

VITALITY AND REQUALIFICATION OF CITIES: A CONTRIBUTION TO A RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF A SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING

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Abstract

The present study is focused on the *city*, as an urbanized space, thought and produced for and by man. It studies a notion of patrimony/ city that is beyond its architectonic and functional importance for it includes, forcibly, the human and humanized dimension, being this later vector the one that will grant it sustainability. Setting out from the will to contribute to the *vitality of cities in the promotion of their requalification*, we explored the viability of an interactive and mediatory instrument, which can be potentially useful to its management and planning. For doing so, we built measurable, objective but, above all, interactive parameters. This perspective, which is global and complex, claims the conjunction of the pedagogical approach, with factors of motivational capitalization and of the catalyzing of competences and abilities. It also casts a new look at the identification of opportunities able to vitalize the well-being of cities. Therefore, it is our belief that these are indicators of mediation because they aim at rethinking planning through a continuous exercise and systemic action in the intervention in potentially contentious spaces. Being our object of study “the places” in urban space, we built the concept of “entrepreneurial vitality”. We defined it based on the following three dimensions: (i) motivation, (ii) capabilities and (iii) opportunities. The conjugation of these three dimensions leads us to the notion of *the degree of people’s capability*, which, for us, will be greater (i) the better the motivational environment that structures the dynamic of places is, (ii) the better the factors that qualify and promote skills, capabilities and abilities are, so that they can be seen as social actors and agents and (iii) the more synergic the opportunities to catalyze the degree of participation in the several activities are, including the economic and political, which embody a community. In this reflection we started from an eclectic look at the critical field of social sciences regarding urban planning. Afterwards, we widened the perspective to show the importance of the articulation between analytical procedures and social intervention. We also plead for planning as a mediatory and relational practice in the creation of spaces that will enable social cohesion and convergence. This environment recreates the concepts of competitiveness and competences, here observed as spaces that materialize and instigate economic, social, political and cultural processes, whose interaction constitutes the core of sustenance for the sustainability of spaces.

Jel Classification: R11, R13, R58

Key words: city – skills – competitiveness – entrepreneurial vitality – sustainable planning

1. Introduction, purpose and organization of work

Increasingly, the urban expansion highlights the necessity of developing planning perspectives for the requalification of cities, which will enable quality of life for those who live in them and which will contribute to the sustainable development of the societies they integrate. We live in a time when it is urgent to create paths that consider: (i) the preservation of identities, (ii) environmental protection, (iii) citizenship, (iv) development, (v) competitiveness and (vi) social cohesion, whose conjugation reflects

the infrastructure of the very sustainability of spaces, namely, the urban. Based on the perspective, this study focuses attention on the entrepreneurial vitality of cities to their own requalification. However, we should not neglect the strategic importance of planning, aiming at their sustainability. It is our intention to call forth a process of discussion and debate that examines thoroughly this subject and introduces the dynamics that a reflection on the requalification of cities always demands. It is not our intention to develop a requalification management perspective for the city, but to work an attitude of commitment from the communities that constitute it.

In this study we associate, particularly, two emergent issues about the development of any community: (i) competences and (ii) opportunities. Both are supported by the strategy of Lisbon, which is based on *the principle that the competitiveness of an economy depends on the intensity of the knowledge existing in that society* (Gomes, 2005:5). Prodi (2001) also states that the strategy of Lisbon is both economical and social and that it presents itself as a new way to work. Thus, he adds that it is needed a new leadership for the coming challenges. It is in this same viewpoint that Rodrigues (2001) refers that the strategy of Lisbon is oriented to the economic and social development and that it is related to the challenges of globalization, of technological change and of the new values of an economy based upon knowledge. It is thus reinforced the perspective that moves us to think about the promotion of an entrepreneurship culture – efficient and participated – and of urban management. In the present context of deep economic, social, relational and behavioral fluctuations, it is fundamental that the capability to propitiate and explore opportunities of development, promotion of knowledge and competences becomes a key factor to transform possible potentialities into social value, which will catalyze the sustainability of places.

These were the presuppositions that instigated us to create parameters that were measurable and verifiable, referring to the *entrepreneurial capacity of cities, in the promotion of their requalification*. To this end, it seemed to be suggestive to conduct a study which connected its underlying elements, of which we highlight: the motivational environment, the environment that promotes capabilities and the synergic environment of opportunities. In the elaboration of the concept – *entrepreneurial vitality of cities* – we aimed at bringing forth the creation of indicators about the capability to enable the requalification, from its places. For the consecution of this study it became necessary to create a reliable analytical tool, demanding in its adequacy, trustfulness and validity to answer to our purposes.

In view of such purposes, the study is divided into five points. The first frames the urban requalification and raises the necessity of reflection on the management and sustainable planning of cities. In the second point, we looked for a model of analysis for the vitality and requalification of cities, which is discussed and confronted with the systemic view of competitiveness (as it is explored in point four). In the third point, we raised the question of competences being a simple strategic variable or, on the contrary, the anchor of the new competitiveness. Here we redesign a model, complementary to the previous one, based on the competences of the spirit of sharing, reliance, respect, democratic experience of tolerance in space and of tolerance towards the space. Afterwards, we list the main conclusions and present some considerations about the intention of suggesting future new analysis.

2. Management of urban requalification or the capability of cities to promote their own requalification?

With respect to the variables that rule the processes of planning for the requalification, cities have been studied according to criteria of affectation of resources based on efficiency and efficacy, extremely directed to the physical intervention. Strategically, the urban management is anchored in the interpretation of urban legislation of the time and on the set of guidelines that regulate it. It is a shared process between the public administration and the movements of the civil society, which are organized and shaped through programmes and actions, both coordinated by a plan.

Nevertheless, urban requalification aims at dealing with a certain degree of complexity in order to create an analytic discourse and the epistemological eclecticism. The regularities of sociology define places and the emergence of a territorial order. *But the question of knowing how an urban spatial order is constituted leads us to the representations about the behavior of men; thus, to the particularities of social sciences* (Abramo, 2001:9). On the other hand, economy tells us that *with the plan coordination crisis, we will have the victory of the idea, according to which the localization market would allow the attainment of an efficient spatial order, respecting the individual's freedom (and creativity) of action* (Abramo, 2001:11).

From here, the debate on the requalification of cities is redesigned, namely through the proposition of a table of motivations, competences and opportunities as concepts that characterize the entrepreneurial vitality of each place. In this sense, we highlight the image of a city where “the places” (autonomous and interrelated) that are self-managed are capable of producing the needed efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness, as answer to the need of a sustainable development, without neglecting the equity of their inhabitants. Yet, in a process of urban management, thinking about the requalification starting from the places – in the cities and surrounding areas connected to them by important functional relations – is the same as acknowledging them as autonomous entities. Such autonomy will only happen and be efficient if the strategic power is based in adequate institutional instruments, grounded in clear principles for the promotion of citizenship. In this sense, the urban space is an object of planning and, essentially, a inter-mediator of human relationships.

In sight of the challenges of the new society, characterized by migrations, the appearance of new technologies, the intensive use of globalized information and knowledge, it is our belief that, more and more such reflection is needed for each “place” will have to redefine ways of innovating, valuing and yielding results from the abilities and opportunities it faces to achieve sustainability. Simultaneously, this behavior is related to the scarcity of material resources, which is intensified. The approach of places, as nodal spaces for the requalification, also highlights them as key spaces for the creation of wealth and sustained competitiveness. In this case, spaces are challenged by development dynamics leading to an increase in the levels of competences, abilities, resources and opportunities. The vitality of cities will thus be seen, as far as we are concerned, as the capacity to promote their own requalification. But cities are not mere aggregations of places, enterprises and individuals. They are also identity spaces that express themselves through culture dynamics, knowledge centers, institutional and social networks and agents that operate in public, private and social markets. Hence, the

visibility of actions becomes more complex when it comes to urban requalification for it is implied the crossing of intangible patrimonial capitals in opposition to the tangible that the human being continues to validate and respect as the basis of success and requalification.

When processes to plan intervention are created, identity processes that build the critical conscience of communities are rediscovered, which can only be developed through a pedagogic and mediatory dynamics. Thus, urban requalification appears as an integrator process, where individuals and communities acknowledge one another. It is therefore given coherence to the methodology of work we wish to conduct; on the other hand, this perspective defines possible directions to the methodological process to be implemented. Nevertheless, managing requalification is not an easy task. It demands a systematic and systemic critic posture, as well as a mediatory discipline able to defend and support the idea that managers are obtained through practice. It also demands the understanding of historical, sociological and political conditionings in the search for the relations between its content and the dimensions that put in perspective development. In this context, the necessary posture to the act of managing requires of those devoted to it: a) the assumption of the role of subject of that very act and the due confrontation with the surrounding world; b) the implication in a relation of dialogue before each cultural, economic and social context.

3. In search of a model of analysis

Themes like the management of urban requalification have overlapping areas since managing is a multifaceted process, being influenced by socio-historical factors and contexts. *It is always the social life that is discussed;[even] by proposing new objects; [it is about] not suppressing those that were being initially worked, but increasing their complexity* (Augé, 1994:21). Any place, created by man, is a set of activities that must be understood. Also, *any plan, however radical it may be, will have to maintain the continuity with the pre-existing place.* (Lynch, 1980:14).

All the representation of communities is, in that sense, a representation of its consubstantial social bond. In the model of analysis we intend to build, each place is both agent and expression of what happens in society: individual and collective projects, interactions, contradictions, the environment and the existing different styles of life. Places are, therefore, the instantaneous configuration of several dimensions, which increases the variety of variables we will have to use. On the other hand, in the plural city, the heterogeneity that characterizes the place must be seen as an added value in the whole that is the city.

A fundamental characteristic of the model is the introduction of the factor “opportunities“, as spaces that enable the catalizing of synergies, knowledge and capabilities. They are, by definition, projected spaces, reflecting the life of the community and the interaction between the individuals and daily impulses: social projects, political and institutional strategies, articulations, calls for participation, among others.

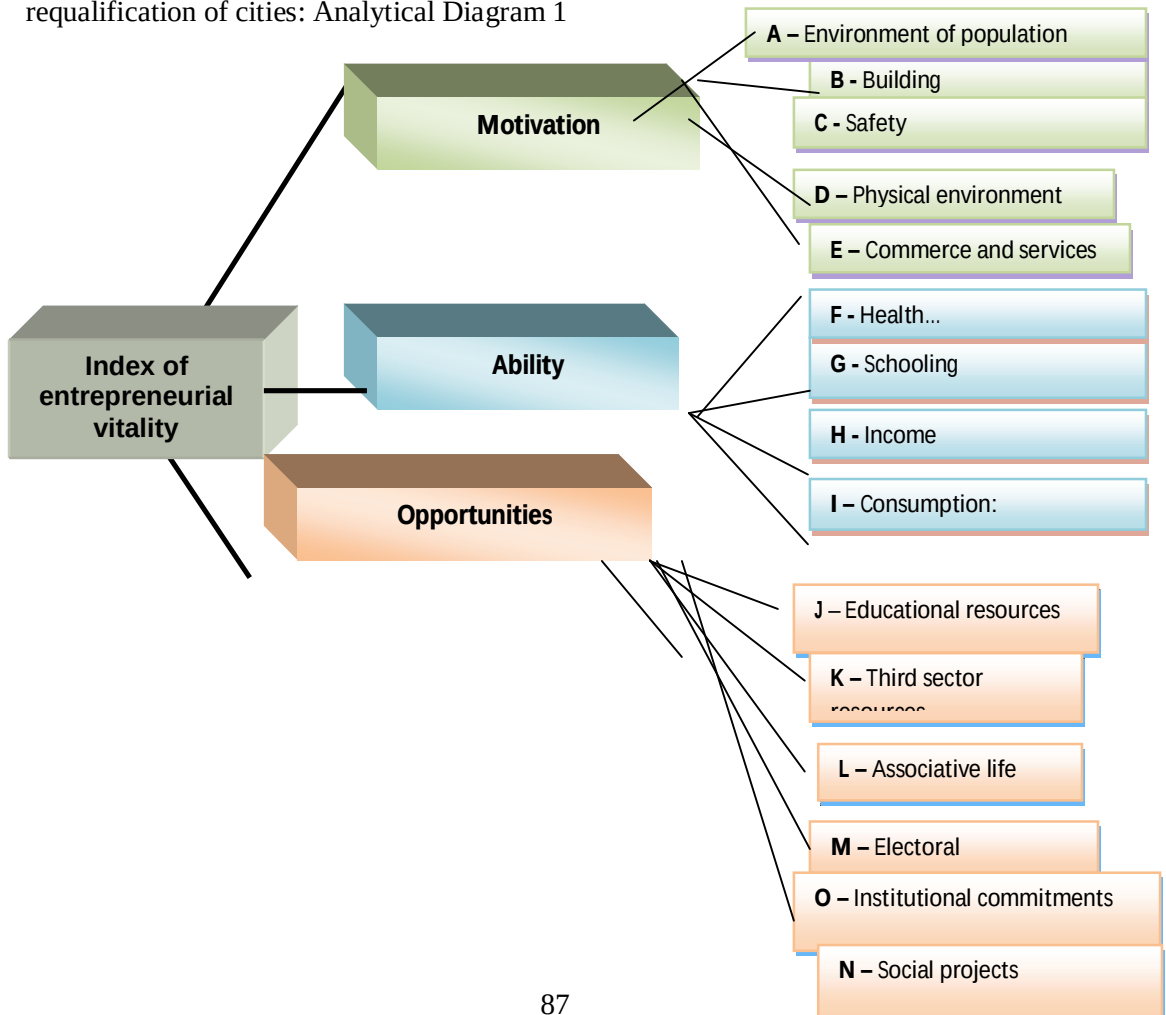
The proposed model of analysis suggests that it is possible to measure the potential of each place to promote its own requalification and explore processes that contribute to the high performance of communities. It intends to characterize micro-spaces (to facilitate the spatial comprehension of the micro-processes they comprise), report the scenario and

enable the comparison between results (partial and final). The idea will be, in the future, to build the profile of the entrepreneurial capability that the places possess – to infer on their ability of articulation with the exterior and on the level of importance of their activities and functions, with regard to the surrounding territory. The intention is to achieve an expression in numbers of the complexity of factors that interfere in the requalification of places, which can be used as a referential tool to the urban proposals integrated in the planning strategies.

We will thus approach the following factors underlying the processes of requalification: (i) motivation, (ii) capabilities, (iii) opportunities.

Here motivation is defined by the ability to catalyze new cultural, economic and social performances. On their turn, abilities are constituted by the competences, aptitudes and competences that build our potential for that same performance. Lastly, opportunities are issued from the resources, projects and commitments that catalyze our abilities to the development, as it is evidenced by the model drawn in the analytical diagram 1, designed from the exercise of investigation worked and published by Coutinho (2003)

Exercise of construction of an index about the entrepreneurial vitality for the requalification of cities: Analytical Diagram 1



Source: original

The model that we present (see analytical diagram 1) is anchored in the three base factors already mentioned: (i) motivation, (ii) ability and (iii) opportunity. The different variables that support it are a result of the realization that in a healthy environment (in terms of its population and in the relational, social and physical levels) coexist many indicators beyond the traditional ones of *unhealthiness and safety*: the levels of schooling, training and competences.

Yet, today, we face the intensification of the competition among regions and among cities, in spite of the poor inter-institutional articulation and the poor cooperation being responsible for the regional competitive debilities (Teixeira, 2005: 29). As local growth depends highly on the aptitude to attract investment, qualified capital and competences and, even, on the capacity to render those factors still more productive (Teixeira, 2005: 29) in the city, as occurs in any region, there cannot be a deficit of cooperation, of mutual help, of healthy social voluntarism nor of qualifications and competences. If those deficits exist, in the whole or partially, the negative externalities about performance and productivity are enhanced of multiplying effect. Therefore, we also focus our approach in the opportunities, here defined as spaces where competences, solidarities, cooperation, mutual help and the exercise of participation are promoted. We thus reinforce a systemic and systematic view for the development and attractiveness of cities.

And it was precisely this systemic approach that urged us to re-center the analysis of the cities in its multiple aspects, together with motivational factors, following a logic where still more intangible factors fit. Consequently, we highlighted the competences, the abilities and the opportunities derived from another look and another feeling about society and the challenges that its economic agents face. Its personality features must contain, in their structure, the feeling and the social concern, which is beyond economic and financial sustainability. In this context, the sustainability of the social cohesion is observed and explored as maintenance of the economic and financial facets.

4. Framing of the proposal of the analysis model

Motivation is an interesting requalification factor as it allows the investigation of the predisposition to inhabit in the space, to withdraw pleasure from it and contribute to its aggrandizement. That is why public safety, crimes, murders, unoccupied buildings, physical spaces to usufruct from the environment and the city, together with the quality and diversity of available products and services are interesting variables in this *motivational context*. As for the *abilities context*, it presents a second level of interests as it is here that it is possible to analyze the levels of schooling and of income in presence, as well as the level of consumption projected by it. Nevertheless, the third level, *the context of opportunities*, seems to us crucial because the variables it comprises allows to achieve the sustainability of the projects through the conjunction of the three major sectors of economy – the *private*, the *public*, and the *third sector*. It is therefore possible to analyze the quality of the resources and social supports, the type of goals, mission and longevity of the Associations, Cooperatives, Foundations, Mutualities, among other forms of organization of the Third Sector. We cannot ignore the projects of development, cooperation and relation among the different institutions, as it is the case of Universities and similar institutions, independently of their vocation towards profit.

In the presence of low expressivity of the shown factors, the attraction of the more highly-skilled, better prepared and motivated human capital is reduced and the region becomes impotent in the face of the constraints that such situation causes. This happens because the innovation does not depend exclusively on I&D, but also on entrepreneurship, on an oriented culture towards the risk and on the climate of confidence that is established in the heart of society. Like companies, cities fight to offer quality of life to their inhabitants and we cannot ignore that fact that entrepreneurship is the result of the combination of tangible with intangibles, being this combination a complex function of life experiences, opportunities and individual abilities (Filion, 1999). Consequently, cities will have to be spaces of creation, diffusion and application of knowledge. This is one of the fundamental keys to its competitiveness. Therefore, the city should be a pool of competences, which are an expression of knowledge. As a result, the main factor of production – knowledge – is the visible face of competences, which include qualifications and the relational capital. This is why Silva (2005a) considers that

- (i) qualification and competences of human resources,
- (ii) *the scale and quality of public infra-structures,*
- (iii) *the centers of knowledge and the innovative agents,*
- (iv) *the social and institutional dense and concrete networks*
- (v) *the abundant cultural and quality actives*

are factors that transform cities and regions into attractive places to the intelligent and healthy enterprises as well as to the settlement of people with high competences and qualifications. Effectively, the XXI century is demanding in terms of intangible patrimonial values and appeals to the construction of a collective intelligence.

According to Silva (2005a: 06), it is this collective intelligence that is the basis for the reposition of competitiveness and not the exercise of a “centralized and hierarchized planning”. But, the collective intelligence, business-related and local, does not appear spontaneously. Thus, it must be fed and motivated so that the surgical intervention of the State in the market economy, its support and incitement to the diffusion and application of knowledge, together with its support to the creation of an economic climate of reliance and stability in the social relations and those of proximity, implies the reconstruction of models of competitiveness and social stability, as it is evidenced in image 1.

The systemic view of competitiveness involves a reconfiguration of the theoretic reconstruction of economic models of competitiveness, due to the causality logic with the endogenous growth models, where social and relational networks constitute a patrimonial value of strategic importance to the enterprises and regions. Based in this patrimonial value appear waves of innovation with growing sustainability. These are, very often, of the incremental type but allow the bettering and/or replacement of daily routines aiming at a higher performance. Nevertheless, the efficiency to be obtained through the allocation of resources, within the postulate of endogeneity of growth and of entrepreneurship, presupposes the internalization of the “path dependency”, meaning that one should not follow, lyrically, the ideal beauty of a theoretical construction to competitiveness; one should combine, cross and rearrange the traditional resources with the new ones. This is another form of incremental innovation that allows the development

of sustainability in the organizations and in the regions. In fact, the efficiency and the attractive results obtained as a result of the effort made in strategic investment and in innovation also depend on the intervention of the State in the economy and on the adequacy of the public policies implemented. In this sense, the attractiveness of regions is also a result of the policies and incentives given by the Government and of its capability and will to emancipate the regions.

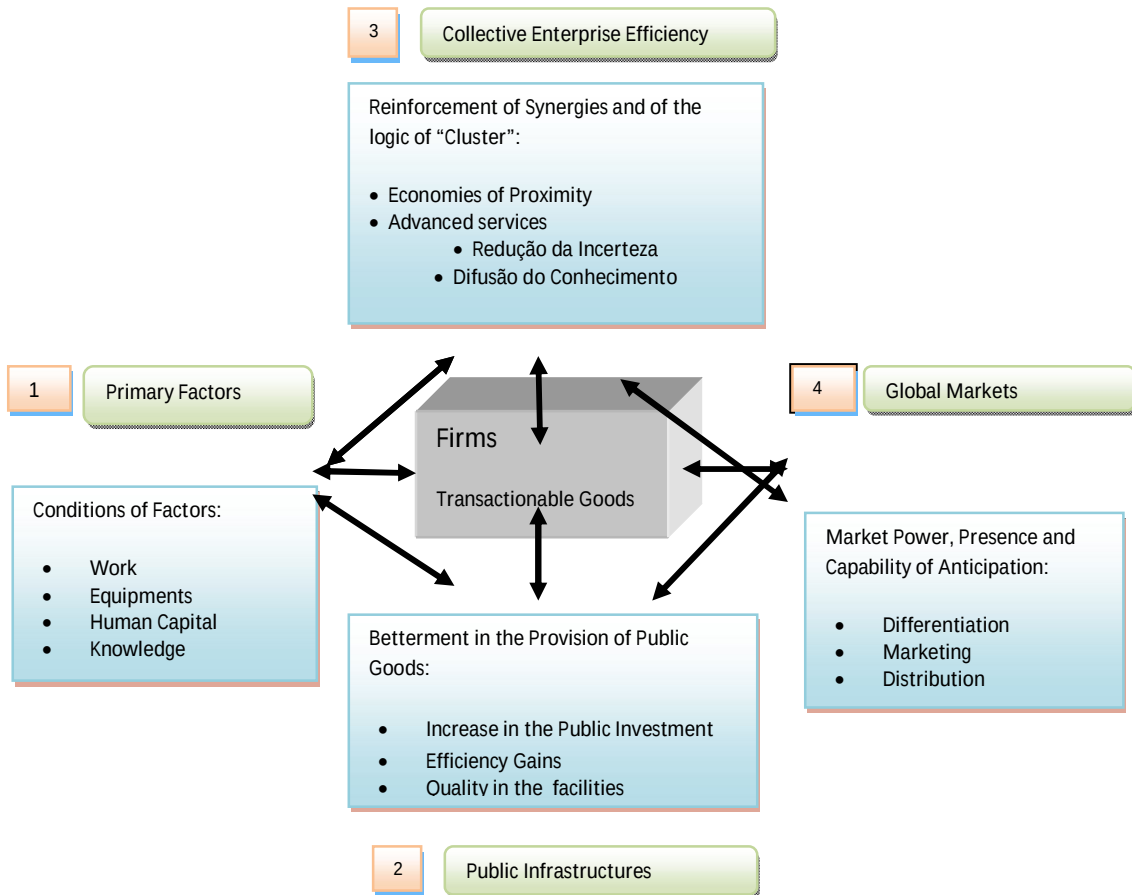


Image 1: Competitiveness: systemic vision. Source: Adapted from Silva (2005b: 9)

The absence of this requisite castrates the entrepreneurial dynamism of cities and hinders the construction of industrial districts and corresponding feeding channels: the *clusters* of high technological intensity. Consequently, it is urgent to implement proactive organizational paradigms of planning, structured in values of the new organizational culture, as in the case of *learning organizations*, labs and learning factories, whose main factor is knowledge. Here networking and net work increment this type of organizational culture where complicity, companionship and responsibility are daily values, beyond being strategic elements of the relational capital. But how big can the sustainability of a region be when it is based in the simple acquisition of technology? This requirement is important but does not assure the longevity and independence of the

organization. It will also be necessary the production of technology, being this one of the differentiating and sustainable elements of organizations and localities. This is why the big spatial capacities present a nexus of cause and effect with the human abilities and their professional qualifications, which are cumulative and of continuous learning.

Competences: strategic variable or anchor of new competitiveness?

There are many contributions to the clarification and conceptualization of the competences typology both in the organizational, personal and spatial level. Still, it can be considered that the explicit analysis is a relatively recent preoccupation, with special focus on the spatial domain. In spite of these contributions, a consensual basis on the “competences” hasn’t been found yet, which can be proved by the proliferation of studies about the analysis of “competences”, the analysis of “knowledge management” and the analysis of “knowledge in the organizations”. All these areas of knowledge, despite being complementary, have different goals. That explains the occasional conflict that arises from the analysis, which hinders a consensus about their composition and typology. However, it seems consensual the opinion of the different authors that the competences are acquired and bettered with training, learning, observation, reflection and sharing. Due to this, in the present socio-economic context, the notion of competences is much more complex than the technical skills, and includes personal, social and spatial competences. There is already the strategic implementation of concurrence policies among cities and regions to conquer more power of influence, to attract more national and foreign direct investment, to motivate and settle the enterprises in the locality, to settle the more qualified workforce (Calderero, 2009), among other goals. In fact, competitiveness is a plural and complex concept and it is used for different ends, in spite of its systemic and universal characteristics. Competitiveness can be seen from different angles, as, for example, in the case of the spatial dimension, when we are referring cities, spaces and regions. This spatial perspective of competitiveness is also linked to the systemic view of the endogenous growth and development of the city, where innovation is part of its model. This latest can be divided into the three time dimensions: short, medium and long term. However, competitive weaknesses appear from the combination of organizational, institutional and behavioral factors. The institutional variable is relevant. Here the uncertainty and volatility of the public policies can be evidenced, the labour precariousness and the motivational asphyxia of the population in the economic, labour, social, cultural and political fields.

Nowadays, cities and regions already care for the sustainability of their competitiveness and assume that this latest is crucial to offer quality of life to their fellow-citizens. There is also the conscience that the attractiveness of cities depends on their economic, social, political and cultural performance. Thus, the cooperation and interaction of institutions give an interesting contribution to the dynamism and attractiveness of cities (Malecki, Nijkamp and Stought, 2004; O’Gorman and Kautonen, 2004; Smith, Glasson and Chadwich, 2005). In this context, entrepreneurship can be a key lever to the improvement of the cities performance for it facilitates the diffusion of technology and stimulates the practice of innovation, whatever its type, degree, intensity or novelty. But, the adoption of technology and the personal contribution to the attractiveness of cities presupposes the edification of new competences and attitudes. For this reason, the attractiveness of the city is dependent on the civic, emotional, relational

and cognitive culture of the different institutions (Durbin, 2004; March, 2006). It influences the productivity of the economic agents and their capability to implement the processes of innovation. Thus, new abilities lead to autonomous work, in group and in interaction, where the entrepreneurial function is fed by competences, where the emotional ones are evidenced and act as a catalyzer of organizational and spatial competences (Pereira and Coutinho, 2009). For that reason, it is great the effort to the production of wider competences since competences which are merely technical and cognitive lose their validity and vitality. This because they do not keep up with the swift technological changes, both material and immaterial. This perspective brings to the discussion of the competitiveness of cities other competences, which we called:

- (i) Competences of the spirit of the sharing of the space,
- (ii) Competences of the spirit of confidence in the space,
- (iii) Competences of the spirit of respect for the space,
- (iv) Competences of the spirit of democratic experience in the space,
- (v) Competences of the spirit of tolerance in the space,
- (vi) Competences of the spirit of tolerance towards the space

These six competences, when combined, act as a harmonic constellation oriented by non-cognitive intellectuality, as it is shown in image 2.

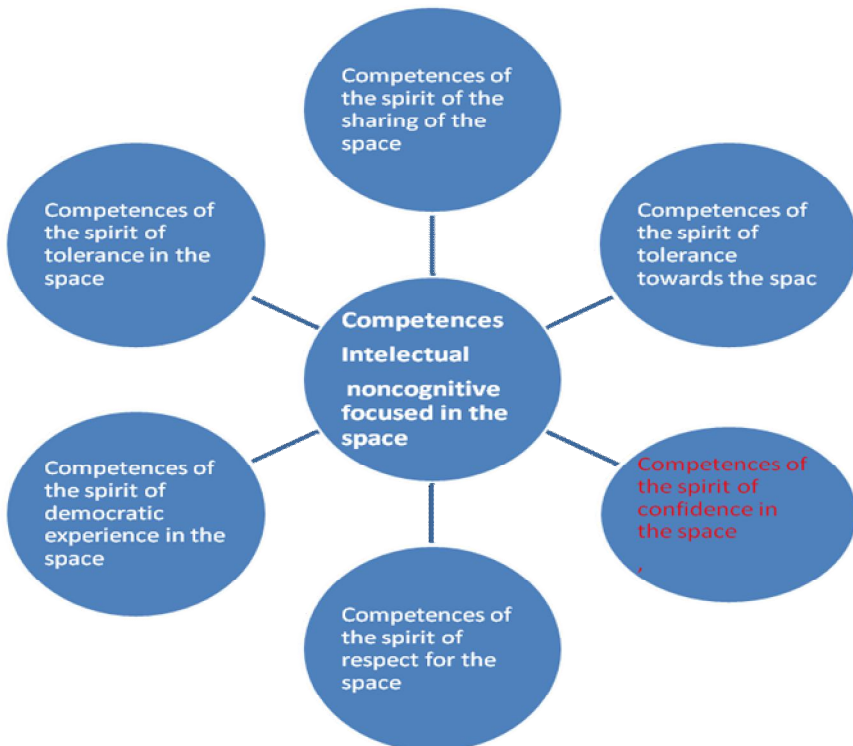


Image 2: No cognitive intellectual competences. Source: original

But, the attractiveness and vitality of the city, despite its importance, does not depend, only, upon its intellectual noncognitive competences. It also depends on the cognitive and on the codified tacit knowledge that, together, become the new factors of competitiveness. When these are complemented by the dynamics of the traditional factors of production – capital, land and work – we are given a new perspective about the efficiency on the use of resources and their productivity. It also allows us to reconfigure and rebuild the models for the revitalization of cities, although the strategic importance is focused in the new competitive factors, as shown in image 3:

This perspective is structured in the notion of identification of opportunities to the collectivity, once the competitiveness of a region also depends on its infrastructure, its motivation policies and its stimulus (Calderero, 2009), as well as on the pool of information and knowledge existing in the space and its spillovers (Cohen and Paul, 2005: 216; Correia and Pereira, 2007 e 2009; Pereira and Correia, 2007). Therefore, the “competence” is manipulated, worked, shaped and applied to concrete situations, which renders it a strategic factor by excellence, with explicative power in the manipulation of available information, as shown in image 4.

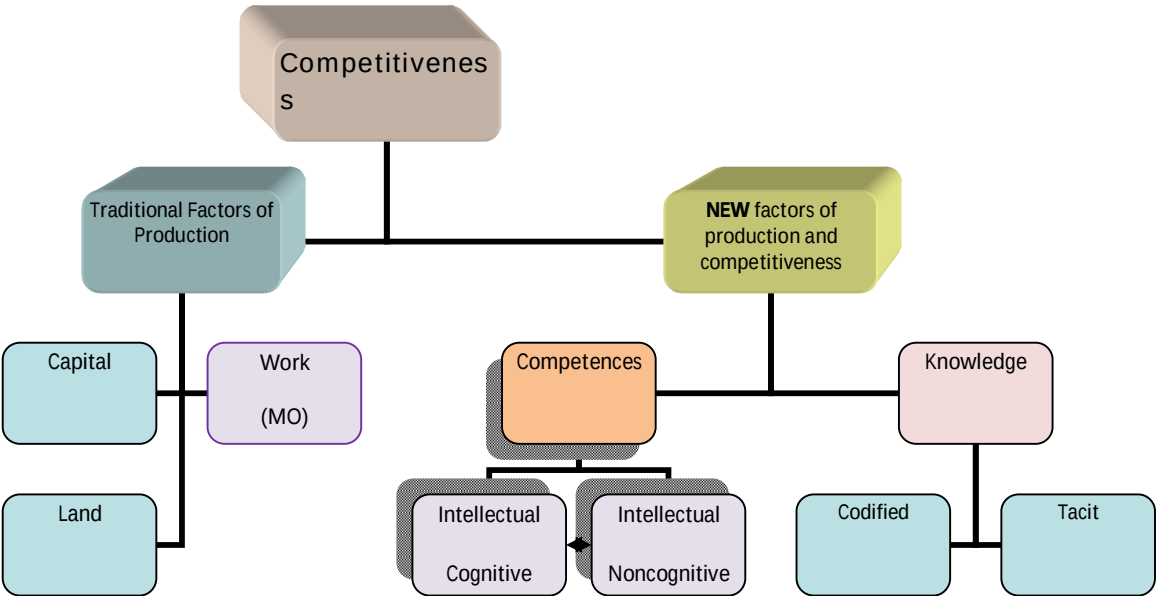


Image 3: Competitiveness Factors. Source: original

In fact, abilities are based, more and more, in knowledge and include the ability, education and attitude (Ordóñez de Pablos, 2004b e 2004c:10). They also rely on the principle of organizational absorption (Choen e Levinthal, 1990) and in that of the transmission of confidence to themselves and to the others (Levy-Leboyer, 2003). This vision allows the relation of the abilities with the volunteer and endogenous

entrepreneurship, where entrepreneurial movements, social institutions, the quality and intensity of associate life, the compromises and social projects move and get intersected in a spontaneous and self-sustained way. Following this reasoning, we believe that the window of opportunities of our model represents the pulse of competences. Yet, we cannot ignore the fact that the notion of competences is a composite term and that it includes a large set of factors, among which we highlight the abilities, the experience, the motivation, the expertise, the wisdom in action and reaction, together with social beliefs and value judgements. Therefore, given the necessity of new knowledge and new abilities, it is urgent its reconfiguration (Bergman, Jantunen, Saksa, 2004), so as to sustain the competitiveness and increase the attractiveness of cities and their quality of life.

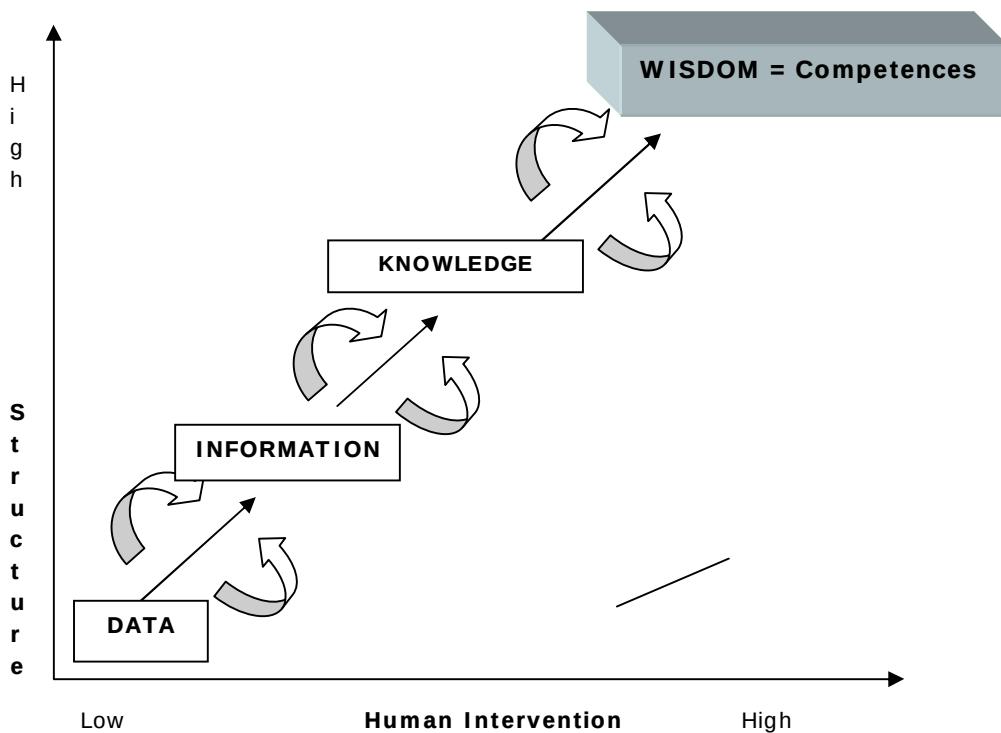


Image 4: Evolutive Construction of Competences. Source: Adapted from Serrano & Fialho (2005: 51)

But, in the city, what role have the social, relational, structural, emotional and cultural competitiveness beyond the economic one that, usually, is mentioned? And, in the economy based in knowledge, how to conciliate and conceive new models where the five following areas - (i) hardware, (ii) software, (iii) orgware, (iv) peopleware e (v) groupware - are harmonized?

In fact, in the knowledge-based society, qualifications can be turned into abilities for the specific use of knowledge (Teixeira, 2005: 31). For such, qualifications will have to be associated with personality characteristics, as in the case of the behavioral, relational, and social ones as well as the capability of working in team or in group, autonomously, without the need of supervision and assuming the corresponding solidary

responsibility. It is within this spirit that we defend that, after the acquisition of a school degree, people should look for relevant competences. Thus, in the regions as in the cities, it is important to pay attention to the school degree, many times associated with the qualifications, and also to its type and flexibility. It is within this spirit that the results of the efforts conducted are leveraged and we can answer to questions such as: Why do their strategies fail and why are their policies directed to the enterprises, to the region and to the work marked inoperative? Why isn't there the confidence capital in the regions? And in the cities, why isn't there the confidence capital and the pride-capital in belonging to them?

These are questions that must be analyzed if we want to redirect and requalify the city, because: the growth of the attractiveness of the city is transformed in magnet for the attraction of more qualified workforce, which increases the pool of knowledge in the region. Simultaneously, it causes the emergence of more entrepreneurial behaviors, which will develop the degree and type of innovation, and thus, the use of knowledge. Nonetheless, to the increase of its efficiency, knowledge will have to be shared, which will cause the movements of cooperation and sharing.

5. Conclusion and clues to future reflection

The diversity of the theme *urban space* and the plurality of its approaches render very often difficult an observance and a coherent and consistent study of the organizations and institutions. However, the conscience that there are gaps and flaws to overcome in this area prompted us to an exercise of reconceptualization and framing of several thematic areas. In analysis were the policies of revitalization of the cities as spaces of quality of life and socioeconomic performance with competitive, dynamic and sustainable structures. Among the different areas, we highlight the economy, sociology, psychology, administration and management. This diversity of areas becomes associated and creates virtuous movements with the new paradigm of the economy based in knowledge. This perspective relies on the belief that the imbalance of the present society, both economically and socially, should not be attributed to any of these areas, but its inadequate interaction and combination.

We are apprehensive with regard to the problems that our society faces, although we are aware of our limitations to prescribe a magic formula to solve these divergences. Yet, it seems to us that the awareness and the assumption of the responsibility of the economic agents may lead us to higher standards of well-being and performance.

Thus, with this paper, we aimed to do a theoretical exercise about the theme, which will support the reconstruction of indicators that allow the definition of public policies to the reconstruction and reconfiguration of cities, where their development will be grounded in two complementary perspectives: (i) the economic and (ii) the social. For such, the very creation of the graphs and diagrams we have made may constitute an important experience to the discussion on this theme and may lead to different perspectives of analysis, not only of the cities but also of factors that qualify and promote them.

In fact, despite our limitations, we would like to contribute to the (re)design of a conceptual and analytical table adapted to the society based in knowledge, that appeals to the mobilization of active competitive forces and that visualizes the harmonic

development. Simultaneously, it should place side by side the economic and social areas and consider the global and integral development of man. This is why the creation of our diagrams is based in the assumption of the need to delimitate thematic areas so that, from them, we can (re)design indicators adapted to the reality of the new economy and that allow to measure:

- a) the power of the attractiveness of the city;
- b) the spatial productivity, with focus to the local;
- c) the competitiveness of the city;
- d) the social cohesion of the city

Thus, our itinerary intends to find evolution indexes that characterize the present society and that enable, at least, the diminution of divergences and economic and social imbalances, present in the standards of urban and human dynamics. But competitiveness is a term used to numerous ends and, very often, not very consensual. It is used to verify and/or refer the performance of institutions, of regions, cities, people, among others.

In spite of this complexity, competitiveness is an indicator of the measure of performance and projection of the future, namely, in terms of the definition of public policies to implement and of the means and pertinence of the State intervention in the economy of the market. Consequently, competitiveness may be seen as an infrastructure of economic and social policies of cohesion.

That is why the goals that guide the systems of innovation – national, regional or local – serve strategically the global competitiveness of regions, where education, training, knowledge, diffusion of technology, supportive infrastructures, production of higher value-added products, telecommunications, support and well-being services, among others, are strategic in the sustainability of the development. All these factors derive from the many competences, perfectly complementary, as it is considered by the knowledge-based economy.

In this manner, competitiveness in the domain of new economies dynamizes the virtuous flows of the economy and solidifies its social flows. This is why innovation, independently of the processes related to it, is more social than economic because the processes of social and organizational innovation structure and reinforce the processes of economic innovation.

Within this perspective, we believe that the conjugation of the cognitive and noncognitive domains produce dynamic entrepreneurial competences. These increase proactivity and grant more autonomy and freedom to the behaviors of the individual and, simultaneously, enrich his visionary and strategic abilities. Thus, we consider that innovation, prior to being organizational and economic, is social and supported by the informal movements of the economy.

As a matter of fact, today we face much conjunctural maladjustment in society. Yet, it seems to us that its origin is in the structural maladjustments. We can verify this through the challenges that the notion of *competitiveness* prompts, both economically and socially. In this context, and so as to guide our future investigation, we ask ourselves:

- What is the strategic role of organizations in the global development?
- What is the role of institutions and of the informal economy in social cohesion?

- What strategic behavior and what competences do enterprises of the informal economy have? Are they concerned about the collective efficiency? Can they manage new routines and digest the abrupt changes implemented or to be implemented?
- Do organizations know that their social responsibility policies give sustainability to the competitiveness?
- Do organizations know that the sustainability triangle – environmental preoccupations; social preoccupations; economic preoccupations – is a whole and supports competitiveness?

These are, in fact, some of the troubling questions that disturb us and that make us rethink society, aiming at the reconfiguration of a more altruistic socioeconomic paradigm, more human, solidary and responsible collectively.

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