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## RESEARCH PROJECTS AS INSTRUMENTS FOR PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS. MULTIJURISDICTIONAL CULTURAL POLICIES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT MODELS IN THE CITY OF MAR DEL PLATA

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**Summary.** The Research Group on Policies and Management of Cultures belonging to the Faculty of Architecture, Urbanism and Design of the National University of Mar del Plata, developed its research proposal with the objective of analyzing the articulation in the research process carried out during its project: Multijurisdictional Cultural Policies in the City of Mar del Plata. Comparative Study of Investment and Management Models of the State. Period 2007-2015. From a quantitative-qualitative methodological design, the project presented -as part of the framework of the convergence of public policies of the three levels of the State: national, provincial and municipal, corresponding to the period 2007/2015 in the city of Mar del Plata, Republic of Argentina-, has problematized the political definitions executed separately, in order to analyze to what extent they oppose, neutralize or complement each other in terms of audience construction. The articulation of the three emblematic case studies chosen allowed us to recognize the degrees of development achieved by the social subject as a subject of cultural rights. Currently, the project seeks to socialize the analysis of the emerging processes of public policies that are transversal between jurisdictions, based on understanding the integrality of the territory and the social subject that accesses the agenda of public policies in culture. The theoretical relevance of the research allows providing conceptual content from an interdisciplinary approach to the field of culture.

**Key words:** Research, public policies, cultural policies, Mar del Plata.

# LOS PROYECTOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN COMO INSTRUMENTOS DE ANÁLISIS DE POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS. LAS POLÍTICAS CULTURALES MULTIJURISDICCIONALES Y SUS MODELOS DE GESTIÓN EN LA CIUDAD DE MAR DEL PLATA

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**Resumen.** El Grupo de Investigación en Políticas y Gestión de las Culturas perteneciente a la Facultad de Arquitectura, Urbanismo y Diseño de la Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, desarrolló su propuesta de investigación bajo el objetivo de analizar la articulación en el proceso de investigación llevado adelante durante su proyecto: Las Políticas Culturales Multijurisdiccionales en la Ciudad de Mar del Plata. Estudio Comparativo de Inversión y Modelos de Gestión del Estado. Periodo 2007-2015. Desde un diseño metodológico de tipo cuantitativo-cualitativo, el proyecto presentado -como parte del marco de la convergencia de las políticas públicas de los tres niveles del Estado: nacional, provincial y municipal, que se corresponden con el periodo 2007/2015 en la ciudad de Mar del Plata, República Argentina-, ha problematizado las definiciones políticas ejecutadas por separado, con el objeto de analizar en qué grado se oponen, se neutralizan o se complementan en término de construcción de audiencias. La articulación de los tres casos emblemáticos de estudio elegidos, permitió reconocer los grados de desarrollo alcanzados por el sujeto social como sujeto de derecho cultural. En la actualidad, el proyecto, busca socializar el análisis de los procesos emergentes de las políticas públicas que son transversales entre jurisdicciones, a partir de entender la integralidad del territorio y del sujeto social que accede a la agenda de las políticas públicas en cultura. La relevancia teórica de la investigación permite aportar contenido conceptual, desde un abordaje interdisciplinario sobre el campo de la cultura.

**Palabras clave:** Investigación, políticas públicas, políticas culturales, Mar del Plata.

## Introduction

The Research Group on Policies and Management of Cultures, belonging to the Faculty of Architecture, Urbanism and Design of the National University of Mar del Plata, presented its research proposal (2021-2022) at the University: "Multijurisdictional Cultural Policies in the City of Mar del Plata. Comparative Study of Investment and Management Models of the State. Period 2007-2015" whose objective is to establish the degree of articulation of cultural policies implemented in the city of Mar del Plata.

The research work was carried out based on the study of three emblematic cases of architecture linked to cultural activities: the recovery of the former Saturnino Unzué Institute by the National Ministry of Social Development; the competition, construction and inaugural exhibition of the MAR Museum of Contemporary Art by the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires; the acquisition and conversion of the House on the Stream into a museum by the Municipality of General Pueyrredon.

We consider that the field of research helps to investigate different problems that are subsequently delimited by the researchers. This reality makes it possible to establish areas of interest, objectives, methodology, theoretical framework and state of the art, in addition to establishing the social, cultural and political impact of the research, as well as the possibility of training human resources. Research makes it possible to build scaffolds of new knowledge that, through analysis instruments, establish levels of information tending to construct new categories of analysis.

As a starting point for the research, we consider it necessary to explain some concepts on public policies that have allowed us to advance in the project and to establish the different levels of public policies. In principle, policy is a decision-making process with an ideological orientation that makes it possible to establish objectives, criteria and premises on a particular and/or general issue. In this sense, politics is a tool that allows, from a biased vision (ideological), to propose mechanisms to implement a project.

Oszlak and O'Donnell (1981) consider public policies as: "(...) a set of actions or omissions that manifest a certain modality of intervention by the State, in relation to an issue that arouses the attention, interest or mobilization of other actors of civil society" (p.21). These decisions will generate operations in the territory, intervening, both materially and symbolically, in its structure.

Taking this into account, we can conclude that every public policy has the capacity to be understood as a cultural policy in terms that directly and indirectly affect socio-cultural practices and their forms of appropriation of the territory.

On the other hand, we can establish three guiding categories of public policy: 1. The ideological, 2. the instruments, 3. the actions (Ruiz López and Cadéas Ayala, 2005). Based on these categories, we can find different types of classifications of public policies:

1. Substantive and procedural policies. Substantive policies have to do with what the government is going to do (...). Procedural policies have to do with how something is going to be done or who is going to undertake the action. (...).
2. Distributive, regulatory, self-regulatory and redistributive policies. Policies can be classified according to their effect on society and the relationships between the actors involved in their formation. Distributive policies consist of providing goods or services to a certain segment of the population (...). Regulatory policies impose restrictions or limitations on the behavior of individuals and groups (...). Self-regulatory policies are similar to the previous ones because they consist of limiting or controlling some sector or group, but they differ from them in that they are defended and supported by the group as a way of protecting or promoting the interests of its members. (...). Redistributive policies are a deliberate effort by government to change the allocation of wealth, income, property or rights among broad social groups or classes. (...).
3. Material and symbolic policies. (...). Material policies provide tangible advantages or disadvantages. (...). Symbolic policies, on the contrary, have hardly any real material influence on people:

they assign non-tangible advantages and disadvantages (Delgado Godoy, 2009).

In addition, we can categorize public policies - from their stability as a government policy or State policy; - through their territorial scope: national, provincial and/or local (Pérez Antrakidis and Romero, 2022).

On the other hand, the analysis of public policies allows us to know the management and strategies adopted by the State in the face of a problem, as well as to observe whether the issues are part of a public agenda or only a concern of the government administration.

The purpose of this paper is to give an account of the processes, analyses and explorations carried out as part of the research conducted. In this sense, research on multijurisdictional cultural policies and their management models in the city of Mar del Plata became the subject to be investigated, taking into consideration the three levels of the State: municipal, provincial and national. The aim of this article is to analyze the articulation mechanisms in the research process carried out by the Research Group on Policies and Management of Cultures -FAUD, UNMDP- during its project: "*Multijurisdictional Cultural Policies in the City of Mar del Plata*".

## Method

The research was developed based on a quantitative-qualitative methodological design, with case study analysis. The case study as a research strategy in the social sciences is "an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon, taken in context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not obvious" (Yin, 1994, p.13).

The case studies selected by the researchers had to correspond to different levels of the State in the city of Mar del Plata, as well as being home to cultural activities and having been reached by different public policies. "The case study represents a very useful research tool, since it allows to have as a result a holistic approach to a situation or event under study (...) (Escudero Macluf, Delfín Beltrán and Gutiérrez González, 2008, p.10).

In the proposed methodological approach, the integration of the methodological tools, the documented, the observed and the conversed, lead to the recursivity of analysis, synthesis and interpretation processes that enable different perspectives on the same reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

During the research, different techniques were used: documentary analysis, content analysis and interviews. The primary sources used were interviews with political actors and content analysis, and the secondary sources were information systems, digests and archives of the national, provincial and municipal governments. Among them, we searched the Municipal Official Gazette System (SIBOM) of the Province of Buenos Aires, the library of the Honorable Deliberative Council of the Municipality of General Pueyrredon, the Malvinas Argentinas Regulatory and Documentary Information System of the Province of Buenos Aires and the Official Gazette of the Argentine Republic, as well as the bases of contests and agreements signed with the School of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design. In addition, data from records, documents from national and local newspapers, as well as documents from the researchers' archives were collected.

The sources are the resources to which we are going to turn and which contain the data (in different media) that we need to extract after using precise intellectual operations in order to obtain knowledge. The alternative is to use the appropriate tools that enable us to produce the data of our direct interest. We need these devices as mediators to achieve (construct, discover or obtain) data and general information (Cicalese and Pereyra, 2016, p. 23).

## **Results**

In the research project elaborated, the framework of the convergence of public policies of the three levels of the State - which correspond to the period analyzed, 2007/2015 -, different governmental strategies on the same territory can be recognized. In this sense, public policies implemented separately have been analyzed in order to determine to what extent they oppose, neutralize and/or complement each other, as instruments for the articulation of intervention strategies and as a response to the needs of the population.

As we have expressed, the case studies selected for the research were emblematic works of the city of Mar del Plata that have different origins, but that fulfill social and/or cultural functions. In order to understand the value of the works, we will describe some characteristics that allow us to understand why they were selected for the analysis of public policies within the framework of the research project.

The former Saturnino Unzué Institute ( Figure 1) is a building constructed in 1910 with the purpose of fulfilling a social function as an asylum for orphan girls. It was donated by its owners to the Sociedad de Beneficencia de Buenos Aires (1911) and later, it passed to the orbit of the National State (1946) to the Fundación de Ayuda Social María Eva Duarte de Perón and then under the direction of the National Ministry of Social Development. In 1997, the Unzué was declared a national historic monument; however, several years of abandonment of the building made necessary a series of political actions for its restoration.

### **Figure 1**

*Former Saturnino Unzué Institute*



*Note.* Photographs taken by the authors (2022).

The MAR Museum of Contemporary Art (Figure 2) was inaugurated at the end of 2013; it is the product of a national competition for preliminary projects (2009) with the aim of providing the city of Mar del Plata with an art museum on a provincial scale. For the realization of this project, the Ministry of Infrastructure of the Province of Buenos Aires took several steps as promoter of the new cultural initiative.

**Figure 2**

*Museum of Contemporary Art MAR*



*Note.* Photographs taken by the authors (2022).

The Casa sobre el Arroyo Museum (Figure 3) is a work declared of patrimonial interest at the municipal, provincial and national levels, being a paradigmatic work of the modern movement with international recognition. Although it was built between 1943-1945 for residential use, with the passing of time it was acquired -through a long process of negotiations- by the Municipality of General Pueyrredon with the purpose of becoming a museum.

**Figure 3**

*Casa sobre el Arroyo Museum*



*Note.* Photographs taken by the authors (2022).

As part of the dynamics of the research project, it was possible to develop -through the analysis of cases related to the field of culture- a comparative and integrative study of public management models. In this sense, the research project made it possible to investigate how the works were socially appropriated in different historical contexts, both for their heritage value and for their value as a cultural asset. On the other hand, the review of legislation (by establishing a timeline) made it possible to analyze the linkages between the different levels of the State and, in some cases, the absence of actions because they

were not part of the administrative and/or political project. In this sense, although the three works are located in the local jurisdiction, the municipality has not always been involved in the decision making process regarding the recovery, execution and/or intervention in the properties.

The research approached the objects of the regulations that initiated the management processes that allowed direct or indirect interventions on the tangible and intangible assets of the cultural projects. In this sense, we have shown that, both in the local and national cases, several actions took place prior to the acquisition of the House on the Stream and the patrimonial intervention of the former Saturnino Unzué Institute. In the first case, the participation of the Mar del Plata community, as well as organizations related to architecture and heritage, were the architects of the social pressure for the recovery of the house. In the case of the Unzué Institute, the National Ministry of Social Development, through negotiations with the School of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design, signed a contract for the transfer of services that allowed for the preparation of the technical documentation for the subsequent bidding process for the heritage intervention works. Meanwhile, the physical realization of the MAR Museum was the result of a national competition for preliminary projects for which the provincial government allocated a budget item.

The analysis of interinstitutional and intergovernmental articulation necessarily entails a discussion of the political and institutional dynamics that sustain it, where we can establish which variables are shaped by the rules of the game of power distribution among the political and social actors involved.

The decisions of local, provincial and national governments generated public policies that were reflected in the development of legal instruments such as national, provincial and local declarations, laws and regulations, as well as in concrete actions: expropriations, development of architectural intervention projects, calls for bids and enhancement of the materiality -of the real estate- and of the functionality -giving new functions- to the objects of study.

From the analysis of the different public policies, we established that they were of a substantive nature for the execution and/or recovery of the works addressed. Likewise, there is evidence of procedural policies related to different mechanisms for complying with the objective proposed by the State that were determined for each case study. On the other hand, material policies were also implemented that provided tangible advantages in the reference works. Finally, symbolic policies related to property declarations were proposed.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

Public policies as strategic actions that the State designs and manages must be materialized in a territory, in order to satisfy the demands of a society. The lack of coordination between the different levels or jurisdictions of the State leads to inefficiency in its implementation.

The study of the processes that lead to the management and/or materialization of public policies allows the analysis of a wide range of variables that determine and articulate how the good or service that the policy promotes reaches the most effective way possible to the end for which it was designed.

In this complex scenario, many aspects of policy design are - or must be - modified during implementation, making it necessary for research groups to analyze the entire process in its different phases, in order to establish the emerging dynamics and the variables that determine the success - or otherwise - of the policies implemented.

In this sense, the analysis of the regulatory frameworks has allowed us to understand the way in which they have been developed, their evolution over time, the processes of political commitment for their implementation, as well as their levels of scope and response to social demand. The objective of the articulation between the different levels of the State is to achieve greater coherence and impact of the policies designed, which, due to the lack of comprehensiveness and convergence of the various interventions, is not always achieved, duplicating efforts and resources.

It is important to highlight that the work developed, as a research instance, has also allowed progress to be made in the training of human resources through the incorporation of scholarship students. Likewise, the work establishes the basis for future lines of research by encouraging students, scholarship holders and trained researchers that make up the work team to investigate the management and articulation processes in the different jurisdictions of the State, in relation to heritage assets.

This document has sought to socialize part of the analysis of the emerging processes of cross-cutting public policies between jurisdictions, based on an understanding of the integrality of the territory and the social subject that accesses the agenda of public policies in culture. The theoretical relevance of the research allows us to contribute new knowledge from an interdisciplinary approach to the field of culture.

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