, if we don't prefer goods that we like. The second aspect has been more frequent in the economic analysis through the concept of the weakness of willingness. Secondly if it is possible to manipulate our preferences, that is to say if we can consider the endogeneization of preferences. Both aspects, although they are very present in other social sciences as the Sociology or the Psychology, since they affect two basic pillars for the coherence of the economy; the consumer's sovereignty and the rationality, have been treated in a very marginal way by the conventional economy, and always as negligible anomalies. "The technical characteristics of some situations subvert the normal relationship between perceived preferences and action, so rational individuals may be expected to act in ways that do not directly reveal their preferences. This type of argument is common in economics and is widely accepted as providing limits to the normative scope of consumer sovereignty". As we can check, although this type of argument is common in economics is widely accepted, the text in *italic* (our *italic*) they are always considered as anomalies that subvert the normal relationship. The contributions of Elster from Ulysses and the Sirens, in 1979 they have drawn us with enough precision the profiles of the borders. The analysis of Endogeneity of preferences, Inconstant preferences, Undesirable preferences, Multiple preferences and Relevation, Weakness of will and so on. Some specifics of cultural consumption allow us to take a walk on this border side.

III. *Why don't we do what we want?*

Though we can not consider the following data as the empirical ground of our utterances, they can reinforce our intuitions about the issue. The following data panel shows the answers of the interviewees on how they spend their free time, compared to their ideal use option.

Table 1. Real and ideal free time activities.

% N = 2.985 Multiple choice answer % of people that choice the answer	what tends to take up, as a rule, your free time?	If it depended on you, how would you like to use your free time ?	Real/Ideal
Be with the family	76	41	1,9
To do sport	32	34	0,9
Go to the cinema	27	29	0,9
Watching television	69	25	2,8
Read books, magazines	45	24	1,9
Listen to music	42	22	1,9
Go to the theatre	8	18	0,4
Go for dancing	17	17	1,0
To watch sport	33	17	1,9
Not to do anything special	16	13	1,2
To date a girl/boy	18	12	1,5
To play a musical instrument	4	10	0,4

Source: Estudio CIS-Consejo Superior de Deportes 2.198, noviembre 1995.

The question that arises from these data is; why do people not act according to their ideal preferences? These differences between real time and ideal time spent in leisure activities shows that there must exist some constraints that do not allow people to behave according to their ideal options. Of course in most of these activities there are important constraints that limit the ideal option considerably. For instance we would like to spend our time playing music but for doing that we first need to learn how to play an instrument. Obviously it is an important constraint that could explain the differences between real and ideal preferences. Indeed, the conventional approach will bring us the questions of costs and constraints. If we do not go more to the theatre as much as we would like it is because the cost of going to the theatre. Or if we spend more time with the family is because there are important constraints that compel us to do so (to share familiar household, to attend the education of our children, to guide their educational or leisure activities). However, this approach could not explain why in activities that imply very similar costs (to go to the theatre and to the cinema) and impose practically the same constraints, so notable differences appear between ideal and actual use of the leisure time.

On the other hand, neither would it explain how an activity as watching tv, where there are no important constraints that oblige us to watch it, why there are so many differences between the wished consumption and the actual consumption?

To observe the dimension of prices effect, we can see Table 2, where from the source of a wide survey on habits of cultural consumption in Spain, we can check that, the difference between the expressed interest and the attendance could be explained partially by the price. However the magnitude of the differences between

high culture and cinema point us that the influence of other factors should exist. Moreover still considering that in all four cases (theatre, music, opera and cinema) the sociodemographic description show us consumers belonging to the middle and upper class, for whose the price variable is not the most determinant to explain behaviour.

Table 2.

% of population N= 12072 Year 1998, Spain.	% Declared	% Attenders (with assiduity)	Price***
High Interest ^a for theatre.	32,4	3,0 *	1054
High Interest for classical music	22,3	1,8 *	968
High Interest for opera	10,1	0,2 *	4653
High Interest for cinema	34,6	36,8 **	612

SGAE (2000): Informe sobre los hábitos del consumocultural. Ed. Fundación Autor. Madrid

SGAE (1999): Anuario. Edit. Fundación Autor. Madrid

* More than 4 times/year

** More than 6 times/year

*** Collection / spectators

(a) High interest means, the subjective valuation of 5 or 6, in a scale between 1 and 6

A solution for this paradox consists on defining different origins to explain our preferences. The economic theory of consumption postulates like one of its basic suppositions a type of total rationality by the individual-consumer. A type of rationality in which the human being stops to be such a human being to become a “representative agent”; the homo oeconomicus. The traditional utility theory presupposes that the consumer possesses some very defined preferences, with very peculiar properties, that is, continuity of the preferences, non saturation, completeness..., and it is assumed their stability over time and space of individuals, for what are considered as exogenous to the model.

However, the purely economic man is destined, indeed, to be a imbecile social in words of Sen (1977), and the common sense take us to the fact that is not intellectually reasonable that by means of a series of axiomatic premises at the point to modelize the “true decision” of consumption (if we don’t want to fall in a excessive reductionism).

These “deficiencies” that took, and that still take, to the economists to skirt the limits of their science with the sociology, the psychology and the philosophy, just as Harsanyi (1955) with the differentiation among “ethical preferences” (based on the social dimension) and “subjective preferences” (based on the personal dimension), Stigler and Becker (1977) with their analogy of the consumption as a productive process, or Sen (1977) with those “rankings of preference rankings” (metapreferences, preferences of second order, ideally well educated preferences...). All these proposals that go into in the dissociation of the rationality and the multiplicity of preferential outlines, contributed to achieve for the economic science a bigger degree of verisimilitude and a more “fine tuning” to the complexity of social processes.

For example, in this field, Brennan (in Brennan and Walsh (1990)) pointed out the possibility of a seemingly irrational behaviour, explained by the divergence among preferences and action, and/or preferences and true interest. Given their perspective (political processes), they propose some readjustments in the basic paretian propositions about value judgements that end in the premise that the political process can solve the deviation eliminating irrational behaviours. This, that can be seen as an attack to the individual sovereignty, is not completely, since in spite of not being the best judge in their well-being, it continues being the appropriate referee of their own interests. Starting from here, they develop a voting theory in which the subject faces the consequences of their expressed preferences, distinguishing this way among the true expressed preferences (through the polls, or in a market context by means of the purchase) and the expressed preferences (in questionnaires of surveys; in the author's example).

The previous discussion is not, however completely satisfactory for our purposes. Our objective, although it is to explain the demand of cultural policies cultural, doesn't include any voting theory. More interesting for our objective is the work "Democracy and Decision", (Brennan and Lomasky, 1993) where they introduce us to the preferential outline in a self-paternalism environment that supposes an extension to the ideas reflected by Brennan three years before. The preferences that are revealed in voting contexts are denominated "p-preferences" and, according to the authors, they are not guided toward the attainment of a result ("preferences revealed by voting will tend to be non-outcome-oriented"), while those that pursue a concrete result, receive the name of "m-preferences" ("since [this] preferences are pre-eminent in market contexts"). Again, this duality of preferences that both also remain in the same level, provoke a divergence, causing the appearance of inefficient results (finally it disappears the characterisation of "irrational").

Following this dissociated approach, we can consider that in cultural consumption, a part of the utility comes from the rewards for the excitement generated in our emotions and in our senses and on the other hand that that people "act in part upon the basis of myths, dogmas, ideologies and 'half baked ' theories" (Denzau, North, 1994). And this half baked theories could be more important to define the decision of cultural consumption that is conventionally considered

IV. Decomposed demand. Reputable and embarrassing preferences.

In theoretical terms, we can propose a utility function, $U(C)=U(\text{tastes, mental models})$, in which the consumption doesn't only depend on tastes, but also on the mental models. Let us also suppose that, although it is not assigned a specific functional form, the function is additively separable in its terms, this is, $U(\text{tastes, mental models})=U(\text{tastes})+U(\text{mental models})$.

We could decompose the demand function in two different components; on the one side that part of the demand related to mental models (ideal demand) and on the other side that we could designate as "classic demand" related to a given distribution of tastes, preferences and to the price in a classic way. Though this decomposition will be very little empirically useful it can provide us some higher resolution in conceptual terms, and perhaps it could avoid us to define all this hierarchies of levels of preferences.

Thus we would have a total Demand D_t that of a very simple manner could be formulated in the following way:

$$D_t = D_c + \alpha D_i$$

Being D_i , the ideal demand, a dependent function of mental models (MM), and α the proportion in which the ideal demand is effectively expressed in consumption,

$$D_i = f(\text{MM})$$

While the classic demand would depend only on price and tastes.

$$D_c = (\text{Price, Tastes})$$

Though it is not the objective of the present work to go deeper into the complete implications of this simple formalisation, we could consider that in normal conditions and for most of the goods $D_c > D_i$, being in this way that ideal demand only partially softens or modifies the trend that shows classic demand⁵. In this framework when D_i is negative we are speaking of an embarrassing preference, while when D_i is positive we are facing a reputable preference. The embarrassing preference would make reference, then, to those goods that individuals like and then they express this through the concretion of their market demands, but that they would wish, for ideal reasons, not to like it. Thus occasionally the consumers dominate the pressure of their classic preferences and succumb to the criteria of their mental models, reflecting finally a demand inferior to which would result in case they did not listen to their ideal "conscience". On the contrary the reputable preferences are those expressed on goods that do not correspond with our tastes but on those of which our mental models tell us that "we should have to" like more. Effective demand of these reputable goods, therefore is superior to the one that would reflect our classic preferences in the moment that we submit ourselves to our duty⁶ and we demand these goods that we partially dislike.

If $D_i < 0$ embarrassing preference. \rightarrow $D_c > D_t > \text{Ideal Demand}$
If $D_i > 0$ reputable preference \rightarrow $D_c < D_t < \text{Ideal Demand}$.

This artificial de-construction of demand allows us to isolate, at least conceptually, the effects of the mental models and to categorize those types of consumption in which the mental models, either in a positive or negative way, explain the effective demand.

Though the data that appear in the previous point (see Table 1) are rather circumstantial related to the topic that concerns us, it allows us to classify some cultural or symbolic consumption within the defined (reputable and embarrassing preferences) categories. If we pay attention to the ratio between real (declared) and ideal demand, we could quickly deduce that watching tv is clearly an embarrassing

⁵ Though it results relatively easy to find examples where ideal demand will be the principal component of total demand. i.e journeys to Meca for Muslims or Sunday mass for Catholics.

⁶ Its consumption responds in a given proportion to the pressure that practices on our acts an ideal conception on the goodness of cultural consumption. As the same Keynes wrote in 1927 about buying books; is a social duty that first of all gratifies those who observe it (Keynes, 1927).

preference and going to the theatre a reputable one⁷. Other cultural consumptions as going to the cinema seems to adjust quite well the real and the ideal consumption, while listening to music, listening to the radio and reading books and magazines show some more confusing results.

Generalising, we can say the “high culture” consumption (classical music, theatre, opera, modern art) is affected by the Irene’s effect.

V. The demand of cultural policy.

Some more consequences we can find from this approach, because the demand originated by our mental models but not expressed, could ground the demand of cultural policies.

We can find antecedents of construction of demands of cultural policies in Frey and Pommerehne (1989). Starting from the results of direct referendums which took place in Switzerland, a demand curve is built where in the vertical axis is located the percentage of favourable votes to the subsidy (to a communal theatre, in this concrete case), and in the horizontal axis is the subsidised quantity. As a result of two referendums, a decreasing curve is obtained, as predicted in economic theory.

We try another way. If we accept that the demand of this type of goods is dualized, at aggregate level we could also distinguish two types of collectives: The consumers (its demand function is in great measure formed by its "true tastes", that is to say, the predominant effect in this type of consumers is the provoked by their tastes, and for simplicity we suppose that their utility function depends exclusively on the first factor: tastes). And for other side, the non-consumers (in its case, the mental models is those that bigger effect provides to the construction of its aggregated demand; we suppose for this group that their utility function only depends on the mental models, and that they only materialize their demands in a proportion α).

$$\begin{aligned} U^{\text{CONSUMERS}} = U(\text{tastes}) &\Rightarrow D^{\text{CONSUMERS}} = D^{\text{C}} \\ U^{\text{NON CONSUMERS}} = U(\text{mental models}) &\Rightarrow D^{\text{NON CONSUMERS}} = D^{\text{I}} \end{aligned}$$

The effective demand therefore will be the sum of the demand of the consumers and a proportion of the demand generated by the mental models:

$$D = D^{\text{C}} + \alpha D^{\text{I}}$$

⁷ Specifically for the theatre, the empirical studies seem to show that the satisfaction degree is bigger among the occasional attenders than in the frequent attenders (Lévy-Garboua, L., Montmarquette, 1996), what could indicate us that the satisfaction of the occasional attenders don't comes so much of the sensorial rewards but of the sensation of having completed a duty.

Also the notes that makes Brennan on the fact of (Brennan and Walsh, 90, pág 102) that the concerts of classic music solded by abonaments, can indicate that somehow the users put under an obligation to go with the help of paying in advance.

The classic demand has a more or less standard behaviour, while we suppose that D^I it will show a very low sensibility with regard to the price. This supposition can be more or less based empirically with the answer that give the interviewees regarding those variables that could increase the attendance to the theatre. Only 22,3% of those that never or hardly ever go to the theatre considers that the variable price has some effect to increase the audience, while for those that go more than twice or three times a year, 41% considers that the price is a relevant factor. In this sense the elasticity of the D^I , act more as a pretext than as a factor of budget constraints

Table 3.

Price. Would influence in increasing the attendance to the theatre (multiple answer)?	%
Consumers*	41,0
Non Consumers**	22,3

Source: SGAE (2000): Informe sobre los hábitos del consumocultural. Ed. Fundación Autor. Madrid

* They are theatregoers more than 2-3 times/year

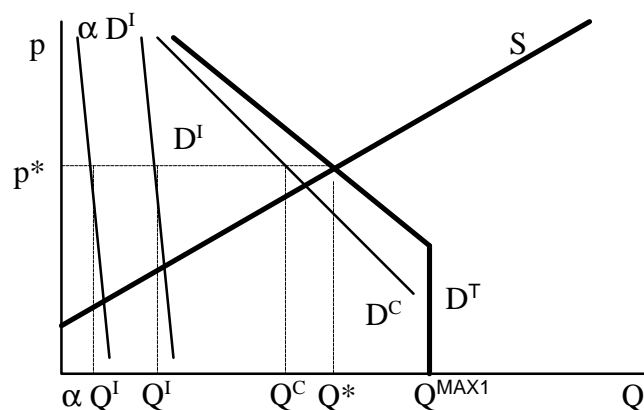
**They go to the theatre esporadically or never

Another important supposition is the existence at aggregated level of a point of saturation (Q^{MAX}) in the combined demand since the distribution of the taste for “high culture” is a finite and limited value at aggregated level, given that is an intensive-time consumption process. Therefore with a certain quantity all those that demand are quantitatively satisfied.

Given the “demand-oriented” character of this work, we won't consider the productive process of the cultural good that defines the supply curve. We suppose that it is a growing function in prices, as determine the conventional micro-economic theory.

This way, the market equilibrium is defined by Q^* and p^* .

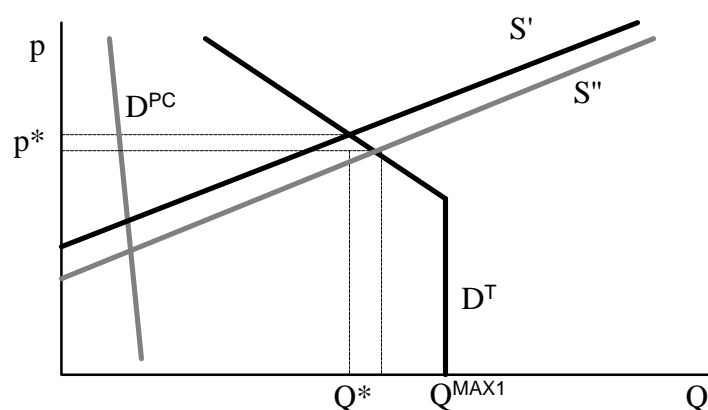
Figure 1. Equilibrium without public sector.



In this situation Q^* would result from the addition of $de Q^C$ and αQ^I . However the rest of the demand not effectively expressed $(1-\alpha)Q^I$, is translated in demand of cultural policies, and this fact could explain the paradox of why do the nonusers of cultural services agree in so high proportion with the public subsidies on culture?. Many empirical researches show that the cultural policies are one of the less questioned. There is a wide consensus in Europe that legitimates cultural policies, although they tend to be highly regressive and benefit to a small portion of the upper and middle class. The continued intervention of the State in culture, and the social acceptance of the expenses in culture could be interpreted as the social institutionalisation of the ideal demand of culture, aspect that would explain why many times, the nonusers of public cultural institutions show their willingness to pay. Many empirical evidence is provided in this sense (Throsby and Withers, 1979; Morisson and West, 1986, Schneider and Pommerehne, 1983). This decomposition of cultural demand that we propose would give coherence to this apparent paradox, since a part of the ideal demand not expressed in the market can remain expressed in preference terms on public policies. In this sense the “non users” of cultural services becomes the reverse of the free-rider problem. They don’t want to ride but they want to pay for the ride.

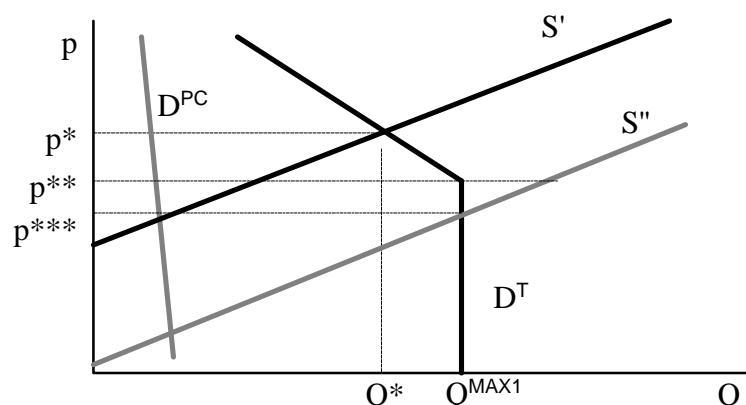
The demand of cultural policies is similar to a proportion of the total demand; and this proportion is $(1-\alpha)$, that is to say, the proportion of non consumers whose demand is not expressed in the market. In such a way, the demand cultural policies demand (D^{PC}) will be $D^{PC}=(1-\alpha) D^I$. This demand is expressed in the public opinion arena, building a wide social consensus, that act as a pressure over the State action. If the State is sensible to this demand of cultural policies, moreover when the costs in budget terms are rather moderate, the effect will be an increase in the public supply (although they provide private goods)) of cultural goods.

Figure 2. Equilibrium considering a Demand of cultural policies.



As we can observe in figure 2, there is no new problem if the increase of public supply doesn't overcome the Q^{MAX} . Price reduction and some crowding out effect will be the results of this action. However if the magnitude of that increment of the supply overcame the value of Q^{MAX} , as it appears in figure 3, the State is confronted with a non negligible dilemma that could determine the style of cultural policies.

Figure 3. Equilibrium considering a Demand of cultural policies (ii).



Strategies for cultural policies supply.

The consequences of this analytic perspective already move us far away from the conventional approach. Public policies are not the answer to any market failure but rather they are the answer to the expression of a demand of the non-consumers, that finally won't be beneficiaries of the public intervention. The concretion of the interventions becomes a difficult exercise since there is a big and generic demand of public support, and the citizens are willing to pay for it, but it doesn't exist a instructions book about what provide and how. In this framework we are speaking about private goods and we have represented the effects of each strategy in figure 4.

(i) Price reduction.

The more efficient (and probably the most recommended by conventional economics) strategy is subsidise a price reduction (to p^{***}) without moving quantity. There are two problems with this strategy; firstable has a clear regressive redistributive effect, and second and more important, the effective demanders of cultural policies – the non consumers- don't perceive that they are being satisfied.

(ii) Quantity increases.

Another most obvious answer from the public side is to increase the quantity of private cultural goods provided, maintaining the prices at the level p^{**} . This strategy implies an overprovision of cultural goods that could take us to the situation of empty halls and empty museums. In fact, this is a common strategy in Spain in the growing of cultural policies. This type of adjustment could be detected intuitively if one takes a walk on the regional museums or in those that aren't the main museums of the cities. The problems of this strategy is that the empty spaces⁸ are rather embarrassing for public managers, but the advantages are that the non-consumers (the really demanders of cultural policies) “can detect” the public action trough the new buildings (new theatres, new museums, new auditoriums, etc...) and so they get

⁸ Of the 887 pieces that have been represented in Madrid and Barcelona during the season 96-97 according to the Anuario el País, more than the 22% have had less than 30 spectators by performance. That implies about 2000 performances where the actors must compete hopelessly with their own echo.

more or less satisfied. This strategy could also explain the public efforts made, in Spain in the last two decades, over the cultural containers compared with the attention paid to the contents. In Spain the rise of the name of some architects (Santiago Calatrava, Moneo, Foster, among others) as signal of quality of the cultural projects is a good example of this process.

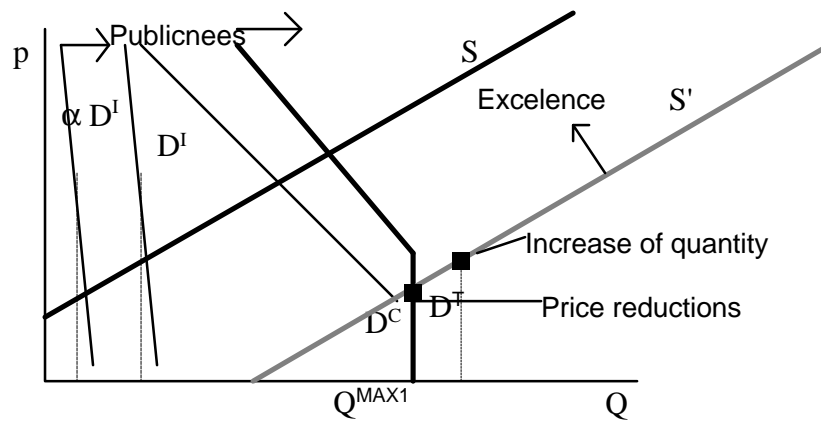
(iii) Excellence.

Another feasible possibility is to reinforce the quality of the supply by the searching of excellence. That means that the public intervention rise the prices of the factors in the production function (public and private), contracting the supply curve towards the left and so maintaining it around the point of saturation. This strategy implies that there are no significant variations in quantity but the modifications on quality made the cultural policies visible to the non consumers. A performance by Pavarotti or Plácido Domingo has important media effects and so the non-consumers could notice that there is someone making cultural interventions.

(iv) Publicness.

The strategy of the publicness consists on providing cultural goods with some characteristic of public good, forcing the marginal propensity to the effective demand of the non consumers increase. This is, varying the α (and therefore displacing the group of the Demand (D^T) toward the right and getting a higher saturation point (Q^{MAX}). An example of this type of strategy could be the supply of an sculpture exhibition in a public park. This way those no-consumers that will go for a walk to the park, will be forced to consume cultural goods.

Figure 4. Graphic representation of the public strategies



(v) Externalities.

Finally another way to return the positive effects to the non-consumers is providing cultural goods for visitors trough big events. So the non consumers detect the cultural policies and moreover enjoy the positive effects trough the externalities generated by the cultural policy (tourism, prestige of the city, etc...).

Of course in real world there are not pure strategies as described in this paper, and also the conversion of ideal demand into demand of cultural policies, and , of course, the conversion of cultural demand into public cultural supply are not so direct and simple as we describe here. We have to consider too, that some of the public interventions could not be understood only as “reaction” to the demand of public policies, and that the State has in some cases her own goals⁹. Anyway this simplification could be useful to analyse some cultural policies and some of the characteristics of the real world about the public intervention could fit well in the theoretical model shown in this paper.

VI. Final Remarks.

This paper emphasizes the obvious fact that consumption is a complex act in which a multitude of factors intervene. Its own complexity is probably the cause that economics may have tried to avoid the problem of how preferences are conformed and tastes are fitted in a fictitious stability. The mental models have a decisive importance in most of the consumption and in fact we could qualify globally the consumption as an " ideological act". In this sense the consumer sovereignty is not more than the space bounded with the sum of the restrictions that it is imposed on us by our vision of the world and life. Departing from this obvious assertion we wanted to point out that in some symbolic consumption as watching tv or attending theatre these conceptions or mental models are especially relevant and meaningful in the moment of explaining the behaviour of demand. With a simplified decomposition of demand we have tried to categorise two types of preferences; The reputable and the embarrassing, depending on the mental models that legitimate or discredit them. From this simple microfoundation of behaviour we ground a demand function for cultural policies where the State, in a first phase, merely react to the claim of the (basically)non consumer.

From this conception, some strategic behaviour from cultural institutions and agents can be understood. The world of art and culture have a high negotiation power in front of the public sphere that other professional or institutional collectives do not have. It is not rare in Spain that public declarations of individual actors, famous musicians, theatre directors, museums curator can easily affect cultural policies because the “non consumers” society has always present this lack between effective and ideal demand and cultural agents exploit this collective feeling of guilty and also they profit the lack of defined own goals by the Government. But as well, there is a scarce political and social control of cultural policies in the set of the European countries. Everything that carry the artistic or cultural adjective collects quickly a wide social and political consensus that avoids more detailed analysis on social economic profitability, opportunity costs of the projects, viable alternatives etc. The information deficiencies of detailed and harmonized statistics at European level can be a good indicative of the inappropriate control that European societies have on cultural activities and on the policies that articulate them.

⁹ This aspect is dealt in Rausell (1999).

The analysis shows that if we are near of the point of saturation the possibilities of amplifying audiences are quite limited. Some intuitive and partial evidences support our utterances¹⁰. From this point of view, the amplification of the cultural audiences since the World War II may have been based not mainly on the reduction of the access costs (prices and offer increases) but on the consolidation and extension of that dominant mythical discourse (mental models) of cultural consumption not only to the educated groups but to wider social groups.

¹⁰ For instance, for theatre, the last report of the SGAE in Spain, says about the possibilities of amplifying audiences. “Of the answers any measure is not deduced that could impel a growing to the theatre attendance. All the answers are unwrapped in some modest percentages. [...] Linked with the above-mentioned, it is significant that at least half of the interviewees it points out that no measure would influence to increases its disposition to go to the theatre”.

VII. Bibliographic references.

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