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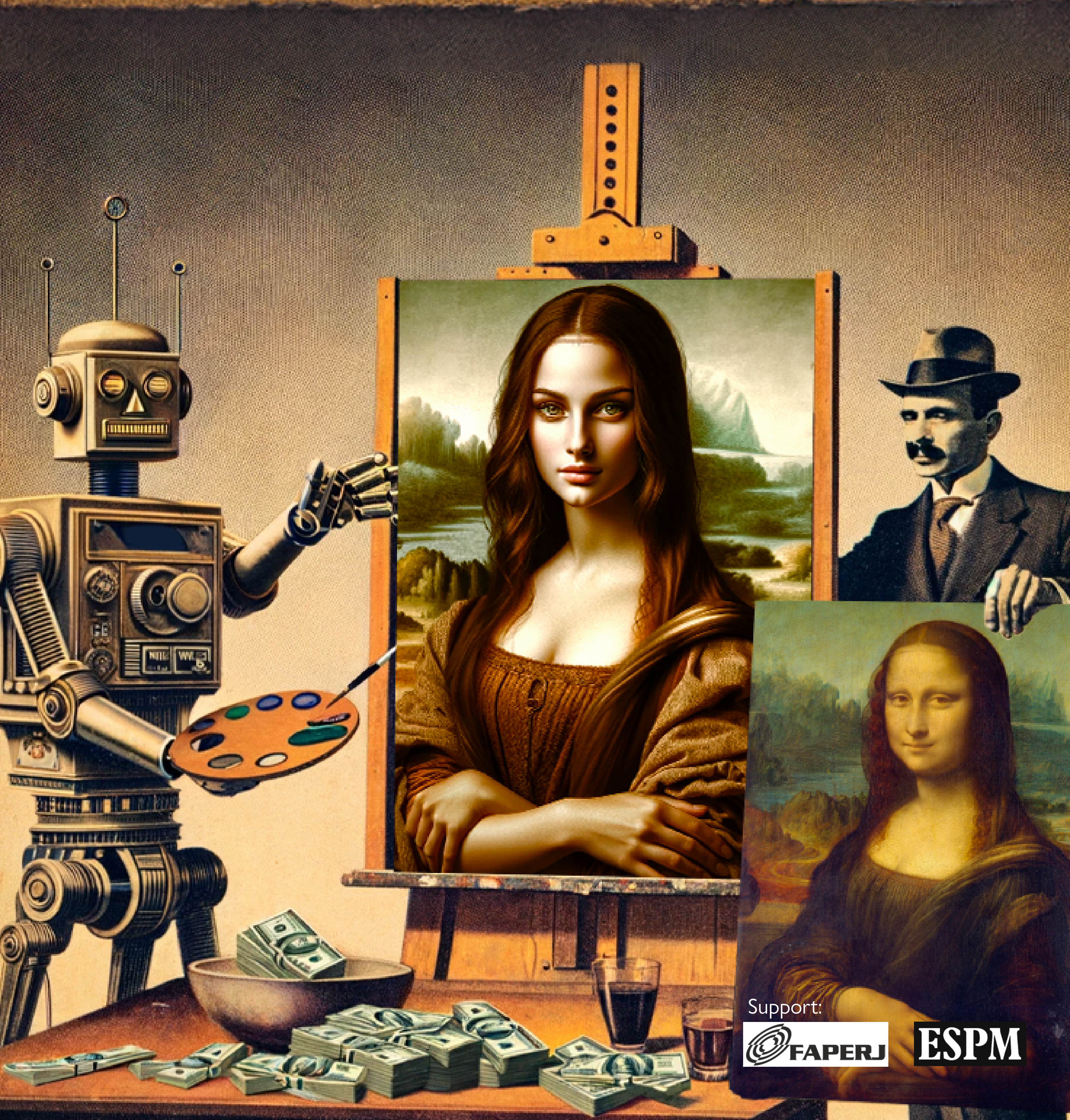

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Summary

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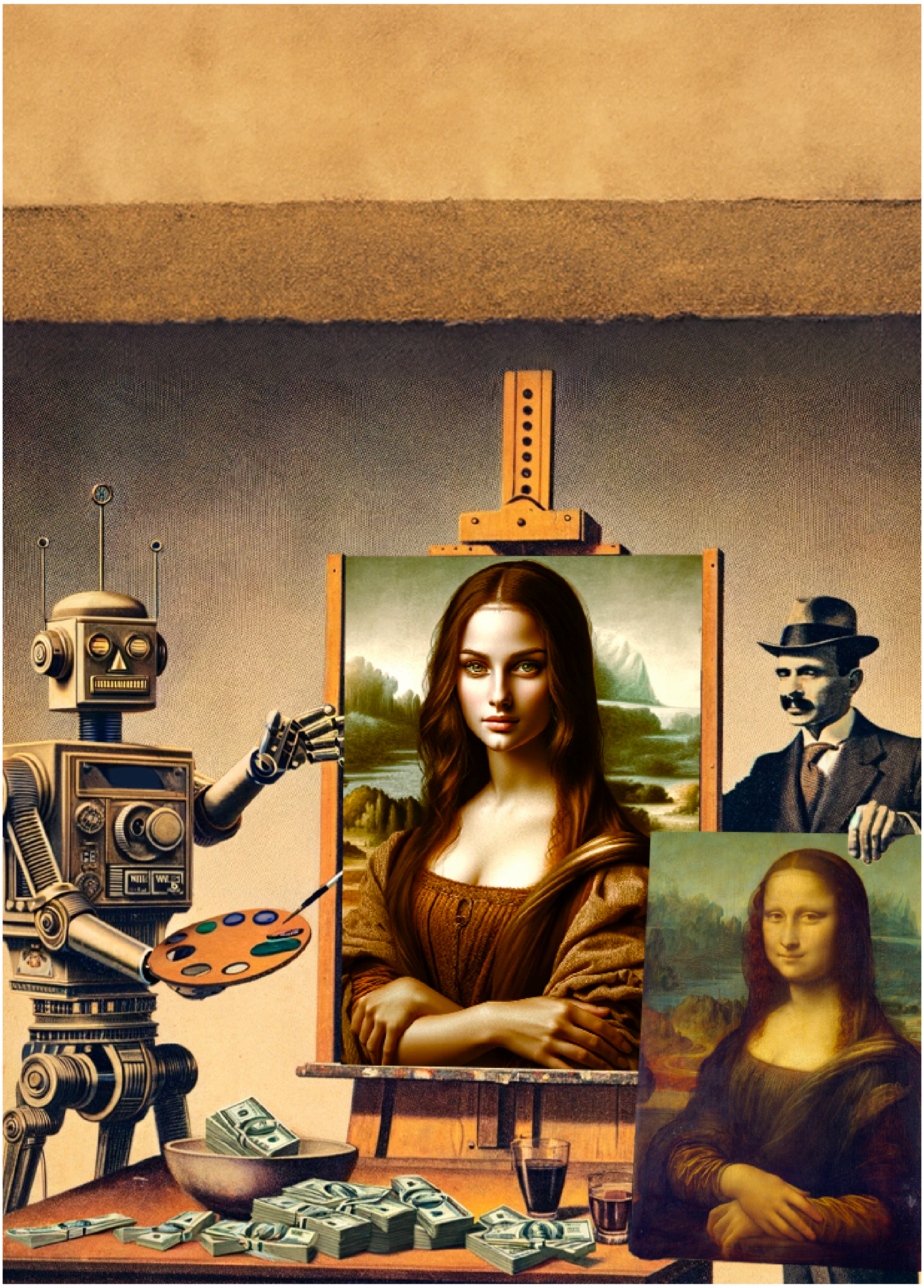
How much is this cover worth?
Quanto vale essa capa?

Mirella De Menezes Migliari[I], Felipe Macedo Lemos[I]



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The oldest of new debates is represented in the cover of this issue of *Diálogo com a Economia Criativa*. However, it is impossible to be oblivious to this debate when artificial intelligence (AI) permeates all sectors of production and communication, and can particularly reflect on creative industries. Considering that, in synthesis, creative economy includes the original production and intellectual property of goods with high symbolic value, it is worth to reflect on value. The data of 2020 for the culture economics and creative industries in Brazil point out that it mobilized about 230.14 billion reais, amount that represented 3.11% of the Brazilian GDP (Almeida, 2024), being one of the economies that grew the most in a world where production moves to the services and intangible products' sector, which generate symbolic capital. Here, we ask: how can AI have an impact on this industry?

We intend to formulate an answer through analyzing the cover image. Considering its universal concept, aspects of its composition and its quality, how much is this cover worth? Knowing that this image was developed within minutes through a generative AI platform, such as Midjourney or DALL-E, how does it impact its value? Also, taking that this image has gone through a hybrid process in which, after being generated by a prompt – a series of descriptive instructions – in an AI platform, it was digitally finalized by software operated by humans, such as Photoshop, how much is this relevant for its value? How many layers of technology were overlapped in this process? All these provocations are pertinent and current.

According to the World Economic Forum (2020), in a 2020 report, the workforce will have become automatized and displaced 85 million jobs by 2025. On the other hand, the robotic revolution will create 97 million jobs. Among other positions, examples such as prompt engineers, AI researcher, expert in natural language processing, expert in robotic process automation (RPA), expert in ethics and law with knowledge in AI and algorithm auditor, to name a few, are highly required and provide high paychecks.

It is not only the first and second sector labor that feels the impact of the post-industrial revolution. With the most recent chapter being written by generative AI, the matter regarding the value of the creative professional in the industry hangs in the air. A number of articles announce the end of some creative professions in the next 10 years, and those that will perish in up to 25 years, being replaced by technologies that are able to generate reflective texts, ultra-realistic images, editions and other creative productions. The concern about the topic has recently generated manifestations from the Screen Actors Guild and Writers Guild in the United States of America, which led to the renegotiation with studios and added more concern to the current agenda, in an attempt of protection against the threat brought out by AI technology.

Specifically reflecting about the illustration of this cover, it is possible to come up with some insights about this scenario. We understand that, for this cover, generative AI was able to produce an analogous version for the work made immortal by Leonardo da Vinci, Mona Lisa. However, we understand that this new version only has a meaning as a parody, once its symbolic reading can only exist and be understood when compared to the work of art it refers to. Looking at this image out of context, for example, as would be the case of someone who does not have the reference of the original oil painting on wood from the early XVI century, the image is empty in meaning, it becomes hollow. Even though it is convincing for presenting a character of realistic image, it does not convince as a fine painting using the *sfumato* technique (because it is not), nor as a representation of the noble lady from the XVI century. This new Mona Lisa is a woman whose image is adapted to the beauty and attitude parameters of the XXI century, being challenging and sexy, very different from the introspective and shy lady reported by Leonardo; therefore, its essence is lost. All about it is a copy – the light, the color palette, the composition –, without, however, being able to sketch the enigmatic smile that made the original painting so famous around the world.

When we understand the visual narrative of the cover, we can appease ourselves and breathe. Generative AI's ability to create such an analogous image has not affected the value of the original piece at all – maybe it even brought it up, once its brilliance was not present. The work generated by AI has symbolic value and meaning only when juxtaposed with the original, without which it would not survive. Thus, we conclude, for our peace of mind, that considering art and creation, it has always been this way: artists create based on their references and repertoire. While this repertoire is developed and elaborated by people, AI will be more artificial than intelligent.

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Editorial

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Editorial
Editorial

Diogo Tavares Robaina[I]

Dear readers,

Technology is a fundamental pillar of human progress and revolutionizes the way we live, work, and communicate. Although its development provides notable advances, it also raises questions about the ethical, social, and economic implications that accompany these changes. A historical example of this tension is Luddism, a movement that emerged at the beginning of the 19th century as a reaction to the mechanization of the textile industry. It illustrates the concern about technology's potential to displace the central role of humans in production, threatening livelihoods and handicraft skills.

In the current digital era, Artificial Intelligence (AI) represents the state of the art of technological innovation, opening up previously unimaginable possibilities for creation and innovation. However, its adoption without criteria in creative contexts renews the debate about the relationship between automation and human creation. Richard Florida (2014) highlights innovative professionals from the "creative class" as drivers of economic development, pointing out that cities and regions that foster creativity, technology, and tolerance prosper economically. He highlights the need for environments that attract and, more importantly, sustain creative talent — places where innovation is not only possible, but actively encouraged. For Florida (2014), creativity transcends a mere individual characteristic, becoming an essential collective resource for economic and social advancement. This concept reaffirms that, for the development of cities and economies, it is necessary to cultivate an environment of diversity and innovation.

As we explore the potential of AI, we come across large language models (LLMs), as described by Zhou et al. [2022]). These AI systems are trained to understand, generate content, and interact with human language in a natural and coherent way. A notable feature of LLMs is their ability to carry out few-shot learning, allowing them to perform specific tasks with minimal human instruction, making them incredibly versatile and valuable across different fields and industries.

Taking this into consideration, two crucial questions emerge: first, does the advanced automation provided by LLMs represent a threat to the essence of human creativity? And second, how is this wave of technological innovation, especially AI, impacting the creative class and, by extension, the regions that are economically transformed by this class?

Based on the article by Zhou et al. (2022), a new role for AI can be envisioned in the lives of creative professionals. The study highlights how LLMs, by automating and optimizing prompt engineering, advance the interaction between human and artificial

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intelligence, not only improving efficiency in generating creative content, but also raising the level of collaboration between creatives and machines. As LLMs become capable of understanding and executing complex instructions, they transform from passive tools to active collaborators in the creative process, enabling new forms of expression and discovery.

Nonetheless, merging human creativity with computational power poses challenges, including issues of originality, copyright, and authenticity. Overreliance on AI can, paradoxically, limit innovation by confining creatives to the current capabilities of machines. Therefore, it is vital to develop a deep understanding of how these technologies can be employed ethically and productively, ensuring that they complement, rather than replace, human creativity.

The convergence between the Creative Class theory and advances in LLMs points to a promising future for the creative economy, in which it is critical to cultivate environments that nurture creative talent and utilize AI to expand human potential. This involves creating policies and practices that promote education, diversity, inclusion, and access to technology, ensuring that the creative economy continues to be a vector of innovation and social progress.

In short, this editorial highlights the opportunity to use technological development as a means of achieving greater creativity and innovation. As we move forward, it is paramount to remain aware of the ethical implications and impact of these technologies, ensuring that they serve to enrich, not limit, the human creative expression. Thus, we move toward a truly innovative and inclusive creative economy, in which the union between human and artificial intelligence unlocks the entire spectrum of creative potential.

In this issue of *Diálogo com a Economia Criativa*, the journal explores the intersection of creativity, innovation, and technology, shedding light on how these elements intertwine to shape the current and future landscapes of the creative economy. Each of the 10 articles provide comprehensive insights and analysis of different aspects of this dynamic.

"Comprehensive analysis of the contributions of strategic design to the management model in a creative economy company," by Dusan Schreiber, Débora Koch Berlitz, Franciele Reche, Luciane Pereira Viana and Serje Schmidt, explores the synergies between strategic design and strategic management, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and innovation in the business model of creative companies. The authors highlight how strategic design can serve as a catalyst for achieving organizational goals, based on a case study and interviews with managers.

"Creative economy and eating in slow and comfort food modes: resistance movements in the city," by Daniela Barcellos, Daniela Menezes Neiva Barcellos, Lesly Fernandes dos Reis and Victor Albuquerque Borges Quaresma Gonçalves, addresses culinary experiences that promote emotional engagement and resistance in today's fast-paced, productivist society. The authors evidence how eating practices can be forms of cultural and social resistance, highlighting the relevance of these movements during the pandemic.

"Reflections and analysis of the collaborative business models of handicrafts in the municipality of Petrolina (PE) from the perspective of entrepreneurship," by Deranor Gomes de Oliveira, maps collaborative handicraft business models, emphasizing the importance of management and cultural entrepreneurship. The study expands the understanding of how practices and business models can contribute to the economic sustainability of artisans.

"Rio of Imaginaries: City, Mega-Events, and Strategic Planning," by Roberto Vilela Elias, provides a critical analysis of how the image and imaginary of Rio de Janeiro were used and transformed into commodities in large-scale events such as the World Cup and the Olympics. The author unveils the layers of urban planning and the commercialization of the city, providing a unique perspective on urban governance and strategy.

"Creative economy: a chronological view," by Jefferson Yuji Watanabe, Larissa de Moraes Barbosa Borges and Luciana Guilherme, presents a literature review that covers the evolution of the field of creative economy, providing a collaborative timeline of significant milestones in the area. The article serves as a comprehensive introduction to the field for academics, practitioners, and interested parties.

"Design production in creative industries: criticism of the neoliberal capitalist logic," by Camille Vignal Frota and Fabiana Heinrich, investigates the practice of design within contemporary capitalism, questioning how creative industries are influenced and shaped by market forces. The study, deeply reflective, invites the readers to a critical analysis of the role of design and creativity in the current market.

"The career path of digital influencers," by Paula Furtado Hartmann de Queiroz Monteiro and Ana Heloísa da Costa Lemos, investigates the constituent stages of the careers of digital influencers, showing the challenges and opportunities in this emerging profession. The study provides valuable insights into professional development in the digital landscape.

"Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing market in Southern Brazil: a comparison between three companies," by Angele Maine Rhoden, Fernanda Hänsch Beuren, Icleia Silveira and Lucas da Rosa, makes a comparative analysis of the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing market, exploring marketing and product nuances between different companies. The authors highlight the diversity and cultural richness within the fashion sector.

"A study on user experience design (UX design) perception and practices by young iPhone users from Rio," by João Renato de Souza Coelho Benazzi and Sabrina Uderman, focuses on the importance of user experience in the perception of technological products, using the iPhone as a case study. The study contributes to the understanding of how UX design influences consumer behavior.

"Smart tourist destinations: an analysis of tourism governance in Búzios," by Liana Cid Bárcia, Carlyle Tadeu Falcão de Oliveira and Tânia Almeida Gouveia, investigates the concept of smart tourist destinations through the case of

Búzios, discussing the role of governance in the transformation of tourist destinations. The authors shed light on the challenges and strategies for sustainable tourism development.

Enjoy the reading!

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Comprehensive analysis of the contributions of strategic design to the management model in a creative economy company

Análise compreensiva das contribuições do design *estratégico para o modelo de gestão em uma empresa da economia criativa*

Dusan Schreiber[I], Débora Koch Berlitz[I], Franciele Reche[I], Luciane Pereira Viana Viana[I], Serje Schmidt[I]

ABSTRACT

This article aimed to highlight the contributions of strategic design to the management model in a creative economy company. The structuring theoretical assumption underlying the development of the study is based on understanding the relevance of strategic management for the design of the business model. Considering that companies that operate in activities classified as the creative economy, show specificities that require adjustments in their management process, which can find support in theoretical aspects related to strategic design. To carry out the study, the strategy of a single case study and a qualitative approach was chosen, as it was understood that in this way it would be possible to highlight subjective and subtle aspects that permeate the organizational fabric and influence both the management body and the team of collaborators. The collection of empirical data took place in the second half of September of the year 2022, through an in-depth interview with the organization's manager, as well as a documentary survey. The results showed the characteristics of the organization, which operates in one of the activities of the creative economy, as well as the challenges that demand adaptation of the management model, which is influenced by the strategic design, thus enabling the achievement of organizational objectives.

Keywords: strategic design; creative economy; social innovation; strategic management.

RESUMO

Este artigo teve como objetivo evidenciar as contribuições do design *estratégico para o modelo de gestão em uma empresa da economia criativa. O pressuposto teórico estruturante e subjacente ao desenvolvimento do estudo apoia-se na compreensão da relevância da gestão estratégica para a concepção do modelo de negócios, considerando que as empresas que operam em atividades classificadas como da economia criativa evidenciam especificidades que demandam ajustes no seu processo de gestão, que pode encontrar respaldo em vertentes teóricas relacionadas ao* design *estratégico. Para a realização do estudo, optou-se pela estratégia de estudo de caso único e abordagem qualitativa, por entender que, desta forma, seria facultado evidenciar aspectos subjetivos e sutis que permeiam o tecido organizacional e influenciam tanto o corpo diretivo como a equipe de colaboradores. A coleta de dados empíricos ocorreu na segunda quinzena do mês de setembro do ano de 2022, por meio de entrevista em profundidade com a gestora da organização, bem como levantamento documental. Os resultados evidenciaram as características da organização, que opera em uma das atividades da economia criativa, bem como os desafios que demandam adaptação do modelo de gestão, que é influenciado pelo* design *estratégico, facultando, desta forma, o alcance dos objetivos organizacionais.*

Palavras-chave: design *estratégico; economia criativa; inovação social; gestão estratégica.*

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic management is an area of knowledge that can be related to strategic design, as it manages and optimizes processes within organizations so that they are clear and organized for managers and employees. Strategic design is understood as a methodology that promotes design strategies developed collaboratively by a group of actors, in order to generate innovation. It can be explored by organizations of all sizes, with a focus on creating solutions in products and services, as a tool to create solutions to everyday problems (Cautela; Zurlo, 2006; Franzato *et al*., 2015; Manzini, 2008; Manzini; Meroni, 2007; Meroni, 2008).

According to Cautela and Zurlo (2006) and Franzato (2010), the conceptual framework of the relationship between strategic management and strategic design consists of three elements: strategy, design, and the company. Strategy is considered the preferred space of action in this relationship, it involves setting goals and relevant points in the business life cycle and the continuous activity of searching, interpreting, and appropriating endogenous and exogenous stimuli and impulses. Design is understood as the process and instrument for planning, managing, and making decisions and solutions, with a focus on obtaining changes in the characteristics and forms of existing situations.

Company is where project activities for the development of new products, services and processes are integrated into everyday life, especially companies that have high involvement with design, that is, whose design is comprehensively integrated into business dynamics and processes. By aligning these three elements, it is possible for small and large organizations to leverage their growth and creativity. From this context, the objective of this study was to identify the contribution of strategic design tools to the management model of creative economy company.

The company chosen for this case study is located in the city of Dois Irmãos (Rio Grande do Sul – RS) and has more than 20 years of experience. According to SEBRAE (2018), it is classified as a small company (*empresa de pequeno porte* – EPP), it has 20 employees, and operates in the production and sale of artisanal and colonial products, including cookies, breads, cakes, and doughnuts. Although small, the company has some competitive advantages, for instance: as it has few employees, it is able to develop higher quality products and is focused on developing products following the standards of the National Health Surveillance Agency (*Agência Nacional de Vigilância Sanitária* – Anvisa).

Craft products are part of creative economy, since, in addition to preserving cultural tradition and maintaining knowledge of local traditions in the region, craft enterprises can promote income generation, social inclusion, and local development (Reis, 2008). Food adds representations and practices learned and shared by people of a certain culture (Yamagata; Sauerbronn, 2019). But, even by following tradition, artisanal enterprises need to pay attention to valuing intangible assets, such as creativity (Visoná, 2017).

This research addressed a single case study, with a qualitative approach, with data collection through in-depth interviews with the company manager and documentary survey, carried out in 2022. This article is divided into five sections: after this introduction, the conceptual bases are presented; in the third section, the methodological path is detailed; and, in the following section, the analysis and discussion of the results. Final considerations, in which contributions and suggestions for future investigations are described, conclude this article.

THEORETICAL REFERENCE

Strategic design is a project methodology that develops integrated product, service, and communication strategies to be put into practice by a network of people, with the aim of promoting innovations (Franzato *et al*., 2015; Meroni, 2008). These strategies are systems of norms, rules and tools, which, through the analysis of scenarios and the ambitions of the different actors involved, the investigation between the real problem and its possible best solution, social innovation, collaboration between those involved and dialogue strategic, enable social bodies and companies to deal with complex environments (Meroni, 2008).

Manzini (2017, p. 68) suggests a complement to Meroni's (2008) definition, stating that design is characterized by a "[...] culture and practice relating to the way things should be in order to achieve the functions and desired meanings". In other words, design can be used in different projects, bringing its elements and concepts with communication, products, and services, among others, in this way, avoiding potential problems and seeking to emphasize potential opportunities.

Strategic design can identify "promising ideas" (Freire; Del Gaudio; Franzato, 2016) by distinguishing a reference and using it as inspiration to disseminate new possibilities for a given problem in organizations. In this context, Meroni (2008) identifies eight pillars in the foundations of strategic design, four of which are interconnected with strategic management:

1. strategic design is about social innovation: what matters, from an evolutionary perspective, is the power of an idea — from this, strategic design is a bet, a hypothesis, whose vision can shape the future;
2. strategic design is about scenario building: the way scenario building is an inductive form of strategic design struggles with problem solving — by giving structure and motivations to visions, using experience and tools, they become shareable and discussable insights;
3. strategic design is about strategic dialogue: adjusting problem to problem solving, in all strategic design activities, is more appropriate to see it as capable of catalyzing and guiding collective sensitivity toward a common interpretation of how the future may be, having to work the best of the present;

4. strategic design is about building capabilities: contributing to the shift (in a collective, a community, a company) from understanding a problem, to crafting a new perception and vision, to building the capacity to implement the solution — creating a platform of tools and knowledge, enabling and empowering people to do things and deal with a changing context is the real and deep meaning of any strategic development project.

Based on these considerations on strategic design proposed by Meroni (2008), one can understand how its importance for the development of ideas and their applications, building scenarios within organizations, bringing creative solutions and tools and, thus, seeking elements that show, in different ways, what organizations want to disclose to society. Cautela and Zurlo (2006) add that strategic design helps in the projection of new products, services, communication, and experiences, expanding the vision of the organization's focus, to create competitive advantages and strategies and conception of ideas.

Meroni (2008) states that strategic design is bound to social innovation. In social innovation, design uses sensibilities, capabilities, and skills to design strategies that empower community members to use creativity to innovate on a local scale, so that they themselves can solve existing social problems or generate new opportunities (Manzini, 2008; Manzini; Meroni, 2007; Meroni, 2008). In general, expectations about social innovation transcend those attributed to other types of innovation (Repo; Matschoss, 2020).

For Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan (2010, p. 3), social innovations are "[...] like new ideas (products, services, and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are good innovations for society and also expand its capacity for action." In this line of thought, Manzini (2017) and Gentil *et al.* (2019) mention that the term social innovation refers to changes in the way individuals or communities act to solve problems or create opportunities that meet social needs and expand the capacity for action.

According to Rodrigues (2006, p. 7), social innovation consists of "[...] new ways of doing things with the explicit purpose of rearranging social roles or providing other responses to unsatisfactory and problematic social situations". The concept of social innovation permeates between management and strategic design, and, for Bignetti (2011), it is located, in academic research, as a young field, for which there is still no intellectual consensus on its definition and scope. Chart 1 brings the definitions for social innovation presented by Bignetti (2011).

Thus, considering that strategic design has the potential to promote and disseminate social innovations, there is a complexity of dimensions that involve aspects linked to social learning processes. Learning and relearning is a need, and as a result, errors will constantly be adjusted and new actions will be incorporated into the day-to-day activities of organizations (Dees, 2001; Echos, 2015; Metszősy, 2019; Murray; Caulier-Grice; Mulgan, 2010).

Chart 1. Definitions of social innovation according to different authors and sources.

AUTHOR	CONCEPT
Taylor (1970)	Improved forms of action, new ways of doing things, new social inventions.
Dagnino e Gomes (2000, in Dagnino *et al*., 2004).	Knowledge — intangible or incorporated into people or equipment, tacit or codified — which aims to increase the effectiveness of processes, services and products related to satisfying social needs.
Cloutier (2003)	A new response, defined in action and with a lasting effect, to a social situation considered unsatisfactory, which seeks the well-being of individuals and/or communities.
Standford Social Innovation Review (2003)	The process of inventing, securing support, and implementing new solutions to social problems and needs.
Novy and Leubolt (2005)	Social innovation derives mainly from: satisfaction of basic human needs; increased political participation of marginalized groups; increase in socio-political capacity and access to resources necessary to reinforce rights that lead to the satisfaction of human needs and participation.
Rodrigues (2006)	Changes in the way individuals recognizes themselves in the world and in reciprocal expectations between people, resulting from approaches, practices, and interventions.
Moulaert *et al.* (2007)	Tool for an alternative vision of urban development, focused on satisfying human needs (and empowerment) through innovation in relationships within neighborhoods and community governance.
Mulgan *et al.* (2007)	New ideas that work in meeting social goals; innovative activities, and services motivated by the objective of satisfying social needs and that are predominantly developed and disseminated through organizations whose primary purposes are social.
Phills *et al.* (2008)	The purpose of seeking a new solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable or fair than existing solutions and for which the value created primarily affects society as a whole and not particular individuals.
Pol and Ville (2009)	New idea that has the potential to improve the quality or quantity of life.
Murray *et al.* (2010)	New ideas (products, services, and models) that simultaneously satisfy social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are both good for society and increase society's ability to act.

Source: Adapted from Bignetti (2011, p. 6).

Changes must be collective, as an organization is made up of people and that is why change needs to "come from within", bringing construction together between the organization and employees. Therefore, multidisciplinary teams are recommended, formed by three to eight people, thus diversity will help in the analysis and solutions of problems from different aspects (IDEO, 2015).

Reflection and learning are intrinsically interconnected subjects, one does not exist without the other, as people learn through reflection, and it is through learning that they seek to reflect. The resulting learning and reflection can break the scope of the project and transform not only the project, but the designers, the organization, and the social reality (Repo; Matschoss, 2020; Scaletsky, 2016). Internal communication applied to strategic design can be integrated from problem-solving actions, communication planning or strategy development, as well as being a powerful talent retention tool (Andonini; Aroldi, 2018).

In this sense, internal communication and strategic design together can design or define some elements such as what to communicate, to whom and how, in addition to the communication channels and their execution. Once that, through the alignment of strategic design in organizations, it is possible to understand the customers' needs and desires, to correctly segment audiences, to deliver value to employees, and to structure strategic communication (Santos, 1996). "[...] communication has several flows connected to one another and influenced by each other" (Viana; Ferreira, 2020, p. 84).

Internal communication processes involve the human factor, which is the fundamental pillar of any organization, therefore, companies need to look at the employee, understand and analyze their needs, but just as employees need to be aligned with organizations, organizations need to be in line with them (Santos, 1996). Effective communication will influence good coexistence between leadership and employees (Staub; Modinger; Viana, 2023).

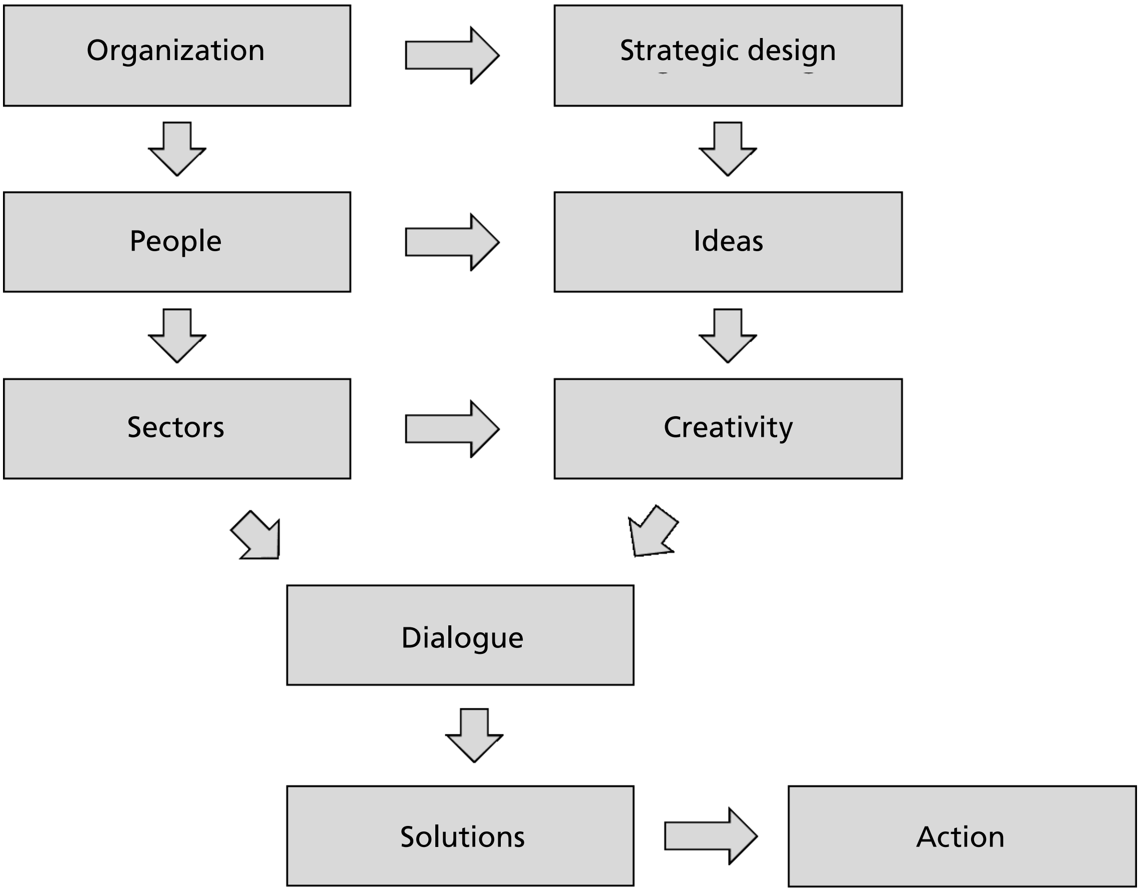
It is worth mentioning that internal communication is linked to the company's organizational culture and, therefore, strategies and elements can work differently in each company (Lima, 2010; Oyarvide-Ramírez; Reyes-Sarria; Montaño-Colorado, 2017; Staub; Modinger; Viana, 2023). However, by combining strategic design and organization, some advantages come to sight, which can be applied to various organizational models. According to Ribeiro (2008, p. 169-170), organizational culture can be characterized by

- strength of culture in the company (rooted cultural norms or not);
- homogeneity of culture (compatibility of subcultures);
- adaptation of cultures to the previously followed strategies; [...]
- attitudes toward staff (trust and participation), toward the company (loyalty, team spirit, identification with the company).

Therefore, it is important that employees and strategic design share the organization's culture, so that processes can be connected (Franzato, 2010). It can be considered which strategies can be better used, as well as methods of creativity and organizational commitment will be more effective and changes in the organization can be more peaceful. Ribeiro (2008) follows this line of thought regarding change in organizations, something that is always visibly questioned, but is, in fact, something that requires planning. This planning can be aligned with strategic design, aiming at innovation, differentiation, and improvements in management processes.

Organizational culture constantly reinvents itself to adapt to changes in society's culture, ideas, opinions and with regard to the environment (Gentil *et al.*, 2019). In this way, discoveries arising from the relationships between authors involved in the creative ecosystem contribute to the strategic management process. It should be noted that, in this case, it is understood that ecosystems "[...] involve a set of actors (stakeholders — interested parties and/or affected by a given context or cause) that do not necessarily have similar purposes and affinity of purpose, but who will need to get closer to act on a given challenge" (Anastacio, 2018, p. 42).

According to Manzini (2017) and Repo and Matschoss (2020), these characteristics can be observed in projects that work with social innovation, mainly with the objective of sustainable changes on a regional scale with the active participation of citizens. To conclude, Figure 1 presents a synthesis of some processes that strategic design goes through to create value in organizations, based on the authors cited in this section.



Source: prepared by the authors.
Figure 1. Strategic design processes.

It can be seen, in Figure 1, that, within organizations, strategic design is related to people, and it is from them that ideas are derived. These people are located in the sectors of this organization and, based on the experiences and knowledge of each person, ideas are created through conversations, exchange of opinions, the possibility of expressing a point of view, etc. Thus, employees will be able to contribute their ideas in the search for solutions and, finally, putting the proposed ideas and solutions into practice takes place.

METHOD

This article is a single case study, in which a small organization in creative economy that operates in the production and sale of artisanal and colonial products was analyzed, located in the city of Dois Irmãos, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The company's corporate name is not disclosed in this study, as to preserve its strategic information, therefore, the company will be name Beta herein. As for the approach, descriptive and qualitative research was applied, following the recommendations of Prodanov and Freitas (2013). To collect data, an in-depth interview was carried out with the organization's manager and a documentary survey was carried out.

This interviewee was chosen using a non-probabilistic sample for accessibility (Gil, 2007), an option justified by the interviewee's legitimacy to provide information about the business model, innovation, market differences, skills, and weaknesses of the company. From this perspective, it was considered relevant to collect data about the organization, its organizational processes, as well as to identify the main difficulties and challenges that require the adaptation of the management model, which, therefore, is influenced by strategic design.

Empirical data collect — namely, in-depth interviews and documentary survey — took place in the last two weeks of September 2022. The interview was recorded with the participant's permission and later transcribed in full. The documentary survey took place following a previously prepared checklist, based on the reviewed scientific literature, with analysis of the company's internal documents.

The questions listed in the interview are part of a script structures as follows:

1. How do you define the company's business model?
2. What are its competitive differences (strengths)?
3. How does the company identify and develop its competencies?
4. How does the company use its skills to expand its market share?
5. What are its weaknesses (weak points)?
6. How does the company identify and treat them?
7. How does the company ensure the delivery of results, whether internally (internal customer) or to the end customer (externally)?
8. What is done in the company to promote improvements in organizational processes?

Information content analysis was carried out according to Bardin (2011), through the following steps:

1. pre-analysis: firstly, it was based on the conceptual understanding of strategic design and social innovation; Next, the script for the interview was organized;
2. exploration of the material: at this stage, analysis categories were identified and classified into innovation and strategic design processes;
3. treatment of results, inference, and interpretation: carried out through analysis and comparison between the theoretical framework and the information collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, analyses and discussions are presented in relation to the interviewee's answers, as well as internal documents so that the contributions of strategic design to Beta company's management model are understood.

The interviewee considers Beta company's strengths to be its expansion in the market, due to some factors, including the search for communication channels to show and highlight the processes of its products with a focus on reaching the end consumer. The company aims to expand contact and, consequently, knowledge of consumers, so that they can search for and buy products in local stores.

Another strength pointed out is the team and the learning process. As it has few employees, it is feasible, on a daily basis, for the management to monitor the routine of each employee and adapt necessary demands, including identifying and developing skills. In this sense, the company's management ends up encouraging employees to have autonomy to solve recurring problems in their work and encouraging teamwork — in addition, contributions of suggestions and ideas, throughout the process, are heard and valued.

According to Franzato *et al*. (2015), the social learning process of strategic design is effective when a plurality of actors rethink and question the product-service systems that affect company relationships. Aspects linked to the processes of learning and relearning need to be incorporated into the teams' routine (Dees, 2001; Echos, 2015; Murray; Caulier-Grice; Mulgan, 2010). It is also worth highlighting that, when the company understands creativity as an important intangible asset, it is more likely to develop a constant innovation process (Visoná, 2017).

Regarding the weaknesses of Beta, the interviewee argues that the company needs to constantly search for new products and niches, due to the seasonality of some products, especially in the summer. Other weaknesses observed in internal documents were the lack of direct sales, poor logistics, and lack of qualified employees. It was also mentioned by the interviewee that negotiating with large chains is complicated and, sometimes, ends up being unfeasible due to the terms of exposure charges, percentage of sales, product exchange, among others.

In this context, Cautela and Zurlo (2006) explain that the conceptual framework of management is made up of three elements: design, the company, and strategy. It can be understood that a company with a process for structuring strategic competencies intrinsically to design has an advantage. However, in small companies, establishing this relationship is more complicated — in these realities, it becomes necessary to have specialized consultancy services (Franzato, 2010).

Therefore, the organization, aware of its weaknesses and fragilities, seeks to address each point daily in order to constantly improve. Currently, as the interviewee explains, Beta relies on the help of a professional to price products and to identify improvements. Furthermore, it should be noted that the exchange of information and communication with representatives and markets is constant, with a focus on building loyalty firstly in markets, supermarkets, fruit and vegetable retailers and, later, end consumers.

For Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan (2010) and Metszősy (2019), the social innovation process comprises stages that begin with the problematization or identification of needs, moving on to the ideation phase, development of prototypes and/or proposals, ending with application and expansion or with systemic changes (Gentil *et al*., 2019; Repo; Matschoss, 2020).

In relation to improvements in organizational processes, according to internal documents, the organization prioritizes transparency and open communication with employees, encouraging the exchange of ideas and improvements in the process, whose main focus is the work environment and the quality of products. The team seeks, in all processes, motivation, freedom of ideas, interaction, and autonomy. Thus, Beta's employees will be welcomed and will feel like part of the organization, because, based on a pleasant work environment, where employees feel welcomed, they pass these feelings on to each product developed.

Based on these responses from the manager, it is possible to observe the elements of strategic design in organizational processes, in addition to teamwork in solving problems, the availability of exchanges between its employees, the vision of recurring situations in the company, and the training of employees to deal with a context of change, so that social innovation is incorporated and new social value propositions are configured (Dees, 2001; Echos, 2015; IDEO, 2015; Murray; Caulier-Grice; Mulgan, 2010).

With regard to Beta's internal communication, there are strategies applied to communication, so that it is possible for certain processes within the organization to be aligned; however, it can be observed that sometimes things do not go as expected, as explained by the interviewee. In this sense, internal alignment between managers and employees is important, as, with the use of internal communication, it is possible to obtain better responses and feedback, which can be managed by the organization, so that they can improve processes, motivation, and the commitment of employees (Andonini; Aroldi, 2018; Lima, 2010; Meroni, 2008; Montaño-Colorado, 2017; Oyarvide-Ramírez; Reyes-Sarria; Staub; Modinger; Viana, 2023).

In other words, internal communication must be aligned with strategic design in an organization, as processes can be rethought so that they become more attractive and aimed directly at employees, as they are the pillar of the organization. Internal communication is directly linked to the company's organizational culture, once that, based on that company's culture, it will be possible to develop and rethink communication, strategies, and processes based on strategic design in the organization (Franzato, 2010; Lima, 2010; Manzini, 2017; Ribeiro, 2008; Staub; Modinger; Viana, 2023).

In this context, it can be mentioned that the organization's development and social innovation must necessarily focus on the strategic dimension of its teams' culture and, then, transfer the consequent theoretical-practical evolutions (Franzato, 2010; Ribeiro, 2008). Therefore, it is crucial for Beta to look for new communication models, mainly because, in so many years, it has not had a specific and continuous line of communication. The implementation of continuous improvement processes in communication is essential in the integration and growth of the company, according to Staub, Modinger and Viana (2023).

In other words, it is necessary to reflect on the fact that it is extremely important that Beta's professionals are directly involved in the innovation and design processes and that their involvement goes beyond communication, processes and flows, making them more efficient and collaborative (Cautela; Zurlo, 2006; Franzato *et al*., 2015; Manzini, 2008; Manzini; Meroni, 2007; Meroni, 2008).

Thus, based on the data collected from the interviewee and the theoretical framework of this study, mainly in Manzini (2008), Beta is suggested some tools to be applied and adapted based on existing strategies:

- responses to conflict situations: in this action, the team of employees reflects on past conflicts, using them to prepare a guide on how to deal with conflicts effectively;
- circles of influence: used to assess team priorities and to make choices about what to focus on, both individually and collectively;
- design sprint: aims at a framework for quickly prototyping and testing new ideas. It is used to creatively and quickly ideate and experiment with a new concept;
- development of the team's operating system: based on reflections and insights into the work process, the team will update its operating system by making considered choices about how to work as a group;
- team purpose and culture: designed to help teams define their purpose and culture;
- the whys: the group defines problems and then asks the question "why?" three to five times, using the resulting explanation as a starting point for creative problem solving;
- fruit design ideation: small groups draw the same fruit and, at the end, the group reflects on the drawings and learnings. The objective is to demonstrate basic principles used for the creation and generation of ideas (quantity of ideas is a condition for quality, as well as ideation based on something that has already been thought of before, considering that ideals are generally the same).

Ultimately, these suggestions seek to show that it is possible to combine strategic design with everyday life, whether within an organization or outside it, as one must constantly learn and relearn and, thus, use strategic design combined with strategic management in organizations. to guide, organize, and change processes or to bring new understanding to people in an innovative and creative way, but that is aligned with the capacity of these organizations (Dees, 2001; Echos, 2015; Murray; Caulier-Grice; Mulgan, 2010). It is also suggested that, if possible, the aforementioned processes be carried out or monitored by a designer (with strategic training).

In an organization, the collaborative construction of processes guides the effective exploration of the application of strategic design tools to discover values and generate recognition and belonging. Therefore, these practices can contribute to the set of strategic design capabilities, as in the combination of techniques: learning, unlearning (Dees, 2001; Echos, 2015; Murray; Caulier-Grice; Mulgan, 2010) and, in return, the design presents its potential to establish empathetic relationships essential for building practices for social and cultural change (Bignetti, 2011; Gentil *et al*., 2019; Meroni, 2008).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to highlight the contributions of strategic design to the management model in a creative economy company. The company operates in the production and sale of artisanal and colonial products, located in the city of Dois Irmãos (RS), has more than 20 years of experience and, for strategic reasons, had its name preserved. Through the main concepts of strategic design and social innovation, we sought to list the weaknesses and competitive differences of both processes.

It was evidenced that strategic design, in a way, is already used in Beta, but without following the application of all the elements of strategic design, which would facilitate certain internal processes, for example, with regard to employees in the exchange ideas or suggestions given by them. This allows inferring that it is up to the organization to describe all the problems mentioned in the interview responses and to analyze them collaboratively, in order to propose ways so that such problems can be analyzed and resolved.

Thus, it is crucial to establish a dialogue with employees, aiming at continued training, and understand how Beta can actually add strategic design, so that they can create new opportunities and strategies, in addition to improving the efficiency of the company's organization in relation to consumer needs and in flows that do not currently work or are not managed. Therefore, collaboration between the organization and employees is extremely important, as they will work together, seeking the same objective, which can improve the relationship and processes between the parties.

In other words, collaboration between the company and employees can and should be a key piece, as employees are on the front line and can perceive situations or ideas that are not seen by company managers, such as: processes that can be changed with small actions, flavors that can be changed or included, and solution to problems that occur with certain products. A point to be highlighted is that internal communication is directly linked to the company's organizational culture and, therefore, by using strategic design combined with the organization, it is possible to obtain competitive advantages.

Another important factor to note is that, as it is a small organization, its management is able to be side by side with employees and see all the difficulties and improvements they need on a daily basis. As for innovation, the organization presents a process conducted slowly but continuously. The company's management is responsible for the constant search for improvements, reevaluating demands and processes, with a view to growing the structure it manages. It is evident, in the interviewee's speech, that the organization can visualize the path that needs to be described, analyzed, and followed.

Despite the relevance of the study, which was successful in highlighting empirical data about the performance of an organization in one of the economic sectors that belong to the creative economy, in the use of strategic design to promote organizational innovation, it is necessary to highlight some limitations that must be considered when analyzing the results. The first refers to the option of a single case study strategy, which makes it difficult to generalize the results, being feasible only for organizations of similar size, operating in the same economic sector. The second limitation consists of the collection of empirical data, as only one interview was carried out, with the manager, which certainly represents an individual perceptual bias, which restricts the understanding of the phenomenon analyzed.

This article is expected to help not only the company's management, but also other organizations that want to implement strategic design in their work environment or to better understand the difficulties encountered in the insertion of strategic design with regard to innovation, management, and processes. Therefore, it is suggested that new studies carry out research, expanding the range of methodological paths both at the level of research strategy, qualitative and quantitative approaches, and in the diversification of techniques for collecting empirical data and its analysis.

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Articles

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Creative economy and eating in slow and comfort food modes: resistance movements in the city

Economia criativa e o comer em modos slow e comfort food: movimentos de resistência na cidade

Daniela Menezes Neiva Barcellos[I], Lesly Fernandes dos Reis[II], Victor Albuquerque Borges Quaresma Gonçalves[II]

ABSTRACT

The city is intrinsically dynamic, expanding through interconnections, reorganizations, performances and consumption patterns. The city not only exists, but, above all, provides experiences that amalgamate subjectivities and objective realities. In the urban context, intense resignifications are experienced. One can perceive the transit between flows of meaning of communicational phenomena such as commensality, eating together. Food and affection are intertwined in the city. Based on these observations, the objective of this work is, with a view from creative economy, to shed light on the possible dissonances between the food offerings that are presented in the city in *slow* and *comfort food* modes and the legitimate search of consumers from a politicized niche, engaged in socio-environmental and anti-capitalist agendas. These themes manifest themselves as resistance movements in the urban context that involves an accelerated and productivist society. These searches stood out in the city during a time of pandemic and disruption, notably on the internet. We also propose a reflection on how the market appropriates these guidelines that generate engagement to promote its product or service, but often does not support its proposal, since they may not promote a perception of value to those who consume it. The work is part of a qualitative approach, from a socio-anthropological perspective, in posts on social networks and online publications. A search was carried out for topics related to *comfort food* during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Commensality. *Slow* food. *Comfort food*. Creative economy.

ABSTRACT

A cidade é intrinsecamente dinâmica, ampliando-se por meio de interconexões, reorganizações, desempenhos e padrões de consumo. A cidade não apenas existe, mas, acima de tudo, proporciona experiências que amalgamam subjetividades e realidades objetivas. No contexto urbano, são vivenciadas intensas ressignificações. Pode-se perceber o trânsito entre fluxos de sentido de fenômenos comunicacionais como o da comensalidade, do comer junto. Alimentação e afetos estão imbricados na cidade. Partindo dessas observações, o objetivo deste trabalho é, com o olhar a partir da economia criativa, lançar luz sobre as possíveis dissonâncias entre as ofertas do comer que se apresentam na cidade em modos slow e comfort food *e a legítima busca de consumidores de um nicho politizado e engajado em pautas socioambientais e anticapitalistas. Essas temáticas se manifestam como movimentos de resistência no contexto urbano que envolve uma sociedade acelerada e produtivista. Essas buscas sobressaíram na cidade em tempo de pandemia e de rupturas, notadamente na internet. Propomos também uma reflexão sobre como o mercado se apropria dessas pautas que*

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geram engajamento para promover o seu produto ou serviço, porém muitas vezes não sustenta sua proposta, uma vez que podem não promover percepção de valor aos que consomem. O trabalho se inscreve em uma abordagem qualitativa, sob um olhar socioantropológico, em postagens nas redes sociais e publicações online. Fez-se uma busca por temáticas relacionadas ao comfort food *durante o período da pandemia de COVID-19.*

Palavras-chave: *Comensalidade.* Slow food*.* Comfort food*. Economia criativa.*

INTRODUCTION

The city is intrinsically dynamic, growing through interconnections, reorganizations, performance and consumption patterns. The city not only exists, but, above all, provides experiences that amalgamate subjectivities and objective realities. In the urban context, intense resignification is experienced. It is possible to observe the transit between communicational phenomena meaning flows such as commensality, eating together. Food and affection are intertwined in the city. In this scenario, of a city-experience notion, representations of foods and commensality are communicational phenomena that can relate to creative economy, making room for new business opportunities and creative expression in consumption networks (HOWKINS, 2002). The act of eating together becomes a place to look at the appropriations which tend to circulate in the city. Nurturing affections, memories, types of intelligence, social relations, coexistence and commensality, the act of eating produces individual and collective experiences. According to Freitas and other authors, "cities and food are still communication channels that work as a central point to get to feel and know others and ourselves, in the different compositions and arrangements of social categories" (FREITAS *et al*., 2020, p. 162, our translation).

It is worth to mention that commensality, the act of eating together, is related to the table culture, being the guests related to codes and social and cultural conventions of their time and means. According to Wollz and Prado (2016, p. 39, our translation),

> [...] the messmate, the one that shares the table with us, may be a friend, a stranger or an occasional guest, who can eat at the same table even without having been invited to, so that he can eat with other people without even exchanging a smile or any kindness. Commensality, therefore, can be pleasant and active when food is shared in a friendly manner, and, on the other hand, can be passive, unpleasant and "bearable" if the person next to us does not share the same social codes.

A tour around town is sufficient to scale the eating experiences. In this asymmetrical and accelerated rhythm space, there are places that promote experiences that renovate consumption and engagement patterns. In fact, the city is constituted as a field of symbolic disputes, being a producer and a product of mentalities, and spares no efforts for that.

In a movement that is articulated with the incessant performance of its actors and trends, it is observed the search for maximum performance, which leads to the generation of what Han calls "Burnout society". "As a counterpoint, the society of performance and the active society generate excessive fatigue and exhaustion [...] The excess of increasing performance leads to a heart attack of the soul" (HAN, 2017, p. 71, our translation).

In this accelerated space, many narratives that are part of the construction of the "new" echo refer to the act of eating sensibilities. Editions and idealization intertwine in the imaginary of the cities among food practices that evoke eating experiences. It is necessary to think about these processes of editions and resignification. For Baccega (1994, p. 9, our translation), we need to "be informed about the construction and edition of this 'world of representations'. Thus, when 'receiving' the cultural products, their perception will be unique, enabling a more adequate reading of the world". This learning process that considers the complexity of the language enables the individual to reconfigure circulating experiences; after all, this learning process reedits and consumes media narratives. Communication and education processes sharing a theoretical and practical ground, dimension that is close to the reflections by Freire (1987, p. 58, our translation) about praxis that, "being a truly transformative reflection and action of reality, is a source of reflective knowledge and creation".

And what do the experiences of eating in the city communicate? How can food care of self (FOUCAULT 1985) and of others for survival in this society of performance? In this paper, we aimed at strengthening a broader discussion of the symbolic socioanthropological elements present in food and commensality based on a multicultural perspective. After all, food is language, communication, symbolic exchange. Food is one of the invitations for congregation, for embracement, sharing of ideas, values, traditions, celebration. In many cultures and civilizations, it is constituted as a place of experiences of being human and humanization in large and diverse dimensions.

Food establishes deep roots in culture and in civilization, and is deeply connected with the constitution of more elementary bonds among individuals, creating plural connections. As mentioned by Maffesoli (2004, p. 49, our translation), "there is a plurality of worlds, a plurality of appreciations and sensations". Based on these observations, the objective of this study is to shed light, from the creative economy perspective, on the possible dissonances between the offers of slow and comfort food eating modes, which are presented in the city, and the legitimate search prioritized by consumers from a politized niche, engaged in a socioenvironmental and anti-capitalist agenda, translating into movements of resistance in the city, in a context that involves an accelerated and productivist society. The analysis we tried to work on this article is a result of a study carried out in 2021 about eating experiences in slow and comfort food modes, as movements of resistance in the city[1].

The study has a qualitative approach with a socioanthropological look and aims at provoking a reflection about what is offered and what these slow and comfort

1 This study was presented in the Communication and Urban Cultures RG, in the 44th Brazilian Congress of Communication Sciences, in October, 2021, and derives from the Narrative, Experience and City discipline, ministered by Prof. Ricardo Freitas/PPGCom/Uerj.

food modes of eating represent based on concepts that awakens sensitivities, shared by movements with logics that are approximated, such as slow fashion (FLETCHER, 2010). To investigate these articulations, we used other studies, by Félix Guattari, Michel Foucault, Paulo Freire, Ricardo Freitas and Luisa Ferreira da Silva, among others, especially regarding the city, experiences, subjectivation and commensality.

WHAT IS THE SLOW FOOD MOVEMENT?

> Food involves many dimensions in life, is one of the main elements that shape our identity and our relations with the world. Food is connection with territory and nature. It is memory and affection, history and heritage; it permeates all cultures and many rituals, besides defining economic, social and political relations. (SLOW FOOD BRASIL, 2020)[2]

According to Andrews (2008), *slow food* had already taken its first steps in the 1970s, when one of its founders, Carlos Petrini, became a councilor in the Italian region of Piemonte. There, he encouraged young people of the left wing to mobilize in favor of regional cultural identity and national gastronomy. The slow food movement's historical landmark, however, happened in 1989, when a manifestation was organized against the opening of the first McDonald's in Rome. After that, the movement became stronger and, on December 10 of that same year, the Slow food International Association was launched in Paris, represented by members of 18 countries.

Specifically, slow food's motto is good, clean and fair food[3] for all, and that comprehends a series of changes in the basis of what is now established, but especially the deceleration in the way of eating and living. This involves making changes concerning politics, economy, modes of production, sustainability and appreciation of local food culture. Besides, through projects that promote the dignity of workers and respect towards nature, it values the knowledge of traditional cultures, local diversity and social innovation (SLOW FOOD BRASIL, 2020)[4]. This movement tries to create connection and partnerships among people, be them the ones who eat, the ones who plant or the ones who produce food.

The movement cherishes empathy and the group, and understands that eating is also a political act; when we make our choices related to food or ways of living, we are aware, or at least should be, of the process involved. So, here we propose that the entire food process presents itself in a transparent manner, from production to the appreciation of the small producer, regarding nature through the search of sustainability and consumption of seasonal foods until the respect towards local gastronomic traditions and the appreciation of the people's history. To publicize the pillars on which the movement was build, the organization created a manifest[5] with the practices considered to be essential for the establishment of its proposals.

2 Available at: https://slowfoodbrasil.org/movimento. Access on: Jul 30, 2021.

3 Information collected at: https://slowfoodbrasil.org/movimento. Access on: Feb. 12, 2021.

4 Available at: https://slowfoodbrasil.org/movimento. Access on: Feb. 6, 2021.

5 Available at: https://slowfoodbrasil.org/movimento. Access on: Feb. 6, 2021.

From a more comprehensive perspective, slow movement was an act of resistance that went beyond the matter of ways of eating, and put in check the ways and means through which contemporary capitalism works, forcing us to live a fragmented life due to the speed of information, the demands and the multitasks we need to respond to in order to keep us productive, and, therefore, competitive. The picture of a depressed society with broken social bonds. “The subject of post-modern performance, which disposes of an exaggerated number of options, is not capable of establishing intense connections. In depression, all connections and relationships are broken, and also the connection with ourselves” (HAN, 2017, p. 92, our translation).

Not without reason, the slow food movement is resistance against the way of life that is conditioned to acceleration, to speed and fluency in relations, to individualism, and to all strategy used by capitalism with the purpose of no longer taking possession of the materiality in production and consumption, but of capturing our time. Slow food, therefore, defends commensality, calmness for the act of eating and food and affections sharing. Do cities allow us to live in a slow mode?

FROM *SLOW FOOD* TO AN ACCELERATED CAPITALIST CITY

Here, we find a disruptive moment that tries to slow down the rushed life and to promote new awareness that dives into new codes, rules, values, representations and a network of consumption permeated by the ingredient of sensitive experiences that affect us.

> We are in fact affected all the time by volumes, colors, images and sounds, as well as by narratives and aphorisms. The sensitive is that persistent background rumor that compels us to something without being able to separate real from imaginary; therefore, without being able to turn to structures and laws to define the unity of the world, because then what prevails is the continuous drift of a form, or, better yet, of a manner. (SODRÉ, 2016, p. 219, our translation)

Considering that acceleration represents one of the strategies produced by capitalism to perpetuate itself as the dominant system, it is proposed, after this point, to analyze how it produces its subjectivities.

Guattari understands that capitalism, which was called, in the contemporary scenario, Integrated World Capitalism (IWC), produces subjectivities in an industrial and mechanical scale, and that the logic of the system is to control the subject considering the articulation of its existence. “Capitalism is empowered by human beings from within” (GUATTARI, 1977, p. 205, our translation), therefore, through arrangements, the subject begins to understand and exist in the world in a controlled and massified manner. So, the product of capitalism is to build subjectivities. Its logic is to decentralize itself from the production of goods and services and to be centered in the production of signs; these signs, when intertwined and in constant transformation, shape a form of existence.

Understanding how the aforementioned process is given, we propose to focus on a determinant factor for the success of capitalism, that is, the fact that it appropriates from other subjectivities that escape the dominant models built by it. As mentioned, the capitalist system is plastic, permissive, and, therefore, accepts that different singularity processes coexist, since these can be potentially useful and can also feed it. And what would be the strategy to make these escape lines a potential for capitalism? The concept of territorialization/reterritorialization, built by Deleuze and Guattari, partly explains how it can be used as a strategy.

> The territory is a synonym of appropriation, of closed subjectivation about itself. It is the set of projects and representations which will pragmatically lead to a whole series of behaviors, investments, in times and in social, cultural, aesthetic, cognitive spaces. (GUATTARI; RONILK, 2010, p. 388, our translation)

While these territories are represented by this set of projects and, in general, a way of existing, it also does not exist without an output vector, which always allows the possibility of escaping, a vanishing point, that is, deterritorialization. On the other hand, there is no deterritorialization without the effort to reterritorialize in another part. Back to the idea that capitalism allows the existence of vanishing points, we understand that the logic of territorialization and reterritorialization is put in practice by it effectively. This process of appropriation occurs constantly, and it is possible to identify it in the very movements that appear every day as alternatives for the way of living and eating in big cities. Resuming the idea that capitalism is plastic and shapes itself to singularities, promoting experiences that get close to dissonant movements, and adding it to the notion that slow food cherishes the sharing of food and affection, it is pertinent to reflect on the initiatives that dialogue with slow food.

We looked for some actions that resonate in the city starting with media in the digital environment and referring to affection in the ways of eating, counterposing the oppressive logic of healthy consumption, which understands health simply as the absence of disease.

> Considering the complex matter of food, redefined with social and cultural aspects and eating practices every day, often dominated by the oppressive logic of consumption of health act of eating, the dissemination of content through new communication technologies is a phenomenon. Without a doubt, we are facing a battlefield that is related with the multiplicity of means and messages, complementing itself and promoting symbolic arrangements and materialities of all sorts. (BARBOSA *et al*., 2020, p. 221, our translation)

Healthy act of eating is more than the intake of nutrients, and incorporates symbolic plural dimensions that moves through relations among people, affecting them. Food is identified as a "social act inserted in a subjective logic, imbued with symbolisms that integrate other values beyond that of biological health, of medical-scientific rationality" (SILVA, 2013, p. 63, our translation).

Therefore, in this scenario of circulating experiences about eating that promote affective engagement, remarkably in the internet (social network and online publications), during the COVID-19 pandemic there was a search for themes related to affection and comfort promoted by food. There was information of all sorts, and the ones related to comfort food, which will be presented next, were listed to illustrate the reflections of this study. For example, in Instagram we could find, using the hashtag comfort food (#comfortfood), more than nine million representations.

> The hashtag is the name that highlights meanings marked by the punctuation mark "#", which precedes the words chosen by the user, and also a hyperlink. The hashtags classify and recognize the representations of common sense: a code of social recognition of elements that are constituted as a common reality for those involved in the communication process. Based on the interaction between users of the networks, in the course of communication and cooperation, the hashtags enable communication and reinforce common ideas that come both from scientific information and cultural ideology and the practical experience of the subjects. (GLORIA *et al*., 2021, p. 640, our translation)

There is a comprehensiveness in subjective spaces that exhibit images and messages of ways of eating that affect people, producing public opinion effects. The aggregations raised by the internet, which became a global communication network (CASTELLS, 2009), configure real socialization spaces (BACCEGA, 2009) that can cause both "educational" and "devastating" effects. This is precisely the question that must be thought about the movements that transit with strength and vigor in our contemporary urban routine.

WHAT DOES THE CITY HAS TO OFFER IN THE COMFORT FOOD MODE?

> The Comfort food concept has appeared as a gastronomic term in the 1990s, and gives food a role that goes beyond its nutritional value, taking on the responsibility of awakening emotions and affective memories related to flavors, scents, places, social events and significant people. The emotional relation is established not with food itself, but instead, with everything it represents and means. (SOUSA *et al*., 2018, our translation)

As aforementioned, the term had been used in gastronomy since the 1990s; however, in times of pandemic and consequent social isolation, the meaning of comfort food gained new dimensions and made room for a more intense demand around this type of experience. "What one eats or does not eat reflects the symbolic uses of each food that integrates our cultural choices and our specific lifestyle in urban centers. Biological needs and cultural habits provide feedbacks in this process" (FREITAS *et al*., 2020, p. 160, our translation).

A story published in September, 2020, by the Versatille magazine[6], specialized in trends related with art, culture and gastronomy, explains comfort food as the cozy power of food with an emotional appeal, which tries to refer to the sensations of comfort and affective memory, and is prepared with foods that stimulate the production of serotonin, neurotransmitter related with the feeling of happiness. This way of eating has become stronger with the pandemic.

6 Available at: https://versatille.com/tag/comfort-food. Access on: Jul. 08, 2021.

> When we go through troubling moments, sometimes caused only by the rushed routine, it is normal to look for escape alternatives to relieve stress. Sometimes, it can be a conversation with a friend, physical exercises, binge watch series. But with social isolation, an alternative that ended up growing is coziness through Comfort food. (TORQUATO, 2020, our translation)

The idea of creative economy has been an alternative to articulate sectors such as economy, culture and Society. For De Marchi (2013, p. 3, our translation),

> In the past years, the idea of creative economy has been adopted by several governments and international organizations as a guideline of public policies for the sectors of communication and culture. Implicit in its concept, there is a perspective that rearticulates the relationship between culture, economy and society. Based on the principle that creativity has become key to the promotion of new development, one that is socially inclusive, ecologically sustainable and economically sustained, the proposal is to encourage different productive sectors whose common denominator is the ability to generate innovation based on local knowledge, to aggregate symbolic value to goods and services, besides generating and exploring intellectual property rights.

Based on the proposal of creative economy as a policy that integrates culture and economy, in which creativity is the main bias for socioeconomic development, gastronomy appears as a promising sector. Therefore, gathering gastronomy and creative economy and, based on that, promoting experiences that involve important topics in the agenda, such as “ethical food”, “slow food”, and “comfort food”, generates engagement of a specific niche of consumers, since they point out to socioenvironmental and anti-capitalist policies.

Many restaurants, betting on this demand imposed by the pandemic, have used the #comfortfood in their social media posts to engage this audience that searches for comfortable and cozy experiences through food. For example, Mocotó café, traditional restaurant in São Paulo, run by chef Rodrigo Mocotó, published in Instagram, in July, 2021, one of the dishes of the menu with this hashtag. In the text he also used the sentence “this is the mummy’s food that comforts us[7]”.

Another restaurant that works with the concept of comfort food is Balcone, specialized in Italian food, also in São Paulo. In October, 2020, Vogue magazine, in a story about gastronomy, listed seven restaurants that were launched that year to be visited by its readers. Balcone was presented as “the Italian comfort food news that offers a simple menu, one that holds you in the very first bite[8]”.

In August 2020 Claudia magazine published “10 affective food recipes that are just like a hug”, emphasizing the fact that “besides nourishing, some simple and classic preparations can bring comfort, well-being and good memories[9]”. It is about

7 Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CR3luJElyFK/?utm_medium=share_sheet. Access on: Jul. 29, 2021.

8 Available at: https://vogue.globo.com/lifestyle/noticia/2020/10/7-restaurantes-que-inauguraram-em-2020-para-conhecer-ja.html. Acess on: Jul. 29, 2021.

9 Available at: https://revistacasaejardim.globo.com/Casa-e-Comida/Receitas/noticia/2020/08/comfort-food-10-receitas-de-comida-afetiva-que-valem-por-um-abraco.html. Access on: Jul. 29, 2021

showing that comfort food has gained new shapes facing the need of cooking at home caused by the pandemic. This context led many people to rescue or discover the pleasure of preparing meals to share experiences. Many restaurants took advantage of this demand to offer kits with pre-prepared ingredients, easy to execute, as was the case of chef Rafa Costa, owner of the restaurant Lasai, in Rio de Janeiro, which elaborated the "Menu Lasai[10]". The idea was to put together a box with all of the necessary ingredients to produce a menu with an entry, a main dish and a dessert. The initiative was publicized in a restaurant's Instagram post (@restaurantelasai), in June, 2020. Therefore, it produced not only a box with ingredients to prepare a meal, but the materialization of the cooking experience. The level of personalization, unlike the level of impersonality, leads to a level of hospitality and identity that is connected with the symbolic dimension, and transmutes the food to the healthy level. "Home-made food is perceived as healthier, not because of the ingredients with which it is made, but because of the effort and care that is put into its production […] It is the socializing function of the kitchen, which gives identity to food " (SILVA, 2013, p. 59, our translation).

Considering that, in contemporaneity, food activism has become stronger, and considering that this phenomenon has become a promising niche for entrepreneurship, we observed its presence in the narratives that intend to offer such ways of eating. Inspired by creative economy concepts, we reflected on the eating narratives of the city that are close to slow and comfort food, and whether they are aligned with the original ideas of these movements. As commented by Azevedo (2017, p. 296, our translation),

> Food activism appears as an interdisciplinary umbrella that accommodates different movements and discussions with wide reach in societies, in which food appears as a cross-sectional element, such as Agroecology and Family Agriculture; the Food and Nutritional Security movement; Organic Agriculture and other sustainable agri-food systems (Permaculture, Byodynamic, Natural, Ecologic Agriculture); Fair Trade; Slow Food; Locavorism; Vegetarianism; Veganism; Freeganism, among the most famous ones.

As observed in the presented examples, there is a sometimes affective, sometimes active atmosphere to serve as a shield in a movement that resists the acceleration, isolation, sickening and precariousness of life conditions that are equally visible in large cities. A range of experiences is rapidly disseminated and, in this sense, many of their directions get close to self-care, care towards others and the society, as encouraged by comfort food, embraced by the slow food philosophy.

CARE OF THE SELF AND SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

When we go back and look at the engagements proposed by slow food, we can see narratives of power that support consumption networks. "The more powerful

10 Disponível em: https://www.instagram.com/p/CCD6oFPAl31/?utm_medium=copy_link. Acesso em: 29 jul. 2021.

power is, more silently it will act" (HAN, 2019, p. 9, our translation). Then comes the interest to combine the slow and comfort food philosophy to the ways of eating that echo sensitivities and take up the urban space and the media very fast, in order to reach the condition of happiness, not by coercion, but using seduction.

Capitalism triggers the search for happiness through reaching things, and this ends up deflecting people from the focus of what the search for the "art of existence" is"[11] (FOUCAULT, 1985, p. 50, our translation), which is the search for knowledge, for philosophy, for the memory work to reach the truth. The search for the truth was taught before Christ, by Socrates and other thinkers. Foucault, two thousand years later, presented us with what was called "care of the self", which is the search for knowledge. In this context, it is an invitation to observe the several narratives, be them slow, comfort or others, and realize what is the best way to find the truth that is given by the knowledge journey. It is an invitation to be set free from the oppression of one or more stories and, after that, make our own genuine choices. The term coined by Foucault comes from the Greek: "care for oneself (*heautou epimeleisthai*)". The French philosopher resumes the Greek thought to capture the concept. Thus, he quotes Socrates to declare to the sovereign that has not learned what is "necessary to know in order to rule: first, one should care for oneself" (FOUCAULT, 1985, p. 49, our translation).

The care of the self can be a problem for the capitalist system when facing it through knowledge, because it goes through matters such as autonomy for the individual to make his own choices, through a critical reflection that aims at observing and transforming the world. According to the reflections by Freire (1996, p. 18, our translation), it is necessary to enable the construction of an autonomous citizen who, "through thinking about practice, naïve curiosity, seeing oneself as such, becomes critical". Therefore, for the author, "the more critically the capacity to learn is exercised, the more is built and developed in what I call 'epistemological curiosity', without which we do not reach the total knowledge of the object" (FREIRE, 1996, p. 13, our translation).

> If, in fact, I am not in the world to simply adapt to it, but transform it; if it is not possible to change it without some sort of dream or world project, I should use every possibility I have to not just talk about my utopia, but to participate in practices that are coherent with it. (FREIRE, 2000, p. 33, our translation)

A critical consciousness can be able to lead to processes of transformation of reality based on wishing, buying and discarding and, in case of food, of reaching the *Super Size Me*[12] point, that is, of eating with exaggeration. This becomes clear in

11 The text has quotation marks and apostrophe because this is how it is in the text; Foucault himself used quotation marks to present the concept of self as the "art of existence", and that is how we quote that part.

12 Reference to an independent documentary by Morgan Spurlock, "Super Size me. For one month, the director only ate "Mc products", which assured him a lot of weight gain and worsened medical rates.

promotional actions, such as "free refill" and "twice as many chips", in a system that offers more to the client, obviously earning more, but also favoring waste.

> This obsessive search is strategically programmed to handle a continuous movement of producing desires, needs, consumption and the consequent disposal, for the immediate appearance of new desires, needs, consumption and, in this awareness, individuals feel impelled to go on an adventure of looking for happiness. (BARCELLOS, 2016, p. 39, our translation)

In the Greek vision, the concept about this care also went through the rational use of goods, or the use of only the bare minimum. In other words, without excesses or luxury, because Foucault, inspired by the Socratic philosophy, reminds us that men "should care not about their richness, nor their honor, but about themselves and their souls" (FOUCAULT, 1985, p. 50, our translation).

"Know thyself", from Antiquity, which gains strength as a line of thought, needs to be more conjugated with the caring of oneself, and, apparently, in this process, caring for oneself can even allow individuals to get to know themselves better, since it is about wishes. Actually, the will, or better yet, the intention of the individual regarding caring for himself, as mentioned by the Greek, is the search of happiness. This knowledge for the truth (aletheia[13]) will lead to the caring of the soul, the knowledge of philosophy.

In Bauman's vision about utopia in the liquid modern world, certainty and permanence are in the constant search to reach the condition of happiness. "The singular idea of removing uncertainty from its incapacitating power, at the same time transforming happiness in a safe and permanent condition (facing the continuous and uninterrupted variation of the self, through a change in costumes), is now the very incarnation of utopia" (BAUMAN, 2013, p. 29, our translation). As the author describes it, the objective of a life in utopia is the search for happiness. It is understood that this happiness is the redemption of troubles, compensation of ethical-moral debt and re-humanization of social relations which also take place in the ways of eating.

The multiple significations of eating impose themselves, resist and are constituted as ways of resistance against the acceleration of contemporary life. At the end, the impact of a network of consumptions around happiness resonates in the society of performance.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering that, these days, the engagement in food activism is growing and, at the same time, recognizing that this phenomenon appeared as a promising field for entrepreneur activities, the objective of this study was to shed light, from the perspective of creative economy, on the possible dissonances between the offers of eating that are presented in the city in the slow and comfort food modes, and the legitimate search for consumers of a politized niche, engaged in socioenvironmental

13 Without a veil... the veils that come loos etc. and reveal the truth. Aletheia, unveiling.

and anti-capitalist agendas. These themes manifest themselves as resistance movements in the urban context, involving a rushed and productivist society. Among current experiences about the act of eating that promote affective and political engagement, based on questions that involve sustainability and anti-capitalist policies that dialogue with the slow, we chose comfort food for this study.

These initiatives are understood as parts of a process of making things differently and resisting; therefore, they are in a territory of subjectivation considered as an escape; such an escape is to be continuously resignified by capitalism, and appropriated of creative modes by a powerful consumption network.

> Even though the definition of what is or is not comfort food for an individual depends on subjective contents directly related with their personal history, it is possible to observe constancy in criteria and delicacies in social groups whose members have experienced similar socioeconomic and cultural references. And this has not gone unnoticed by the food industry and the food market outside the households, which incorporate expressions such as "from grandma", "home-made", and "traditional" in many products and in their marketing speech. (GIMENES-MINASSE, 2016, p. 100, our translation)

The matter of sensitivities that search for alternatives to meet their affective demands in the city are also utopic; demands that cannot be fulfilled only with food, as proposed by comfort food, since they involve other values that cherish care of self that are structuring in life. Referring to a depressed society, with broken social bonds, fragile and, at this time, adding the impacts imposed by the pandemic, people look for compensation in comfort food to meet these demands generated at this time of speed, of more and more, and, finally, exhaustion.

The "strength" of the capitalist machine induces individuals to produce all the time. In this logic of productivity, paid vacation or weekly rest, or simply a break to eat, do not comfortably fit this productivits pattern. Companies only grant this right by force of law. And if it were possible, the worker would not even stop to eat. Would recomforting foods be able to meet the necessary affective demand to exist in a society that imposes such an accelerated rhythm? In a society that is subordinated to the imperative of productivity and performance, there is no room for pause, in a tendency of optimizing time in which all space should be filled with tasks. Without pauses to think and reflect critically. Escapes and rest are seen, usually, as escape places.

Among the many eating experiences offered in the city, and looking for the ways of eating critically, it is observed that they follow the same pattern of productivity and strategies of seduction to reach specific groups, promoting experiences of belonging based on the several dimensions that food can trigger. Multiple senses and meanings given to food are built to guide lifestyles and projects of happiness, thus opening up the possibility for the individual to choose, however, based on the affective and digital engagement that marks the context of this time.

Even if they are understood as movements of resistance, it is not possible to say that the experiences that look for the pleasure of eating are not genuine and valid, but need to be carried out with a critical awareness and reading of the world, thus appreciating the personal and subjective experiences of thinking and feeling. The ways of eating are not an end in themselves, but instead, they represent small resistances looking to transform an established and oppressive reality. The pauses to rescue subjectivities of affective memories, as suggested by the slow and comfort modes, can be ways of resisting acceleration. And recognize and realize the subtleties of the construction and edition of these experiences is also a way of resisting to the subordination of a productivist society; after all, as mentioned by Freire (1996, p. 41, our translation), "nobody is a subject of anyone's autonomy". The critical debate about the ways of eating cannot be emptied by the capitalist logic and the escape moments can also be understood as care, rest, pause, and not escape from the contemporary rushed routine.

In this context of contrary forces that are installed in contemporary society, between the established system and the singularities, the search is to answer the following question: based on the experiences of ways of eating that are offered, it is possible for a person to live according to a resistance philosophy against the ways of existing and eating inside the metropolis? Our perception is that there is a big gap between the philosophy proposed in these movements, and that are looked for by the individual, and the offers that are made. The act of eating (and here we extend to lifestyle) in slow mode, inside this society characterized by an accelerated rhythm focusing on productivity, becomes utopic, even if such offers provide us with minor resignified experiences that get close to these singularities, even though for these offers to sustain themselves and generate perception of value by the consumer, they need to be revisited in deeper dimensions.

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Reflections and analyses of the collaborative business models of handicraft in the municipality of Petrolina (PE) from the perspective of entrepreneurship

Reflexões e análises dos modelos de negócio colaborativo do artesanato do município de Petrolina (PE) pelo viés do empreendedorismo

Deranor Gomes de Oliveira[I]

ABSTRACT

This article seeks to fill the gap in the literature on craft entrepreneurship regarding business model configurations. Its objective is to analyze collaborative craft business models, formalized in artisan associations that are present in Petrolina, municipality of Pernambuco, a Brazilian Northeast state, considering the management of these enterprises. The methodology adopted is a triple case study that carries out field, exploratory and bibliographical research. Managers and members of artisan associations were interviewed from December 2022 to January 2023. The data was analyzed using the Canvas tool, which can be used to analyze existing or new business models. The relevance of this work is justified by the theoretical contribution it seeks to bring to the area, by expanding knowledge of studies and practices on artisanal business models, as well as by its social contributions, by focusing on the development of cultural entrepreneurship as a channel that generates basic sources of income. The analyzed business models have similarities in several aspects, such as distribution channels, value propositions, operating costs and diversified revenue sources, and have just small differences in the relationships and customer segments. However, the research highlighted differences in the infrastructures of these associations.

Keywords: Craft. Entrepreneurship. Creative economy

RESUMO

Este artigo procura preencher a lacuna na literatura sobre empreendedorismo no artesanato em relação às configurações de modelos de negócio. Seu objetivo é analisar os modelos de negócio colaborativo do artesanato, formalizados em associações de artesãos existentes no município de Petrolina, Pernambuco, Brasil, considerando a gestão desses empreendimentos. Trata-se de um estudo de casos múltiplos com três unidades de análise. A metodologia engloba pesquisas de campo, exploratória e bibliográfica. A metodologia engloba pesquisas de campo, exploratória e bibliográfica. Foram entrevistados gestores e membros de associações de artesãos no período de dezembro de 2022 a janeiro de 2023. Os dados foram analisados à luz da ferramenta Canvas, que pode ser usada para analisar modelos de negócio existentes ou novos. A relevância deste trabalho deve-se às contribuições teóricas que buscam aportar para o campo, ao ampliar os conhecimentos dos estudos e das práticas sobre os modelos de negócio do setor de artesanato, bem como às contribuições de caráter social, focadas no desenvolvimento do empreendedorismo cultural como canal gerador de fontes básicas de renda.

Palavras-chave: *Artesanato. Empreendedorismo. Economia criativa.*

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INTRODUCTION

Creative economy has been defined by Oliveira, Araújo and Silva (2013) as the group of economic activities that depend on symbolic content, which are based on creative resources that can potentially generate growth and economic development, and that are able to promote the generation of income and employment and exportation. These activities promote social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development.

This set of economic activities mentioned by the authors in the scope of creative economy was classified by the Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro (Firjan, 2022) in four creative dimensions: consumption, culture, media and technologies. Each one of these dimensions represents a set of activities, which go from marketing to architectural design, production, distribution and publication of media, performing arts, biotechnology, reaching cultural dimension, whose framework, among other activities, includes handmade production, which is the object of study of this work.

In Brazil, the pandemic affected the creative industry, and this impact may now be visualized in the new issue of *Mapeamento da Indústria Criativa no Brasil* (Mapping of Creative Industry in Brazil), elaborated by Firjan (2022). The study analyzed the field between 2017 and 2020 and showed that the number of creative professionals, despite the crisis, increased 11.7% in relation to 2017. The country has 935 thousand creative professionals that are formally employed, which is equivalent to 70% of the entire workforce that acts in the Brazilian metal-mechanic industry.

According to Costa and Souza-Santos (2011), the developmental challenges of creative activities reside on the lack of studies and in-depth data about the sector and the formation of skilled workforce, and, among others, it is necessary to improve the flow of production, distribution and consumption of creative goods and services. On the other hand, academic production has neglected the aspects related to the sustainability and efficacy of the handcraft production business models.

In this sensitive and challenging universe, the work group formed by researchers and graduate and post-graduate students at Universidade Federal do Vale do São Francisco (Univasf) made efforts to support artisans in the attempt to solve the absence of information and data about collaborative handicraft production.

The demand was discussed in the classroom of the thematic group Development Dynamics of the Semiarid, in the Administration Course of Univasf in 2022. This reflection was based on the case study of groups of handicraft production in the state of Pernambuco, approaching the specificities of business models as producers of culture and merchandise, in a type of economy that can be characterized as cultural, creative and popular, according to the definition by Oliveira, Araújo and Silva (2013).

The academic and practical concerns in the context of handicraft activities led to the following guiding question: how are handicraft business models configured in the current economy and society? Based on this guiding landmark, the objective of this study was to analyze the collaborative business models of handicrafts, formalized in associations of artisans existing in the city of Petrolina, Pernambuco, considering the management of these enterprises.

This study used several theoretical perspectives and methodology that is based on the analysis of business models anchored in Canvas, which is a visual tool that can be used to analyze existing or new business models. Canvas can help to understand how a company creates, delivers and captures value (Osterwalder; Pigneur, 2010) and is divided in nine blocks, each one representing an important aspect of the business model. Field work was carried out to interview the members of associations and other parties, as well as research of documents provided by the associations and direct observation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The deepening of creative economy, handicraft, entrepreneurship and business model concepts is an essential stage for a literature review about collaborative handicraft business models. This approach allows researchers and users to develop a more comprehensive view, contributing with the knowledge of the phenomenon of collaborative handicraft business models. Besides, it also enables the researcher to identify gaps in the literature and to propose new studies about the theme, for example, the researcher can verify there are few studies about the impact of collaborative business models in the economic and social development of handicraft communities.

The references used for the theoretical foundation of this study were selected in the Academic Google and Capes periodicals platforms using the search terms *creative economy, handicraft and business models*, refined by peer-review articles and Portuguese. The main parts of the structure of the articles, such as keywords, objectives, used methodology, theoretical foundation, results and final considerations, were systematized in the Workbook, which allowed, through an objective analysis, to structure the literature review in three themes: creative economy, handicraft and business models.

Creative economy

The definition of creative economy, first coined by the researcher John Howkins (2007), comprehensively, including the sectors of cultural and creative industries, based on the intellectual capacity to generate a product or service, resonates with the Mapping of Creative Industry in Brazil, carried out by Firjan, in 2022. Likewise, it is backed by scientific papers, such as in Gondim (2015), who called creative economy as the economy of the intangible, or economic of symbolic goods. For the author, creative economy feeds of the talent and creativity of the human being to produce products with high added value. Therefore, it uses creative resources to generate socioeconomic development, such as income, social inclusion, cultural strengthening and human development.

Britto (2016) extends the understanding of creative economy to collaborative processes between creativity, technology and businesses, which emerge from the core of people's creation as aesthetic expressions of work.

If we could say it differently, the local cultural expression, be it for the elaboration of an application, be it for the idealization and confection of local clothes, is a field that works in the context of creative economy, which transforms an idea in the materiality of a product and (or) service based on people's inventiveness.

In creative economy, goods and services come from cultural activities and are appreciated for cultural and social reasons that can complement and transcend a purely economic evaluation. Organizations that work with creative economy, according to Tabosa, Fernandes and Paiva Jr. (2010), seek competitive advantages, developing products, services, processes and businesses, both new or modified, based on the social, environmental and economic dimensions.

According to data from Firjan (2022), creative economy can be segmented in four creative dimensions: consumption, culture, media and technologies. Chart 1 synthetizes the segmentation adopted by Firjan.

Chart 1. Segmentation of economic activities in creative economy.

Consumption	Culture	Media	Technologies
Publicity and *marketing*: Market research, organization of events etc.	**Cultural expressions:** Handicrafts, folklore and gastronomy.	**Editorial:** Publishing of books, journals and digital content.	**Research and Development:** Experimental development and general research (except biology).
Architecture: Design and Project of buildings, landscapes and environments, planning and conservation.	**Heritage and arts**: Cultural services, museology, historical heritage.	**Audiovisual:** Development of contente, distribution, schedule.	**Biotechnology:** Bioengineering, research in biology, laboratory activities.
Design: Graphic, multimedia and furniture.	**Music:** Recording, editing, creation and interpretation.		**Information and Communication Technologies:** Development of software, systems, consulting in information technologies and robotics.
Fashion: Design of clothes, accessories and shoes, besides modelists.	**Performing arts:** Acting, theater and dance production.		

Source: adapted from Firjan (2022).

Among the several economic activities categorized by Firjan (2022) in the scope of creative economy, Brazilian handicrafts are in the cultural dimension and moves around R$ 100 billion a year — 3% of Brazil's gross domestic product generated by the approximately 8.5 million artisans spread in all States. Keller (2014) already indicated a reflection about the production of cultural and traditional handicraft production and the rooting of economic actions in society as a basic principle of contemporary economic sociology.

The study by Santos-Duisenberg (2008) brings evidence about the role of handicrafts as one of the factors that make creative economy a promoter of local development with the creation of employment and income. The activity, when performed collaboratively, is able to mitigate poverty. For the author, it is capable of gathering minorities, leading women who work in the fields addressed to cultural activity to the production of crafts, thus colluding with gender balance, social inclusion and female resistance.

Handicraft and entrepreneurship

Nowadays, the market, boosted by consumers, requires innovative companies. The new types of businesses and the different ways of commercializing goods and services aim at production with high added value. Handicrafts, classified as one of the segments of creative economy, uses creativity to promote socioeconomic development (Pratt; Hutton, 2013).

According to Ordinance n. 1.007-SE, from June 11, 2018, which institutes the Brazilian Handicraft Program and establishes the conceptual base of Brazilian handicraft, "handicraft is every production that results from the transformation of natural or manufactured raw material, through the employment of handicraft production techniques, which expresses creativity, cultural identity, skill and quality" (Brazil, 2018).

Therefore, understanding new nuances in handicraft production collaborative business models may reveal the possible potentialities in the production, commercialization, management and innovation in these types of enterprise.

The central matter of this article relates to the ways handicraft work is rooted in contemporary society, especially work in the value chain of handicrafts, which is conceived as a linear network of work and production activities that connects the project activities of a product, going through its manufacturing or confection, its commercialization and marketing, until its final consumption (Keller, 2014).

About the perspective of handicraft work in contemporary society focusing on the precarious nature, in the social conditions and the forms of work organization, Tabosa, Fernandes and Paiva Jr. (2010) analyze handicraft work focusing on nature, on social conditions and on the modalities of work organization in the economy of handicraft, which is often used as a source of occupation and income, considering its unexpected opportunities to include, in social terms, women, the elderly, and people with disabilities who can even work from their own homes.

The work of Brito *et al.* (2015) about the changes promoted and suggested by the social actors and the perception of artisans about their activity, focusing on the analysis of entrepreneur behavior, observed that the changes promoted by the intervention of these actors have led to the consolidation of the local production arrangement. This allowed the creation of the foundation so that artisans could continue with their productive activities while learning to distribute tasks, control income as a group, share management practices and other types of knowledge that can keep the values and beliefs of the community cohesive.

As in any other economic activity, in handicraft, specifically for the purposes of this study, collaborative business models exist and operate with proposals of value, client segmentation, monetization models, with all elements and factors that compose business models.

Business Models

About business models and because of the growing complexity involving very different environmental, economic, social and political variables, Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) claim that the constant analysis of the business model helps to understand the positioning of an organization, so that it can conceive more solid and competitive models. For the authors, the detailed and structured analysis of the business models' components is crucial to reveal interesting paths towards innovation and renovation, while providing a scenario of where the organization is now, suggesting some future trajectories in terms of opportunities and threats.

Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) defined business model as the logic of creation, delivery and capture of value from an organization. Therefore, a business model is an important management activity that allows an organization to assess the health of its position in the market and to adjust accordingly.

Authors such as Petrini, Scherer and Back (2015) developed the junction of sustainable development alternatives with social impact and business models created for the generation of profitable results. For the authors, a social business tries to merge the creation of social value with the creation of economic value in the same organizational structure. In this sense, the generation of social value is extended not only to the final consumer, but also to all interested parties — clients, collaborators, suppliers, investors and society.

The artisans' associations, as collaborative business models, have been an efficient business model from that perspective, being an advantageous escape valve for small business entrepreneurs, including artisans (Silva *et al*., 2023), who often do not have the visibility or cannot afford their own site nor to invest in it; thus, they have the possibility to exhibit and sell their products and services in a physical space, allowing the sharing and exchange of services and objects between the company and individual microentrepreneurs.

According to Pirotti, Bitencourt and Wegner (2017), collaborative ventures are those built and maintained by a community of people who have a common objective. They are characterized by collaboration, sharing of resources and shared decision making. Artisans' associations follow the same principles. They are formed by artisans who gather to promote their work, exchange knowledge and experiences and improve their work conditions.

The study by Melo (2015) emphasizes that, even though the concern with the symbolic is present in the analyzed studies, the economic approach has been privileged, especially when the goal is to generate income for communities in situation of social vulnerability. The growing appreciation of handicraft goods in contemporary society allows to infer that, in the future, artisans will be more autonomous in the market.

The configuration of handicraft collaborative business models is not different from that logic. These models, first created under the logic of creating social value, need to incorporate, even because of organizational survival, economic and environmental sustainability, matters that are now essential for any type of business.

METHOD

This is a descriptive study, with qualitative approach, through a multiple case study. The unit of analysis was the business model, and observation units were three collaborative ventures that fit the definitions of creative economy by Oliveira, Araújo and Silva (2013), and of handicrafts by Pratt and Hutton (2013), Keller (2014) and Ordinance n. 1.007-SE, from June 11, 2018. Initially, six collaborative enterprises were modelled; however, only three fit the definitions of creative economy and handicraft.

The main interaction was carried out with representatives of artisans and the artisans themselves, which allowed data to be collected through semi-structured interviews aiming at filling out the business model chart developed by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010), considered as adequate to qualify and classify the several existing business models in the scope of economy.

The methodological procedures contemplated the following steps:

- Field Research: semi-structured interview with managers from collaborative ventures of the city;
- Validation of gathered data with the parties involved in the management of collaborative ventures;
- Treatment and analysis of data: to analyze the systemic consistency of business model components.

For better understanding, the *design* space, shaped in the Canvas chart, was analyzed according to four main dimensions:

- Interfacing with clients: involving the Client segment, Distribution channels, and Relationships with Clients blocks;
- Value proposition;
- Infrastructure: involving the Key-activities; Key-resources and Key-partnerships blocks;
- Costs and income.

As a support for the analyses in Canvas, we used the analytical tool developed by Kim and Mauborgne (2005) called four-action framework (Chart 2). The tool's central ideal is to analyze the cost and value curves, using four key-questions, which investigates the strategic logic and the sector's business model.

Chart 2. Four-action framework.

Cost	Value
Eliminate	**Raise**
Factors that are reasons for competition	Factors that are way above standards
Reduce	**Create**
Factors that are way below standards	Factors that the industry has never offered

Source: adapted from Kim and Mauborgne (2005).

When it comes to business modeling, we need to capture more value than cost to deliver such a value. A business model can only be sustainable if this equation is real.

RESULTS

Considering that the analysis of any business model is intrinsically connected with the understanding of its environment and social, cultural, economic and political aspects involved, it is important to first present the referred business models that met the inclusion criteria for the purposes of this study, contextualizing the location.

Petrolina is a Brazilian city located in the far southwest of the state of Pernambuco, on the banks of São Francisco River, in the border with the state of Bahia. The city's population has 387 thousand residents (IBGE, 2022). Economy is based on agriculture, tourism and industry. The city is an important production center for tropical fruit, such as mango, banana and papaya, besides being a popular tourist destination because of its beautiful natural landscapes, such as the São Francisco River. The city is famous for its music, gastronomy and handicrafts.

Portal do Artesanato de Pernambuco (Handicraft Portal of Pernambuco) is an official state government website that provides information about handicrafts in Pernambuco. The portal highlights the raw materials and typologies from the region, such as leather, wood, clay and natural fibers. The main typologies of the territory of Petrolina, to show local handicrafts, are: leather bags; vases and figureheads produced with regional clay.

Petrolina's handicrafts are an important source of income for the local community. Besides, it is a way to preserve regional culture and tradition. According to Silva (2020), it is relevant to analyze the behavior of the association and public parties involved, among sharing actions, which have been increasing. These actions boost the economy in an alternative manner and change the consumption relationships between people and the access to goods and services.

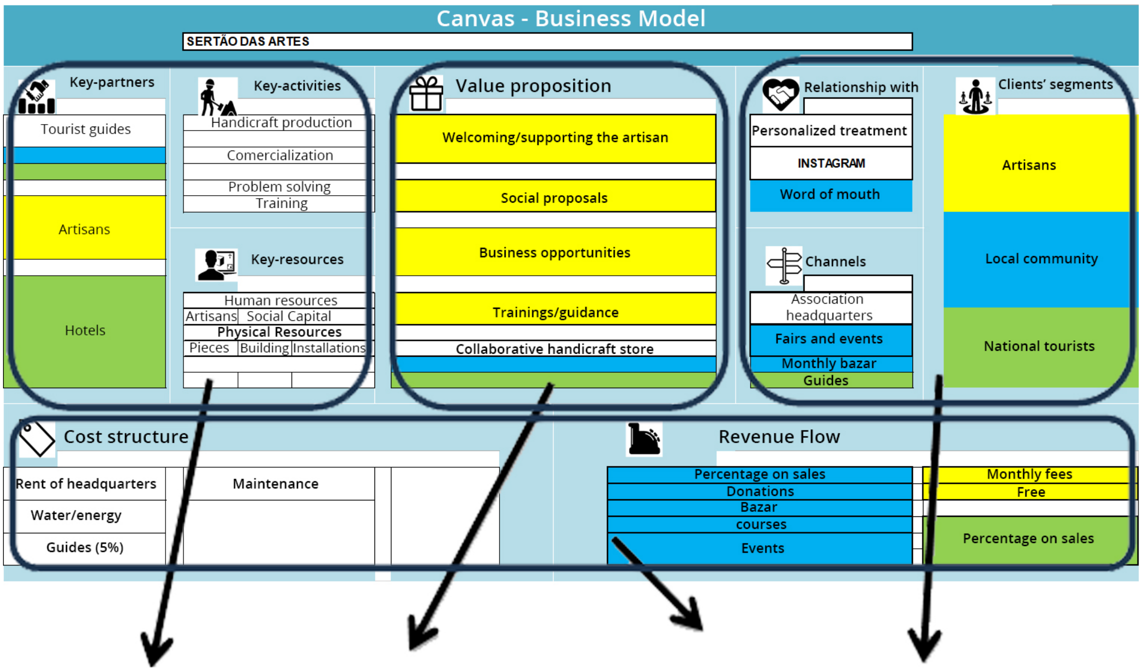
Sertão das Artes Association: business model design

History

During the pandemic, on October 22, 2021, the Sertão das Artes Association was founded by Vanessa Duarte, daughter of an artisan and seamstress. Art is in its essence, but it was her entrepreneur and administrator's vision that made the project real. Being part of handicraft groups, herself and a group of craftswomen saw the need to teach artists that their work has value and that they need administrative and economic vision. Based on that, they created the first course about financial management and pricing of the crafts business.

Through its projects, the Association tries to embrace and support the artisan, and its main goal is to rescue the art and the artist. The house is the center of distribution and reception, where trainings take place, as well as sales of the art pieces, events, such as fairs and bazaars. They also participate in other events. Currently, there are 20 associated artists, and they all contribute with a monthly fee for fixed expenses; the rent of the building for the association's headquarters is shared.

The association's business model can be visualized in Figure 1.



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Key-activities are easy to copy;
- Difficulty to enable the right resources at the right moments;
- Little use of relationships with key-partners;
- Resources are predictable;
- Key-resources are underused.

VALUE PROPOSITION

- Doubts about the alignment of VP with the clients' needs;
- Has potential for a network effect;
- There are replacements available in the city;
- Little complementarity or extensions of the VP.

REVENUES/COSTS

- Unpredictable revenues;
- Predictable costs;
- Low contribution margin;
- Fragile income sources;
- Questionable income sustainability;
- High fixed costs;
- Some revenues might disappear in the future;

INTERFACE WITH CLIENTS

- Client base is well segmented;
- Little efficiency in customer relationship;
- Distribution channels are integrated;
- The brand is not strong yet;
- Traditional channels;
- Channels do not provide economy.

Figure 1. Business model — Canvas — Sertão das Artes Association.

The Sertão das Artes Association is mostly characterized as a business model focused on the production and commercialization of handicraft goods and the appreciation of art and the artist. The four-action framework, in conjunction with the Canvas chart of the business model, shows how the association works with the traditional elements of the business value proposition in the handicraft culture.

Starting with the analysis of the value curve of the four-action framework, it is observed that income sources are not attractive, so they could obtain higher margins and indicate, at the same time, the business' financial sustainability, or even generate recurring sales. It is possible to believe that some of these incomes might disappear in the future, so it is safe to start planning the addition of new income sources. The pricing mechanism depends on the characteristic of the product and the subjectivity of the artist.

The client base is well segmented; however, distribution channels are traditional, and mostly used by its competitors, which is not news in the monetization model.

Distribution channels, despite integrated, are poor and little efficient. They do not provide distribution when we think from the economies of scale perspective.

Relationship with clients is not systematically established, nor does it use efficient strategies and tools to increase sales by attracting new customers without giving up current ones. The brand is still young, has little visibility and is not consolidated as reference in the market.

In the cost curve, the key-activities of the business model do not bring innovation or advantages and can easily be copied – not the piece itself, but the set of arts produced and offered by other artisans. The key-resources, especially human capital, despite being the competitive essence of the business, have entrepreneurial and associative motivations that are little developed. Craftswomen apparently did not understand the entrepreneurial journey. For this category of professionals, it is not easy to align the creative act with the requirements of entrepreneurship.

As for relationships established with key-partners, these seem to be fragile and little efficient. Unlike what some may think, partnerships can help to reduce risks when organizations operate in competitive environments (Osterwalder; Pigneur, 2010). It does not seem healthy for a company to possess all resources and execute every activity. However, in the association, the strategy of building partnerships, in the sense of increasing sales and strengthening activities and resources, it not a privileged goal by the management.

To make money, Sertão das Artes maintains its operational costs, when possible, below the income, including monthly fees. It is a business model guided by the cost, even though it could be guided by value, once it works with customized products. This model aims at keeping the cost structure as low as possible; however, fixed costs, mainly represented by the property's rent, remain high, regardless of the sales.

Chart 3, in a short version, shows the assets, on the right side, that need to be above the patterns of competition and the ones that need to be created in a surprising manner in the industry. On the left side are the liabilities, which need to be eliminated or reduced.

Mestre Quincas Artisan's Workshop: business model design

History

Mestre Quincas Artisan's Workshop is one of the most famous cultural centers in the region. The name honors Joaquim Correia Lima, called Mestre Quincas, considered to be the first artisan of Petrolina. The association was founded due to the need of an owned location that could exhibit the handicraft production in a single space. Therefore, a group of artisans came together in order to value regional

Chart 3. Four-action framework of Sertão das Artes Association.

Cost	Value
Eliminate Factors that are reasons for competition	**Raise** Factors that are way above standards
	• Brand's visibility; • Contribution margin; • Artisans' self-esteem; • Client portfolio.
Reduce Factors that are way below standards	**Create** Factors that the industry has never offered
Number of visitors without sales.	• New customer relationship channels; • New relationship networks; • Complementary distribution channels; • Deep knowledge about customers; • Permanent training program for artisans.

culture, such as figureheads and handicrafts. In this group there are people like Ana das Carrancas, Rock Santeiro, Mestre Bil dos Anjos, Zé Brochado, Bitinho and Zé Alves, who looked for improvements and a space for their work to be exhibited and recognized.

The creation and maintenance of Mestre Quincas Artisan's Workshop have contributed with several projects of access to culture and with the planning of events addressed to artisans in short and medium terms. The workshop's business model depends on a key-partner and is characterized as a model that focuses on the production and commercialization of handicraft products, as well as the support and appreciation of the art and the artist.

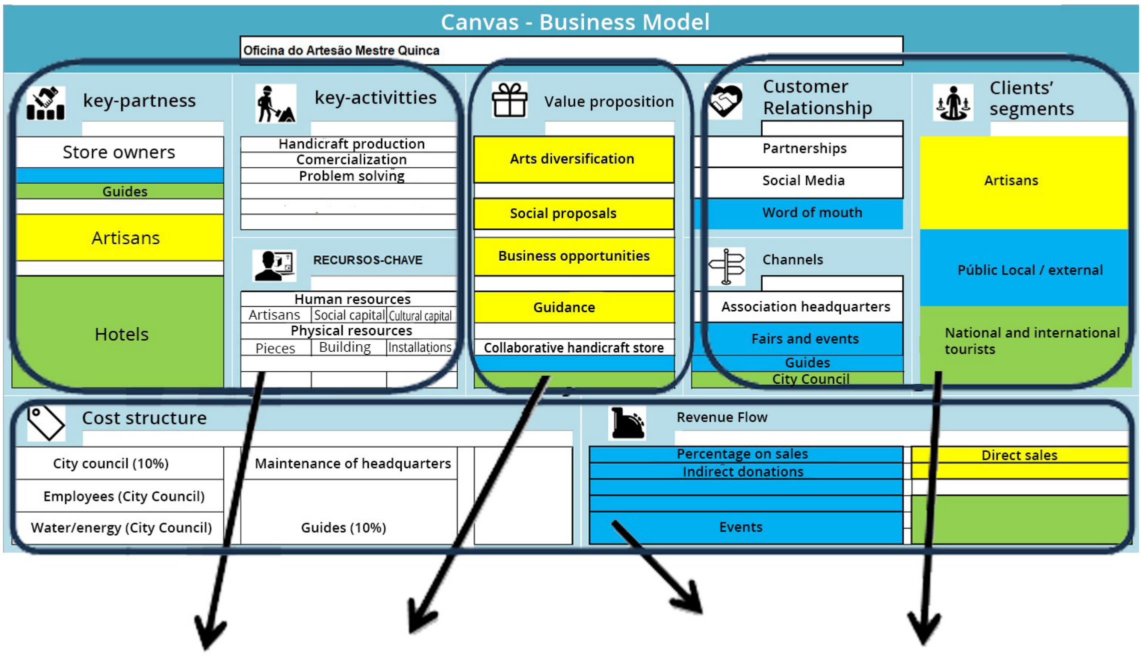
Mestre Quincas Artisan's Workshop aims at recognizing local culture through its art, and its main goal is the centralization of tourism.

In the value curve of the four-action framework, observed in Figure 2, the income sources are not attractive to obtain higher margins, with a few exceptions, when the workshop is invited to external events. The income sustainability is questionable, once it mostly depends on contracts and agreements with the city council, which takes on the operating expenses of the artisan's workshop. On the other hand, it cannot obtain recurring incomes, which are the ones you receive from loyal and regular customers, who buy from your company again, without the need to invest more capital, that is, the client that goes back to you for new purchases with a certain periodicity (Osterwalder; Pigneur, 2010).

The client base is segmented in three main pillars:

- The artisans themselves;
- Local and regional communities;
- National tourists; sporadically, international ones.

However, the used distribution channels are traditional and do not differentiate distribution models among the client segments. It is not that the channels are not adequate, but they are possibly underutilized.



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Key-activities are hard to copy;
- Difficulty to enable the right resources at the right moments;
- High dependency on key partners (City council);
- Little use of IT
- Key-resources are underused

VALUE PROPOSITION

- Doubts about the alignment of VP with the clients' needs;
- Has potential for a network effect;
- There are replacements available in the city;
- Little complementarity or extensions of the VP.

REVENUES/COSTS

- Unpredictable revenues;
- Predictable costs;
- Low contribution margin;
- Fragile income sources;
- Questionable income sustainability;
- High fixed costs;
- High dependency on public funds

INTERFACE WITH CLIENTS

- Client base is well segmented;
- Little efficiency in customer relationship;
- Distribution channels are integrated;
- The brand is not strong yet;
- Traditional channels;
- Threat from competition.

Figure 2. Business Model – Mestre Quincas Artisan's Workshop.

Customer relationship, and, at the same time, support tools, such as social media, do not happen in a conscious, programmatic and intentional manner. At the same time, they are not sufficient to efficiently increase sales by gaining new customers without giving up current ones. Traditionally, it is a known venture in the region, perhaps the oldest one. The "worth of mouth" seems to be the most efficient strategy in the communication process.

The building is the distribution center, where some pieces are manufactured and shown, besides exhibiting sculptures from artisans of other regions. It is a very diversified artistic hub.

Part of the offered pieces is not unique nor exclusive, with peculiar traits, being easily copied and replaced. Another part of the production, especially pieces produced with wood that is exclusively found in the Caatinga biome, is not easily copied nor easy to replace. These are unique pieces with singular artistic traits, and expressive regional recognition.

In the cost curve, we found all of the main costs that have financial weight and derive from the business operationalization. Creating a value proposition, defining income sources, establishing partnerships, creating relationships with clients and operationalizing the model require a well-defined cost structure. In the case of the artisan's workshop, the business model is guided by value with little concern for operating expenses, once these are taken on by partnerships. Artisans worry less about operational costs and are focused on the creation of value propositions, which represents a competitive advantage, whose costs are those related to the artisan's time, creativity, and skills. The handicraft production delivery is usually highly personalized, often developed according to the clients' preferences.

Also in the cost curve, we found little use of information technologies in commercial relations. Among the most relevant intangible assets for this type of activity is human capital. It seems that these resources could be better used in terms of cooperation in labor activities. Unresolved relationship problems in the beginning of the activities end up generating little cooperation in the workplace. It means saying that key-resources are underutilized, and need to walk towards the formation of social capital.

Chart 4 shows the short version of the value and cost curves.

Chart 4. Four-action framework of Mestre Quincas Artisan's Workshop.

Cost	Value
Eliminate Factors that are reasons for competition	**Raise** Factors that are way above standards
• Number of visitors without sales.	• The brand: monetizing it via multiple formats and platforms; • Artisans' self-esteem; • Sales.
Reduce Factors that are way below standards	**Create** Factors that the industry has never offered
• Financial dependency from key-partnerships.	• Customer relationship channels; • Complementary distribution channels; • A sustainable revenue model; • Strategies for future revenues; • Collaborative bonds and entrepreneurs.

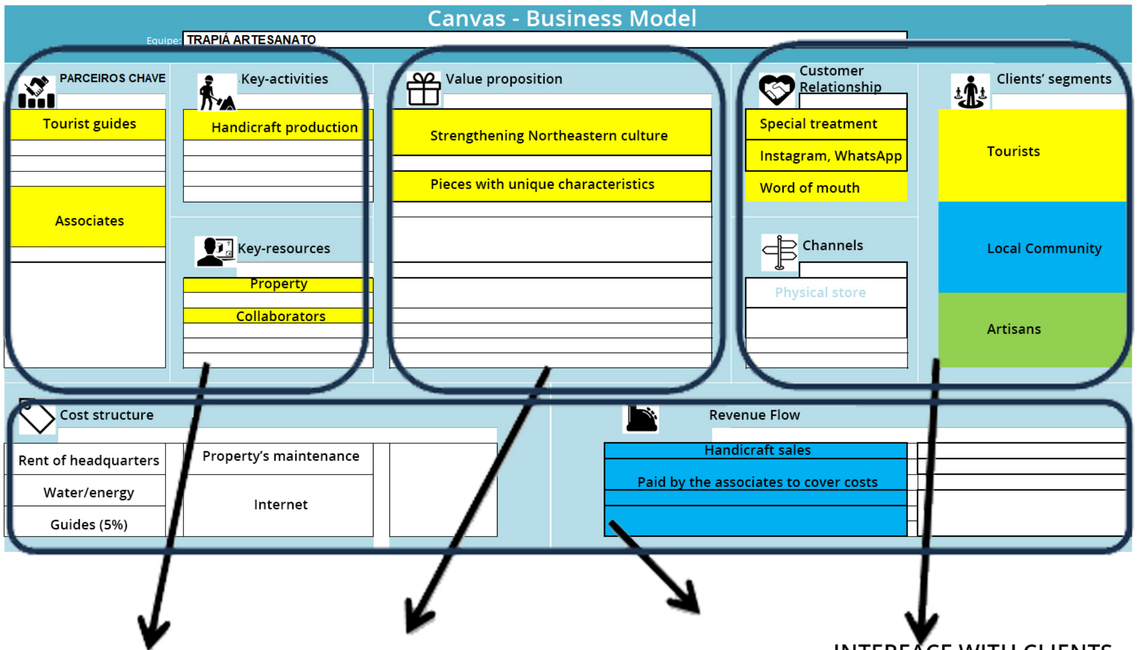
Trapiá Handicraft: business model design

History

Trapiá Handicraft was launched in 2011. This action includes artisans. In its foundation, it had only four associates; now, it is composed of 12. According to the associates, its objective is to strengthen the handicraft trade and regional culture through a collaborative space in which associates prepare the pieces at home and take them to be sold in the space. The business focuses on Northeastern handicrafts.

Trapiá Association makes money by delivering Northeastern culture through handicraft and unique pieces.

The analysis of the value curve of the four-action framework (Figure 3) allows to highlight that income sources are not attractive; counter sales is prevalent — self-service. The associates collaborate with a monthly fee for fixed expenses. The income model produces a low margin of contribution.



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Key-activities are easy to copy;
- Difficulty to enable the right resources at the right moments;
- Dependency on own production;
- Key-partners: Tourist guides or artisans;
- Little use of IT;
- Good location.

VALUE PROPOSITION

- Well-defined VP: focus on Northeastern culture;
- Look for exclusive products;
- Doubts about the alignment of VP with the clients' needs;
- Has potential for a network effect;
- Little complementarity or extensions of the VP;
- There are replacement products.

REVENUES/COSTS

- Traditional income source - selfservice;
- % predictable income – rate;
- Low contribution margin;
- Predictable costs before sale

INTERFACE WITH CLIENTS

- Client base is well segmented;
- Fragile customer relationship;
- A single distribution channel;
- Fragile brand;
- Offer of replacement products

Figure 3. Business model – Trapiá Association.

Its geographic location, a tourist spot of Northeastern culinary, is alone a competitive advantage due to the flow of tourists in the space, which refers to the project's financial sustainability. However, considering the still traditional income source, with little complementarity or extensions in value proposition, it may not be sustainable since artisans may not be replaced in a continuous cultural process. Those incomes from loyal customers are not recurring.

As to customer relationship, digital tools Instagram and WhatsApp are adequate, but underused. Therefore, they are not efficient in terms of increasing sales or getting new customers. The development of digital skills and abilities seems to be more and more strategic in the administration of business models, even when creativity is the essence of the business.

In the cost curve, we found the most important costs involved in the entire complexity of the business. Fixed costs, such as rent, water and energy, are the ones with the most impact. Costs with wages of employees and labor burdens do not exist. Key-activities are executed by the artisans themselves in a rotation system; working 12 hours a day.

The Trapiá Association depends on its production capacity due to its specificity of its own production by means of its associate, which can be a restriction to adjust to an increase in demand.

Chart 5, shows the short version of the value and cost curves.

Chart 5. Four-action framework of Associação Trapiá Association.

Cost	Value
Eliminate Factors that are reasons for competition	**Raise** Factors that are way above standards
	• Contribution margin; • Symbolic value of handicraft production.
Reduce Factors that are way below standards	**Create** Factors that the industry has never offered
• Number of visitors without sales.	• Strong relationship through digital media; • Complementary distribution channels; • Strong brand.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In creative economy, goods and services come from cultural activities and are appreciated by social reasons, being able to complement and transcend a purely economic evaluation. The analyzed collaborative ventures were essential for those craftsmen and women who were in a socially vulnerable situation. They became an opportunity to participate in the market with their creative skills to acquire income. In this sense, the groups revealed good level of knowledge and understanding about the business, whose main challenge is the difficulty to generate attractive income models with capacity to increase the contribution margin.

Through collaborative enterprises, many artisans began to benefit from this activity due to the need to execute autonomous work and put their creation in the market, obtain raw material, distribute handicraft and become more empowered. Artisans enterprises are configured as spaces in which several craftsmen and women can work together, sharing resources and collaborating in social projects.

The current configuration of collaborative handicraft business models in the city does not present sustainable competitive advantages between them. Such models work in a dynamic environment, full of options of products and services from the regional culture. The three of them have similar value propositions, offering their products and services to the same audience, producing and selling with very similar infrastructure, and practically adopting the same monetization model.

As to the interface with clients, the models maintain a traditional client-salesperson relationship, competing with the same client segments: national and international tourists, local community and the artisans themselves, providing all of the conditions for them to serve themselves – *selfservice*. The models sell more than one product and segment their clients, which is a natural factor of the activity, considering that, even if the market is hesitant, artisans will have more options while readjusting their strategy.

Considering value proposition, the models were first created under the logic of social value creation, proposing conditions so that artisans could boost their self-esteem, promote Northeastern culture and develop competences of the entrepreneurial behavior.

About the offer of handicraft pieces, it is possible to consider that similar products are offered, and they can be easily replaced. The models' value proposition, unconsciously, have a direct connection with reason, when the experience of crafts with the emotional is a much more powerful strategy. The experience concerns us, and the handicraft piece refers to something else. Therefore, the experience with people should be a priority. A social business seeks to merge the creation of social value with the creation of economic value in the same organizational structure (Petrini; Scherer; Back, 2015). In this sense, the generation of social value is not only extended to the final consumer, but also to stakeholders — clients, collaborators, suppliers, partners and society.

About infrastructure, the creative capacity of artisans as an intangible asset is what can ensure the advantage of the analyzed models. Human capital is the most refined resource of the process; that is why, coherently, the models make efforts to provide well-being to the artisan as a priority. The key-activities and the key-processes do not differ much. Artisans produce and sell their art practically with the same conditions and little ability to accurately define their main resources and activities. Key-partnerships are not well-established, as a factor of aggregation for value and cost curves, except for Mestre Quincas Artisan's Workshop, which has a partnerships with the local city hall and exempts artists from operating costs. On the other hand, this partnership compromises the financial sustainability of the business, besides creating a relationship of dependence, and can be over at any moment.

In the scope of revenues and costs, pricing is still subjective and different from other activities. Artisans deal with costs before having any source of income, with some exceptions — when they receive part of the order in advance. To guarantee the sustainability of enterprises in the long term, administrators should consider that their cost structure needs to be reassessed from time to time. The activity's peculiarity as to profitability allied to the entrepreneurial behavior of the artists favors the low commercialization margins, which has a direct impact on profitability.

Recommendations follow in several directions. First, there should be a cooperation effort among collaborative enterprises, universities, private organizations and governmental parties to form a handicraft ecosystem and materialize the crafts activity. Secondly, regardless of the development dynamics, the technological conjuncture in constant transformation and the tendency of digitalization, more and more common, lead to the emergency to adopt technologies to increase the possibilities of production and commercialization of products. Third, more than selling handicraft pieces, ventures should sell a unique experience and unite cultural and emotional elements. Brands, cultural knowledge, relationship network, human capital are all intangible assets that ensure advantage and generation of profitable results. Last, but not least, having advantage in relation to competitors and understanding customer behavior must be the strategic fit to consolidate brands.

These models, which were initially created according to the logic of social value creation, need to incorporate economic and environmental sustainability, which is now essential for any type of business, even because of organizational survival.

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Rio of Imaginaries: City, Mega-Events and Strategic Planning

Rio de imaginários: cidade, megaeventos e planejamento estratégico

Roberto Vilela Elias[I]

ABSTRACT

From urban administrators to artists, through entrepreneurs and advertisers, the "Rio" brand is known and consumed worldwide. The media projection that the city had during the preparations and the realization of the 2016 Olympic Games enabled the construction of an imaginary, which is widely used in the intention of legitimizing institutional practices that modified the space and readjusted it to the interests of governmental and business coalitions. This governance model looks at the city and manages it, literally, as a commodity that must be valued and worshipped in order to project itself in an international market where it competes with other cities. In this article, we intend to discuss the mutations of Rio (and the Rio brand) using as parameters, in addition to the historical context, the Passos Reform in the early twentieth century and the interventions operated in the city with a view to the World Cup and the Olympics.

Keywords: Rio de Janeiro; mega-events; imaginary; strategic planning.

RESUMO

De gestores urbanos a artistas, passando por empresários e publicitários, a marca "Rio" é mundialmente conhecida e consumida. A projeção midiática que a cidade teve durante os preparativos e a realização dos Jogos Olímpicos de 2016 possibilitou a construção de um imaginário largamente utilizado na intenção de legitimar práticas institucionais que modificaram o espaço e o readequaram aos interesses de coalizões governamentais e empresariais. Esse modelo de governança olha para a cidade e a administra, literalmente, como uma mercadoria que deve ser valorizada e cultuada, a fim de se projetar num mercado internacional onde concorre com outras cidades. Pretendemos debater, neste artigo, as mutações do Rio (e da marca Rio) utilizando como parâmetros, além do contexto histórico, a Reforma Passos, no começo do século XX, e as intervenções operadas na cidade com vistas à Copa e às Olimpíadas.

Palavras-chave: *Rio de Janeiro; megaeventos; imaginário; planejamento estratégico.*

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INTRODUCTION

From "Paris of the tropics", in the early twentieth century, to "Olympic City", in the early twenty-first century, Rio de Janeiro as a brand has some denominations that, throughout its history, reflect the moment which the city goes through and the way it is administered. Scenario of music, movies, soap operas, poems and romance novels, "from Leme to Pontal, there is nothing like it", as put by Tim Maia. Tom Jobim declared that his soul sang when he saw Rio de Janeiro. Fernanda Abreu does not get enough of repeating that Rio 40° is the purgatory of beauty and chaos. James Bond had an epic fight against "Jaws" in the Sugar Loaf cable car, and those scenes, at the same time, showed a life and death struggle and projected images of one of the main postcards and panoramic views of Rio and its beaches to the world.[1]

Natural *habitat* of the girl from Ipanema, sang even by Frank Sinatra, Rio de Janeiro is the most fetishized city in Brazil, and maybe even in Latin America. We listed some examples in a good-tempered tone to emphasize that, from urban administrators to artists, entrepreneurs to advertisers, the "Rio" brand is globally known and consumed. But what is the origin of that? How was this city historically ordered to receive such appositives that provide several meanings to this brand? In this article, we intend to debate the mutations of Rio (and the Rio brand) using not only its historical context as a parameter, but also the Passos Reform, in the early twentieth century, and the interventions the city went through after 2010, aiming at hosting the World Cup and the Olympics. We understand these changes as a branding mechanism aiming at attracting investments to the city through media exposure.

> When and how do cities reinvent their cultural repertoire and symbolic heritage? The accumulation of symbolic capital in the cities clearly depends on a series of factors, among which are the cultural expressions sedimented by historical legacy, economic and political strength of the city, investment and presence of the State, global dimension of the metropolis, and the action of the capitalist enterprise that reinvents cities as arenas of consumption and entertainment. Mega-events, such as the Olympics, are iconic contests that demand an agenda of urban remodeling. (Jaguaribe, 2011, p. 2)

We also highlight the connection between the urban requalification processes which Rio has gone through after 2010, aiming at the 2016 Olympics, and the creative economy based on these cultural, social and economic dynamics built in agreement with the cultural richness of the city. In this sense, tourism stands out as one of the main actors of this chain, which counts on two yearly ephemerides that are globally known: carnival and new year's, which project the "carioquice"[2] image and spirit internationally.

Verena Andreatta, in *Cidades quadradas, paraísos circulares* (2006), shows us, through ten urban plans applied in Rio up to this day, how the city was planned in

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1 Scenes from the movie "Moonraker", from 1979.

2 Expression used by the City Hall in 2015, as motto of the "Rio 450" campaign, aiming at highlighting the practices and attitudes that are typical of cariocas.

each one of these moments, and remarkably draws attention to the administrations of Francisco Pereira Passos and Carlos Sampaio, in the early twentieth century, as embryos of an extremely worshipped "calling"[3] which, for some, is something to be proud of: the international projection of the city as a host for mega-events. The so-called Passos Reform (1902-1906) was inaugural in this sense and led to the 1908 National Exhibition. The following municipal administrations, of Paulo de Frontin and Carlos Sampaio, followed the same path, and the peak of these two decades of interventions in the urban tissue occurred with the International Exhibition of 1922.

> Among the Exhibits carried out in the city in 1908 and 1922, the Central Avenue was built (nowadays, Rio Branco), as well as Beira Mar Avenue, the Copacabana tunnel and the accesses to Botafogo through the coast mountains; sanitation services began around the Lagoon; The São Cristóvão Field was definitely colonized, with the demolition of Morro do Senado; and a new port was created, incorporating the islands of Moça and Melões, with the new accesses through the new streets Rodrigues Alves and Francisco Bicalho. The 1908 Exhibition started the process of incorporating Urca to the city. (Andreatta, 2006, p. 60)

A second moment emphasized by the author began in 1993, in the first management of César Maia, when the so-called "strategic planning", based on the idea of urban entrepreneurship (Harvey, 2005), was adopted. This governance model looks at the city and literally administers it as a commodity that should be appreciated and worshipped, in order to project it in an international market, competing with other cities. What for? To attract investments. How? By hosting mega-events with great media projection, such as: the World Cup, the Olympics, Formula 1, Pan American games, great music festivals, among others. This model of urban administration continues in the administrations of Luiz Paulo Conde. In the past ten years, Rio hosted the World Youth Day (2013), the World Cup (2014) and the Olympics (2016). As the mayor Eduardo Paes mentioned, at the time,[3] that his intention was to solidify the image of Rio as the global-city of South America.[4]

> In recent years, particularly, there seems to be a general consensus emerging all over the advanced capitalist world: the positive benefits are obtained by the cities that adopt an entrepreneur posture in relation to economic development. It is noteworthy that this consensus, apparently, is spread through national borders, and even in political parties and ideologies. (Harvey, 2005, p. 167)

We chose this time frame because practically one century after the urban reforms triggered by Pereira Passos, which led to two mega-events – The 1908 National Exhibition and the International one, in 1922 –, in the decade of 2010 another large program of changes in the urban tissue began, aiming at the World Cup 2014 and the Olympics in 2016. We already mentioned that the reforms in the early twentieth century did not exactly aim at the conduction of these exhibits, unlike the

3 Eduardo Paes is in his third term in Rio's city hall. The first one was from 2008 to 2012, when he was re-elected until 2016. In 2020, Paes was. Again elected for mayor, until 2024.

4 Story from *Isto É* magazine, from December 9, 2016.

interventions that took place after 2010, whose targets were the aforementioned sports mega-events. We will further discuss it throughout the article. For that, we were based on bibliography we considered relevant for the debate about the city of Rio de Janeiro and mega-events.

The spectacularization of Rio's image, when elected to host the Olympics in October, 2009, enabled the construction of largely mediatized imaginary that became a legitimizing factor for the urban reforms, with the purpose of changing space and readapting it to the interests of governmental and corporate coalitions. The phenomenon can be verified through an excessively coincidental confluence between the corporate media discourse, institutional discourse and the several constructions executed by local governments in the city. Public policies, therefore, take on a notoriously neo-liberal bias in which governments think and make the city thinking much more about enabling the wishes of the market than in promoting well-being and quality of life for the population.

THE PARIS OF THE TROPICS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A "CALLING"

The first big urban reform program implemented in Rio de Janeiro took place during the administration of mayor Francisco Pereira Passos, between 1902 and 1906. At that time, a local elite that had just reached political power aimed at modernizing the city and freeing it from colonial vestiges. Inspired by baron Haussmann (who reformulated the city of Paris in the nineteenth century), mayor Passos completely changed Rio's central area, shaping it with the avenues and blocks we know up to this date.

The Passos Reform left the imperial city behind and made it more modern and adequate to the capitalist dynamics of the time. The opening of large avenues enabled the connection between the port and the city, dynamized dislocations with electric trams and the first vehicles, besides encouraging individuals to go out in the street, which facilitated the control of deviant attitudes. The reordering of space also led to a re-education of bodies and behaviors: dressing codes, ways of walking, interacting, partying and manifesting.

To better understand the scenario, we need to go back to the nineteenth century, especially after the 1870s, when Brazil began to receive large contingents of European immigrants, as well as generous loans from foreign banks (especially British ones). The increasing number of salaried employees was incompatible with a slaveholding society. "The cities grew, and the country began to see an emerging capitalist elite that had reached some economic strength, and, therefore, began to claim for more political participation" (Chalhoub, 2001, p. 248). In this context, the Abolition of Slavery (1888) and the Proclamation of the Republic (1889) were natural consequences of this process. Florestan Fernandes (2005) refers to this historical fact as: "Brazilian bourgeois revolutions", highlighting the time when this liberal capitalist elite consolidates itself in power.

Based on this scenario, of a country that is more and more inserted in the capitalist world order, there was no sense in having a capital with colonial traces. "With the approval of the Federal Congress, president Rodrigues Alves negotiated a loan of 8.5 million pounds from a group of English bankers, to finance the constructions to reformulate the capital" (Chalhoub, 2001, p. 250). This was the first time the city would go through a large spatial reorganization.

The central area of Rio de Janeiro was totally reformed, and the neuralgic point was the opening of Central Avenue; then, the realignment of all blocks in the region. The "Bota Abaixo"[5] of Pereira Passos, as it became popularly known, besides aesthetics, also considered local healthiness and raised Rio to a new level, from colonial city to capitalist city, establishing a new relationship between residents and the city.

Central Avenue, with refined commerce, fashion and tissue stores and bookstores, became a catwalk where one would go to notice and be noticed. The habit of going out, walking around town, became a normal practice. The Passos Reform not only operated a series of urban changes in the city, but it also reflected on the habits of its citizens. All of this modern wave which Rio was going through in the first decades of the twentieth century incorporated a new repertoire of actions and representations. In it, the beauty of this "new" city stood out, as well as the organization skills of the local administration and the population receptivity. With these qualities, the new capital that projected itself began to be thought of as a possible attractive pole for foreign investment through events.

"The first test the city went through was the 1908 National Exhibition, to celebrate the centenary of the opening of ports to friendly nations. It was the first mega-event conducted in Rio, and it gathered exhibitors from all over Brazil and Portugal" (Levy, 2008, p. 53). There, we showed the world what the young tropical national could already produce.

In 1922, the "Paris of the Tropics"[6] was definitely opening up to the world by hosting an International Exposition. Carlos Sampaio, mayor at the time, understood the city as a business platform. Therefore, it was necessary to develop its own scenario, one that would show the world the new image the capital was trying to send. The demolition of Castelo hill and the consequent landfill of the area – located between the Santa Luzia beach and the Glória cove –, where the exposition was installed, deepened the new urban order, expelling the poor population that still lived downtown. As Richard Sennet mentions, in *Carne e Pedra* (1994), urban "renovation" has pushed poverty, concentrating it in further places. In Rio's case, to other hills in the center of the city.

> [...] the Mayor, right after taking the office and fulfilling an old wish, had removed from the center of the city, "on behalf of aeration and hygiene", the place that originated the city in the sixteenth century – Castelo hill. Even

5 Term used at the time to mention the urban reforms initiated by mayor Francisco Pereira Passos due to the large number of demolitions.

6 Term used at the time to mention the city of Rio de Janeiro, after the conclusion of the reforms in the center of the city, and its deep aesthetic similarity to Paris.

> though it was a historical site, the hill had become a place of residence for several poor families, who benefited from cheap rents in the old constructions that were there. However, its location had increased in value, it was two steps away from Rio Branco Avenue [...] (Abreu, 2008. p. 76)

Sampaio chose the financial path so that Rio became competitive in business generally. The new proposed aesthetics implied placing the city in the international list of the main hosts for events and businesses, such as London and Paris. A modern urban organization integrated with the Passos Reform would enrich the central region of the city even more.

> The Rio de Janeiro from the early twentieth century, as it happened in expositions in Paris and London, in the nineteenth century, also appreciated monumentality as a weapon that would turn the city into one of the international locations conducive to triumphant capitalism. This happens based on a self-image desired by the Brazilian elite, against the abyss that existed between the utopia of European progress and the colonial delay that marked South American countries. (Freitas, 2011, p. 8)

The opening of the International Exposition took place on September 7, 1922, and ended in the first week of July, 1923. It worked as a showcase of progress and a mirror for cosmopolitan, Europeanized and modern self-image, designed to appease the anxieties of the local elite, eager to show off a civilized tropical culture for foreign eyes. "The 1922 contest can be considered as the image of a clean, civilized and aseptic city that had been desired since the Passos Reform, initiated two decades ago" (Levy, 2010, p. 44).

FROM MARVELLOUS CITY TO BROKEN CITY

In 1935, the march composed by André Filho and Aurora Miranda (1935) chanted verses that marked that carnival and the history of the city itself: "Marvellous city, full of infinite charms. Marvellous city, heart of Brazil" (*Cidade maravilhosa, cheia de encantos mil. Cidade maravilhosa, coração do meu Brasil*). In the first half of the twentieth century, the cultural and political strength of Rio de Janeiro, capital of the Republic, made the city sort of the beacon of the nation. Who would not like to live in Copacabana, walk around the remodeled downtown area, have some tea in Colombo confectionery or eat Portuguese candies in Cavé?

Together with the interventions initiated with the Passos Reform, the city began to expand towards the South. Glória, Catete and Botafogo were already inhabited neighborhoods, but Copacabana, Ipanema and Leme were not. With the arrival of trams to the beach neighborhood in 1892, and the inauguration of Copacabana Palace hotel, in 1923, the image of the place began to change and attract not only investments, but also the attention of the local elite, which began to exchange their country houses in Botafogo, or large two-story houses in the center, for seafront properties. Life at the little princess of the sea[7] became an object of desire.

7 Expression used after the 1930s to refer to the Copacabana neighborhood, highlighting its cultural and economic splendor at the time.

Together with this flow towards the Atlantic South zone, other constructions were launched, such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Santos Dumont airport, the Gustavo Capanema building, the Glória hotel, the Pasmado tunnel, the Canoas viaduct, the Santa Barbara and Rebouças tunnels, besides the conclusion of the gardens in Flamengo Park, in 1965. Thus, the Marvellous City was built.

> The image of "Marvellous City" is owed to these constructions, as an archetype of harmonization with nature, which was spread around the world. The paradox that assumes that such an image was fabricated precisely on constructions of such range and artificiality has been remarked, reminding us of the happy premonition made by Roman poet Rutilio Namaciano: you made a city out of what used to be the world. (Andreatta, 2006, p. 67)

Within this developmentalist aura, triggered during the Vargas Era (1930–1945), Brazil hosted the 1950 World Cup. Rio, being the capital and with the newly launched Maracanã stadium, was the main host, held the opening ceremony and the final game against Uruguai, of Ghiggia, author of the goal that silenced more than 100 thousand people in the stadium, and made two nations cry: one of sadness, one of joy.

> The decision to host the World Cup back then not only met the interests of the sport; many other elements were at stake at that time, such as the projection of an image of Brazil, especially of Rio de Janeiro, to the world, accompanying a process that had been designed since the turn of the twentieth century, when the country tried to erase its colonial heritage to the benefit of a modern image. Therefore, besides the soccer results, the image of the country towards the world was at stake, and a chance to definitely project Brazil as entrepreneur, modern and victorious towards development in the international scenario. These aspirations were explicit in the discourses of Mário Filho, member of the organization committee, who often revealed that "*To believe in the World Cup and in Maracanã is to believe in Brazil*". (Correa; Soares, 2015, p. 15, emphasis from the original)

But life is not a bed of roses. After decades of prosperity, Rio began to lose its political prestige, which directly affected local economy. The first pillar to come down was the loss of Federal District status, since the capital was transferred to Brasília in 1960. With the atrophy of its political weight, severe economic emptying took over the city, and reached its worst moment in 1980. Therefore, the same Marvellous City that reflected the potentials of the nation began to witness its socioeconomic imbalance and the worsening of inequalities of all kinds.

With economic retraction, urban violence began to impose itself as the main problem of the city after the 1980s, with increasing military power of criminal factions that dominated local drug trafficking. If in the nineteenth century Rio was stigmatized for its dirt and smell of sewage in the streets, and severe epidemics that devastated the city, in the end of the twentieth century the progression of urban criminality gave us the nickname of "broken city",[8] referring to the deep social inequalities that separated the slums from Southern suburbs.

8 Expression signed by Zuenir Ventura, homonymous work, published in 1994.

Even so, with all these problems, the city hosted, in 1985 and 1991, the two first editions of what can be considered as the largest music festival in Brazil: Rock in Rio. Success was so great that the concert became part of national and carioca history as the first musical mega-event that was able to bring, for the first time, great stars of international music to Brazil and help several national bands and musicians to take off their careers.

However, the origin of Rock in Rio is not directly related to music, but instead, to commercial interests, considering the objective of its directors, publicity entrepreneurs, was to promote a new beer brand among the young audience. For that, they idealized a campaign that would surpass the limits of conventional advertisement. The Brahma brewery used the services of Artplan agency – owned by Roberto Medina – to strengthen the image of its product in the market. The strategy the advertisers came up with was to launch a subproduct of Brahma addressed to the young audience. As Medina said:

> Brahma wanted to rejuvenate the Brahma Chopp brand, which had been down. We proposed to launch a type of beer focused on a younger audience, and sign it as "Brahma quality". So, the attributes of modern days would be transferred in a more natural manner. We launched Malt 90, which reached 14% of the market, a huge success. With this performance, we proposed to do Rock in Rio, which represented complete madness from its conception.[9]

Rock in Rio (RiR) is one of the examples that allows us to illustrate the power of the Rio brand. The festival came at a time the city was decadent, and still, has always been a success in terms of audience and financial profit to its sponsors. Rio hosted several editions of RiR, and the festival also took place in other cities, such as Lisbon, Madrid and Las Vegas, still called Rock in Rio. Why didn't Artplan, the event's organizer, change the name to Rock in *Lisbon*, Rock in *Madrid*, or Rock in *Vegas*? To answer this question, we were inspired by Isleide Fontenelle to say that the Rio brand has an imagery load that transcends the fact of being in the city, pointing to an intimate relationship between culture, subjectiveness and fetishism. It is what the author calls "illusion of shape"; Rio simply subsists for its name, even if the individual is not there or has never been there.

OLYMPIC CITY: RIO *BRANDING* IN THE XXI CENTURY

> Maybe this is, today, one of the most popular ideas among urban neo-planners: the city is a commodity to be sold in an extremely competitive market, in which other cities are also for sale. This would explain that the so-called urban marketing is more and more known as a specific and determinant sphere of the city planning and management process. (Vainer, 2000, p. 78)

9 Interview granted to the website Portal da Propaganda. Available at: http://www.portaldapropaganda.com/comunicacao/entrevista/2003/02/0001/index_html?pagina=4. Access on April 27, 2022.

In the early 2010s, the city of Rio de Janeiro went through its most extensive urban reform program. Unlike previous ones, which focused more on the central region, the changes took place in different parts of the city at the same time. The reason that triggered these reformulations, once again, was the update of the city for the new global capitalist dynamics. The agent that enables this project is its "calling" to host mega-events. The World Cup (2014) and the Olympics (2016) were the mottos used by local governments to trigger a series of urban reforms that apply not only to the physical plan, but essentially to the symbolic plan. To build an image, sell it in the media, in order to strengthen its trade value,[10] and sell it.

> Brand management (branding) is the effort to think about the identity that it represents and incorporate audience response about how they see it in the routine, that is, its image. City branding is a continuous building and rebuilding process, which inserts the brand itself in people's memories. Brand images are mostly consequences of what the brand communicates plus the experiences associated with it. And, in a world ruled by information and communication technologies, it is impossible to think about identity without thinking about image, or to think about image without thinking about communication. (Reis, 2016, p. 22)

Since 1993, during the first administration of mayor César Maia, Rio began to be thought of and administered according to the logic of strategic planning or, as David Harvey proposes, urban entrepreneurship. Since then, this logic has been present in all municipal administrations.

> This type of urban governance is mainly oriented towards the creation of local investment patterns, not only in physical infrastructure, such as transport and communications, port facilities, sanitation, water supply, but also in social infrastructure related to education, science and technology, social control, culture and quality of life. The purpose is to generate enough synergy in the process of urbanization so that monopoly incomes are obtained, both for private interests and state powers. (Harvey, 2005, p. 232)

It is interesting to observe a key concept in Harvey's approach, the one about monopoly income. As monopoly income we can point out the set of singularities, particularities and authenticity that provides an object, an individual, or even a city, with symbolic capital that can only be found there. Such as wine's *terroir*. Without question, this monopoly income is a result of strong discursive construction which involves historical narratives, collective memories and cultural practices, always surrounded by a strong operating speech which gives meaning to such claims. In this sense, mass communication means play an essential role in the construction (or reinforcement) of these hegemonic approaches.

In Rio de Janeiro's case, there are two mega-events annually inserted in the city's calendar, both with vast imaginary, widely used by local governments and

10 Marxian concept.

corporate coalitions in order to potentialize the Rio brand: carnival and new-year's eve. It does not mean that these two are the only pillars of monopoly income, but they surely stand out. Not coincidentally, these are two popular celebrations that began to be promoted by the city hall since the early 1990s, with features of mega-events. Carnival and new-year's eve in Rio turned into products of the Rio brand, annually fueling this brand with strong imagery load. Then, representations are reinforced, or reformulated, so that this brand continues to be profitable for governments and investors. The origin of this process lies in an older concept, with a long history, which leads to the contemporary "society of images": fetishism.

> Fetishism is not an invention of capitalism. However, it is with the historical emergence of capitalist society that, in Marx, the concept gets a very special connotation: the author appropriates himself with the initial notion of fetish – the idea of the artifice, appearance — but it will show that, in a society addressed to the production of commodities, fetish-objects purely gain economic exchange value. (Fontenelle, 2002, p. 281)

The set of urban interventions the city went through after 2010, while causing physical changes in the urban tissue, generated new landscapes that enables a renovation in mediatic approaches. From there, Rio began to abandon the appositive "Marvellous City" and adopted a new one: Olympic City. All of that took place at a time when Brazil obtained significant economic growth and was sedimented in the world as an emerging country. Its symbol city had to be leveraged to a new standard again. In this moment, Eduardo Paes, beginning his second term as mayor, began to refer to Rio as a global city.

Here, we highlight another interest point of contact between processes of urban requalification and the field of creative economy:

> Unesco places creative economy as a way to boost economic growth and represent an alternative for development, especially for emphasizing creativity and for being able to use cultural and social characteristics of each region as advantages in the development and production of unique and competitive goods and services. (Teixeira *et al*., 2016, p. 7)

Therefore, practically one century after the Passos Reform, Rio went through another extensive urban reform program — the justification mentioned by the city hall and the state government was that these reordering was in accordance with a broad agenda required by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for the World Cup and the Olympics, respectively. Without such interventions, it would be impossible to carry out these mega-events.

In the central region, the construction work focused on the demolition of Perimetral and the opening of Binário avenue and Marcelo Alencar tunnel, which were alternatives for the extinct viaduct in order to revitalize the region of Mauá square. Rio Branco avenue also went through a great reformulation aiming at the installation of VLT (light rail). All that was boosted by the Porto Maravilha project, which included the construction of Museum of Tomorrow and Rio Art Museum (MAR).

Harvey (2005) mentions that public-private partnerships (PPP) are a widely used strategy by urban entrepreneurship. In this sense, the Porto Maravilha project was the largest PPP that existed in Brazil. Conducted by the Urban Development Company of the Port Region of Rio de Janeiro (CDURP), a legal person from the city, and Porto Novo concessionaire, formed by construction companies OAS, Norberto Odebrecht Brasil and Christiani-Nielsen Engenharia Ltda., it was based on a municipal law from 2009, which created the Consorted Urban Operation from the Rio Port Region, and involved an area of five million square feet close to the main avenues of the city: Rio Branco and Presidente Vargas. Besides the aforementioned road changes, the project included the construction of houses and had the support from the Federal Government through "Minha Casa, Minha Vida" program.[11]

The West zone — especially Barra da Tijuca — was the city neighborhood with the largest road transformations. The installation of bus rapid transit (BRT) in Américas avenue and the opening of the Grota Funda tunnel established a direct connection between Barra and Santa Cruz — this corridor was called Transoeste by the City Hall. Concomitantly, Ayrton Senna avenue was reformulated to optimize the flow of vehicles in Abelardo Bueno avenue, where the Olympic Park was built, extinguishing the Jacarepaguá racetrack. There, most games of the 2016 Olympics took place. Besides Transoeste, other express corridors were open in the Barra da Tijuca region to Galeão International Airport, and Transolympic, which connects Barra to the Deodoro neighborhood, enabling the transit between the West zone and Brasil Avenue.

The South zone, on the other hand, had changes related to the expansion of the subway line to Barra da Tijuca, going through Leblon. Between São Conrado and Barra da Tijuca, a new tunnel was opened for the duplication of Joá Bridge. In the North zone, constructions were circumscribed around the Maracanã stadium, which was remodeled to host some World Cup games and the opening and closing ceremony of the Olympic Games.

In the scope of public security, the state government began the installation of the Pacifying Police Unit (UPP) in communities considered to be dangerous by the Public Security Secretariat. Implemented in the administrations of governor Sérgio Cabral, the UPPs were part of this package of modifications operated in the city. Using this set of ongoing transformations, the state and municipal governments began to operate new city branding, a reformulation of the urban space and the Rio brand, in order to make it more attractive for investors and, consequently, for new mega-events.

11 Data obtained from the jornal of the Federation of Institutions for Social Welfare and Education (FASE), from June 11, 2014.

Considering the exposed, we noticed a pattern from city hall urban planners and the state government to look at the city and administer it considering an economist logic. The fetishization of the place is recognized all the time to create a hegemonical common sense that is favorable to that dynamic. An example of that is the live coverage – almost a *reality show* – of the implantation of UPPs in Complexo do Alemão and Rocinha. During the broadcast, the feeling was that sooner or later Ayrton Senna's victory theme would start playing.[12]

The same city that, for decades, was publicized by hegemonic media as being chaotic, broken and dominated by outlaws, in a little more than two years became pacified and drug trafficking was fully eradicated in communities with UPPs, at least for the newspapers. Technical communication processes, when activated by local governments, play an important role in the organization and control of social life in the city. The association between local governments and mass communication means work in order to generate new representations and ideologies, reformulating and standardizing the city's imaginary, both for the local citizen and the tourists. The current urban society experiences the growing influence of communication means, especially after the popularization of internet access. In this sense, while information is spread, time and differences are minimized; besides, there is a homogenization between public and private spaces.

> In this sense, mass communication vehicles, with technological modernization, are thought of as great transmitters of communication strategies from urban governments and dominant coalitions, united around urban restructuring projects, aiming at the reproduction of society. As privileged channels for spreading the ideology of those who build the city projects, mass communication means also gain an essential cultural and political role: of means that build the social urban imaginary and agents of the official urban image. (Sánchez, 2010, p. 82)

The city, when thought of and transformed in a product, is a marketing lever for other products associated with it. When the place's image is produced and sold, there is a connection between the spatial restructuring policies and the private capital interests. Therefore, this "revitalization" of Rio, which intended to be the "Olympic City", aimed at reordering high standard activities of production and consumption.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

"The expansion of mediatic and informational reality accelerates the symbolic expansion of consumption" (Sánchez, 2010, p. 78). With the exposed in this article, it is safe to say we are living at a time called "post-modernity" by some people, which means, more and more, a fusion between culture and economy. "Cultural production is now oriented towards the production of goods" (Jameson, 1996, p. 76). The entertainment industry would be the greatest expression of this dynamics, and

12 Brazilian instrumental song composed by maestro Eduardo Souto Neto, after a request from Globo network, to be used in Formula 1 broadcasts when a Brazilian pilot would win the race.

mega-events clarify this idea, combined with strong aesthetic, imagery and publicity appeal — marketing pieces that are closely related to a fetishist and spectacular dynamics that is now more prevalent than ever. The characteristics of contemporary cultural production are related to the new needs of capital reproduction, and comprise a quick, ephemerous and easy to replace logic.

"If in the past capitalism had clearly separated symbolic from economic, now the economic deeply penetrates the kingdom of symbol, and the libidinal body is attached to the imperatives of profit" (Eagleton, 1993, p. 18). In this context, strategic planning thinks of the city, the production of space surrounds the needs of capital accumulation, and not the citizens' well-being. It is the triumph of exchange value to the detriment of use value.

It is complicated to establish a precise comparison between the urban reordering operated in the city of Rio de Janeiro in the early twentieth century and now, in the early twenty-first century. The historical and economic contexts are different, but maybe it is possible to state that, at that time, mega-events were a consequence that confirmed transformations in urban tissue. Now, these reformulations are requirements for mega-events and an entire industry that supports them.

Therefore, we show that the origin of the difficulty to think about a long-term urban planning policy in Rio comes from the past, because when a city is thought of as a recipient for international mega-events, the word 'continuity' does not exist; everything is constituted based on market interests, and the citizen becomes secondary. This contingent planning results in a city addressed to consumption in the logic of entertainment. In the development of an entertainment society,[13] the city is constituted as the stage of events, and, at the same time, turns into a commodity.

The strength of the Rio brand is exactly in its ability to adjust to several meanings, reflecting an empty society that keeps searching for references to be followed. The brand gives meaning to what is experienced, and is a guide for socially legitimate representations.

> The brand name helps us prove that; think about how many meanings are attributed to the McDonald's brand, and how many different images and meanings this name has carried since it appeared, in the 1930s. So, if objectively we know that the brand is hollow, on the other hand it is capable of incarnating a story and "printing it" in a well-defined picture, therefore recovering some sense of totality, which becomes essential at a historical time in which culture has become disposable. (Fontenelle, 2002, p. 296)

Therefore, the production of the commodity-city also involves the production of representations that accompany it. This city is conceived as a place where the private is declared, producing signs that seem to make consumption wishes and fantasies shaped by global values come true. In this context, it is not enough to reform the city physically; it is necessary to sell it and, by doing so, what is sold is an

13 In reference to the approach of Guy Debord (1997).

updated image of it. This new urban management model allows us to understand that the so-called "global thinking" is no more than a varnish, a make-up of neoliberal ideology, and strategic planning is its aspect concerning urbanism.

> The "commodity-city, product that is apparently concluded and translated in urban image, ready to enter information circuits and flow and international communication, does not allow to identify how its construction took place; its history seems to be hidden; its genesis, forgotten. According to Marx, guiding the look towards the genesis of merchandise allows to discover social, economic and cultural systems, power arrangements, hierarchy, games of interest that took place to build it. In effect, his known statement about the "commodity fetishism" seems to be adequate to what happens with cities transformed in images, which is the sphere of symbolic circulation. There, they fight against other images of cities that respond to the pressures of the modernizing rationality of globalization. In this process, qualitatively distinct cities may become equivalent or similar in their branding, in how they are promoted in the market. (Sánchez, 2010, p. 71)

Therefore, we point out some aspects for the logic of city-marketing: spatial changes (construction), changes in the city image (branding) and a justification that can seduce the population, building the official discourse and enabling profit to investors. Mega-events are central elements that enable this mechanism.

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Articles

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Creative economy: a chronological view

Economia criativa: um olhar cronológico

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ABSTRACT

As activities of the creative economy have been regarded as alternatives for the growth and economic development of countries worldwide, stemming from a new perspective on the relationships between the fields of culture and economy in the early 21st century. Simultaneously, a series of academic studies have delved into the subject, expanding perspectives and reflections on the field. Given the ongoing international projection of the topic, largely due to the actions of international organizations such as UNCTAD and UNESCO, it becomes relevant to present and systematize a macro view of the area to introduce it to a broader and more engaged audience in this market, including representatives from the public sector and civil society. For this reason, this article provides a literature review on the field of creative economy, based on a chronological perspective, and a timeline of the main events and studies in the area, both internationally and in Brazil.

Keywords: Creative economy. Timeline. Literature review.

RESUMO

Fruto de uma nova compreensão das relações entre os campos da cultura e da economia no início do século XXI, as atividades da economia criativa têm sido destacadas como alternativas para o crescimento e o desenvolvimento econômico de países em todo o mundo. Simultaneamente, uma série de estudos acadêmicos tem se dedicado ao assunto, ampliando perspectivas e reflexões sobre o campo. Devido à crescente projeção internacional do tema, em grande parte devido à atuação de organismos internacionais como a Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre Comércio e Desenvolvimento (UNCTAD) e a Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, a Ciência e a Cultura (UNESCO), torna-se relevante a apresentação e a sistematização de uma visão abrangente sobre a área, com o objetivo de introduzi-la a um público mais amplo e envolvido neste mercado, incluindo representantes do poder público e da sociedade civil. Por esse motivo, este artigo apresenta uma revisão da literatura sobre o campo da economia criativa, seguindo uma abordagem cronológica, e uma linha do tempo dos principais acontecimentos e estudos da área, tanto em nível internacional quanto brasileiro.

Palavras-chave: *Economia criativa. Linha do tempo. Revisão de literatura.*

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INTRODUCTION

The historical association of culture with the economy has never been established harmoniously and without controversy. The critical perspective of the Frankfurt School has long influenced this discourse. It views the intangible nature and symbolic value inherent in cultural productions as possessing an essence that cannot be replicated without some form of loss. Consequently, as cultural production engages with the reproduction techniques of capitalist industry, its originality is compromised, succumbing to market logic.

Nevertheless, with the onset of a new phase of capitalism, particularly toward the end of the 20th century, there has been a growing convergence between the two domains for various reasons, as highlighted by Madeira (2014). These include the diminishing role of the State as the primary investor in cultural activities within the traditional patronage system, prompting cultural sectors to explore alternative forms of financing. Additionally, there has been an escalation in competition among economic sectors, driving them to increasingly incorporate symbolic values into their products. Furthermore, there has been an expansion of the notion of culture beyond the arts, embracing concepts linked to creativity and innovation, which are highly sought after by industries in the 21st century.

These are just a few of the myriad reasons that have broadened the understanding of culture in its economic dimension, prompting reflections on its interaction with market forces and the impacts stemming from behavioral and technological changes over the past three decades. In light of this, the concept of creative economy emerges, emphasizing the interplay between culture, creativity, and innovation. It presents itself as an alternative for the economic and social growth and development of countries at the onset of the 21st century.

However, like any concept, it is essential to explore both its origins and its consequences, as well as the subsequent discussions that have led to a better understanding and further development of the topic. Therefore, this article aimed to provide a literature review on creative economy, tracing its evolution chronologically through the main concepts, events, and studies in both Brazil and around the world from 1944 to 2023.

As this is a timeline of how the topic has evolved over the years, multiple approaches could have been considered, and, exactly for this reason, it is necessary to present the section that was used in this article. Drawing primarily from the work of Hesmondhalgh (2008), the third section delves into the correlation between the concepts of cultural industries and creative industries, tracing a trajectory of reflections from the mid-1940s to the late 1990s, examining the differences between these concepts and the evolution that led to the emergence of the creative industries concept, superseding the former.

The contributions of Madeira (2014) and Vlassis and Beukelaer (2019) play a pivotal role in delineating how discussions on the topic progressed in the early 2000s, starting with the initial national policies, such as those implemented in Australia and the United Kingdom, and the pioneering academic works on the subject. Special attention is then given to the involvement of various United Nations (UN) agencies in the global dissemination of the topic, with a focus on the significant roles played by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

With the growing impact and evolution of the creative economy theme across various nations, the article dedicated particular attention to its development in Brazil, focusing primarily on national policies and economic data, highlighting the establishment of the Creative Economy Secretariat (SEC) under the Ministry of Culture (MinC). It also examines other significant initiatives that unfolded over time until the restructuring of the MinC in early 2023.

The penultimate section of the article features a timeline that offers a synthesis of concepts, debates, and milestones pertinent to the theme of the creative economy and its applications, both internationally and within the Brazilian context. In the final considerations, reflections are provided on the resurgence of public policies for culture and the creative economy in Brazil. The conclusion also highlights the challenges that persist and explores potential avenues for future research.

METHODOLOGY

Given that this article aimed to conduct a literature review, a qualitative approach was adopted in the methodology. The results were presented through verbal descriptions rather than numerical data, focusing on a descriptive characterization of variables and outlining the characteristics inherent in the phenomenon under study (GIL, 2019).

The method employed in this study involved bibliographical research. The arguments and factual descriptions were drawn from materials already published, whether in physical or digital formats. National scientific articles accessible via the *Periódicos*/CAPES platform were selected from the 2000s onward. This timeframe corresponds to the period when terms such as "creative economy," "creative industry," and "cultural sector" began to emerge more prominently in abstracts of academic works, as noted by Almeida, Teixeira, and Luft (2014).

Within the selected scope using these keywords, an analysis was conducted to identify articles that provided detailed insights into the historical development of the term and highlighted theoretical frameworks in the field of creative economy. This analysis led to the identification of three key articles mentioned by Hesmondhalgh (2008), Madeira (2014), and Vlassis and Beukelaer (2019), which form essential components of this article.

Moreover, considering the collection techniques employed, which encompassed bibliographical and documentary surveys, with a particular focus on influential books on the topic and reports authored by UN System bodies, the contribution of predominantly primary source texts is noteworthy (GIL, 2018; STUMPF, 2011). As a result, a timeline constructed based on the reviewed literature is presented, highlighting key historical milestones, publications, authors, and other events within the historical scope of this study.

Finally, following the review of the selected bibliography, we chose to employ an interpretative reading approach in data analysis (GIL, 2018). This involves the systematic organization of the gathered information and the correlation of its ideas, aiming to guide the reader toward an understanding of the context that gave rise to the terms “creative economy” and “creative industry,” as well as the evolution of discussions surrounding the topic.

FROM THE CULTURAL INDUSTRY TO THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY

The discourse surrounding creative economy has significantly broadened in recent decades, encompassing both conceptual and pragmatic dimensions. It becomes apparent, upon examining its foundations, the interconnectedness with the concepts of cultural industries and creative industries. Nonetheless, as underscored by Hesmondhalgh (2008), while both concepts address the production and distribution of cultural goods within economies and contemporary society, it is crucial to delineate the distinctions between these two fields. They adhere to divergent theoretical frameworks and occasionally critique each other as a result.

A priori, investigations into cultural industries often draw upon the ideas put forth by Adorno and Horkheimer in their book “Dialectic of Enlightenment” (2006 [1944]). In essence, the authors present a critical perspective on the interplay between cultural production and the capitalist system. They argue that advancements in reproduction techniques enable scalability, leading to a homogenization of cultural products that are then consumed *en masse* by an uncritical audience.

The logic of productivity and profit becomes integrated into the production of cultural goods and services, thereby becoming central to the operation of the so-called “cultural industry.” This influence extends from the creation stage to the consumption stage, directly affecting decisions regarding musical genres and styles played on the radio, the selection of film scripts for production and exhibition by the film industry, and the determination of literary styles and genres prioritized and chosen by publishers for book publication (GUILHERME, 2018).

Thus, the production processes of traditional industries, along with their operational methods and interactions with consumer markets, start to dominate the dynamics previously at play in cultural activities and goods. Consequently, beyond merely producing goods and services, the cultural industry also assumes the role of a mediator, exerting significant influence over what is presented to the public. It acts as a replicator of symbols and values associated with capitalist ideology, reinforcing it as the sole path for development (ADORNO, 2002).

Consequently, cultural products, as products of this industry, not only perpetuate it but also experience a direct influence on their potential for creativity and innovation due to its dynamics. This results in a growing constraint on creative freedoms and a diminishing space for experimentation. As a result, there emerges an illusion of freedom of choice, with increasingly blurred distinctions between the products available in various markets, be they traditional or cultural (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 2006).

Building upon the critiques of Adorno and Horkheimer, the concept of the cultural industry underwent further analysis by authors such as Nicholas Garnham in the late 1960s. Garnham connected cultural industries with other approaches, particularly in the formulation of economic policies for culture. According to these authors, cultural industries could be defined as those utilizing industrial production and organization to produce and disseminate symbols. These industries are characterized by the disparity between the high cost of production and the low cost of reproduction, as well as the tendency for cultural products to remain undiminished with use and to be consumed by one individual or several (HESMONDHALGH, 2008).

Nevertheless, it was not until 1982 that the notion of public policy targeting cultural industries began to take concrete form. This pivotal moment stemmed from the publication of a volume dedicated to the subject by UNESCO. The volume addressed international disparities in cultural resources among countries and underscored the necessity for greater cultural promotion policies at the local level, as opposed to the international level.

In this context, Hesmondhalgh (2008) points out the United Kingdom's policy shift from initially focusing resources on "fine arts" toward broader cultural fields such as crafts and cinema over the years. Additionally, in 1983, the establishment of the Greater London Council (GLC) played a significant role. This council aimed to challenge idealized and elitist perceptions of the arts by recognizing the role of commercial production in culture. It advocated for policies that prioritized distribution and exhibition over subsidies to artists, with a focus on enhancing audience access to cultural products.

Additionally, another noteworthy aspect of the GLC's vision pertains to the role of cultural industries in cities' economic and urban revitalization strategies. Despite the dissolution of the GLC in 1986, the concept of policies aimed at bolstering tourism and commerce in specific urban areas to attract businesses gained traction in the late 1980s and 1990s. A prominent example of this trend is the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, which opened in 1997.

In parallel to this context, the rise of neoliberalism[1] is notable, where the concepts of the cultural industry and the cultural field are seen as integral components of local and regional development policies. These policies aim to generate employment, contribute to the economy, and revitalize cities. However, criticisms emerge regarding the gentrification processes stemming from these policies and the actual significance of cultural industries in cities of varying sizes, as well as two fundamental concepts: creative cities and creative clusters (Hesmondhalgh, 2008).

It is noteworthy that from this juncture, there emerged a convergence between cultural industries and the concept of creativity. By the mid-1990s, creativity was already recognized as a fundamental element for fostering innovation

1 One possible definition is that it is a line of thought that suggests that an individual's well-being is most effectively achieved when they are provided with skills and freedom to undertake within a system based on the right to individual property, free market, and free trade (Harvey, 2005).

and knowledge generation across industries poised for the 21st century[2] (LANDRY; BIANCHINI, 1995).

This new perspective on the relationship between culture and the economy marks a shift in the usage of the term "cultural industry," which proved inadequate in discussions surrounding the city, public policy, and creativity, straying far from its original scope. Consequently, to encompass a broader field that includes not only traditionally cultural sectors (such as arts, heritage, and cultural industries) but also sectors where creativity serves as a primary input for producing high-value-added goods and services, such as design, digital games, mobile applications, and creative content for the internet, the term "creative industries" gains prominence and recognition. This term becomes expanded and linked not only to cultural sectors but also to the broader economy.

CREATIVE ECONOMY IN THE WORLD: REFERENCES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Creative economy has progressively garnered global attention, initially spurred by the formulation and implementation of pioneering public policies in Anglo-Saxon countries. Concurrently, there has been a movement to acknowledge and broaden the discourse on its tangible impacts on the development of nations across various regions of the world. In this regard, the subsequent subtopics aim to present the fundamental references and contributions to the fortification and advancement of this field on a global scale.

First references and national public policies

While it is often challenging to pinpoint the exact emergence of a new field of study, the utilization of the term "creative industries" by the Australian government in its "Creative Nation" initiative in 1994 is widely regarded as a significant historical milestone. This initiative stands out as the first documented public policy aimed at promoting what would subsequently be comprehended as creative economy.

The term gained broader traction in 1997 during Tony Blair's administration in the United Kingdom. The government promoted the strengthening of creative industries as the primary focus for the newly established Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS). According to Garnham (2001), this movement was underpinned by two main understandings: a. that creative industries are pivotal for economic growth, both domestically and globally, and b. that they will serve as the primary source of job creation and export earnings in the future.

The United Kingdom's policy, as outlined in the "Creative industries mapping document" (DCMS, 1998), was primarily characterized by advocating for creative industries as a solution to the country's post-industrial challenges. This period was

2 In this context of the late 20th century, it is also important to highlight the emergence of an "informational revolution," where information and technology gain prominence in social and economic relations, spreading terms like "information society" and "knowledge economy," which corroborate the growing importance of sectors that utilize technology and human capital (Madeira, 2014).

marked by the deindustrialization of cities, where production processes increasingly crossed borders. Additionally, it is noteworthy that by employing the term "creative," which is broadly defined, the government was able to formulate unified policies for sectors that were previously treated separately. This included sectors such as visual arts, dance, and fashion, alongside software and design (GARNHAM, 2001).

In the early 2000s, three authors made significant contributions to the academic field: Charles Landry (2000), John Howkins (2013) and Richard Florida (2002). Charles Landry, in his 2000 book "The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators," played a pivotal role in bridging the creative economy with urban dynamics. He introduced the concept of creative clusters, which are urban areas where companies in the creative sector tend to converge and generate various benefits, particularly when there is favorable infrastructure to support their activities.

In 2001, John Howkins published his book "The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas," where he conceptualized creative industries as those involved in the creation and management of intellectual properties, marketable products recognized for their economic value. This conceptualization has been adopted in numerous subsequent proposals and frameworks.

In 2002, Richard Florida published "The Rise of the Creative Class," where he amalgamated diverse segments such as health, finance, engineering, architecture, design, music, and entertainment into the same "creative class" category. In this work, Florida (2002) posits that global competitiveness hinges on a location's ability to attract and retain a greater number of creative individuals. He argues that governments should foster conducive environments to sustain this "creative community."

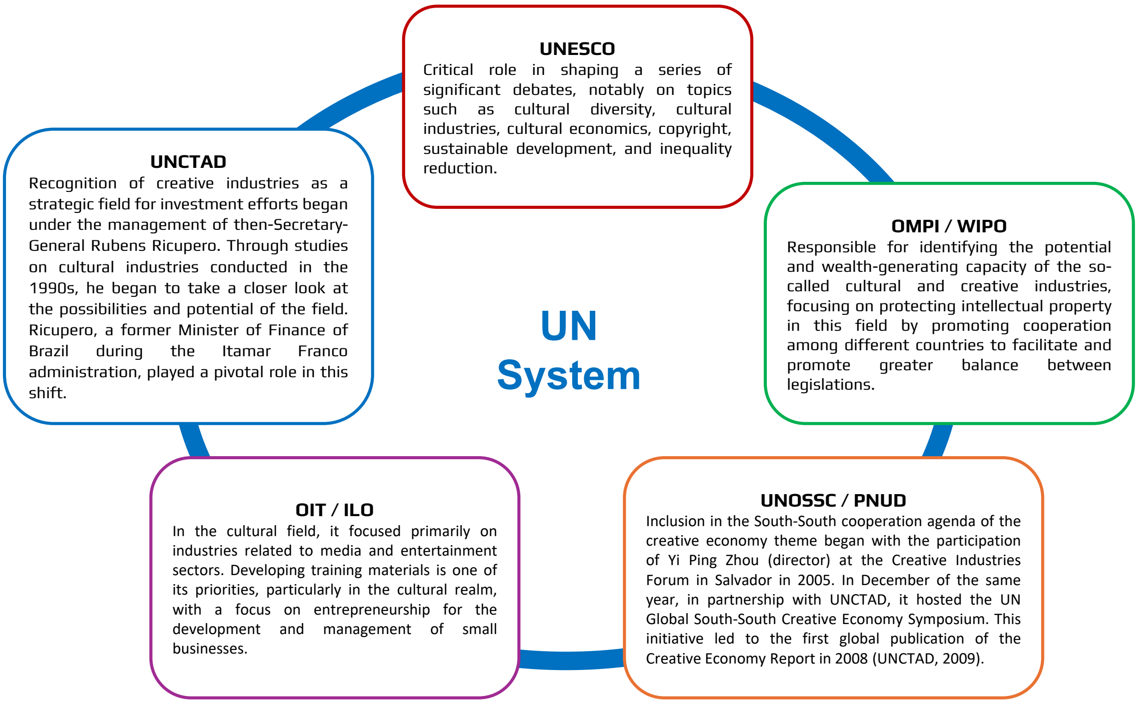
Indeed, these works are notable for their pioneering spirit in academic discussions on creative economy and have been widely referenced. However, it is crucial to approach these materials with a critical lens today, considering the transformations and consequences that have become apparent decades after the initial analyses were published.

With the proliferation of the topic, particularly in influential centers such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, the concept of creative economy permeates discussions on economy, culture, and development in these countries. This attention soon attracts interest from other nations and international organizations alike.

Contributions of the United Nations System

To disseminate the concept of creative economy on a global scale, it is crucial to acknowledge the role of the United Nations (UN) System and its various agencies. Each of these agencies has played a significant role in bolstering the field of culture and creative economy, as depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1 illustrates the complexity and multifaceted dimensions influenced by an economy that has increasingly emerged as an alternative for development. This is evident in its potential to generate employment and income, foster the establishment and growth of new businesses, safeguard and promote cultural diversity, and



Source: elaborated based on Guilherme (2018).
Figure 1. Contributions of UN System Agencies to the field of culture and economy relations.

mitigate social inequalities. Each agency, within its respective mission, has underscored relevant aspects pertaining to these dimensions. However, within the UN System, UNESCO and UNCTAD have assumed more prominent and decisive roles, albeit employing different approaches to the concept of creative economy, largely aligned with the objectives of each organization.

While UNESCO strives to foster societal connections through education, science, and culture to promote peace, establishing itself as an authority in discussions on culture and development; UNCTAD emerges with a mission to promote development through trade, reducing imbalances between developed countries and developing economies, particularly concerning disparities in the export of primary and manufactured goods (VLASSIS; BEUKELAER, 2019).

Thus, with this objective in view and the dissemination of discussions on creative economy, UNCTAD began to defend it as a viable growth alternative for countries with emerging economies, using the argument that such a segment would require less investment in infrastructure in relation to others, in addition to the fact that the main resources for the development of this economy would be present in all countries, regardless of their stage of industrialization, thus enabling more equal competition in world trade.

As noted by Vlassis and Beukelaer (2019), although these arguments are partially true and subject to various criticisms, the notion of an economy that is less reliant on massive investments in infrastructure, transportation, and energy has proven attractive to many developing countries.

However, a unified vision on the topic was never truly achieved. UNCTAD's perspective, which leans toward a vision of culture intertwined with innovation and entrepreneurship, with less dependence on public authorities, led to divergences, particularly with UNESCO, regarding the treatment of culture within the realm of creative economy and which sectors would fall under this classification. Consequently, reports released by the UN in 2008 and 2010 primarily feature UNCTAD and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as main authors, with contributions from WIPO and UNESCO, which are responsible only for their respective parts.

Despite the divergences, reports like these served as crucial tools and references to aid in conceptualizing creative economy in various countries and for other agencies and organizations as well. Supervised by two Brazilians: Edna dos Santos-Duisemberg (UNCTAD) and Francisco Simplicio (UNDP), the reports 'The Challenge of Assessing the Creative Economy: Towards Informed Policy Making" (UNCTAD, 2008) and "Creative Economy: A Feasible Development Option" (UNCTAD, 2010) were guided by two principles: emphasizing the developmental aspect stemming from the creative economy through trade in goods and highlighting the macroeconomic aspect in the endeavor to create a database. This approach made the relevance of this sector in its economic dimension more tangible (VLASSIS; BEUKELAER, 2019).

It is important to note that due to its strong economic bias, with an emphasis on presenting creative industries as catalysts for growth and development, these documents ended up prioritizing the economic impacts generated by such sectors rather than delving into a conceptual understanding of the new area being presented.

Despite facing criticism, these reports played a pivotal role in enhancing the global visibility of creative industries within development discussions. As a result, more opportunities for integrating creative industries into national development strategies began to emerge. Additionally, UNCTAD assumed a leading role in discussions on the topic worldwide.

However, in 2013, UNESCO (2013) in collaboration with UNDP, released the "Special Edition: Widening Development Pathways," a new report that, as noted by Vlassis and Beukelaer (2019), placed less emphasis on quantitative data and instead delved into qualitative analysis. This report emphasized the significance of the local context and countries with burgeoning economies.

This initiative represents UNESCO's effort to establish itself alongside UNCTAD in discussions concerning creative economy, which by then had garnered global attention. It aimed to introduce a distinct approach to the topic. The report is underpinned by three key points: highlighting the non-economic contributions of culture and creativity to development, presenting potential local and national strategies for culture and development, and proposing a range of qualitative and quantitative measures to gauge the effectiveness of investment in the creative economy (VLASSIS; BEUKELAER, 2019).

While the creation of the report aimed to contextualize the creative economy on a global scale, it also includes specific segments addressing creative industries within the context of Latin America. The report highlights countries like Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia, which have showcased a more structured approach to the creative economy compared to other territories in the region that have yet to fully recognize its potential. Cities such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Buenos Aires are cited as examples to inspire others in the region.

This report marked a significant milestone in the timeline of creative economy by showcasing UNESCO's progress in advancing the creative economy agenda. It appropriated the theme by drawing connections to previous works published by UNESCO and proposed a new qualitative perspective for analysis. This shift in focus was noteworthy, and the authorship of this special edition is attributed to UNESCO and UNPD, with UNCTAD's participation being secondary. This contrasts with the previous reports from 2008 and 2010, where UNCTAD played a more primary role.

As a result, UNESCO has persisted in advocating for the inclusion of culture and the creative economy in countries' development plans and in implementing financing initiatives for creative industries (UNESCO, 2020, 2021). This effort became particularly significant in 2021, as cultural sectors continued to grapple with the profound impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, 2021 was designated as the International Year of the Creative Economy for Sustainable Development during the 74th United Nations General Assembly in 2019.

CREATIVE ECONOMY IN BRAZIL: PUBLIC POLICIES AND PATHWAYS TO DEVELOPMENT

National creative economy policies

Given its vast continental dimensions, it is crucial to first underscore the context and certain specific conditions of the Brazilian territory that have proven conducive to elevating it to a position of relevance in discussions on the creative economy from the outset.

Brazil's historical narrative is deeply intertwined with exploitative endeavors from its inception, with the earliest chapters of its history marred by slavery, affecting not only African peoples but also indigenous communities. Founded as an exploitative colony, Brazilian society relied heavily on the manual labor of enslaved individuals, primarily in agricultural production and natural resource extraction. Consequently, sectors within creative economy, including culture, gastronomy, fashion, and music, among others, were historically undervalued (MADEIRA, 2014).

Over time, Brazil emerged as a destination for numerous waves of immigration, largely driven by the promise of wealth and employment opportunities. Presently, Brazil boasts a population of 213.9 million inhabitants (AGÊNCIA IBGE NOTÍCIAS, 2021), reflecting a rich ethnic tapestry and cultural diversity stemming from various origins converging within the same geographic expanse. Consequently, being Brazilian transcends any singular form; instead, it encompasses a multitude of expressions, including differences in language, attire, culinary traditions, and approaches to everyday life… a diversity readily apparent when comparing different regions of the country.

Hence, the greater the diversity within a territory, the greater its creative potential becomes. However, despite its diversity, Brazil grapples with profound inequality, marked by significant disparities between social classes and limited access to basic resources for many. As noted by Madeira (2014), despite the considerable potential of domestic creative production, numerous obstacles hinder its full utilization in the country. These barriers stem from historical and social factors, as briefly outlined, as well as from the absence of sustained national policies aimed at promoting culture.

Despite these challenges, Brazil has played a significant role in fostering discussions on the topic of creative economy on the international stage. This was exemplified by the hosting of the XI UNCTAD Conference in São Paulo in 2004, where the then Secretary-General of the organization, Brazilian Rubens Ricupero, took a pivotal step by incorporating the theme "Creative Industries and Development" into the event's main panels.

The panel "Creative Industries and Development" aimed to highlight successful experiences in fostering creative industries, both in developed and developing countries. It proposed not only a collective effort to deepen understanding of the subject but also the establishment of an autonomous entity: the International Observatory on Creative Economy (IOCE). The objective of the IOCE would be to focus specifically on the development of creative industries in emerging economies, sharing best practices and offering consultancy services for the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of policies in this domain.

While IOCE did not materialize, the institutionalization of national public policies in this domain commenced two years later through MinC. This began with the establishment of the Culture Economy Development Program in 2006, followed by the creation of the General Coordination of Cultural Economics and Cultural Studies within the Cultural Policies Secretariat (*Secretaria de Políticas Culturais* – SPC) in 2009 (BRASIL, 2016). Subsequently, to provide a more robust institutional framework, the Creative Economy Secretariat (*Secretaria da Economia Criativa* – SEC) was officially established in 2012 (GUILHERME, 2018).

SEC emerged as the culmination of an institutionalization process that commenced in 2011 with the formulation of national creative economy policies. It played a pivotal role in shaping the discourse on this topic within the country. Despite encountering more setbacks than advancements in subsequent governments, it is imperative to highlight the work undertaken by SEC due to its historical significance in addressing the subject at the national level and its relevance for studies in the field.

The structuring of SEC began with the development of the "Plan of the Creative Economy Secretariat: policies, guidelines, and actions, 2011-2014." This plan was the outcome of collaborative efforts involving civil society, representatives from various organizations and institutions within the field. Through these collective discussions, a preliminary concept of ""Brazilian creative economy" was formulated, guided by principles of cultural diversity, innovation, sustainability, and social inclusion. The plan also outlined key axes for the development of programs and projects during the four-year term from 2011 to 2014 (BRASIL, 2011). The SEC Plan emerged from extensive debates, listening initiatives, and multi-level interinstitutional collaborations involving diverse stakeholders from across the Brazilian creative sectors ecosystem (LEITÃO, 2016).

The Secretariat aimed to develop and strengthen the creative economy in Brazil while promoting the implementation and monitoring of public policies for its sectoral development through two main action vectors: macro and microeconomic. The macroeconomic vector focused on the following key objectives: developing and monitoring public policies, conducting studies and research, identifying and enhancing creative territories, and fostering discussions on legal and infra-legal frameworks related to the Brazilian cultural and creative sector's development. On the other hand, the microeconomic vector aimed to foster entrepreneurship, management, and innovation in creative enterprises through the following areas of action: promoting businesses, providing training for creative skills, and fostering networks and collectives of professionals and entrepreneurs in the creative sectors (BRASIL, 2011; MADEIRA, 2014).

Despite the efforts and initiatives undertaken, several programs and projects designed and in the process of implementation were gradually discontinued. Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting the continuity of four out of the eight State Observatories on Creative Economy (*Observatórios Estaduais de Economia Criativa* – OBECs) created by SEC in partnership with federal universities from eight Brazilian states (BRASIL, 2013). Even though the program was interrupted, the universities in these four states have maintained their Observatories in operation to this day. Therefore, the following remain active: OBEC linked to UFBA[3], UFRB[4], and UNEB[5], in Bahia; OBEC linked to UFRGS[6], in Rio Grande do Sul; OBEC linked to UnB[7], in the Federal District, and OBEC linked to UFG[8], in Goiás. The first two have demonstrated, in recent years, a more fruitful academic production through studies and research aimed at the field of creative economy in their respective states and in Brazil.

Between 2015 and 2022, both the Secretariat and the Ministry of Culture underwent a series of institutional, structural, budgetary, and political changes due to national political instability during this period. In 2016, the country faced an impeachment process against the elected president, resulting in the institution of

3 Universidade Federal da Bahia.
4 Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia.
5 Universidade do Estado da Bahia.
6 Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.
7 Universidade de Brasília.
8 Universidade Federal de Goiás.

a new government that extinguished and recreated a weakened MinC. In 2019, marked especially in Brazil, the Ministry of Culture was effectively extinguished, reducing its institutionality to the structure of a special secretariat within the Ministry of Citizenship, later transferred to the structure of the Ministry of Tourism. This decision by the federal government highlighted the loss of relevance of the culture agenda within the scope of the country's public policies, also resulting in a decrease in administrative capacity, budget reduction, and the dismantling of previous institutional achievements (ALEM, 2020).

Subsequently, with the COVID-19 pandemic starting in 2020, the creative economy was severely impacted. Scenarios included the lack of support from governments for self-employed workers, increased unemployment rates, decreased purchasing power among the population, and difficulties for professionals and creative entrepreneurs in obtaining remuneration due to the suspension of their activities (CANEDO; PAIVA NETO, 2020). Furthermore, the transition of consumption to a more digital medium highlighted challenges in charging, profiting, and generating value remotely.

The recreation of the Ministry of Culture in 2023, under a new presidential government, marked a significant development, restoring its institutionality and budgetary capacity. Additionally, the recreation of the Creative Economy and Cultural Promotion Secretariat in the same year signals a resurgence of public policies in the field.

Creative economy data in Brazil

The launch of a new edition of the mapping of creative industries by the Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro (*Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* – FIRJAN) (2016) marks a significant milestone, commemorating 10 years since its initial mapping in Brazil.

FIRJAN's analysis of the growth of the creative industry in Brazil focused on two strategic perspectives: production and the job market. For production, FIRJAN developed its own classification system to define the sectors included in the mapping, drawing from indicators sourced from official statistical databases. Regarding the job market, creative professionals were not limited to working within creative industry companies. By the time the data was released, these professionals held 892.5 thousand formal jobs, indicating a significant increase in employment within the sector between 2004 and 2013.

FIRJANs reports provided detailed insights into the creative economy in various Brazilian states, with manuals focused on São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, and Ceará in 2018 (FIRJAN, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2018d, 2018e). The most recent report, released in 2022, covered data from 2017 to 2020, a period marked by the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the creative economy's contribution to Brazilian GDP increased from 2.61% to 2.91%, totaling R$ 217.4 billion, which is comparable to the total production of the civil construction sector and exceeds that of the mineral extractive sector. Additionally, the job market within the creative core comprised 935 thousand professionals, representing an 11.7% growth compared to 2017, contrasting with the overall contraction of -0.1% observed in the Brazilian job market.

Indeed, the FIRJAN report highlights the diverse impact experienced by different sectors within creative industries in recent years, particularly due to the effects of the pandemic. While sectors such as Culture and Media experienced decreases, other areas like Technology and Consumption emerged and contributed significantly to the positive numbers mentioned earlier (FIRJAN, 2022).

It is also important to highlight that, given the impacts of the pandemic in the years 2020 and 2021 on the creative economy, which extend and are present in the daily lives of micro and small businesses in the creative field to this day, a series of impact research were carried out during these two years under the leadership of OBEC-BA (Bahia)[9], Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV)[10], Instituto Itaú Cultural[11], among other institutions.

The research conducted during this period provided valuable insights into potential paths and strategies for the recovery of the cultural and creative sectors, informing the formulation of effective public policies. Despite setbacks in cultural policy, there was significant coordination between civil society and political actors leading to the approval of key legislative measures such as the Aldir Blanc Law (Law No. 14.017, dated June 29, 2020) and the Paulo Gustavo Law (Complementary Law No. 195, dated July 8, 2022), marking important legal milestones in the recovery process (LEITÃO, 2023).

A TIMELINE OF THE THEMATIC

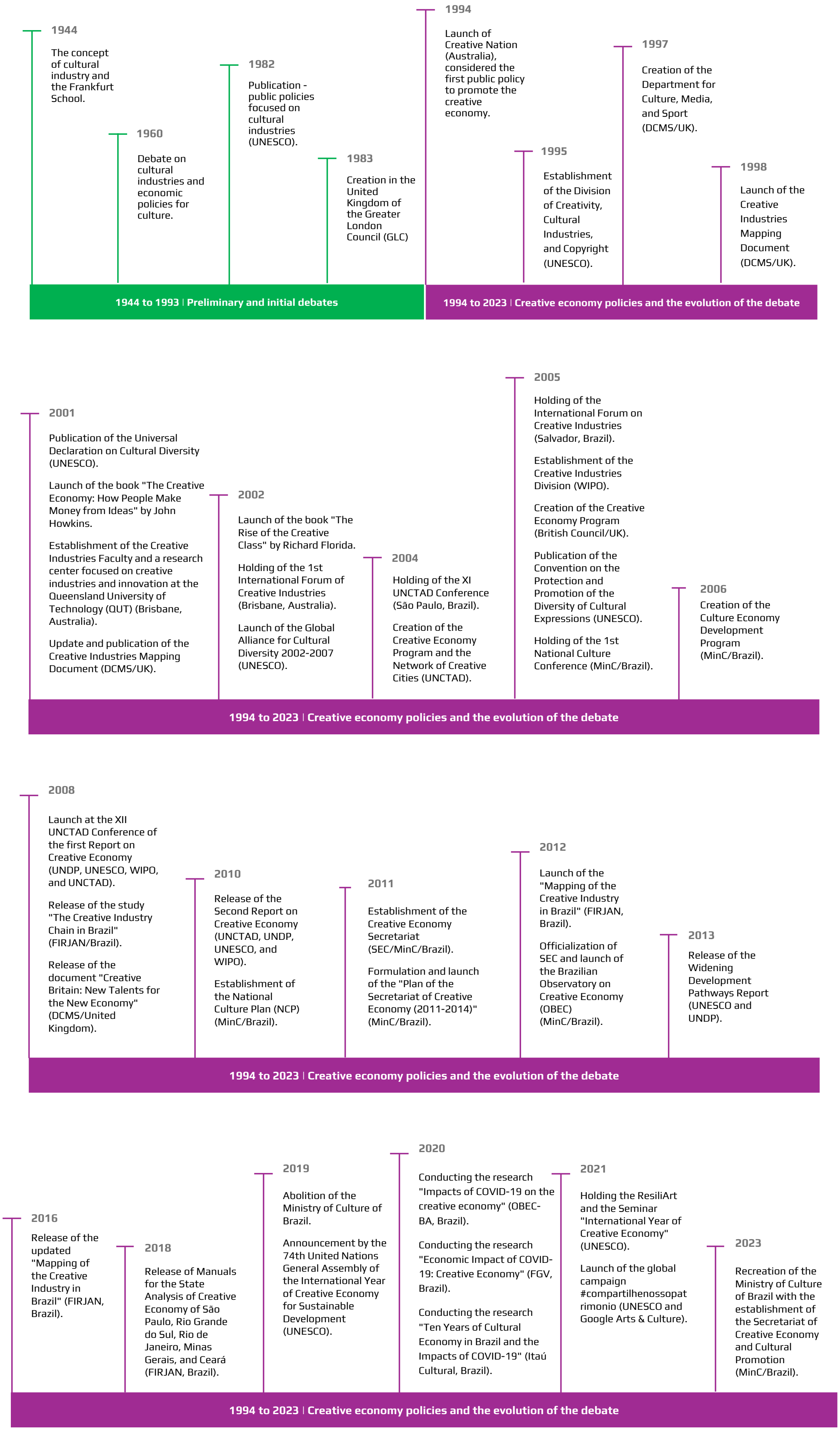
Considering the concepts, debates, and milestones related to the theme of creative economy and its applications in Brazil and the world, covered throughout this article, a synthetic timeline was created structured in two moments: the first dedicated to the initial debates on industries cultural and public policies to promote culture (1944 to 1993); the second covering the period of the inauguration of creative economy public policies in the world and its subsequent developments, with emphasis on Brazil (1994 to 2023).

When analyzing the timeline (Figure 2), the construction of the trajectory of a theme that has expanded and strengthened over the last three decades becomes evident. Thus, despite being a field with relatively recent origins, the topic of creative economy is already following an intriguing path. The euphoria of its initial optimism in the early 2000s has given way to a global dissemination of the topic,

9 See: Report on the Impacts of COVID-19 on Creative Economy - https://obec.ufba.br/economia-criativa-covid19/.

10 See: Report on the Economic Impacts of COVID-19: Creative Economy – https://fgvprojetos.fgv.br/artigos/impactos-economicos-da-covid-19-economia-criativa-julho-2020.

11 See: Report on Ten Years of Cultural Economy in Brazil and the Impacts of COVID-19 - https://www.itaucultural.org.br/observatorio/paineldedados/publicacoes/boletins/dez-anos-de-economia--da-cultura-no-brasil-e-os-impactos-da-covid-19.



Source: created by the authors.
Figure 2. Timeline of creative economy | concepts, debates, and milestones.

as well as a deepening of its concepts and the beginning of critical analyses, mainly based on reports published in 2008 and 2010.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Given the information presented above, it prompts reflection on the future of the field. This article did not aim to provide an exhaustive exploration of all the diversity and multiplicity of reflections already produced but rather to offer a broad view of the evolution of the field and serve as introductory material.

In this regard, the aim is to stimulate and encourage future theoretical contributions, fostering a growing production of studies and research in the field. It is evident that the breadth and diversity of sectors encompassed by this economy, both in Brazil and around the world, warrant a deeper exploration and greater attention to detail, highlighting the specificities and dynamics of each territory.

Moreover, data comparison remains challenging due to the various sectoral classifications adopted by different institutions, presenting an ongoing challenge to be addressed.

Furthermore, the impacts of COVID-19 on cultural agents and creative entrepreneurs, as well as on the economic dynamics of the creative sectors, persist, prolonging a crisis that underscores the urgency not only to expand funding but also to reach a turning point where the construction of new models becomes imperative.

In the Brazilian context, the revival and reinforcement of public policies on culture and the creative economy, through the reestablishment of MinC and the Creative Economy and Cultural Promotion Secretariat, also raise expectations regarding the formulation of foundational public policies not only in the short term but also in the medium and long term.

In practical terms, the budget of the Ministry of Culture in 2023 reached a historic high of R$10.7 billion[12]. However, the process of recovery is not straightforward. It entails more than just returning to the *status quo* before the dismantling; it requires rebuilding paths, strategies, networks, and connections to foster a robust and conducive environment for the development of the Brazilian creative economy. While a record budget is significant, it doesn't fully address the complexity of an intersectoral economic field that extends beyond the purview of a single government department.

That said, there are several potential avenues for future studies to expand upon the timeline presented here. It is crucial to bear in mind Leitão's (2023) perspective, which suggests that the development and fortification of creative economy require an integrated, multilevel policy framework within a networked state logic. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of coordination, whether stimulated or organic, among diverse communities and territories, considering both specificities and pluralities inherent to each context.

12 The composition of the Ministry of Culture's budget for 2023 is structured as follows: approved budget - $5.7 billion; Paulo Gustavo Law: $3.8 billion; and Condecine: $1.2 billion. See: https://valorinveste.globo.com/mercados/brasil-e-politica/noticia/2022/12/27/ministrio-da-cultura-ter-oramento-recorde-de-mais-de-r-10-bilhes-em-2023.ghtml

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Articles

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Design production in creative industries: criticism of the neoliberal capitalist logic

A produção de design nas indústrias criativas: crítica à lógica capitalista neoliberal

Camille Vignal Frota[I], Fabiana Heinrich[I]

ABSTRACT

In this study, we consider the professional designer's work as project-oriented praxis guided by dialectical logic, that is, one that is shaped and, at the same time, shapes capitalist creative work. Through a critical social analysis, we show the marketing dimension of imperative socio-economic notions in the Field of Design and how they impact it, since the current understanding of the act of creating is technocratic. To develop this investigation, we begin with a presentation of the capitalist mode of production and its determination, and the critical bias that emerges as a challenge to this configuration. Next, we trace the meaning of "creativity" as a historical process and its consequences in Design. Afterwards, we contextualize the current hegemonic nature of late capitalism, the Creative Industries, and how Adobe Inc. influences the digitalization of production. With the results obtained in this critical analysis, we highlight the importance of observing implications of social phenomena in the praxis of designing, and how the creative process is impacted by materiality.

Keywords: Capitalism. Creative industries. Creativity. Criticism. Design theory.

RESUMO

Neste estudo, o trabalho do designer é considerado uma práxis projetual orientada pela lógica dialética, ou seja, é moldada e, ao mesmo tempo, molda o trabalho criativo capitalista. Por meio de uma análise social crítica, é evidenciada a dimensão mercadológica de noções socioeconômicas imperativas no Campo do Design e como estas o impactam, uma vez que o entendimento do ato de criar vigente é tecnocrático. Para desenvolver esta investigação, inicia-se com uma apresentação do pensamento econômico-político do modo de produção capitalista e sua determinação na instância de produção, além do viés crítico que surge como contestação a essa configuração. Em seguida, traça-se o processo histórico do entendimento de "criatividade" e sua influência no Campo do Design. Por último, contextualiza-se a atualidade hegemônica do capitalismo tardio, as Indústrias Criativas, com uma breve análise da Adobe Inc. e sua influência na digitalização do trabalho no Campo do Design. Com os resultados obtidos nessa análise crítica, evidencia-se a importância de observar implicações de fenômenos sociais na práxis do projetar e como o processo criativo é impactado pela materialidade e historicidade das circunstâncias nas quais está inserido.

Palavras-chave: *Campo do design. Capitalismo. Criatividade. Crítica. Indústria criativa.*

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INTRODUCTION

The reflection of this study is based on the master's research called "Field of Design and Creative Industries: Criticism of the Adobe Inc. Hegemony in Contemporaneity", developed in the Design Graduate Program of EBA-UFRJ. Through the analytical reading of materials presented in the "Visual Design and Culture" (PPGD-EBA-UFRJ) and "Political Economy of Information and Communication" (PPGCI-UFRJ) disciplines, we identified socioeconomic characteristics of the capitalist production system that influence the work in the Field of Design[1], and how the critical approach of Political Economy can help the research and the understanding of its configurations.

Nowadays, as designers, we obtain the status of "creative", members of a supposedly rising working class, embraced by new technologies. Based on this conjuncture, the question is: what do we understand as creativity today? What are the interests that shape and are shaped by this notion? And what are its impacts in the designers' practice as a worker under the capitalist production regime? Besides, in the digitalization era in the Field of Design, a company that manufactures and sells tools for "creative" practice reaches exceptional presence and popularity, which requires further investigation.

In the first section, we will present the field of Critical Political Economy and the key Marxist fundamentals from the production sphere, aiming at understanding the logic that defines the conditions of capitalism. Then, we will present "creativity" as a socially determined and determinant process for the Field of Design, turning to authors that criticize the hegemonic notions that prevail in the Field. After, we will place the state of art of productive hegemony through the Creative Industries phenomenon, and how it impacts the Design work. For that, we will approach the influence of Adobe Inc. in the work and digital reality of the XXI century.

HISTORICAL-ECONOMIC CONTEXT: THE CAPITALIST LOGIC OF PRODUCTION

In this investigation, the epistemological base was the Critical Political Economy concept. As presented by Hardy in "*Critical Political Economy of the Media*" (2014). Hardy explores the relationship between the political-economic approach and media studies.

The author (HARDY, 2014) defines the political economy thought as the study of power social relations that structure the production, distribution and consumption of resources. Hardy criticizes the neoclassic (hegemonic) approach of economy, mainly developed by authors such as Adam Smith (1723-1790) and David Ricardo (1772-1823), defenders of capitalist liberalism, justifying that it is limited by deductive mathematical methods, concerned about the market-oriented performance of the product offer to fulfill wishes, instead of focusing on fulfilling the collective needs of society.

1 In this study, we understand "Field of Design" as the field of professional work, and "design" as the format of a commodity. Throughout the study, the use of the term "design" in uppercase or lowercase letter can change due to the spelling used in the mentioned references.

Then, he contextualizes the field of Political Economy in the studies of Communication, presenting the broad field of Communication Political Economy and delimiting focus to the approach of Critical Political Economy (CPE). In this case, there is a strong contribution through the studies of Karl Marx, to understand matters about power, dominance and inequality, which are still current. Osvaldo Coggiola (2021) comments, for instance, the continuous relevance of the celebrated piece Capital[2], claiming that its brilliance is justified by the broad analyses of the consequences of changes in social life – which persist up to this day – with the appearance of proletariat and the great industry. Therefore, themes analyzed by Marx over a century ago are still relevant and need to be debated.

Grundrisse, by Karl Marx (2011), is a piece that discusses the method developed by the author, because it gathers drafts and initial studies of the political economist and enables the analysis of concepts from the Marxist philosophical thought and the Political Economy method under a critical perspective. Marx (2011, p. 59) highlights the importance of the relationship between subject and social structure in the theoretical method approach, arguing, through the historiography of the onset of bourgeois economy, the rise of the structure based on generation of capital:

> Since in general, in every historical and social science, in the course of economic categories, it is necessary to be aware that the subject, here, the modern Bourgeois Society, is given both in reality and in the mind, and, therefore, the categories express ways of being, determinations of existence, only with frequency of singular aspects, of this determined society, this subject and, because of that, society, also from the scientific point of view, somehow only begins where the discourse is about it as such.

One of the concepts initially approached in the piece is that of material production, and how the individual's production is socially determined. A brief historiographic contextualization of the subject as a social element in the capitalist system is developed by Marx (2011). For the author, the bourgeois society appeared in the XVI century and reached its maturity in the XVIII century. In this environment, the subject is separated from his natural bonds. For Marx (2011, p. 39): "in this society of free competition, individuals are detached from natural bonds that, in previous historical times, made them an accessory in a determined, limited human cluster". That is, a product both of the ruin of feudal society models and the new productive strengths that rose from the XVI century. So, considering the individual as a "natural" being is an illusory, naive vision; after all, individuals are not independent, but instead, a member of a much larger whole.

Thus, when we talk about production, we are considering a production localized in a specific stage of social development resulting from its past. This definition remains relevant nowadays. "No production is possible without past, accumulated work, even if this work is only accumulated skill, concentrated in the hands of the

2 "The first book of the piece was published in 1867; the second German edition is from 1873. The second and third books were edited by Friedrich Engels and published in 1885 and 1894, respectively" (GRESPAN, 2021, p. 10).

savage through repeated exercise" (MARX, 2011, p. 41). Therefore, the accumulation of capital throughout time is configured as an essential instrument of bourgeois modes of production. We can exemplify it with the current production of the merchandise called "digital book reader", which was made possible thanks to the wage-earning workforce involved in the production, circulation and consumption of digital aids; but also physical books, and even the diffusion of reading by the European press — also carried out based on past work (Figure 1).

With a knowledge base, Marx (2011, p. 44) elaborates about the economic steps — production, distribution, exchange and consumption — and the relations established between them. He exposes that, "in production, the members of society appropriate the products of nature to human needs". He also defines that

Source: the authors, with images accessed in the links: https://www.amazon.com.br/kindle-11geracao-preto/dp/B09SWTG9GF, https://www.qualitel.com/how-to-reduce-costs-in-electronics-manufacturing/, https://ensinarhistoria.com.br/linha-do-tempo/gutenberg-lega-a-imprensa-a-humanidade/ and https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=171Ftx0oxgg&ab_channel=FactoryMonster. Access on: Feb 2, 2024.

Figure 1. Collage indicating the historical connection between a merchandise and the workforce prior to it.

production is immediately consumption, and consumption is immediately production — through objective and subjective spheres. Only in the stage of consumption can the product receive a final improvement. Thus, consumption reproduces the need for production. Therefore, production creates consumers and the cultural aspects of their experiences. "Therefore, production produces not only an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object" (MARX, 2011, p. 47).

Further ahead, Marx (2011) clarifies the relationship between producer, distribution and products, which enables the economic mechanism. Distribution consists of the resources that will be used, such as earth, tools and creativity. As production agents, we can mention: earth, work, capital. And as distribution agents, we can quote: earth income, wage and mode of capital reproduction (interests and profit). Besides, before being product distribution, distribution is the distribution of production instruments and members of society in the different types of production.

Regarding productive force, Marx defines what would become fixed capital as a mean of production: "capital that consumes itself in the very process of production" (MARX, 2011, p. 578). The process of fixed capital production involves: work means, metamorphosis, machines. In this sense, the machine needs to be considered as a (powerful) social organism, and not a detached individual aspect. "The worker's activity, limited to a mere abstraction of activity, is determined and regulated in all aspects by the movement of the machinery, and not the other way around" (MARX, 2011, p. 581).

After understanding the important concepts of the Marxist theory for the work activity as a whole, in which, historically, is inserted the act of projecting in the Field of Design, it is necessary to understand the current consequences of the subject-machinery relation, and to what point what we produce can be influenced by them and by the hegemonic economic context. Based on what was seen in this section, the question is: is it possible to establish semantic relationships between the contemporary digital production of the Field of Design and the Marxist economic-philosophical concepts, elaborated in the XIX century? To answer this question, the choice was to understand the thought considered as "creative" — which permeates the Field of Design — and its industrialization process to, afterwards, observe the digital production of the Field of Design.

ABOUT THE NOTION OF CREATIVITY

In the Field of Design, "creative process" is a methodological concept that defines the mode of production in the project-oriented praxis. To conceive the manifestation of creativity as a fundament of the "making" in the Field of Design, according to the Marxist theory, it is necessary to assess the process of formulation and dissemination of the "create" activity as a social practice through work. According to Janet Wolff (1982), the general concept of "creativity" can be identified in all forms of human activity, not being restricted to artistic performance, or, in our case, to the designer. The base is the assumption that the qualification of a process, product or even a designer as being "creative" is inserted in broader socio-historical structures.

Since "creativity" is a recent word, originated in the XX century (WILLIAMS, 2007, p. 113), we analyze its appearance through the term "creation". Before being recognized as a human activity, "creation" was understood as divine property, witnessed by mortals until the XVI century. According to Raymond Williams (2007, p. 112):

> *Create* began in English based on the root of the past participle, from the Latin, *creare* (make or produce). This inherent relationship with the sense of something that was made, and, therefore, with a past event, was exact, since the word was mainly used in the precise context of the original divine creation of the world: creation and creature have the same root.

Therefore, we observe that the primary and significant use of the act of creating in the language is originated in a divine, founding action, however, with cloudy and universal causality, which would only be moved by the hidden wills of God. As shown by Nicola Abbagnano (2007): during the medieval period, the notion of "creation" did not represent the concept of reality, once this would be an effect of non-divine authorship. Thus, "creation" would represent a benevolent superpower of the omnipresent, which we would be privileged to witness.

With the Bourgeois rationalism from the XVIII century, the "creative" faculty begins to be considered of human authorship, instead of being restricted to a divine execution causality. Thus, the "creation" phenomenon is configured by a rising economic system, as a private skill of commercial interest in the generation of surplus value and capital accumulation. The consolidation of such a change in paradigm can be mainly detected in the understanding of "artistic work" reproduced by agents and structuring and alienated conditions of that moment, which persists, except for some specificities, until these days (WOLFF, 1982, p. 30). In this moment comes the belief that the art producer is a genius creator, with an interior, individualized ability to relate to unknown superior forces through "inspiration". As explained by Cipiniuk (2014, p. 67):

> After the Renaissance, result of the fundament crisis, the passage from theocentric to anthropocentric cosmology, man was understood as a supreme creator, competing with the religious notion of the *artifex* god. One of the reasons for the modern man to be modern is the fact that he took God's place in creation.

However, it is important to highlight that the advent of creative capacity as talent, intrinsic geniality, was only made possible due to its assertive representation in terms of profitability for the capitalist economic system. In this sense, the idea of particularity should not be restricted only to the creator, but also to his creation, which is praised as something superhuman – phenomenon that can be observed in Renaissance artists and their pieces, recognized by high ingenuity and excellence by the members of the artistic class. To solidify creation as merchandise, we turn to the technical discourse as a way to justify attributed value through the use of qualitative criteria. It is observed that, up to these days, a product considered as "excellent" according to arbitrary values imposed by the dominant class is priced and announced in a superior manner in comparison to a product considered as "average". These concepts of "quality" influence the creation and, consequently, the creature. Such precepts are not fixed, but instead, malleable and adaptable to different specificities of a certain context or field, but maintaining the ideological base. Thus, we are unconsciously guided not only in our consumption habits, but also in our production habits, that is, in the creation of the material world in which we live. To release the productive state from a specific hegemonic domain, the cultural consolidation of actions that promote awareness about what, why and how we express ourselves as social and creative agents is necessary. Until this condition is reached, the capitalist production values continue to be reproduced and normalized.

For example, in the phase of industrial capitalism (after the second half of the XVIII century), production through the act of designing goods became stronger. In "Objects of desire – design and society since 1750" (2007), Forty discussed the importance of variety for the manufacturing of products. According to the logic of capital, a single design of a product is limited to matching us, whereas multiple designs, or a more particular visual configuration, transmit a (illusory) feeling of choice. As an example of this time, Forty (2007, p. 89) mentions the wide set of pocketknives produced by Montgomery Ward & Co.

> In its 1895 catalogue, the North American sales company, through postal reimbursement, offered 131 types of pocketknives, grouped in four categories: "for ladies", "for men", "for boys" and "for men, heavy and for hunting". Even though there were differences between categories, the variations were relatively small. The catalogues of other postal reimbursement companies, department stores and manufacturers from the XIX century show that this amazing variety of choice was normal for everything, from pens to sewing machines or chairs for the dining room.

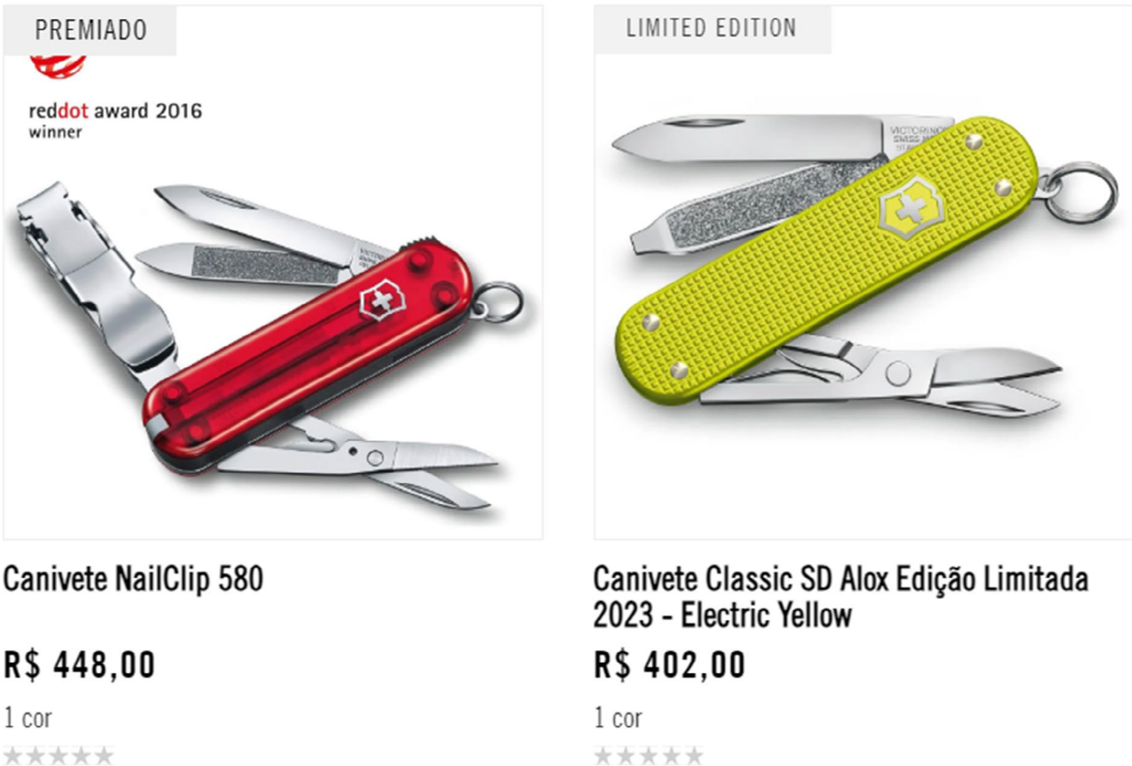
It is observed that originality through individualization was developed to trigger consumption and, consequently, participated in the bourgeois advance and its consolidation as a hegemonic ideology. According to Forty (2007, p. 124), encodings both visual or ergonomic, of these "varied" goods, are designed from commercial projections based on assumptions about gender, age and social class. As the author puts it: "profit was determined by the volume of sales, and once the existence of more types of design stimulated fashion, they promised more sales and performed an important role in the accumulation of capital" (FORTY, 2007, p. 126). Therefore, the creation process of a designer[3] is influenced by market expectations of consumption and economic surplus.

Currently, it is observed that the differentiation of products as a market argument of production is maintained as part of the structure, a factor of the capitalist regime that is reinforced by the neoliberal model. Analyzing the digital catalogue of the Swiss pocketknife brand Victorinox, there are five categories of products: pocketknives, cutlery, travel items, watches, and personalization. Regarding the

3 Like Forty (2007) and Cipiniuk (2014), the authors of this text consider that the practice of Design appeared with the advent of the industrial bourgeois mode of production, First Industrial Revolution.

first mentioned category, seventy-nine products are offered in three subcategories: small pocketknives (fifteen models), medium-sized pocketknives (thirty models) and large pocketknives (thirty-four models).

Of the fifteen small pocketknives, we found a total of 40 variations of colors or patterns to be chosen. And, at the same time, pocketknives with special seals, such as “limited” or “award-winning”, are offered in a single version to symbolize rarity or scarcity as a distinction to trigger more sales (Figure 2). Therefore, the differentiation of the form is used as a profitable strategy for the market, but it becomes obscured or hidden behind a speech considered as “creative”, in which differentiation is manifested as sacred, innocent and individualized, only accessible to those who “have talent” or “were born with a gift”. It is possible to notice this lack of socioeconomic context in alienating shows, such as documentary Abstract: The Art of Design (2017), from Netflix, which only shows great names of the contemporary Field of Design, like Paula Scher, and not the system of conditions and privilege that involves the production, circulation and consumption of her products.



Fonte: https://www.victorinoxstore.com.br/. Access on: Sep. 15, 2023.
Figure 2. Screenshot of the page “small pocketknives”, with examples of special sealed products from *Victorinox*.

As demonstrated, the understanding of the act of creating is ruled by political interests of a dominant ideology, which dictates the guidelines of any field, or occupation, including the design project. To understand how this exploratory aspect of creativity is veiled, we turn again to Forty’s work (2007), which demonstrates how the formation of a Design theory is connected to individual reports, instead of determinant factors to produce a product. According to the author, the way manufactured goods are exposed in museums contributes with the focus on the agent as a designer, hiding him or her as accumulated workforce. To illustrate this point, Forty mentions the exhibit "Thirties", carried out by the Arts Council of Great Britain in Hayward Gallery, in London. There, British Art, Architecture and Design pieces from the 1930s were exposed. Defining such objects were "the names of the designer, the manufacturer, the date of the design and the name of the current owner" (FORTY, 2007, p. 322). Besides these materials, a brief biography about each of the present designers could be found in the exhibit's catalogue. The lack of social determinants, such as:

> (...) original price of the exhibited products or the market to which they were destined, or how they were advertised, or some facts about the manufacturer, made it difficult for the audience to see that the design was not only an expression of the designer's creativity, but also incarnated ideas and material restrictions about which designers had no control over. (FORTY, 2007, p. 322)

Thus, Forty (2007) explains that creativity cannot be an intrinsic, individualized process. Despite being shaped by subjectivities that look individual, these are influenced by sociocultural contexts. The economic system that rules these contexts and specificities of reality that we know of is capitalism, which might even change its forms of production in operating and technological terms, but whose logic of generating surplus value for the profit of the bourgeoisie remains the same (MATIAS, 2014). According to Matias (2014), there was a process known as productive restructuring, with which the Toyota production system rose as a new way of generating and accumulating capital.

Matias (2014), throughout his work, shows how liberal capitalism had to adjust to the needs of the organizational model, production and work, called Taylorism-Fordism, and then, Toyotism – model of production in current industries. He also dissertates about the hegemonic importance of concepts of innovation and entrepreneurship coming from the field of business management in the theoretical field of contemporary Design, indicating that changes in the shape of neoliberal economic model are the explanatory basis for transformations that happen inside the Field.

With Fordism, general production was focused on manufactured goods, whereas the Toyota way, based on technological "advances", turns to the emotional and the subjective; turning them into material for new forms of merchandise in favor of consumption. Therefore, market agents and managers expect the designer to develop new ways of awakening desires and cause enchantment.

As we can observe, in capitalism, market factors determine what can in fact be created. In this system, we are led to a version of "strange creativity, once the conceptual power that designed the object materialized by the work process is also exterior and hostile to the worker" (MATIAS, 2014, p. 55). Creativity under capitalism is, therefore, an action addressed to commercialization, marginalizing ideas that are not seen as a source that generates capital – that is, those that cannot be sold.

Even with a change from this industrial model to another one, the logic of accumulating richness and power among a few still dominates our reality. However, it is essential to delimit the new means and apparels that materialize these mechanisms, as well as the influence and hegemonic relevance they exercise. Therefore, next, we will observe the impacts of the industrial phenomenon in the Field of Design, and how it is strongly influenced by a North American digital tool company.

HEGEMONIC PRESENT: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, THE FIELD OF DESIGN AND ADOBE INC.

According to Bell (1973), we live in a "post-industrial society", in which information is the base for all development. Production is focused on the generation of services, instead of manufactures, and the bourgeois elite is replaced by new technical elites, with forms of social organization that are sill unknown. However, Contino (2019) disagrees with that notion. For the author, the social transformations that occurred after the 2000s, date foreseen by Bell for such changes, did not represent a wearing down of the bourgeois power structures, but instead, a distinguished manifestation of the already structured logic of monopolist capital. Crary (2014, p. 37) reinforces that vision: "as many have noticed, the way innovation takes on in capitalism is the continuous simulation of the new, whereas the existing power and control relations remain, in practice, the same".

In the 1970s, while Bell developed his futurological essays, a variation of the capitalist economic doctrine began to rise as a promise of "innovation" in the market practice: neoliberalism. According to Julier (2017), such a movement occurred based on changes in global measures of economic control, guided especially by the United States. Due to the Second World War and the influent North American power during the conflict, the USA dollar was designed as a reserve currency in the global commerce, that is, currencies from other countries were, since 1944, fixated in relation to the North American currency – event known as the "Bretton Woods Agreement". However, with Nixon's government (1969-1974), this formulation was concluded, promoting that monetary negotiations would be carried out and determined by financial market agents instead of being subjected to government treaties between countries. In the long term, according to Julier (2017, p. 7, our version), "this launched a new era in which the liberalized market, in terms of trade in goods, services and finances, would dominate the increasing capitalist world".

Thus, based on this moment, characteristics of neoliberalism began to interfere in our experience through production and consumption. Julier (2017) defines these specificities as: deregulation of markets and freedom in relation to state intervention; privatization of state companies (and services); intense favoritism of financial interests and focus on competitiveness and business and individual practices. These new measures were put in practice, especially by English governments under Thatcher (1979–1990), and in the United States, under Reagan (1981–1989).

These characteristics are sustained by several techniques, developed to facilitate the circulation of goods and the generation of surplus value to penetrate and become part of reality in different sociocultural contexts. The work of the neoliberal program is diverse, flexible, represented by the production of processes, media and artifacts (tangible and intangible), manufactured by industries.

In 1998, Blair's administration in the United Kingdom created the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The objective was to promote the so-called "intellectual work" through a speech focused on creativity as an economic resource to be explored. The department then developed the concept of "creative industries", delimiting the sectors that would belong to this group, plans and actions of encouragement for those who aimed at promoting the objectives of the mean. The initiative was considered an economic success, employing millions of people and generating attractive income.

> Using forged models in the Silicon Valley and in Hollywood, where the profitability of intellectual property had been perfected (especially by an army of legal services' professionals and a flexible and autonomous business), this new government in the United Kingdom began to adopt a cultural production policy that defended its competitiveness, global reach and viability. (MOULD, 2018, p. 12, our translation)

As Mould (2018) indicates it, intellectual property is the base for the so-called "creative economy". According to John Howkins (2013), there are many variations of intellectual property defined by governments and courts. However, the most common ones are: copyrights, patents, brands and industrial design. A high flow of financial transactions coming from these four sectors of "intellectual" production is what makes the success of the creative economic model. For example, in 1999, the number of American patents, made by the US Patent and Trademark Office, reached 169,000 with a new peculiarity:

> Besides patenting the current inventions and devices, he patented methods of "making business" (fact that amazed many people). This body granted a patent to Dell Computers not for the computers it sold, but for the way it sold them. (HOWKINS, 2013, p. 11)

Regarding the fields that include this type of production, according to Howkins (2013), fifteen of them are defined: advertising; architecture; arts; handicraft; design; fashion; cinema; music; performing arts; publishing sector; research and development; software, toys and games; TV and radio; videogames.

Thus, by the influence of this context in the Field of Design, creativity, through "creative processes" with an automated application of the design methodology, is used as an appropriation of work by the capital — whatever the shape of the desired merchandise is. Therefore, as professionals, we are guided, consciously or unconsciously, to producing "innovative" projects and studies, but they are actually uncritical products that do not represent change, only conformity. Creativity, under the ideological domain of capital, does not create in a freely manner; it appropriates itself through rhetoric (MOULD, 2016). As designers in a context of creative industries, we participate in the construction, and, therefore, in the reproduction of this rhetoric.

Besides, John Hartley *et al.*, in "Key Concepts in Creative Industries" (2013), define relevant terms to understand creative industries. One of these terms is the work called "creative", in which authors highlight the importance of the theme for the incentive to the production of richness. Professionals are characterized as "creative" when they possess the "creative human capital", able to relieve the negative consequences coming from technology, and still helping economic growth through the development of potential techniques.

Unlike tasks performed under a Fordist logic, according to the authors, creative processes would be more related to principles such as freedom, inconformity and flexibilization. However, because we continue to be in an industrial model, it is necessary to think of ways to align "creative talent" with the purposes of the market and the owners of the business. Therefore, the investment is in mitigated, mild control practices, instead of more totalitarian management operations.

Such a behavior is criticized by some work relations' scholars for being exploratory manners of manipulating the workforce in creative sectors, places that can bring about insecurity due to its high volatility (HARTLEY *et al.*, 2013). To compensate this scenario, monetary and symbolic rewards are conceived, which would maintain the attractiveness for a "creative" career. Therefore, the propagation of values such as autonomy and self-fulfillment in creative work are considered, by critical approaches, as another way of precarization in work conditions. Hartley *et al.* (2013) problematize this vision:

> The criticism of precarious work can become so general and comprehensive that it might lose the analytical understanding of changes in the work conditions it seeks to understand. To generalize precarious conditions and the experience of marginalized workers, such as janitors and domestic workers, for the status of a common cause with creative cultural workers and professionals, is deeply problematic. (...) Instead of making an effort to understand labor trends, the objective of criticism seems to preventively judge how the capital is, once again, exploring the work's surplus value. This analysis does not produce any new information. (HARTLEY *et al.*, 2013, p. 64, our translation)

For the authors, it is necessary to obtain more information about the work conditions in creative industries before assessing the deficiencies resulting from these conditions, once it is a recent contemporary phenomenon. They complement it by stating that critical research about creative "workforce" should not be limited to a simple opposition to the political economy of capitalism, but instead, to making efforts to understand the categories, strategies and risks of creative work. The questionable and condemnable position of neutrality of the authors concerning the investigation becomes clearer in the part: "we need to overcome this pro *versus* anti standoff, rethink work categories in a more fundamental manner, paying close attention to the real changes that occur in economy as a whole " (HARTLEY *et al.*, 2013, p. 65, our translation). The logic of the capitalist mode of production operates from the exploration of the workforce, and this exploration is reproduced in different forms of work, both for janitors and domestic workers and for workers from the creative industry. Therefore, it is a theoretical mistake to let go of this common point of origin and to be dedicated only to "labor trends", as the authors mention, and that should be avoided.

About "creative industries" (HARTLEY *et al*., 2013, p. 58-62), the authors argue that one of the reasons for the wide use of this expression is its connection with the current political tendencies of consumption and production. However, since the concept of creative industries is in constant debate, the authors also mention five variations of interpretation models. Then, they elaborate how economic growth can be triggered by this type of industry.

> At first sight, from a mainstream business perspective, it may look like creative industries are not progenitors of the standard causes of economic growth in the development of new technologies, in the further exploration of capital, in operating efficiency, in the innovation of the business model or institutional evolution. However, many of the people and companies of this sector are actually closely related in all of these things. Creative industries are deeply engaged in the experimental use of new technologies, in the development of new contents and applications, and in the creation of new business models. (HARTLEY *et al*., p. 61, our translation)

From this part, one can observe the importance of using "new" technologies in the production process of creative sectors. Harvey (2010) elaborates, with a materialist base, the historical context of technological developments based on the space-time compression phenomenon, and how it is shaped by the reorganization of the capitalist system in the late XX century. To understand the significant changes in the use of space and time, the key-event approached by the author is the transition from the Fordist mode of production to the so-called "flexible accumulation" — characteristic of the Toyota way, mentioned in the previous section. In 1973, Fordism-Keynesianism was in crisis. And to solve the problems caused by the rigidity of such a model, new forms of organization and production were implemented — one of them was the acceleration of turnover, with reduced inventory through electronic systems in several productive sectors (HARVEY, 2010).

With the acceleration of production turnover, time of circulation and consumption were also accelerated, in a dialectic relation. Communication systems then became adapted to enable the circulation of goods in a shorter interval of time. As an example of projects considered as innovative for accelerated distribution, the author mentions the rise of electronic banks and plastic money —- initiatives that have been improved until these days. In relation to consumption, two new organizational projects were emphasized: the development of fashion in mass markets and the transition from the consumption of goods to the consumption of services (HARVEY, 2010), with the commercialization of "experiences[4]" (HEINRICH, 2018, p. 51). Therefore, the act of consuming presents an expansion of its limits, then restricted to the physical environment.

4 In her dissertation, Fabiana Heinrich (2018) shows the uncritical notion of "production of experiences", perpetuated by the designer. According to the author, the experience is impossible to be designed.

Nowadays, volatility is significantly represented by the digitalization of spaces of production, circulation and consumption of goods and information. The current configuration of production in the Field of Design faces strong digitalization of space through electronic software from the North American company Adobe Inc., founded in 1982 by Charles Geschke and John Warnock in the state of California, United States of America (WARNOCK; GESCHKE, 2019).

As Oli Mould (2018, p. 12) explained when defining the main influences for the development of creative industries that, in this period, rose the "Silicon Valley", "technological innovation" region of late capitalism, which accommodated the birth of this and so many other companies that work with the development of mechanisms and software for computers. A sort of collaborative competitiveness connected companies established there, in which there was much more of a managerial concern of sharing development techniques (functionalism) for different applications of coding than with the development of more human work interactions, sustainable in the medium and long term (MOULD, 2018).

Before founding Adobe Systems, Geschke and Warnock worked together at Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), the research sector of Xerox Corporation, which produced machines and systems of photocopies and printing material[5]. However, they were unhappy with some internal decisions regarding what they considered to be a long period for the development of mechanisms in which the execution of their computer system would be carried out. They wanted the project, that took about 4 years to be developed, to be used fast (WARNOCK; GESCHKE, 2019).

So, the two scientists decided to found their own company with an initial bank investment of 2.5 million dollars for the two first years. Forty years went by, and the renamed Adobe Inc. currently has an annual income of 17.61 billion dollars (ADOBE United States, 2023b), 12% higher than the taxable income of the previous year[6], with the work of more than 29,000 employees (ADOBE United States, 2023a)[7].

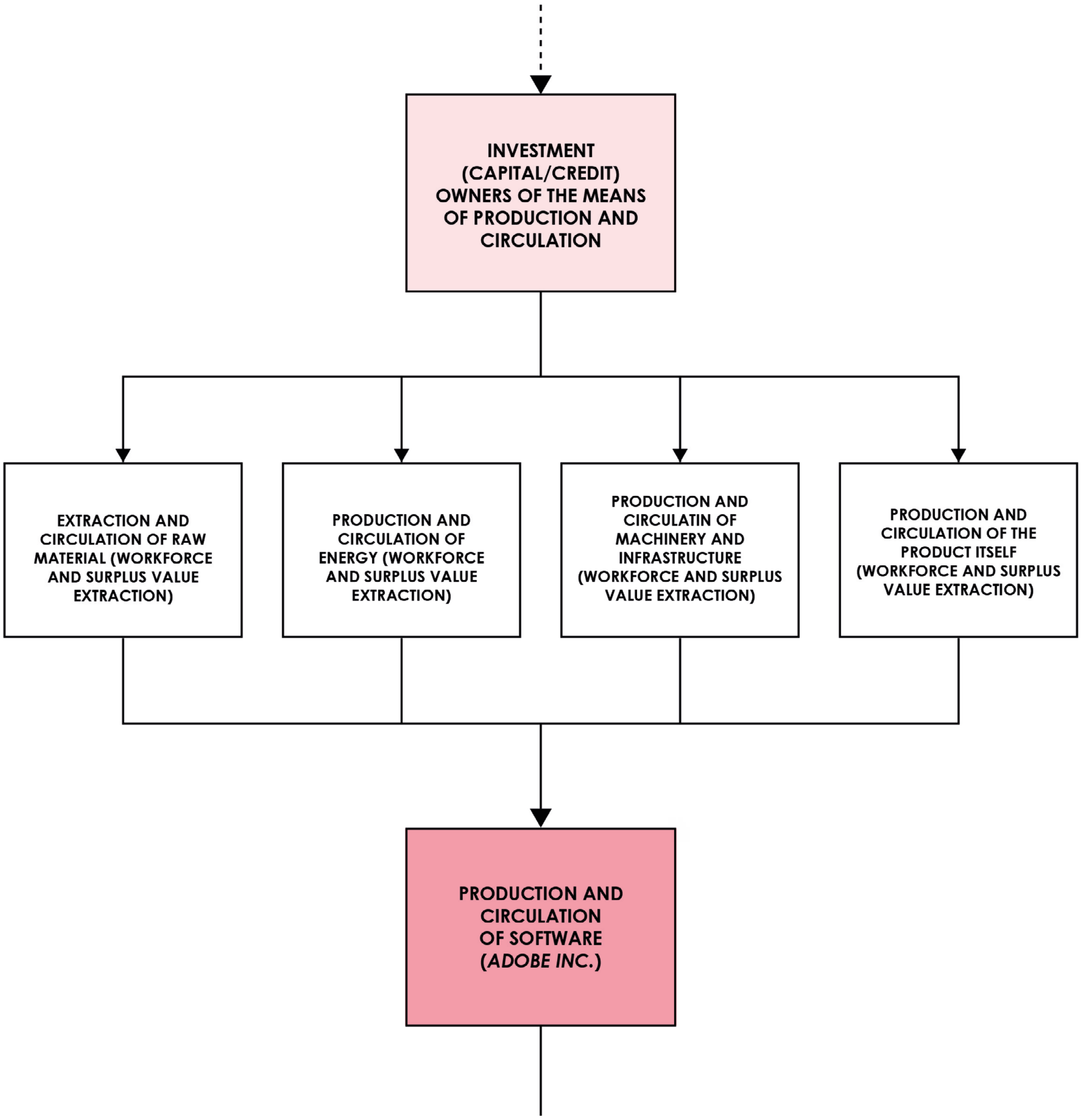
To understand the relationship Adobe Inc. has developed with work in the Field of Design in the past decades, a scheme (Figures 3 and 4), based on the study "The Financial Logic of Internet Platforms: The Turnover Time of Money at the Limit of Zero" by Marcos Dantas (2019), was elaborated, contextualizing the company's participation in total production.

For production to happen, an investment is necessary from the holders of the means of production and circulation, divided in four categories (Figure 3): extraction and circulation of raw material; production and circulation of energy; production and circulation of machinery and infrastructure; production and circulation of the

5 Xerox Corporation was so popular for its prices and photocopy products that, in Portuguese, the expression "fazer uma xerox" and "xerocar" began to be used. Source: https://canaltech.com.br/empresa/xerox/. Access: Sep. 26, 2023.

6 Data regarding 2022. Available at the company's official platform: https://www.adobe.com/pdf--page.html?pdfTarget=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuYWRvYmUuY29tL2NvbnRlbnQvZGFtL2NjL2VuL2ludmVz-dG9yLXJlbGF0aW9ucy9wZGZzL0FEQkUtUHJveHktMjAyMy5wZGY=. Access: Sept. 26, 2023.

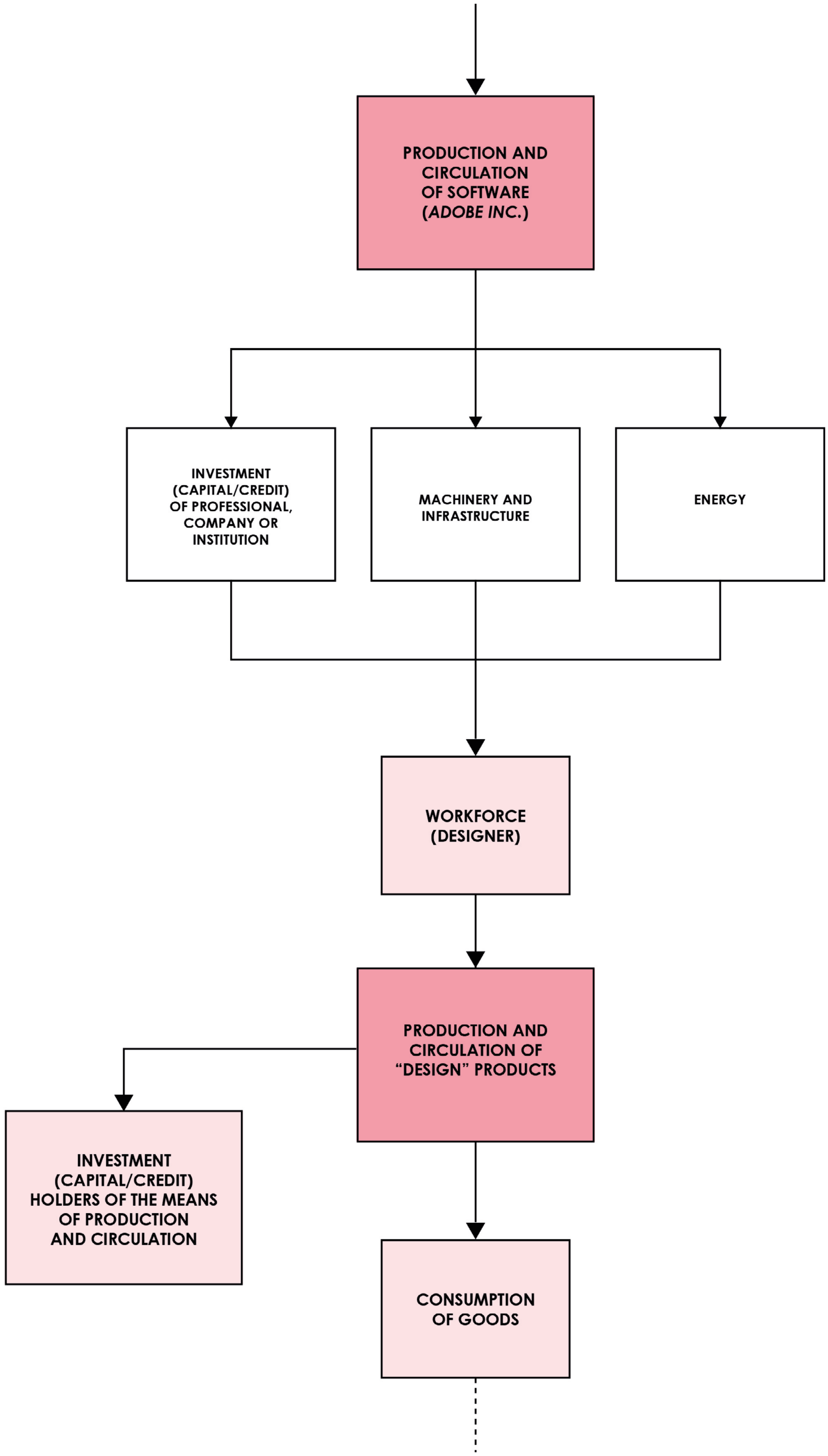
7 Data regarding 2022, considering employees that are not Only in the USA. Available at the company's official platform: https://www.adobe.com/about-adobe/fast-facts.html. Access: Sept. 26, 2023.



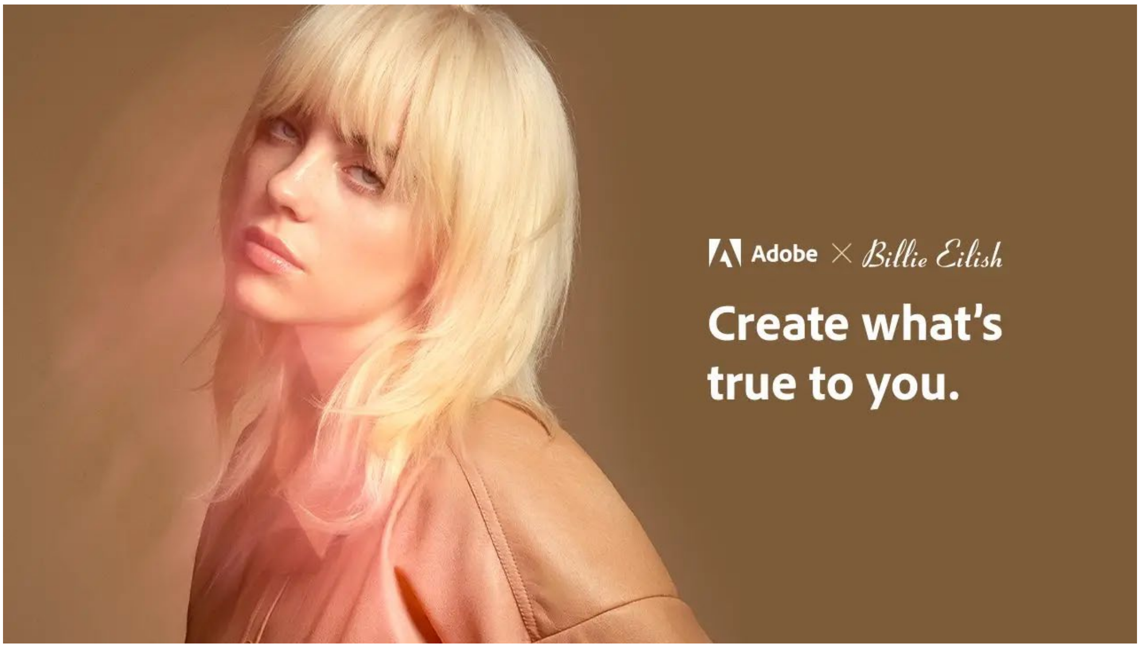
Source: the authors.
Figure 3. Scheme of the productive ("creative") process of Digital Design under Adobe Inc. Part 01.

merchandise itself (workforce and extraction of surplus-value). All these categories are work that began to be consumed by Adobe Inc. itself in the fabrication of its own products. Only with capital investment in all of these conditions is it possible for products, such as digital software, to be produced, distributed and consumed by a specific audience.

The investment in the stage of distribution is essential for the success of the production-consumption relation. Adobe Inc.'s strategy in that stage involves the production of static and audiovisual digital advertising pieces of its products and services, which are publicized both in the company's social media accounts and in accounts of other companies through advertising funding; hiring of influencers in the "creative" field, with different levels of popularity (an example of a very popular influencer was the North American singer, Billie Eilish, as illustrated in Figure 5);



Source: the authors.
Figure 4. Scheme of the productive ("creative") process of Digital Design under Adobe Inc. Part 02.



Source: https://blog.adobe.com/en/publish/2021/08/02/be-inspired-by-billie-eilish-create-what-is--true-to-you. Access on: Feb. 05, 2024.
Figure 5. Digital banner of the partnership between Adobe Inc. and the singer Billie Eilish in 2021.

events for the discussion of techniques and practices connected with the company's products; among others.

With Adobe Inc.'s tools, designers depend on three material conditions to acquire and use these goods (Figure 4): capital (be it from the company or from workers, in case of freelancers, to pay for the costs of the other conditions); machinery and infrastructure (such as workspace, computer, internet etc.); energy (for the machinery and infrastructure to function). All these conditions are necessary so that digital production takes place in the Field of Design with any digital tool, including those sold by Adobe Inc. However, it is worth to mention that this software would be useless without the designer's workforce and, for that to occur, a current investment between R$ 43 and R$ 215 a month is necessary for the self-employed professional (ADOBE Brazil, 2023), which, according to the neoliberal point of view, is considered as his own company. Despite the economic cost to access these tools, the company defends creativity as being "free" (Figure 6), hiding socioeconomic aspects and its participation in the propagation of production and consumption capitalist ideals.

Therefore, Adobe Inc. participates in the productive system of the Field of Design and communicates itself as being a symbol of "creative" distinction, which some profiles of professionals or aspiring to be professionals can acquire, and some cannot. The minimum monthly subscription fee of one of the packages offered by the company, mentioned before, already constitutes the exclusion of students, self-employed professionals and institutions with low purchasing power. These small producers are then led to the margin of one of the conditions that are essential to their work: the use of tools. Marginalization also leads to the difficulty for them to be hired in private, and even public, positions (Figures 7 and 8).

Source: https://www.adobe.com/br/about-adobe.html. Acesso: 04 mar. 2023.
Figure 6. Publicity of Adobe values.

Sobre a vaga

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- Criar logotipos, designs, mídia impressa e digitais.

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- 3-5 anos de experiência com design gráfico;
- Proficiência no pacote Adobe;
- Comunicação forte, pensamento conceitual, habilidades de tipografia e habilidades de design.

Source: Duma Consultoria de Marca. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/3t9z4yzj. Access on: Feb. 07, 2024.
Figure 7. Job description at a private company for the position of Graphic Design.

As observed throughout this section, the creativity that is imposed to us, and reproduced by the practice and thought of peers, is a version that is limited to financial profitability; something that is only referred to as creative when stimulating, or reformulating, ways to generate surplus value. In the industrial conjuncture, also in the digital context we are inserted in, creativity is dictated as a cognitive resource that works through production techniques, be them methodological or representative. In this context, Adobe Inc. plays an important role in the Society of the Spectacle, defined by Débord (2013, p. 22). According to the author, "all life in societies in which modern conditions of production reign announce itself as a huge accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly experienced drifted away

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8. Requisitos

8.1. Dos Requisitos Eliminatórios:

1 – Formação nível superior em Design Gráfico ou Desenho Industrial com habilitação em Comunicação Visual ou Comunicação Social com habilitação em Produção Editorial ou Publicidade e Propaganda. **2 –** diploma expedido por instituição de ensino superior reconhecida pelo Ministério da Educação; **3 –** experiências prévias e comprovadas superiores há 7 anos na elaboração/produção de materiais gráficos e digitais; **4 -** vivência em diagramação e design editorial, com experiência prévia no desenvolvimento de projetos gráficos de peças editoriais; **5 -** experiência no desenvolvimento de layouts, criação e padronização de projeto gráfico e identidade visual para materiais gráficos de grande porte (publicações, padronização tipográfica e de elementos gráficos), criação de elementos gráficos visuais e de tratamento de imagens e elaboração de ícones vetorizados; **6 -** conhecimento em edição áudio e vídeo; **7 -** conhecimento dos principais programas de editoração da Adobe (Photoshop, Illustrator e Indesign), pacote Office e Corel Draw.

Source: INCA (2023). Available at: http://tinyurl.com/3t9z4yzj. Access on: Feb. 7, 2024.
Figure 8. Job description at a public institution for the position of Graphic Design.

in a representation". The image of creativity publicized by Adobe Inc. is a simulation of creativity without market purposes. That is, an inexistent creativity, disconnected from a labor practice that is mostly guided by capitalist market, as is the professional practice in the Field of Design.

CONCLUSION

For now, we mainly present some critical preliminary considerations about the current production hegemony in the Field of Design. The objective of this work was to present a projective field under a critical approach, also related to the field of Political Economy. In the first section of this study, we analyzed the field of Criticism to Political Economy, and relevant concepts for the ideal of Marxist production. Then, we argued about the historiography of the concept of "creativity", and how this process impacts the Field of Design. Finally, we briefly analyzed the context of Creative Industries in the XXI century, and how Adobe Inc. is influent in the digital field nowadays. Thus, we conclude that, in this socioeconomic context, creativity has become a resource, a capital, instead of a human skill. Through techniques, "creativity" today enables the production of goods, both digital or not, reproducing dominant social values and conventions. However, it is necessary to analyze, in detail and critically, the status of the tools and their influence, which products represent the productive techniques in the Field of Design, how they can be classified and located in the process we call "creative". As stated by Iraldo Matias (2014, p. 371), "there are many aspects of the exploration of the cognitive component of work by capital in its manifestations in design, which require further critical research". In this moment, it is essential to understand the Field of Design under the socially determined instances, and how these guide even what is considered as subjective in a dialectic relation.

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The career path of digital influencers

A trajetória de carreira dos influenciadores digitais

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ABSTRACT

The article's objective was to understand the career development of digital influencers. To this end, testimonials were collected from 9 influencers, who spoke about their experiences, according to the constituent stages of their professional trajectories. The survey results revealed that the majority of respondents began their influencer career as a hobby, and with the gain in visibility and financial return, they saw a job opportunity. Furthermore, it was found that an influencer career involves many challenges, such as pricing, understanding how algorithms work and the intense work routine. In the end, some advice for those who want to invest in their career was provided by the interviewees. Given the constant expansion of the digital influencer market, this article contributes to career studies with information about the trajectory of these professionals.

Keywords: Career. Career developmental theory. Digital influencer.

RESUMO

O presente artigo objetiva entender a construção de carreira de influenciadores digitais. Para isso, recolhe depoimentos de nove influenciadores, que falaram sobre as suas vivências, de acordo com as etapas constitutivas das suas trajetórias profissionais. Os resultados da pesquisa revelaram que a maioria dos entrevistados começou sua carreira de influenciador como um hobby *e, com o ganho de visibilidade e retorno financeiro, vislumbraram uma oportunidade de trabalho. Ademais, verificou-se que a carreira de influenciador envolve muitos desafios, como a precificação, a compreensão do funcionamento dos algoritmos e a intensa rotina de trabalho. Ao final, alguns conselhos para quem deseja investir na carreira foram mencionados pelos entrevistados. Tendo em vista a constante expansão do mercado de influenciadores digitais, este artigo contribui para os estudos de carreira com informações acerca da trajetória desses profissionais.*

Palavras-chave: *Carreira. Teoria desenvolvimentista de carreira. Influenciador digital.*

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INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, the seamless connection between personal computers and the availability of user-friendly applications has facilitated the sharing of information by ordinary citizens. Individuals with specific opinions or skills can influence others and gradually gain prominence on social networks (CHAU; XU, 2012; CRESCITELLI; TAGAWA, 2015). This communication occurs directly, swiftly, with minimal creation costs, extensive dissemination, and without direct oversight from public bodies or companies (CRESCITELLI; TAGAWA, 2015). As a result, users can share personal stories, ideas, opinions, and emotions, thereby transforming social networks into a highly valued form of media (CHAU; XU, 2012).

With the ability to evaluate products and brands and sway their followers with their opinions, "digital propagandists" have piqued companies' interest in compensating them for promoting their products (CHAU; XU, 2012; CRESCITELLI; TAGAWA, 2015). This phenomenon has given rise to digital influencers, who capitalize on their presence on social networks for monetization. These influencers can be found on popular platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter, as well as on channels like YouTube or blogs.

In Brazil, the digital influencer market is experiencing rapid growth. According to a study by Nielsen Media Research (2023), there are over 500 thousand individuals acting as influencers, each with at least 10 thousand followers. This popularity is further evidenced by data from Statista Consumer Insights (2023), which revealed that Brazil leads in terms of digital influencers' impact on consumers. Approximately 45% of individuals surveyed reported purchasing products or services recommended by influencers (BUCHHOLZ, 2023). Consequently, three bills have been proposed to the Chamber of Deputies, currently under review in respective committees: numbers 929/2020, 1.282/2022, and 2.347/2022, which aim to regulate the profession of digital influencer in the country.

Given the burgeoning market for digital influencers and the limited exploration of their career trajectories in existing studies, this article sought to understand how the career of a digital influencer is cultivated. To achieve this goal, qualitative research was conducted, involving gathering testimonies from nine digital influencers, who elucidated the motivations driving their pursuit of this profession, outlined their daily routines, discussed the challenges they encountered, and shared strategies they employed to attain success.

In crafting the career trajectories of digital influencers, Super's (1957, 1990) career development theory was employed as a framework. Although originally devised to delineate traditional and linear career paradigms, this theory was selected for its capacity to furnish a conceptual foundation for analyzing professional pathways, which aligns with the ultimate objective of this study.

TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY CAREERS

The definition of a career has evolved significantly over time, rendering it a complex concept to encapsulate. In the 1930s, Hughes and his colleagues at the

Chicago School defined a career as encompassing all experiences that occur in an individual's life, whether work-related or not. Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence (1989) conceptualize a career as the accumulation of professional experiences undergone by an individual over time. While this definition acknowledges upward, downward, and lateral career trajectories, it confines the scope of research to work-related experiences.

Sullivan and Baruch (2009, p. 1543) define a career as a collection of "relevant experiences, whether work-related or not, both within and outside organizations, that form a distinctive pattern throughout an individual's lifecycle." While this definition does not confine careers solely to professional experiences, the notion of a singular pattern of experiences throughout an individual's life may not be entirely clear.

More broadly, De Luca, Oliveira, and Chiesa (2016, p. 472) define "career" as "a retrospective and prospective trajectory, dynamic and mutable, of an individual or collective, unveiling negotiations between objectivities and subjectivities." This definition integrates past, present, and future, endorsing the "future trajectory" within the "reciprocal influence among individuals and between individuals and their environments." Furthermore, they emphasize the significance of contemplating careers collectively, underscoring both the material and symbolic dimensions involved.

While the concept of a career extends beyond an individual's path in the realm of work, in this article, the term was confined to the professional trajectory. This limitation stemmed from the acknowledgment that career studies, including those within organizational and management fields, typically adhere to this convention, thereby restricting their focus to the realm of work (GUNZ; MAYRHOFER, 2015).

During the period spanning from the 1970s to the mid-1990s, career studies were characterized by a focus on traditional organizational careers. These careers were predominantly pursued by men from socially dominant groups (CHANLAT, 1995) and were shaped by economic and work environments undergoing technological advancements (SULLIVAN; CROCITTO, 2007). They were characterized by a degree of stability, a linear vertical structure, and typically defined in relation to an individual's affiliation with an organization (SUPER, 1957).

Events such as increased diversity in the job market, rising education levels, rapid technological advancements, economic restructuring, and the growing prevalence of outsourcing and temporary work have ushered in a series of unpredictable behaviors, giving rise to a new model of career (SULLIVAN; BARUCH, 2009). Contrary to the traditional model, as described by Chanlat (1995), the new career paradigm is characterized by its instability, discontinuity, and horizontal progression. In this context, workers are required to pursue continuous learning, adeptly utilize sophisticated technologies, demonstrate flexibility, sustain their employability, and proactively create opportunities (DUARTE, 2004). Among the emerging concepts of the new career model, borderless careers and protean careers are particularly prominent in scholarly studies on the subject (SULLIVAN; BARUCH, 2009).

The protean career, coined by David Hall in 1976, entails a professional's ability to adapt their knowledge, skills, and attitudes over time to personal and environmental changes, emphasizing that career progression is driven by the individual rather than the organization (HALL, 1996). Borderless careers, on the other hand, represent an individual's professional trajectory, comprised of experiences in various organizations and diverse work contexts. The traditional notion of upward mobility within a single organization is giving way to individuals who actively manage their own careers, driven by the pursuit of new professional challenges. In these evolving career paradigms, individuals bear sole responsibility for navigating, sustaining, and advancing their careers in the ever-changing landscape of work.

CAREER STAGES ACCORDING TO DONALD SUPER

The author most commonly associated with the career development approach is Donald Super. He is best known for his developmental career theory, which aims to explain the choices and transitions individuals make throughout their careers (MAGALHÃES, 2005). His career stage recital highlights changes in goals across five life periods as an individual moves from one stable condition to another. Each stage has a different objective, and the name of the stages indicates that objective: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement.

For Super (1957, 1990), careers develop as a person faces the challenges inherent to psychosocial maturation. These challenges may stem from a linear developmental model, wherein tasks are traditionally associated with specific age periods, or they may arise from adaptive tasks that lack predictability or correlation with age or stage linearity. Therefore, the age boundaries outlined by Super are approximate and can vary from person to person.

The career stages developed by Super (1957, 1990) are as follows:

1. **Growth –** encompasses four primary tasks of professional development imposed by society on children: developing concern about future employment; enhancing personal control over vocational activities; forming conceptions regarding educational and vocational choices; and gaining the confidence to make and execute career decisions. Throughout elementary school, students acquire skills and attitudes vital for work and cultivate self-assurance to make autonomous decisions. This phase expects children to navigate social interactions, striking a balance between competition and cooperation. Over time, they assimilate adult perspectives, growing more cognizant and invested in future-oriented matters.
2. **Exploration –** at this stage, young individuals gather information about themselves and various occupations to inform their career decisions. This stage involves three key tasks: crystallization, specification, and realization. Crystallization entails broad exploration to form initial ideas about societal roles, fostering the development of attitudes, beliefs, and competencies necessary to shape a vocational self-concept. Individuals begin to identify with a subset of occupations at a certain skill level. Specification involves delving

deeply into preliminary preferences to prepare for declaring a career path. The final task, making an occupational choice, requires individuals to commit to a decision and take action to actualize it. By pursuing relevant education and entering a professional role, a young person transitions from a specified preference to a concrete reality.

3. **Establishment –** this stage encompasses three vocational development activities reflecting societal expectations regarding employment and community integration: stabilization, consolidation, and vocational advancement. Stabilization involves securing a position, assimilating organizational culture, and performing job duties proficiently to ensure job security. Consolidation entails refining one's self-image and seeking a suitable environment to solidify and enhance career achievements, forming a career trajectory. This trajectory may manifest as conventional (stability), unstable (instability followed by stabilization), or a pattern of multiple career (continuous shifts without stabilization). Finally, vocational advancement entails assuming new or expanded responsibilities, seeking better opportunities within current or alternative organizations, and exploring different occupations. As individuals enter middle age, they may prioritize maintaining established achievements over pursuing new directions, signaling the transition to the maintenance stage of their career.
4. **Maintenance –** this stage underscores the preservation of attained achievements. Society expects mature adults to maintain steadfastness in their positions, retaining interest in their work and loyalty to their organization. Super (1984) delineated three modes of positive functioning during this stage: security, updating, and innovation. Security necessitates awareness of challenges posed by competitors, evolving technology, familial responsibilities, and diminishing resilience. Failure to enhance one's position risks being surpassed by others. Updating extends beyond task execution; it entails striving for improved performance and renewing skills and knowledge. Conversely, innovation involves forging new paths, altering tasks, engaging in diverse activities, or embracing fresh challenges. Contemporary organizational structures have shifted from lifetime employment models to embrace flexible approaches like protean and boundaryless careers, emphasizing adaptability and new beginnings over static maintenance.
5. **Disengagement –** this stage entails a gradual reduction in tasks and the initiation of retirement plans, aiming to transition into a retired lifestyle. Following an extended period of maintenance, individuals often experience a decline in energy and interest in their occupation.

THE CAREER OF A DIGITAL INFLUENCER

Information technology has revolutionized the dynamic between communicators and the public. Previously monopolized by large media entities, the power to communicate is now decentralized, empowering individuals (SHIRKY, 2011). Unlike the conformity enforced by traditional media channels, the internet has bestowed individuals with unprecedented legitimacy and freedom of expression. The advent of online platforms facilitating interpersonal connections has birthed online social networks, effectively erasing spatial barriers in communication (ZANETTE, 2015).

The availability of a diverse array of user-friendly applications played a pivotal role in fostering this type of engagement, initially perceived by many as a leisure pursuit (SHIRKY, 2011). As noted by Sibilia (2008), the emergence of new resources opened previously inconceivable opportunities, presenting promising prospects for both creation and interaction.

In this context, detached from physical confines yet linked by social platforms, the phenomenon of digital influencers arises. Abidin (2016) characterizes them as ordinary internet users amassing sizable followings on social media platforms by narrating their personal and daily lives through textual and visual content. They leverage technologies like video, blogs, and social networking sites, along with platforms such as YouTube, to engage with their audience.

According to Karhawi (2016), social actors transition into digital influencers for two primary reasons: a. they occupy a niche within the digital landscape, disseminating specialized information sought by certain individuals; and b. they possess qualities that confer credibility, reputation, and prestige. Building reputation hinges on the influencer's consistent publication of high-quality content, catering to the demands of their audience. This audience, in turn, legitimizes the influencer by fostering a sincere, genuine, and intimate connection (KARHAWI, 2016).

Influencers have the flexibility to communicate with either a highly targeted audience or a broader one. Some exclusively engage with teenagers, while others reach out to a more diverse demographic. While certain influencers specialize in specific subjects such as gaming or cooking, leveraging their expertise to connect with enthusiasts, others excel in communication skills and master techniques like camera positioning, public speaking, and narrative scripting. They foster engagement by stimulating debates, reflections, and dialogues within the communities they cultivate (KARHAWI, 2016).

Senft (2008) associates certain influencers with the concept of microcelebrities, contrasting them with traditional entertainment celebrities. Microcelebrities can achieve widespread fame among large-scale followers and become public icons within specific niches. Their activities center around curating a persona that resonates authentically with their audience. Allsop, Bryce, and Hoskins (2007) support this perspective, contending that information exchanged among consumers carries greater credibility than information sourced from traditional media or conventional advertisements.

The direct engagement between digital influencers and their audience fosters trust among users, endowing their opinions and recommendations with the potential to sway perceptions of products, brands, and companies, thereby directly influencing sales (CRESCITELLI; TAGAWA, 2015). Recognizing these attributes, companies and agencies invest in influencers to promote their products or services. In Brazil, there exist firms specializing in image management, consulting, advertising, and tailored projects for digital influencers. For instance, the YouPix platform is dedicated to professionalizing and enhancing the digital influencer market (KARHAWI, 2016).

As per Karhawi (2016), the prevailing communication trend entails influencers evolving into brands and even media platforms themselves. Beyond digital environments, influencers with symbolic capital engage and influence niche markets. "The contemporary influencer is on magazine covers, in television advertisements, on bookstore bestseller lists, starring in campaigns for big brands" (KARHAWI, 2016, P. 42). Sibilia (2008) underscores that "each person's image is their own brand, a capital so valuable that it requires nurturing and cultivation to present an appealing persona in the competitive market of appearances." (SIBILIA, 2008, p. 225).

Currently, digital influencers are classified into five large groups, according to the number of followers they have on social media: 1. nano-influencers, who have between one thousand and 10 thousand followers; 2. micro-influencers, ranging between 10 and 100 thousand followers; 3. macro-influencers, who have between 100 thousand and 500 thousand followers; 4. mega-influencers, who vary between 500 thousand and 1 million followers; and 5. celebrities, who generally have more than 1 million followers (INSPER, 2022). Nano-influencers, despite their smaller number of followers, are often able to have greater engagement with their audience. In contrast, celebrities and mega-influencers have greater reach, but higher costs and lower engagement (INSPER, 2022).

According to Vilicic (2019), while the careers of digital influencers may seem glamorous, they encounter numerous challenges. "Going viral" on the internet has its dark side, including the constant pressure to maintain presence and swiftly produce content aligned with the influencer's brand; the risk of oversharing and tarnishing one's image and income; navigating the ever-changing algorithms of social networks and other platforms; managing offensive and malicious comments from internet users; staying abreast of new channels and competitors; dealing with intense fan harassment at inconvenient times; and contending with heightened anxiety and psychological strain exacerbated by these stressors.

Despite the challenges outlined, Fialho and Lütz (2011) emphasize the continual expansion and growing significance of social networks as communication platforms and sources of information on the internet. Consequently, the authors assert that there are promising opportunities for individuals aspiring to pursue careers in this field.

METHODOLOGY

To attain the study's objective, semi-structured interviews were conducted with digital influencers. The aim was to comprehend the trajectory these professionals traversed to reach their current status, along with identifying key characteristics and challenges encountered along the way. The research subjects were selected based on the following criteria: individuals whose primary source of income is derived from being a digital influencer, irrespective of age or educational background.

Through the researchers' social network and supplemented by the snowball technique, nine influencers were recruited to participate in the study. The interviews, averaging 35 minutes each, adhered to a structured script outlined in Figure 1. Figure 2 provides a summary of the interviewees' profiles.

1 – Where did the idea of becoming a digital influencer come from and how did it all begin?
2 – What were the main challenges you faced until reaching the current stage of your career, and how did you overcome them?
3 - What or who helped you along the way?
4 - How did the contacts and partnerships come about, and what is your work routine like?
5 - How do you earn your income?
6 - How do you organize yourself financially?
7 – What do you like and dislike the most in this activity?
8 - What are the professional plans for the future?
9 - What advice would you give to someone who wants to become a digital influencer?

Source: Compiled by the authors.
Figure 1. Interview script.

Interviewee (fictional names)	Age	Qualification	Activity	Start date
1- Jéssica	31 years	Marketing	Travel Blog	2010
2- Alessandra	29 years	Computer Sciences	Travel Blog	2013
3- Rebeca	33 years	Industrial Design	Youtuber	2009
4- Mario e Lucas	21 years	No qualification	Instagram, Youtuber, and Twitter	2013
5- Leandro	29 years	Administration	Youtuber	2012
6- Michelle	25 years	Journalism	Travel Blog and Instagram	2012
7- Ana	32 years	Cinema	Instagram	2015
8- Felipe	31 years	Environmental Engineering	Facebook and Instagram	2012

Source: Compiled by the authors.
Figure 2. Characteristics of the interviewees.

All interviews were transcribed and subjected to analysis. The analytical framework was structured around Super's career stages model (1957, 1990), aiming to elucidate the various phases of the influencers' careers. This approach facilitated the exploration of each stage, spanning from the inception of their careers to their current status. It is important to underscore that this analysis does not presuppose any inherent relationship with age or linearity of stages, as suggested by Super (1957, 1990).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In this study, Super's model (1957, 1990) served as a guiding framework for mapping and analyzing the stages of a digital influencer's career. It is noteworthy that while the model delineates age-based periods and associated challenges in professional maturation, the author emphasizes that these age boundaries are approximate and may vary from person to person. Therefore, the present analysis did not adhere strictly to the specified age groups or all characteristics of each phase. Instead, it focused on the moments of maturation signified by each phase. Consequently, the analysis presented below is structured around three themes derived from Super's five-stage model (1957, 1990): exploration, establishment, and maintenance. Although originally designed for traditional careers, adapting the Super model to map the trajectories of the professionals interviewed provided valuable insights into the construction of an influencer's career.

EXPLORATION PHASE

In the initial stage of analysis, the inception of the interviewees' journey was addressed, aiming to comprehend their motivations for becoming digital influencers, delving into their efforts and experimentation prior to committing to this career path, as well as identified factors that facilitated their journey.

Regarding their motivation to embark on this endeavor, the majority of interviewees expressed a profound personal interest in the topics they communicate about on social media. They noted that they initially pursued this activity as a hobby, without initially considering the notion of making it their primary source of income:

> When I started making videos, I was passionate about makeup... I began on YouTube doing makeup tutorials as a hobby (Rebeca).

> We used to play a game because we enjoyed it and had fun. At that time, recording gameplays on YouTube was very common... We didn't envision to create our own channel, it was like: we sat down, goofed around, and recorded the game in our style (Mario and Lucas).

As elucidated by Shirky (2011), the current revolution hinges on the integration of amateurs as content producers. With the accessibility of user-friendly applications, individuals no longer rely on communication or marketing professionals to disseminate information publicly, empowering everyone to become content creators. This accessibility was a significant catalyst for engaging in such activities, initially pursued by many as a hobby (SIBILIA, 2008). Felipe's testimony aligns with this narrative: "I used to take photos and started posting them [...] I actually wanted to show my family where I was [...]. People started commenting and sharing with others... After a while, I had a lot of followers and started investing in it."

The absence of professional support and the experimental nature of their endeavors were not perceived as difficulties by the interviewees, given that, for the majority, it was initially a hobby. Therefore, the easy accessibility of tools enabling content production and dissemination fostered their dedication to an activity that ultimately evolved into a profession.

Although the majority of interviewees initially embarked on their professional activities without intending to make it their primary source of income, two participants indicated that there was an initial objective of monetizing their endeavors. Alessandra, who runs a travel blog, shared that due to her passion for traveling and dissatisfaction with her job in São Paulo, she viewed investing in her blog — originally started as a hobby — as an opportunity to potentially transition to a livelihood based on her dedication to this activity. She remarked, "Tripadvisor will buy it one day, who knows, maybe it won't work out (laughs)." In Alessandra's case, despite the experimental start, there existed a desire to turn the hobby into a financially viable pursuit.

The notion of professionalizing an initially unassuming activity was also evident in Leandro's account. Upon mentioning his decision to move in with his successful influencer friends Mario and Lucas, Leandro disclosed his intention to transition his DJ hobby into a pursuit akin to that of his friends: "I already wanted to have a strong YouTube channel, but I didn't have the knowledge they have. [...] The idea was to get closer to them so we could grow together." In Leandro's case, forging closer ties with friends served as the pathway to professionalization.

Based on the insights gleaned from the interviews, it can be inferred that the decision to pursue a career as a digital influencer evolved through experimentation with the activity and the gradual acquisition of necessary skills and attitudes. This process ultimately led to a commitment to this pursuit as a profession. The increasing demands associated with influencer activities prompted interviewees to fully dedicate themselves to this endeavor, motivating them to pursue it as a career. This was the case for Jéssica, who disclosed: "there came a moment when I had to choose, and I decided to believe in the blog. I chose to quit the other job and dedicate myself solely to it, to professionalize it and make it grow." Similarly, the decision to abandon previous jobs, as seen in the cases of Jéssica and Alessandra, or discontinue ongoing courses, as experienced by Mario and Lucas, marked a pivotal moment in their professionalization journey. At this juncture, being a digital influencer ceased to be a mere hobby and became a significant source of income for the interviewees, motivating them to depart from their employment and/or academic pursuits. It is posited that at this stage, the interviewees effectively made an occupational choice (SUPER, 1990), ushering them into the next phase of establishment, in which they endeavored to seize and consolidate the positions they had attained (SUPER, 1990).

It is noteworthy that among the nine interviewees, two individuals, Leandro (a YouTuber DJ) and Michelle (a travel blogger), have not yet transitioned to the next phase. Despite earning income from their activities, it is insufficient for their sustenance. Consequently, Leandro is compelled to undertake an internship in his field of study (administration), while Michelle resides in her parents' house.

ESTABLISHMENT PHASE

This stage is characterized by the digital influencer's transition to a consolidated, stable profession with an income sufficient to sustain their livelihood. As emphasized by Super (1990), it is during this stage that professionals cultivate a repertoire of attitudes and activities that solidify their vocational commitment. This transition mirrors Alessandra's experience, who remarked:

> Some big accounts on Instagram started reposting some photos from my trip, and when I saw it, we already had 100 thousand followers. From that moment on, it became a real business... My differentiator was being a real person, giving tips that I know are worthwhile. I wasn't just a space for advertising anything without much filtering (Alessandra).

In this stage, the quantity and consistency of followers, coupled with the attainment of a reliable income stream through online presence on various networks and digital channels, are paramount. This marks the transition from an activity with hobbyist undertones to a livelihood, a full-fledged profession. Mario and Lucas, entertainment influencers, underscore the significance of follower metrics in this transition: "We hit some trends in a month, which we called the golden month. We went from 600 thousand subscribers to 1.2 million! We never imagined it would boom like this. We used all the money we earned this month to professionalize the business and live off of it."

The growth in the number of followers played a fundamental role in the professionalization of the interviewees. This metric defines them as "influencers" and enables them to monetize their platform through advertising, whether through personal testimonials or editorial opinions (ABIDIN, 2016).

In terms of financial gains, a significant milestone in the transition from hobby to professional activity, Jéssica emphasizes that: "In 2012, the blog started making money. 2013 and 2014 were very good years for us, as we earned a lot, and after that, it just kept growing."

The establishment phase also entails the refinement of the professional's self-concept, aimed at imbuing greater depth into their life narrative (SUPER, 1990). In the case under examination, it was noted that following an unassuming start, during which the interviewees did not perceive themselves as professionals but rather as individuals sharing their creations and interests, they gradually began to define themselves as digital influencers. This transition occurred after monetizing their posts and other activities:

> When I started the videos I was passionate about makeup [...]. People trusted me a lot because of my familiarity with videos, they said they felt more intimate [...]. At the time, I also worked at a publishing house and produced jewelry on weekends. Only after some time did I realize that I could make money from it. Today, 100% of my income comes from my work as a digital influencer (Rebeca).

Despite the enthusiasm for embracing this career, the professionals interviewed encountered numerous challenges. What was once not a source of concern when the activity was pursued as a hobby becomes a significant hurdle when it transforms into a source of prestige and income. The lack of technical expertise to produce content and limited understanding of the dynamics of the chosen channel were obstacles that interviewees had to overcome at this stage. As noted by Vilicic (2019), this is one of the primary challenges faced by influencers, even those with extensive experience on the platform. Michelle, whose primary platform is Instagram, highlighted this difficulty: "Instagram has a lot of algorithm changes, and that makes me very anxious. If a photo I post today gets 2,000 likes and reaches 20,000 people, another photo I post the next day may only get 300 likes and reach 4,000 people." Since the number of views and followers is central to influencers' remuneration across various channels and social networks, dealing with constantly evolving and often complex metrics becomes a source of stress and anxiety for interviewees, posing a daily challenge to be navigated.

Having access to and establishing partnerships with companies, which are important sources of revenue for influencers, was another major challenge faced at this stage. Alessandra's account reflects this difficulty: "I didn't know how to position myself in this digital world, how to get in touch with companies, or which companies would be open to this, so I kept researching other people's larger blogs to try to understand."

Organizing their routine emerged as another challenge reported by the interviewees, given the demanding nature of the activity that necessitates frequent presence on their chosen channels. It is noteworthy that this profession requires professionals to be constantly connected and attentive to developments around them, necessitating round-the-clock availability and the development of effective organizational strategies. Jessica noted that the absence of a fixed work routine is both enticing and anxiety-inducing for her:

> The lack of routine appeals to me a lot because I hated the office life, having a boss, and being in a closed place. At work, I have a lot of flexibility, I travel the world... but I'm always swamped and owing a lot of content because if I come back from a trip, I need to write a lot about it, fulfill the obligations to the hotels I stayed for free (Jessica).

Contacts and partnerships emerged as strategic elements that significantly contributed to advancing the profession. Companies specializing in enhancing influencers' careers also played a pivotal role. Ana, for instance, highlighted the impact of her agent who had existing relationships with brands. This was the case of Ana, who said: "I had an agent who already worked with brands. She started taking me to some big gigs, to some cool brands. At these events, influencers would meet and there was some good networking going on."

According to Karhawi (2016), as digital influencers cultivate a loyal audience, they can forge commercial partnerships with companies within their industry. This enables them to enhance the monetization of their content, effectively transitioning into communication professionals.

Finally, emotional balance was mentioned as key to deal with the dynamics of social media. Mario and Lucas mentioned: "you have to have a very strong mindset. It's a business that messes a lot with your emotions. Especially us, who post two videos a day, when the channel is going through a rough patch, your life becomes horrible."

This issue is extensively examined by Vilicic (2019), who delves into the pressures experienced by influencers, encompassing both the pressures of achieving success and coping with criticism, as well as the fear of fading into obscurity. According to the author, these professionals often find it necessary to seek support from psychologists and psychiatrists to navigate such pressures. Among the interviewees, frequent mentions of “anxiety,” “emotional,” and “psychological” challenges indicate that the profession of a digital influencer is indeed fraught with pressure.

In summary, Karhawi (2017) asserts that to become a digital influencer, one must undergo a progression: content production; maintaining consistency in production (both thematically and temporally); nurturing and updating relationships; establishing and sustaining prestige within a community; and ultimately, wielding influence. This array of requirements characterizes both the establishment phase of the careers studied and the subsequent phase, which focuses on sustaining a career as a digital influencer.

MAINTENANCE PHASE

This stage pertains to the current phase of the majority of interviewees, delineating the actions undertaken to sustain their digital influencer activities and their endeavors to innovate and evolve. As previously noted, not all interviewees have reached this stage in their careers: Leandro and Michelle are still in the exploration phase, while Ana, despite earning significant income from her Instagram posts, is contemplating transitioning from the beauty sector (the current theme of her posts) to the gastronomy sector. Conversely, the remaining interviewees have already arrived at a juncture where their focus is on preserving their achievements, a task fraught with challenges due to the dynamic nature of the environment. According to Super (1990), maintenance entails efforts geared toward security, updating, and innovation.

In terms of security, this poses perhaps the foremost challenge encountered by the interviewees. Regardless of the size of their follower count and revenue, the digital landscape remains volatile, with new competitors emerging daily, posing a constant threat to the space acquired by the professionals.

The update that characterizes the maintenance stage is associated with the nature of the activity that requires constant content production. Mario and Lucas spoke about the need to organize their routines to ensure this production: “we created a strategy: when Sunday comes, we plan the week. We record two videos daily, and to keep up with that, we need to plan in advance.”

Alessandra also noted that, despite not being bound by conventional corporate norms and rigid schedules, her routines are nonetheless quite intense:

> I’d say that my basic activities are: researching which destinations are popular, what people are searching for the most, packing, booking hotels, searching for flights, and producing content to clarify these doubts. It’s about finding ways to monetize the work. So, I look for partners, potential clients, and present proposals to them. Editing photos, managing finances, responding to emails... I keep an eye on the access reports... Additionally, there’s also the maintenance of social media (Alessandra).

Even though they have already overcome the establishment phase, the interviewees stated that they still face obstacles when closing deals and dealing with competition. This was the case for Alessandra, who reported: "Nowadays, the difficulties lie in showing these companies that I am a professional, that my blog brings returns, that it works, and what to propose to them to make them want to close deals with me." Jessica also commented that the difficulties intensify when competition cannibalizes the profession: "Recently, there has been a boom of blogs. People want to have a social media channel just to travel for free. The biggest challenge for those who make a living from this is for companies to see us and recognize a differentiated work."

Another difficulty reported by Alessandra is understanding how pricing works:

> A constant challenge I face is pricing because companies sometimes want to charge only for the media. They try to pay us as they would pay a magazine, for example. But we are everything, we are scriptwriters, content creators, photographers, video editors... so it's very difficult to have to charge for all of that (Alessandra).

Given its competitive nature and appeal to numerous individuals, particularly the younger demographic, maintaining one's position and fostering innovation emerges as a challenge for the interviewees, constituting an integral component of their routines:

> Always keeping an eye on new trends, being on all social networks, everywhere, and being present. Working on all fronts to be in the minds of all companies and people. You have to study a lot about digital marketing, new forms of advertising, and how to monetize in this environment. Investing heavily in the website, interface, site navigation, and contact is everything in life (Jessica).
>
> Staying updated is mandatory at this stage: "This is my job, so I need to stay updated all the time. I have daily contact with friends in the same profession, and we exchange a lot about what's happening in the market. Technology changes exponentially, and it's necessary to stay connected and keep up (Felipe).

Influencers' revenue, at this stage, comes from various advertising sources, as Alessandra says:

> The main income basically comes from advertising, but there are also affiliates, so anyone who books a hotel through the blog earns me a commission, anyone who rents a car through the blog earns me a commission, anyone who rents an international chip, anyone who buys insurance, and so on... I also sell e-books, so we always have to keep inventing to keep the momentum going and continue monetizing (Alessandra).

The experience of establishing their YouTube channel enabled Mario and Lucas to venture into another business derived from this activity: "We created a company, akin to an incubator, to facilitate the entry of newcomers into this sector.

We faced numerous challenges along the way, but we also gained invaluable insights. Thus, our aim is to streamline the process for them by offering professional assistance." In this manner, the duo forged a new revenue stream stemming from their influencer work. Moreover, through this incubator initiative, they envisioned an alternative professional path that is less susceptible to the constant pressure of maintaining visibility as successful influencers, thereby offering a viable career option for aspiring individuals.

In terms of learnings and strategies for growth and sustainability in this environment, the most commonly repeated tip among influencers is to only post content that authentically reflects your thoughts and preferences. According to the interviewees, discussing topics that genuinely interest you is the most effective way to earn the trust of your followers while also helping to sustain the demanding routine of an influencer. Thus, authenticity emerges as a pivotal factor in maintaining the activity:

> At the beginning, you might be desperate for money, and a company you don't trust may come along, promising to pay you a certain amount, and you might be dazzled by the money and want to close the deal. Don't do it at all because the trust of your audience is your main asset. They are the ones who will help you make money, they are the ones who will make your business work, they are your most valuable asset. So don't sell yourself for something that is false to your audience (Alessandra).

> Always be yourself. It's the originality that attracts the audience. Post things that you believe in and that are in line with your theme. Be close to your followers (Michelle).

As previously mentioned, despite having established their presence across various digital channels and media, maintaining a secure position is an ongoing challenge for all interviewees, necessitating a perpetual struggle to uphold their prominent positions in the digital landscape. By cultivating profitable businesses reflective of their own identities, they demonstrate entrepreneurial prowess within the current unpredictable and uncertain professional climate. Despite these challenges, Fialho and Lütz (2011) underscore that social networks continue to expand, gaining prominence and assuming a crucial role in communication and information dissemination on the internet. Consequently, the authors posit that the future appears promising for individuals aspiring to pursue careers in this field, as social networks increasingly solidify their foothold and emerge as prominent job markets.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The aim of this research was to scrutinize the construction of a digital influencer's career, delving into the various stages that delineate this trajectory, the challenges encountered along the way, strategies employed for career development and sustenance, financial gains, routines, and future expectations.

Most interviewees share a common trajectory of starting their careers as digital influencers as a hobby. However, as they witnessed their content gaining visibility and unexpectedly generating financial returns, they began to perceive this activity as a viable job opportunity. Nevertheless, the construction of this professional journey was far from straightforward despite its modest beginnings. Among the challenges they encounter in their careers are: setting prices for various activities; staying updated constantly; comprehending the dynamics of algorithms governing social networks, which dictate their popularity and amplify their earnings; establishing a work routine; and maintaining prominence in an intensely competitive environment with low entry barriers for new competitors. Furthermore, financial gains are precarious, necessitating financial planning skills to avoid compromising the economic viability of the activity, while the dynamism and volatility of the environment serve as stress-inducing factors.

Among the primary pieces of advice, the interviewees emphasize the importance of being authentic from the outset, only presenting content that genuinely reflects their thoughts and preferences. They stress the necessity of providing differentiated and high-quality content, staying abreast of developments on social networks, and underscore the misconception that success will be swift and financial returns instantaneous. With over six years of experience in the field, some interviewees boast a significant following on their social networks. However, not all have reached the same professional level: two interviewees still rely on additional income sources, while others, despite earning a living from this activity, have yet to achieve the millionaire earnings of celebrity influencers. Despite harboring insecurities about their roles as influencers, the interviewees are optimistic about the future of the profession, believing that the social media and online media market will continue to grow progressively, presenting promising prospects for those who distinguish themselves and maintain their presence in this environment.

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Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing market in Southern Brazil: a comparison between three companies

Mercado de vestuário litúrgico afro-brasileiro na Região Sul do Brasil: um comparativo entre três empresas

Angele Maine Rhoden[I], Fernanda Hänsch Beuren[I], Icleia Silveira[I], Lucas da Rosa[I]

ABSTRACT

This article aimed to carry out a comparative analysis between three companies in the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing segment located in the South region of Brazil using product mix and marketing tools. For this research, the inductive method was applied, with an applied purpose, with qualitative data analysis and descriptive from the point of view. Among the technical procedures, the preparation of the bibliographic research was based on an unsystematic review and online field research to identify the intentional samples analyzed in this study. The result obtained allowed the creation of a comparative table of the aforementioned companies, their common points and their market differences.

Keywords: Liturgical clothing. Afro-Brazilian. Product mix. Marketing mix. E-commerce.

RESUMO

O presente artigo teve como objetivo realizar uma análise comparativa entre três empresas do segmento de vestuário litúrgico afro-brasileiro localizadas na Região Sul do Brasil por meio das ferramentas mix de produto e marketing. Para a presente pesquisa, aplicou-se o método indutivo, de finalidade aplicada, com análise de dados qualitativos e descritivos do ponto de vista. Entre os procedimentos técnicos, a elaboração da pesquisa bibliográfica deu-se mediante uma revisão assistemática e realização de uma pesquisa de campo online para identificação das amostras intencionais analisadas neste estudo. O resultado obtido permitiu a elaboração de um quadro comparativo das referidas empresas, seus pontos em comum e seus diferenciais mercadológicos.

Palavras-chave: *Vestuário litúrgico. Afro-brasileiro. Mix de produto. Mix de marketing. Comércio eletrônico.*

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INTRODUCTION

In Afro-Brazilian religions, *axós*[1] play a vital role in interpreting and acknowledging a cosmogony that originates from the sacred. Consequently, Afro-Brazilian religions attribute significant importance to clothing. When combined with specific rituals, colors, garments, and accessories, clothing represents a symbolic universe influenced by diverse environments. In these religions, initiates are typically provided with ritualistic clothing and accessories that serve various purposes. These items communicate authority, symbolize power or wisdom, convey magical qualities, or denote sacramental significance, among other functions.

Clothing and ritual accessories, owing to their distinctive nature, are not widely available in commercial outlets in urban centers. Instead, they are typically crafted by small ateliers specializing in the development and production of Afro-Brazilian liturgical costumes. These ateliers are often situated near *terreiros* (places of worship in Afro-Brazilian religions) and traditionally employ seamstresses who are either members of Afro-Brazilian religions or sympathetic to their beliefs, securing a loyal and steady source of income among them, as finding seamstresses willing to work within this niche is not the easiest of tasks (Teixeira, 2005).

Campos (2015) explores the composition of Afro-Brazilian liturgical costumes, highlighting that historically, the majority of these garments were crafted from simple and rustic materials such as raw cotton, calico, and jute. Over time, with the urbanization and expansion of practitioners, the production of these garments has grown and undergone a process of industrialization. According to the 2000 census, only 0.3% of the adult Brazilian population identified themselves as followers of Afro-Brazilian religions, totaling just over 470 thousand followers (*apud* Prandi, 2007). However, the census conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* – IBGE) in 2010 reported an increase in self-declared practitioners to 588,797. Given the significant time elapsed since the last census and the tendency for statistics on followers of Afro-Brazilian religions to underestimate the actual numbers, it is likely that this figure has considerably increased by the year 2024.

Based on the above findings, Campos (2015) suggests that changes in the conception of Afro-Brazilian liturgical garments have occurred, influenced by various factors including the integration of urban culture into *terreiros* and the increased use of industrialized fabrics. This transformation, facilitated by the urban environment, has provided opportunities for African-based religions to engage in the market to fulfill the consumption demands of their followers.

Hence, the demand for the aforementioned costumes has created a business opportunity for the sale of *axós* and Afro-religious accessories. Specialized stores now cater to practitioners by offering a variety of options for personal ornamentation, with a constant search for new pieces, fabrics, and prints. Currently, the use of

1 Ritualistic clothing in African-derived religious ceremonies in Brazil. They are considered magical items when their functions go beyond simply wearing a piece of clothing and integrate a rite (Campos, 2015).

ready-made *axós* has become increasingly common, and this new production method has gained widespread acceptance among followers in *terreiros*. However, the formal commercialization of these costumes in physical stores struggles to keep pace with the growing number of followers of Afro-Brazilian religions, who are dispersed across various locations in the country and the world. Thus, overcoming the physical barriers of commerce through online sales proves to be a viable and effective alternative to meet this demand (Anderson, 2006).

Competition in the online sphere has seen a notable rise since 2020, prompting companies to prioritize differentiation strategies to maintain their market presence. In this context, the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing segment holds a distinct advantage as it inherently operates within a niche market. Ateliers specializing in Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing offer a unique service that is experiencing growing demand across the nation. They possess the potential to scale their sales and cater to the needs of various states in the country, capitalizing on the rapid growth of online consumption in recent years.

Given the informal nature of many producers of liturgical clothing, along with the lack of instructional and academic resources to assist them in scaling their niche sales online, it is imperative to conduct research on how these companies approach their marketing and product mix. Understanding the strategies adopted by these companies and their average effectiveness can provide valuable insights into developing an overall mix capable of meeting consumer demands.

This article aimed to create a comparative table between three companies in the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing segment located in the Southern Region of Brazil, focusing on their product mix and marketing tools. Firstly, the research provides an overview of the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing market and the aforementioned tools. Subsequently, a comparative table is presented, showcasing the selected companies, with the objective of understanding the impact of this business strategy on the ritualistic clothing niche.

The significance of this research is justified by its potential to provide valuable information on the subject of marketing and product mix, as well as on the market niche of Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing. Additionally, it contributes to addressing a gap identified through exploratory searches in scientific databases.

The research is classified as basic in nature, qualitative in terms of its research problem, and descriptive in terms of its objective. Technical procedures were applied to conduct bibliographic research through an unsystematic narrative review, along with online field research to select the companies analyzed in this study. The results were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. The theoretical foundation encompasses the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing market, as well as marketing and product mix tools.

AFRO-BRAZILIAN LITURGICAL CLOTHING MARKET

According to Gama (2016), consumption transcends mere economic transactions and is deeply intertwined with culture and society. The author emphasizes that individuals' purchasing decisions are influenced not only by their immediate environment but also by the broader social and cultural context in which they live and interact. In the context of Afro-Brazilian religious consumption, this influence extends to both human beings and the spiritual entities associated with these cults, who also act as consumers. Moreover, it is essential to recognize that the social aspect encompasses non-human elements as well.

Verbal and non-verbal communication modalities, both conventional and interactive, play a crucial role in all forms and levels of organizations. In the context of the consumption of Afro-Brazilian liturgical costumes, additional forms of communication are employed, involving interlocutors, meanings, and specific communicative practices. This includes communication between religious practitioners and the producers responsible for crafting ritualistic clothing and adornments (Guimarães & Rodrigues, 2015).

Gama (2016) underscores that *Umbanda terreiros* and centers operate within market dynamics, adapting to the demands and offerings of the surrounding society, thereby reflecting social changes. However, consumption patterns in *Candomblé*, for instance, while possessing an individual dimension, are intricately tied to the group's prescriptions and, notably, to the desires, requests, or demands of the *orixás* and other spiritual entities. While the spirit in *Candomblé* does not dictate everything, it unveils many aspects. Thus, it is the religious system and the deities themselves that dictate what, how, and when consumption should occur, taking into account the hierarchy of the *terreiro*, the liturgical calendar, the characteristics and preferences of the *orixás*, the faithful, among other factors.

In a study on Afro-Brazilian consumption and religiosity in the Southern Cone, Oro (1998) reveals that in the city of Montevideo (Uruguay), specialized stores offering Afro-Brazilian liturgical costumes can be found. These stores showcase a variety of items including *axós*, gloves, hats, and covers for *exus* and *pombagiras*, all crafted by local seamstresses. Conversely, in Buenos Aires (Argentina), ritualistic clothing is not readily available in specialized stores; rather, it is typically handcrafted by members of the religion themselves or by conventional seamstresses. Additionally, the author notes that consumers in Argentina perceive Brazilian products as synonymous with quality. They attribute greater efficacy to Brazilian products, as they are crafted in the country where the religion originated and was structured.

Transformations in consumption patterns are also evident in the *terreiros* of Afro-Brazilian religions, particularly in the clothing worn during ceremonies. In the past, women typically danced in skirts made of chintz, an affordable fabric often adorned with floral prints, while the daughters of saints were distinguished by their satin coats in specific colors representing the *orixás*. Despite the availability of more luxurious fabrics, they were rarely utilized, typically reserved for a select few mothers of saints. However, a recent trend toward greater sophistication in the crafting of *axós* has emerged in *terreiros*. What was once considered a privilege, a luxury item worn only by a select group of mothers of saints, has now become nearly indispensable (Gama, 2016).

In this context, which encompasses both society at large and the sacred spaces of Afro-Brazilian religions, maintaining an established network for religious consumption is crucial. As per the data presented by Gama (2016), followers strive to uphold loyalty to specific stores, while also expressing a desire to forge connections and bonds with priests (who can provide recommendations for commercial establishments) and with the children of saints.

As time progresses, new modes of consumption emerge. Gama (2016) contextualizes that *Candomblé* also intersects with fashion, particularly evident in the evolving fabrics used for women's clothing. Additionally, he explores the concept of investment as expressed by the sons of saints. To them, purchasing an *axó* is not merely an expense but rather an investment in their own lives, intended to please their *orixá* or entity.

When searching for the term *umbanda clothing store* on Google, the platform retrieves approximately 1,620,000 results in just 0.30 seconds. These results include physical stores, online stores on their own websites, online stores on marketplaces (Mercado Livre, Shopee, Magalu, Amazon, Elo7, among others), as well as stores on social networks and resale platforms (OLX and Enjoei).

With the assistance of the Trends tool, a Google-provided application that presents the most searched terms within a recent period, it is feasible to gauge the frequency with which a particular term is searched across various regions worldwide and in different languages. Consequently, upon searching for *umbanda clothing stores*, as illustrated in Figure 1, the results indicate that interest over the last 12 months (Mar. 2023 – Mar. 2024) in *Umbanda* clothing stores is primarily observed

Figure 1. Frequency of interest by sub-region.

in the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, Piauí, and Paraná, respectively.

To become part of the online Afro-religious market, additional investments and dedicated efforts are necessary. Virtual communities not only help overcome geographical barriers but also provide a sense of closeness to the religious space, even in a virtual setting, for users who may be "more isolated" from physical stores (Guimarães; Rodrigues, 2015). Therefore, it is evident that the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing market is an existing and growing niche that requires a strategic approach to encompass all the changes in today's consumption landscape. Effective strategic planning for the online environment is crucial for this expansion. The marketing mix and product mix tools presented below can aid in achieving this objective.

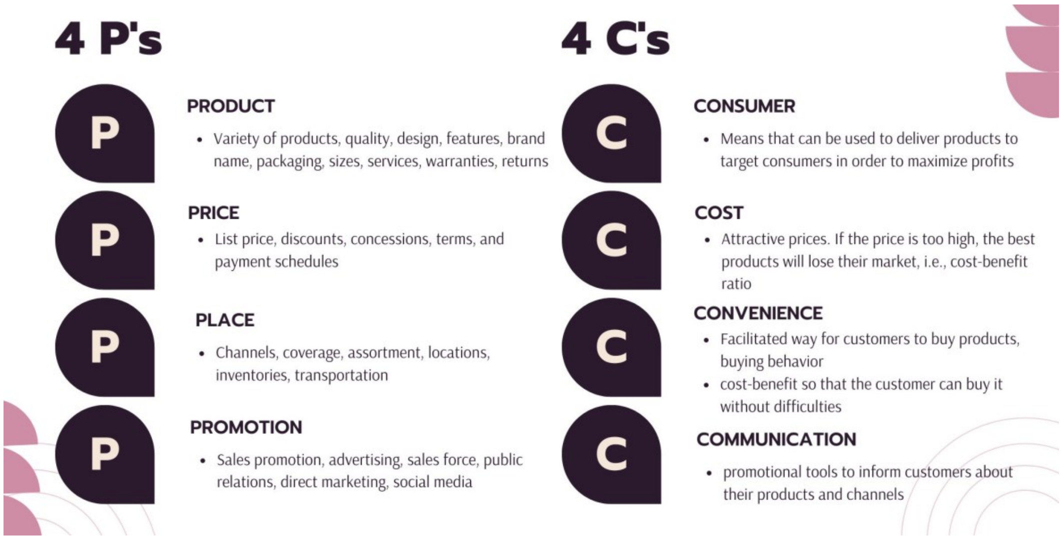
Four marketing mix: four Ps and four Cs

The current economic situation is prompting many individuals to venture into the business realm, leading to the emergence of entrepreneurs in the market. The majority of these entrepreneurs fall under the category of small and medium-sized enterprises. However, entering the business arena is no simple feat, particularly for these smaller companies. They must navigate market competition and develop effective marketing strategies to capture customer attention and distinguish themselves. Thus, it is imperative for small and medium-sized enterprises to establish robust planning and precise strategies to mitigate substantial losses and effectively compete in the market. Utilizing the marketing mix is considered one of the fundamental marketing strategies (Idris, 2021).

Over nearly seven decades, the field of marketing has undergone significant evolution, transitioning from a product-centric approach to recognizing the centrality of human beings. Throughout this transformative period, several concepts have remained enduring. Despite their "traditional" nature, the principles of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning, coupled with the four Ps model (product, price, place, and promotion), have become universal touchstones for contemporary marketers (Kotler; Kartajaya; Setiawan, 2021).

According to Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), marketing can be approached through two distinct frameworks: the four Ps and the four Cs. The four Ps encompass the foundational elements of the marketing mix: product, price, place, and promotion. In contrast, the four Cs revolve around consumer, cost, convenience, and communication. While the four Ps marketing mix remains fundamental for companies aiming to market their offerings, the four Cs framework holds particular significance due to its consumer-centric orientation.

As per Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), the marketing mix comprises a collection of marketing methods and strategies available to a company. These tools, when integrated, facilitate the formulation of a competitive market strategy that directly influences commerce, ultimately reaching the end consumer. Each element of this strategy ensures the precise execution and planning of actions tailored to the specific target audience. A comprehensive understanding of this entire process and the significance of each tool is crucial for companies, given their pivotal role and impact on business success. Figure 2 illustrates the concepts of each of these tools.



Source: adapted from Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017).
Figure 2. Four Ps and four Cs.

According to Gonçalves *et al*. (2008), product-related decisions within the definitions of the four Ps involve identifying opportunities for product launches and adapting these products to meet customer needs. Meanwhile, Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017) mention that companies employ various pricing methods, such as cost, competition, and customer value, to determine the sales price. However, the consumers' willingness to pay, estimated through pricing based on customer value, constitutes the most significant contribution of consumers to the pricing process. Regarding distribution strategies, consumers are accustomed to purchasing products from accessible, suitable, and available places when needed and expected, as outlined by Kotler and Keller (2006). Promotion encompasses a set of actions aimed at promoting the commercialization and dissemination of products or services, with the primary objectives of expanding reach and generating profitability.

Robert Lauterborn, a renowned expert in marketing theory, is credited as one of the pioneers of integrated marketing communication theory. He introduced a customer-centric marketing model known as the four Cs, which include *customer*, *cost*, *convenience*, and *communication*. In contrast to the traditional four Ps theory, the four Cs theory shifts away from product-centric approaches and instead emphasizes communication between companies and consumers, tailored to their interests, to foster and maintain customer loyalty (Rongxuan, 2019).

In the age of connectivity, the concept of the marketing mix has evolved to include greater customer participation. According to Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), the traditional four Ps of the marketing mix were redefined as the four Cs: co-creation, currency, communal activation, and conversation. In the digital economy, co-creation has emerged as a crucial strategy in product development. By involving customers from the early design stages, companies can enhance the success rate of product launches. Co-creation also empowers customers to personalize and tailor products and services, leading to superior value propositions.

Furthermore, the concept of pricing has evolved in the digital era, moving away from standardized approaches to embrace dynamic pricing. Dynamic pricing involves setting flexible prices based on market demand and capacity utilization. With technological advancements, this practice has extended to various sectors. For instance, online retailers gather vast amounts of data enabling them to utilize big data analytics to offer personalized pricing for each customer. Also according to Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), dynamic pricing enables companies to optimize profitability by charging customers differently, considering factors such as their purchase history, proximity to physical stores, and other aspects of the customer profile. In the digital economy, price functions as a currency that fluctuates according to market demand.

According to Idris (2021), marketers should focus on developing products based on consumer needs and desires, setting prices considering the cost to the consumer, ensuring convenient availability of the product to the customer, and effectively communicating the product's attributes to the consumer, going beyond simple promotion. The prevailing viewpoint among experts is that marketing activities yield greater success when professionals integrate the concepts of the four Ps and four Cs. These concepts serve as essential guides, enabling businesses to identify improvement opportunities and establish the most efficient promotion strategies.

Hence, the utilization of the marketing mix tool assumes a fundamental role in pinpointing areas for enhancement and executing the requisite changes. Within this business framework, the application of both the four Ps and four Cs is indispensable for devising a marketing strategy that fulfills customer demands and ensures the company's sustainability. As noted by Kotler and Keller (2006), the significance of this tool lies in its capacity to offer a tactical approach that culminates in satisfactory sales outcomes and exponential business expansion.

With that in mind, to complement the planning strategy, a contextualization of the product mix is presented below.

Product mix

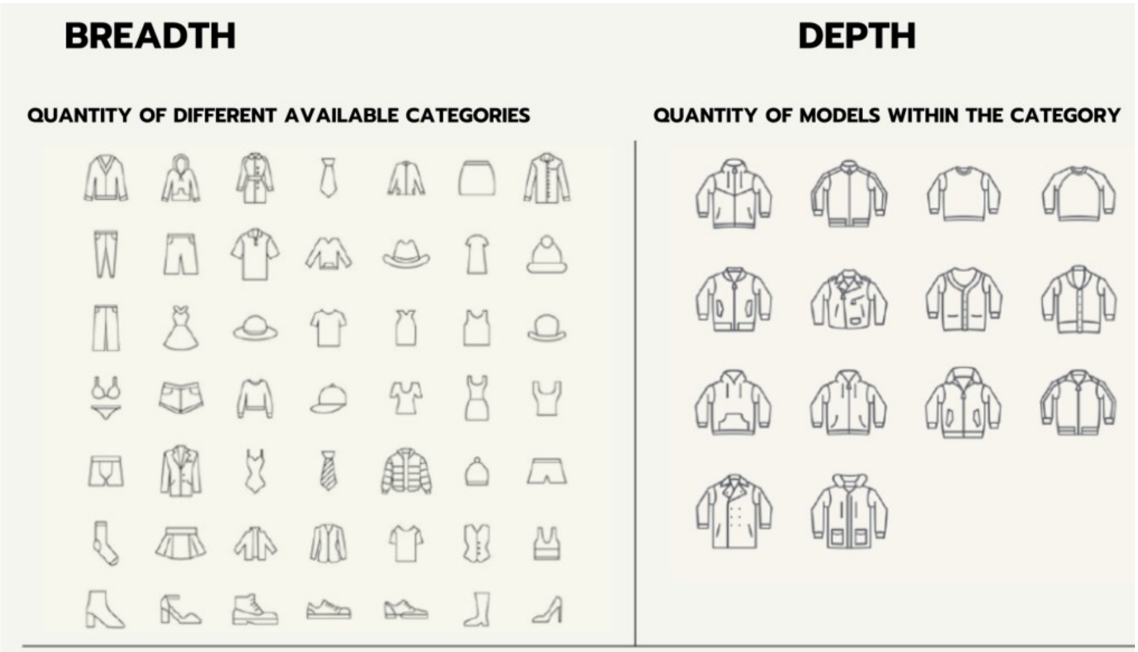
According to Bahng and Kincade (2014), the product mix represents the assortment of items offered by the retailer in each category, whether in physical or virtual stores, aimed at maximizing profits. Utilizing the product mix in retail entails ensuring the right quantity of products is offered at the right place and time to meet the company's financial objectives. This tool necessitates a series of quantitative decisions in product development to attain these goals. Therefore, effective management of the product mix is crucial for achieving sales and profitability targets, as well as satisfying customer needs.

Parente and Barki (2014) emphasize that the primary motivation for consumers to visit stores is to fulfill their product needs, underscoring the significance of decisions related to the product mix for retail companies. In this context, the product mix also serves to attract and entice customers into the store. This objective is achieved through a well-balanced assortment, which entails harmonizing colors, designs, and styles of the items, offering relevant brands, setting prices suitable for the target audience and the store's positioning, as well as ensuring availability of stock in various sizes, colors, and designs (Barbosa, 2021).

Barbosa (2021) suggests that product mix management extends beyond meeting customer needs and desires; it is also essential in shaping the identity of the retail brand. Before finalizing the assortment, the company must define the image it aims to portray. Thus, the product mix should align with the brand's positioning. It is crucial to recognize that both the company's image and the product mix play roles in reinforcing the brand's positioning.

Barbosa (2021) further emphasizes the importance of achieving a balance in the product line, both quantitatively, ensuring the right quantity at the right time and setting appropriate prices, and qualitatively, selecting suitable products, colors, designs, and cohesive styles. This pursuit of balance is a key objective in the development of the product mix, which is a central activity in clothing retail.

In their study, Parente and Barki (2014) outline the process of preparing the product mix in clothing retail, which involves planning inventories and determining the variety and quantity of products to be made available in each period. Variety, also referred to as breadth, denotes the diversity of product categories offered, while quantity, known as depth, constitutes a strategic decision for the company. Striking the right balance between a broad or more compact variety poses a continual challenge when defining the product mix. A wide variety can enhance sales volume by better catering to customer demand, but it also entails greater investments in stock, heightening the risks associated with products that have low turnover, thereby negatively affecting the company's profits. Figure 3 illustrates an example of the concepts of product breadth and depth.



Source: Barbosa and Seibel (2021a).

Figure 3. Example of product breadth and depth.

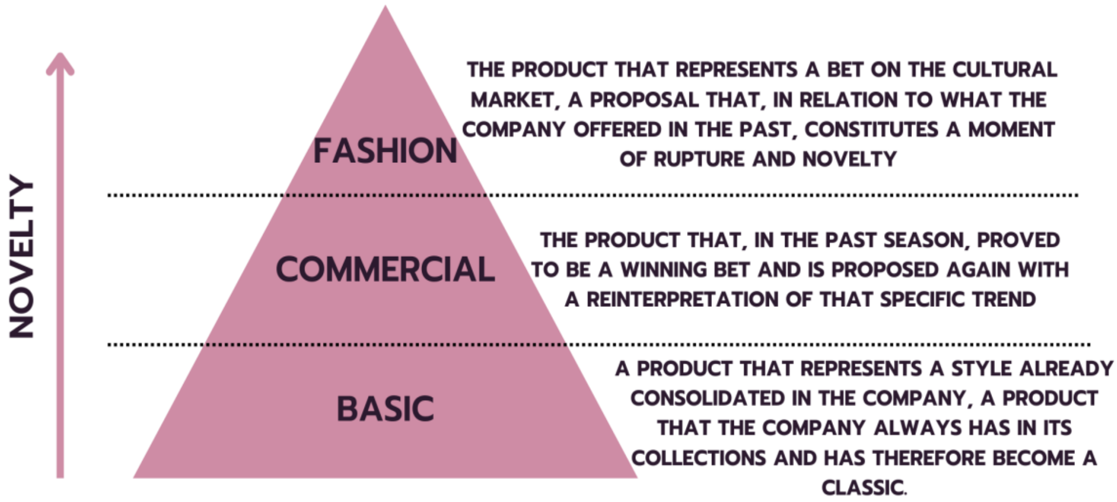
In addition to determining variety and depth, the retail company must establish the hierarchy of grouping products at various levels. As noted by Parente and Barki (2014), in this process, the primary reference for guiding product classification should be the way customers make their purchasing decisions. Understanding how customers categorize products in their perception is crucial for creating relevant categories that will inform everything from product development to the visual layout of the store.

Among the products present in the mix, some are essential in attracting customers to the store. According to Parente and Barki (2014), these products are called "destination category" and "routine category" and, therefore, require special effort in their promotion. They play a significant role for the company by bringing in an influx of customers and conveying the brand's positioning. The authors also present different types of products in this category. Firstly, there are the "icons" or "occasionals", which evoke emotions and perfectly represent the brand's positioning. Next, there are "traffic builders" or "convenience" items, which are part of the routine product mix and encourage customers to visit through promotions. Figure 4 provides an illustration of these roles and their concepts.

Source: Barbosa and Seibel (2021a).

Figure 4. Product Roles.

In his work, Cietta (2017) addresses the categorization of clothing products concerning the level of risk and its importance in planning the product mix in retail. This classification is based on distinguishing between *fashion*, *commercial*, and *basic* products, supporting supply strategies. *Fashion* products revolve around innovative trends and represent the cutting edge of fashion information. *Commercial* products are contemporary and comprise reinterpretations of fashion or successful past commercial products. Finally, *basic* products are the brand's classics, timeless and established. This categorization is illustrated in Figure 5, which demonstrates the classification of products according to fashion trends.



Source: adapted from Cietta (2017) and Barbosa e Seibel (2021b).
Figure 5. Risk levels.

According to Barbosa and Seibel (2021a), developing the mix of clothing products in retail is a complex process requiring the integration of various areas of knowledge. This process involves the flow of information and aims to make decisions based on data to maximize the return on investment made in product stocks. With a large volume of information available, it is crucial to conduct data processing and interpretation activities to enable the development of better products for customers.

The theoretical foundation section concludes here, and the following section presents the methodological procedures.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Building on the concepts outlined earlier, the marketing mix and product mix tools, as articulated by Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), will form the foundation for the analysis of three companies operating within the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing niche.

Following this, the criteria for selecting the companies will be outlined, followed by a contextualization of each of them.

Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing companies in the South of Brazil

According to Iyemonja (2020), Rio Grande do Sul, despite being the second whitest state in Brazil, boasts the largest number of *terreiros* in the country, estimated at around 65 thousand. This abundance of *terreiros* has fostered a thriving community of ateliers and seamstresses specializing in crafting *axós*, many of whom hail from humble backgrounds and operate within local communities. While some of these artisans remain relatively unknown, catering primarily to nearby customers, others have ventured into the realm of online sales. Given this rich landscape of Afro-Brazilian religious practices and associated businesses, the South Region was selected as the focal point for the analysis of Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing companies.

An exploratory nationwide online survey was undertaken to probe into the consumption patterns surrounding Afro-Brazilian religious clothing. The findings unveiled a vibrant market, particularly thriving on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok. This discovery aligns with the observations posited by Guimarães and Rodrigues (2015), underscoring the instrumental role of these social platforms in institutional communication. These platforms facilitate a broadened connection between organizations and their audiences, transcending the conventional notion of bilateral communication. Consequently, relationships are forged within an interconnected network, where all nodes are interlinked and mutually influential. In this milieu, Afro-Brazilian religions are actively engaged on social networks, wielding a notable presence, notably within the South and Southeast regions of Brazil.

Iyemonja's (2020) assertion regarding the prevalence of practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions in the state of Rio Grande do Sul finds support in the abundance of specialized stores and producers engaged in crafting and trading *axós* in the state. In Rio Grande do Sul, the research unearthed a total of 118 establishments. Remarkably, only six of these establishments explicitly conduct online sales, either through their proprietary websites or via marketplace platforms. The vast majority still primarily operate through in-person transactions and/or made-to-order sales. In the neighboring state of Santa Catarina, out of the 27 identified companies/producers, three acknowledge engaging in online sales, with two of them leveraging their own websites and one utilizing a marketplace platform. Conversely, in the state of Paraná, the search yielded the lowest number of stores in the segment, totaling only 17 results. Among these, merely one store declares conducting online sales through a marketplace platform and its proprietary website.

Of the establishments identified, only six explicitly engage in online sales, either through their proprietary websites or via marketplace platforms[2]. The vast majority still primarily operate through in-person transactions and/or made-to-order sales. In the state of Santa Catarina, out of the 27 identified companies/producers, three acknowledge conducting online sales, with two utilizing their own websites and one leveraging a marketplace platform. Conversely, in the state of Paraná, the search yielded the lowest number of stores in the segment, totaling just 17 results, among which only one store declares conducting online sales through both a marketplace platform and its proprietary website.

It is important to note that the results mentioned are just a sample/market trend and may not accurately reflect the exact number of these producers. Many operate informally, lack an online presence, and the category lacks a specific union to measure this amount.

The companies included in this study constitute an intentional sample selected based on the following criteria: one company from each state in the Southern Region of Brazil; and their online relevance, determined through social media

2 Considered an online network economy, buyers seek to go where the majority of sellers are, and vice versa (Hasker; Sickles, 2010).

statistics and the availability of virtual sales channels to showcase their range of products and prices. The analysis will focus on the four Ps and the product mix of each company.

Company 1

Situated in Porto Alegre's city center (Rio Grande do Sul – RS), this store, established in 2010, engages in both in-house and outsourced manufacturing. Specializing in ready-to-deliver costumes tailored for the rituals of *Umbanda*, *Quimbanda*, the nation (*batuque*), and the gypsy community, it boasts a diverse array of male and female models, catering to sizes ranging from S to XL, as illustrated in Chart 1. Beyond its brick-and-mortar location, the company operates a virtual storefront on its website, along with providing direct customer service via Instagram and WhatsApp.

Chart 1. Four Ps of company 1.

Company 1 – Rio Grande do Sul			
Product	**Price**	**Place**	**Promotion**
• Long and short skirts; • Male and female tunics; • Unisex *bombacha* pants; • Accessories; • Petticoats; • Dresses.	From R$ 25 to R$ 470.	• Physical store in downtown Porto Alegre (RS); • Online sales through website, social media, and WhatsApp.	• Advertising on social media (Instagram and TikTok); • Partnerships with influencers in the niche.

Upon analyzing the product mix available on the virtual sales channel, an observation was made regarding the number of varieties, sizes, colors, and materials in which the products are offered. As a result, Chart 2 presents an overview of the product mix offered by Company 1.

With that in mind, the subsequent subtopic replicates the same methodology for identifying the marketing and product mixes of Company 2.

Company 2

Situated in Joinville (Santa Catarina – SC), Company 2 operates both a physical and online store through its website. The company engages in in-house and on-demand manufacturing, with a predetermined production period ranging from 25 to 30 business days, with only a few pieces in ready-to-deliver mode. It offers limited customization options (color variations, details, lengths), but does not provide made-to-measure services, relying solely on pre-existing models in its inventory. Chart 3 outlines the four Ps of Company 2.

During the examination of its product mix accessible through the virtual sales channel, attention was given to the assortment of varieties, sizes, colors, and materials in which the products are offered. Accordingly, a selection of these elements, compiled to form Chart 4, offers an overview of Company 2's product mix.

Chart 2. Product mix of company 1.

Risk levels	Basic	Commercial	Fashion
Reference image			
Detailed description	**Product:** • Capes with collar or hood; • Female tunics; • Long and short flare skirts; • Straight skirts; • Unisex *bombacha*-style and straight pants; • Headscarves.	**Product:** • Long capes with collar or hood; • Long and short flare skirts; • Short and long hoop (petticoats) skirts; • Female blouses with ruffles, flare sleeves; • Unisex *bombacha* pants; • Headscarves; • Accessories (imitation jewelry, belts, hair flowers).	**Product:** • Long capes with collar and overcoat; • Long and short flare skirts; • Dresses; • Hats with embellishments; • Accessories (imitation jewelry, gloves); • Embroidered corsets.
	Fabrics: Oxford, satin with elastane.	**Fabrics:** Satin with elastane, glitter tulle, jacquard, lace, voile.	**Fabrics:** Satin with elastane, embroidered tulle, velvet, jacquard, lace, voile.
	Colors: White, black, red, purple, green, golden, blue, yellow, silver.	**Colors:** White, black, red, purple, green, golden, blue, pink, yellow, silver.	**Colors:** White, black, red, purple, green, golden, blue, pink, yellow, silver.
Depth	The basic products of company 1 have average depth of the total presented and lower prices.	Commercial level products have the highest variety of models and colors. Prices also vary.	Fashion level products have the lowest depth and the highest prices.
Breadth	Five categories at the basic level	Eight categories at the commercial level	Four categories at the fashion level

Chart 3. Four Ps of company 2.

Company 2 – Santa Catarina			
Product	**Price**	**Place**	**Promotion**
• Long skirts; • Male and female tunics; • Unisex pants; • Accessories; • Capes.	From R$ 35 to R$ 549.	• Physical store in Joinville; • Online sales through own website and WhatsApp.	• Advertising on social media; • Instagram; • Partnerships with influencers in the niche.

Chart 4. Product mix of company 2.

Risk levels	Basic	Commercial	Fashion
Reference image			
Detailed description	**Product:** • Female and male tunics; • Unisex pants; • Long flare and straight skirts; • Headscarves.	**Product:** • Long, flared, and straight skirts, skirts with ruffles and embroidery on the hems; • Female blouses with ruffles and details; • Male blouses with subtle embroidery; • Paints with details; • Capes.	**Product:** • Female sets with details, ruffles, and embroidery; • Flared skirts with embroidery and ruffles; • Female tunics with embroidered tulle; • Embroidered capes with buttons and chains;
	Fabrics: Oxford, satin with elastane, knit, eyelet knit fabric.	**Fabrics:** Satin, crepe, embroidered tulle, lace.	**Fabrics:** Crepe, embroidered tulle, velvet, lace, satin.
	Colors: White, black, red, green, yellow, light blue, purple.	**Colors:** Black, golden, white, red, purple, yellow, blue, colorful.	**Colors:** Black, golden, red, purple, green, pink, white, blue.
Depth	The basic products of company 2 have average depth of the total presented and lower prices.	Commercial level products have the highest variety of models and colors. Prices also vary.	Fashion level products have the lowest depth and the highest prices.
Breadth	Five categories at the basic level.	Six categories at the commercial level.	Four categories at the fashion level.

With that being said, the subsequent subtopic replicates the same methodology employed for identifying the marketing and product mixes of Company 3.

Company 3

Operating exclusively as an online service store based in Curitiba (Paraná – PR), Company 3 conducts its sales through its proprietary website, the Shopee marketplace, as well as via direct customer service through Instagram and WhatsApp channels. Although relatively new, with initial online presence records dating back to 2019, the company offers a limited range of products compared to those of the other analyzed companies, as illustrated in Chart 5.

Chart 5. Four Ps of company 3.

Company 3 – paraná			
Product	**Price**	**Place**	**Promotion**
• T-shirts; • Capes; • Headscarves; • Skirts.	From r$ 15 to r$ 230.	• Online sales through own website, shopee marketplace, social media, and whatsapp.	• Advertising on social media.

During the examination of its product mix available through the virtual sales channel, attention was given to the assortment of varieties, sizes, colors, and materials in which the products are made available. Consequently, a selection of these elements, curated to compose Chart 6, offers an overview of Company 3's product mix.

Chart 6. Product mix of company 3.

Risk levels	Basic	Commercial	Fashion
Reference image			
Detailed description	**Product:** • Unisex t-shirts and baby looks (printed); • Plain straight skirts.	**Product:** • Long, flared, and straight skirts with overlays in glitter tulle/lace; • Headscarves; • Lace capes.	**Product:** • Long flare skirts with ruffles; • Flare skirts with scarves; • Embroidered capes.
	Fabrics: Satin, pv knit fabric.	**Fabrics:** Satin, glitter tule, lace.	**Fabrics:** Satin, glitter tule, lace, embroidered tulle.
	Colors: White, black, red, purple.	**Colors:** Black, golden, white, red, purple, yellow, blue, pink.	**Colors:** Black, golden, white, red, purple, silver, yellow, blue, pink.
Depth	The basic products of company 2 have the lowest average depth of the total presented and lower prices.	Commercial level products have the highest variety of models and colors. Prices are comparable to the fashion level.	Fashion level products have depth comparable to the commercial level and prices comparable to the commercial level.
Breadth	Two categories at the basic level.	Three categories at the commercial level.	Three categories at the fashion level.

As such, the companies examined in this study are concluded, and the findings proposed by this research are presented in the following section.

RESULTS

Upon observing the marketing and product mixes of the analyzed companies, notable observations can be made. Companies 1 and 2, representing the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, respectively, exhibit significant similarities in their marketing and product offerings. Similarities extend to the materials used and the pricing of their products.

Company 1 distinguishes itself from the others through its extensive product depth and breadth. Across all three risk levels, it offers a wide array of products featuring variations in color, model, and materials, enhancing public acceptance through increased choice options. Regional influence is evident in the development of costumes, with trousers resembling those worn by *gauchos* and skirts reminiscent of traditional *gaucho* garments. This discovery aligns with Teixeira's (2005) assertion that regional varieties enable the inclusion of distinctive clothing items such as *gaucho pilchas*.

Company 2 distinguishes itself from others by catering to the individual demands of its customers, offering a customization service for its products. This capability, as previously noted, fosters greater customer loyalty and, consequently, enhances profitability through repeat purchases. On its website, customers have the option to select various lengths for their skirts and customize colors for specific details of the pieces. However, this convenience is balanced by a longer production time; the store requires 25 to 30 business days (depending on the model) to produce and ship each piece. Additionally, it offers simplified and adjustable garment designs (utilizing wide shapes, elastic bands, and adjustable laces on the waistbands of pants and skirts), while the quality of manufacturing is further highlighted by reinforced seams in its pieces.

Company 3 stands out for its competitive pricing, which is lower compared to the other companies discussed here, as well as for its more limited product range. By utilizing affordable materials and operating solely as an online store without a physical presence, their costs are lower, thereby influencing the final consumer price and attracting a segment of the market that seeks ritualistic clothing but may have financial constraints preventing larger investments.

Following the analysis of the marketing and product mixes of the chosen companies, data was reviewed to construct a comparative table of these three companies' mixes in the Southern Region of Brazil, thereby fulfilling the primary objective of this study. Chart 7 provides an illustration of the aforementioned comparison.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis conducted among the three companies operating in the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing segment in the Southern Region of Brazil, utilizing product mix and marketing tools, has led to the satisfactory achievement of the study's objectives. Through an examination of the product mix, notable disparities in the product lines offered by the companies were identified, encompassing variations in style, material, finish, and size. This thorough analysis yielded valuable insights into the product strategies employed by the companies, facilitating a deeper comprehension of their ability to meet market demands and consumer preferences.

Chart 7. Marketing Mix Comparison.

	Product	Price	Place	Promotion
Company 1	Female and male tunics, unisex pants, skirts, dresses, accessories, petticoats, headscarves, capes, corsets.	R$ 25 to R$ 470.	Physical and online store (own website)	Advertising on social media, Instagram, partnerships with influencers in the niche.
Company 2	Female and male tunics, unisex pants, skirts, headscarves, capes, sets.	R$ 35 to R$ 539.	Physical and online store (own website)	Advertising on social media, Instagram, partnerships with influencers in the niche.
Company 3	T-shirts, skirts, capes, headscarves.	R$ 15 to R$ 230.	Online store (own website) and marketplace (Shopee)	Advertising on social media.

Regarding the marketing mix, the price, product, place, and promotion strategies implemented by the companies were examined. Subtle differences were observed in the approaches of each, emphasizing the significance of tailoring marketing strategies to suit the characteristics of the target audience and the desired market positioning.

This study lays the groundwork for future research in this field. Its preliminary nature is notable, considering the challenges associated with obtaining reliable results. These challenges stem from the prevalent informality among most producers and traders, as well as the absence of a centralizing entity, such as a union.

As a recommendation for furthering this research, it is suggested to broaden the comparative analysis to encompass other regions of Brazil. This expansion would facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing segment. By including additional geographic regions, it would be possible to identify potential regional variations in product mix and marketing mix strategies. Moreover, such an expansion would deepen the understanding of consumer needs and preferences in diverse contexts.

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Smart tourist destinations: an analysis of tourism governance in Búzios

Destinos turísticos inteligentes: uma análise da governança turística de Búzios

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ABSTRACT

In the 1990s the term smart city came up, whose meaning is attached to urban development. From this term, the concept of smart tourism destinations was developed, which are destinations capable of bringing more innovation, competitivity, improved quality of life and tourist experience in a territory. For these benefits to happen, it is necessary that the place receive investments mainly in the fields of sustainability and information technology and communication. Besides, companies, residents and local governance must be engaged in the process of transforming a destination into a smart one, according to certification criteria defined by the Ministry of Tourism. In 2011, the energy company Ampla/Enel started the Búzios Intelligent City project, aimed at improving the electricity grid to make the city smart. In 2016 the project was closed and Búzios did not become intelligent for some reasons, such as lack of involvement of local actors and changes in the municipality's governance. From this context, this research sought to identify how tourism governance can help a tourist destination to become intelligent. Besides the bibliographical research, we analyzed documents about the Búzios Intelligent City Project, minutes of meetings of the Búzios Municipal Tourism Council, internal regulations and interviews with parties related to this council.

Keywords: Tourist destinations; Smart tourist destinations; Governance

RESUMO

Na década de 1990, surgiu o termo smart city, ou cidade inteligente, com o significado atrelado ao desenvolvimento urbano. A partir desse termo, foi desenvolvido o conceito de destinos turísticos inteligentes, que são capazes de trazer mais inovação, competitividade, melhoria da qualidade de vida e da experiência turística em um território. Para que esses benefícios aconteçam, é necessário que o local receba investimentos principalmente nas áreas de sustentabilidade e tecnologia da informação e comunicação. Além disso, empresas, moradores e a governança local devem estar engajados no processo de transformação de um destino em inteligente, conforme critérios de certificação definidos pelo Ministério do Turismo. Em 2011, a concessionária de energia Ampla/Enel iniciou o projeto Cidade Inteligente Búzios, voltado para melhorias na rede elétrica. Em 2016, o projeto foi encerrado sem que seu propósito tenha sido alcançado, entre outros fatores, pela falta de envolvimento dos atores locais e mudanças na governança do município. A partir desse contexto, esta pesquisa buscou identificar como a governança do turismo pode favorecer que um destino turístico se torne inteligente. Além do levantamento bibliográfico, foi feita pesquisa em documentos sobre o Projeto Cidade Inteligente Búzios, em atas das reuniões do Conselho Municipal de Turismo de Búzios e em seu regimento interno, bem como entrevistas com atores relacionados a esse Conselho.

Palavras-chave: *Destinos turísticos; Destinos turísticos inteligentes; Governança.*

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INTRODUTION

The increasing population in the cities was one of the factors responsible for lack of resources, price instability, degradation of the environment, lack of energy, among other problems. With these questions, the urban environment became a growing concern, in order to preserve it and prevent the population from being affected. Aiming at solving urban problems, in the early 1990s the term "smart cities" came up, attached to urban development (SCHAFFERS *et al*., 2011).

Smart cities are those with advanced infrastructure in relation to information and communication technologies (ICTs), aiming at improving the local development strategies. In smart cities, there should be a connection between three factors: technologies (hardware and software infrastructure), people (creativity, diversity and education), and institutions (governance and politics). To be considered smart, the city needs to invest in human and social capital, in transportation and in the infrastructure of ICTs. Besides, it should estimate sustainable economic growth, high quality of life for the population and good management that involves the participation of the government (NAM; PARDO, 2011; SCHAFFERS *et al*., 2011).

Each city has its own characteristic, diversity and complexity. Some of them are considered as tourism destination, since they attract people from other locations and offer these people a tourism experience (BRANDÃO; JOIA; TELES, 2016). Smart tourism destinations (STD), endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism, in partnership with the Spanish institute Cidades do Futuro (GOV.BR, 2023), enable to provide the tourist with personalized service. However, there are challenges for a tourism destination to become smart (BUHALIS; AMARANGANNA, 2015).

Even though a STD has characteristics such as innovation and sustainability, the tourist experience should be improved in comparison to a traditional destination, as well as the quality of life of residents (GRETZEL *et al*., 2015). Despite the recognition of the importance of ICTs in the destinations, it is known that these tools alone are not able to transform a tourism destination in smart. There are different actors present in tourism destinations, such as the public and private sectors, the population and visitors. These parties should interact, share information and participate in the decision-making process together. However, there may be problems with the lack of representativeness of citizenship and rotation of politicians, leading to destabilization in the alignment of the government's interest for specific projects (BRANDÃO, 2017).

Cities in Motion, a research platform launched by the business school IESE (2018), assesses the level of intelligence of cities and organizes a ranking based in 10 dimensions: governance, urban planning, public management, technology, environment, international impact, social cohesion, transportation, human capital and economy. The first presented dimension is governance, characterized by the level of participation and collaboration of citizens (ÁVILA *et al*., 2015). The concept of governance is related to the ability of a political system to generate confidence and involve different actors, be then political, administrative and social ones, in the decision-making and problem-solving processes in search of development (VELASCO, 2008).

Therefore, it is understood that poor governance and lack of governmental commitment make it difficult for a tourism destination to become a smart destination. This is the case of Armação de Búzios, which has had a project to become a smart city since 2011. In the study performed by Brandão (2017) about smart destinations, it was observed that changes in the government enabled the creation of political value, and that city parties need to be more active, since part of the population does not know the concept of smart city or does not understand how this project can benefit them (BRANDÃO, 2017).

In this context, the general objective of this study was to identify how governance in tourism may strengthen a destination so that it becomes smart. The study included the city of Búzios — chosen for having an active Municipal Tourism Council (COMTUR), for being an international tourism destination and for having been selected by the power utility Enel, in 2016, for a project that aimed at turning it into the first smart city in Latin America – which was not fulfilled.

SMART CITIES

The term "smart city" appeared in the 1990s, and its meaning is related to urban development. However, the term began to build reputation only in 1999, when Singapore won the Smart City Awards, granted by Intelligent Community Forum (ICF). These cities represent an environment of innovation, enabled by an advanced ICT infrastructure. These technologies, allied to the infrastructure for education, innovation and interaction between companies and government, allow the involvement of local actors, improving the quality of services and the city's well-being (INTELLIGENT COMMUNITY, 2023; SCHAFFERS *et al*., 2011; STRAPAZON, 2010).

Ávila *et al*. (2015) state that smart cities can also be called efficient cities, or e-cities. For these authors, smart cities have completely defined boundaries from the geographic and political-administrative point of view. With the help of ICTs, these cities need to project innovative spaces that can facilitate sustainable development and the quality of life of the population. Besides, they believe their concept is open to several focuses (ÁVILA *et al*., 2015).

A smart city can be considered as a way to appropriate the urban space that counts on sustainability as a component. Thus, a harmonious relationship with the environment needs to be briefed. High quality of life needs to be ensured through a good management of resources, with the support of a participating governance. Some key-elements of a smart city are: innovation, creativity, knowledge, people and technologies. In this sense, for a city to be considered smart, it needs three types of intelligence: human, collective and artificial (CARAGLIU; BO; NIJKAMP, 2012; CURY; MARQUES, 2016).

Strapazon (2010) states that intelligence needs to be present in each subsystem, such as transportation, health, water, public security and education, even though this does not guarantee that the city will become smart. It is necessary for the city to be thought of as an organic and interconnected system. Therefore, more attention should be addressed to the connection, and not the parts (STRAPAZON, 2010). Caputo, Walletzký and Štepánek (2018) believe that smart cities have two main goals, as follows: increase the citizens' standard of living and developing in a sustainable manner.

The technological advances in the past few years have enabled the development of a wide range of solutions and products for smart cities. These products use ICTs to improve the management of urban functions in fields like transportation, power, health, water and residue. In this sense, it is observed that technological advances enable cities to become more creative, vibrating, healthier and safer places to live (ANGELIDOU, 2015; HARRISON *et al*., 2010).

A tool that depends on technologies and can contribute with cities is the smart power network, or smart grid. Despite the high investment, smart networks guarantee the distribution of electricity in a safer, more efficient and sustainable manner. Besides, power utilities can identify flaws, unauthorized connections and provide more flexible and advantageous fares. In the state of Rio de Janeiro, pilot projects have been implanted only in the capital and in Búzios. In the city of Rio de Janeiro, the Smart Grid project was developed; in Búzios, the project Búzios Smart City was created (REDES INTELIGENTES BRASIL, 2018). Moreira (2014) highlights that the use of smart power networks is public utility, because it can be good, for instance, for public lighting, traffic and traffic light control, as well as for water and gas supply.

Despite the lack of ICT infrastructure and the social and political problems that exist in Brazil, there are cases of success, such as the city of Curitiba, which uses technologies for sustainable development. Curitiba is a planned capital, a model for transportation, urbanization and respect towards the environment. Population has free access to the internet and technologies are used in an intelligent manner to promote transparency, efficiency in public management, to monitor bus fleets in real time, among others (WEISS; BERNARDES; CONSONI, 2013).

One of the aspects of smart cities is the presence of intelligent people. According to Giffinger *et al*. (2007), intelligent people are, among other factors, creative, informed, people who vote, who have and share knowledge about their city. They can be qualified, know other languages, do volunteer work, make the location pleasant for immigrants, among other attributes (GIFFINGER *et al*., 2007).

Šiurytė and Davidavičienė (2016) understand that smart cities do not have a common definition, be it in theory or in practice, but that it is common to recognize smart cities and ICTs as the main elements of these cities. They consider that strategies should be established by the cities so that these elements can interact, which depends on institutional factors such as governance, policies and regulations (NAM; PARDO, 2011; ŠIURYTĖ; DAVIDAVIČIENĖ, 2016).

The structure of governance is important, because even though the participation of formal institutions is essential in smart cities, other stakeholders should be included in the planning and decision-making. Besides, a smart governance needs to generate inclusion, eliminate obstacles referring to communication, improve access of the population to services, improve organizational processes and make them more democratic (DAMERI; BENEVOLO, 2016; STEINERT *et al*., 2011).

A city with a spirit of governance should be the goal; one in which the citizen has an active participation in the decision-making process. It is important that political components interact, such as boards, municipal councils, city hall and government. These components are essential for smart cities, because they can maintain the population informed (preferably in real time), together and involved with the matters related to the city (NAM; PARDO, 2011).

SMART TOURISM DESTINATIONS

A tourism destination is a location where most of the activities of production and consumption of tourism takes place. It can be configured in one or more places, such as a city or a group of cities. Besides, travelers need to feel attracted through a brand that is able to show the characteristics of the destination's offer (VALLS, 2006).

STDs have been studied in the academy. The first definition of STD came up in 2012, and was made by the State Commercial Society for the Management of Innovation and Tourist Technologies (SEGITTUR, 2013), institution connected to the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism in Spain, based on the concept of smart city (POGGI, 2021). The main difference between the two is that the first emphasizes the improvement of the tourist experience and the competitiveness of the destination (ÁVILA; SÁNCHEZ; 2013; SILVA; MENDES FILHO, 2016).

In smart tourism destinations there is a connection and interaction of the actors through the ICTs, which facilitates the identification and solution of problems, the acquisition of information about the needs and preferences of tourists, and still enables multiple visions towards a common direction and decision-making as a group (BUHALIS; AMARANGGANA, 2015). Baidal, Monzonís and Sánchez (2016) state that ICTs originated new models of destination management, such as the administration of smart destinations. However, it is worth to remember that such technologies cannot guarantee the efficiency of tourism destinations without appropriate governance (BAIDAL; MONZONÍS; SÁNCHEZ, 2016).

Gomes, Gândara and Ivars-Baidal (2017) state that we talk about territorial intelligence when ICTs are used efficiently, and especially when actors work with efficient governance, that is interested in managing a sustainable tourism destination. Despite the importance of ICTs in smart tourism territories, governance and involvement of the actors are the focus. ICTs work as conductors so that objectives, such as sustainable development, be reached.

Sustainable development becomes the base of territorial intelligence, which should include environmental, social and economic aspects. But in order for the inclusion of sustainable development to occur, participative models and the cooperation of the parties are necessary; that is why governance is vital. Brandão (2017) states that one of the factors that turn a tourism destination into a smart tourism destination is the engagement of local actors, who should share information and participate, together, of the decision-making process. The implementation of a STD cannot be a responsibility and of interest only for the public administration; it needs the engagement of the population and the companies (BRANDÃO, 2017; GOMES; GÂNDARA; IVARS-BAIDAL, 2017).

SEGITTUR presents two pillars of STDs: new information Technologies and sustainable tourism development. When a traditional tourism destination becomes a STD, it is benefitted with increasing competitiveness, quality of life, tourist experience and generation of an innovative space (SEGITTUR, 2013).

A STD can be defined as an innovative place with tourist structures, with cutting-edge technology and infrastructure, whose goal is to facilitate the tourists' interaction and integration with the surroundings, besides including them in the destination's decision-making process, always considering the quality of life of the locals. However, the target-audience is the tourist, and not the resident, because the main objective of a STD is to improve the tourist experience that comprehends what comes before, during and after the trip (ÁVILA *et al*., 2015).

In these spaces, concerns about the environment, cultural and socioeconomic matter are also essential. The implantation of a smart system that allows the collection, analysis and distribution of information needs to be included. Therefore, in a STD, innovation, technology and sustainability are important (ÁVILA *et al*., 2015).

GOVERNANCE IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

Xavier (2016) defines tourism governance as a structure that establishes mechanisms of coordination, with the ability to organize the existing relations and interactions between local actors. According to the author, tourism governance allows competitive advantages in the tourism destination. For Velasco (2014), incorporating the public and private actors in group decision-making processes is part of tourism governance, which incorporates ideas such as: government as a social process, activities guided for concrete objectives, increasing cooperation, establishment of rules that allow the work as a group, among others.

Tourism governance, or tourist governance, can be understood as a guidance activity and a new way of making group decisions about topics related to the administration of conflicts of interest, strengthening weaker parties. It should also change the activities related to tourism that cause negative impacts on the site (VELASCO; TRENTIN, 2014). For Queiroz and Rastrollo-Horrillo (2015), governance allows to identify how to implement an effective exercise of sustainability in tourism destinations.

According to the National Tourism Competitiveness Study (*Estudo de Competitividade do Turismo Nacional*) (BRASIL, 2015), tourism governance is a measurable managerial and operating strategy, necessary to reach common goals. It works to help the multiple inter-relations of the parties involved in the production of goods and services for tourists, besides managing the field in a more efficient manner, in the several levels of the government, and looking for solutions for problems.

According to Duran (2013), tourism governance became a current focus of interest. It includes different levels of public administration and their relations with the private sector in tourism destinations. Global tourism policies, institutions and legislative aspects are also part of this type of governance. Velasco and Trentin (2014) analyzed the insertion of the work "governance" in the context of the Brazilian tourist politics and identified a connection with the ideas of decentralization, participation, cooperation, networks and partnerships. It is emphasized that the search for more autonomy was one of the causes of decentralization in the tourism sector, originating the convention bureaus, which aim at promoting tourism, and tourism councils, as examples of tourist governance, in the different governmental levels (FRATUCCI, 2005).

There is not one single model that adjusts to any location, nor a perfect city; however, it is possible to understand that it is essential to define which type of city it intends to be, and what dimensions need to be improved. These dimensions should not be operated separately, because they are not independent. Therefore, having good governance is not enough for a place to become smart, even though it can influence the other dimensions (IESE, 2015).

Armação de Búzios

We chose to briefly describe the city of Búzios in order to understand the context of the research.

About Armação de Búzios, it is a city located in the coastal lowland Region, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, 165 km away from the capital. It was part of Cabo Frio until 1997 (BÚZIOS, 2018). According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in 2010 the city had 27,560 inhabitants, increasing to an estimation of 32,260 people in 2017. As to the main local economic activities, fishing and tourism stand out, boosted by the presence of over 20 beaches in the city (IBGE, 2018).

Búzios is a tourism destination inserted in the Costa do Sol region, together with Araruama, Arraial do Cabo, Cabo Frio, Carapebus, Casimiro de Abreu, Iguaba Grande, Macaé, Maricá, Quissamã, Rio das Ostras, São Pedro da Aldeia and Saquarema (TURISRIO, 2018). According to the Court of Audit of Rio de Janeiro (TCE-RJ, 2016), Búzios and Cabo Frio, unlike the other cities in Costa do Sol, are classified in the "A" category of tourism destinations, which means there are more companies that provide accommodation and jobs in the field.

The Municipal Tourism Council of Búzios was instituted by law n. 990, from September, 2013. As established in its Internal Regulations, the council has advisory roles addressed to the Municipal Executive Branch. According to Kronemberger, Medeiros and Dias (2016), when the council has an advisory role, it should give recommendations to the public authority through opinions and suggestions. The objective of COMTUR, according to the Internal Regulation, is to give opinions, suggest, indicate and propose measures to improve and develop the tourism activity in Búzios.

According to decree n. 994, from August, 2018, the Municipal Tourism Council of Búsios is composed of representatives of several institutions, such as the Commercial and Business Association, the Association of Inns, the Association of Hotels, the Association of Quilombolas of Rasa, the Cab Drivers' Association, Búzios Convention & Visitors Bureau, besides municipal entities related to tourism, environment, culture, public order, civil defense, planning and urban development, besides legislative power.

METHODOLOGY

We performed a qualitative study using the case study research strategy. This approach is adequate to examine contemporary events and is especially useful for research questions that begin with the words "how" and "why" (YIN, 2010). The research question that guided this study was: How can tourism governance contribute to transform a tourism destination in a smart destination? As to the unit of analysis, the choice was to select the Municipal Tourism Council (COMTUR) of Búzios, since this is the organization that represents tourism governance in the city the most.

The interviews were carried out in May and June, 2019, with 11 face to face interviews in the city of Búzios. Among the interviewees, eight are members of the council; one attends the meetings as an advisor of COMTUR; and two are members of institutions that are part of it, but are not advisors. Besides these interviewees, a pilot test was carried out in February, 2019, with a representative of the cab drivers' association and member of COMTUR. A semi-structured script was used for the interviews.

The used tata analysis strategy was the content analysis (BARDIN, 2011). For data treatment, we used concepts that were extracted from the three topics discussed in the theoretical reference developed in this study: smart cities, smart tourism destinations and tourism governance. Chart 1 aims at characterizing the approached central concepts.

Chart 1. Thematic areas.

Categories	Concept	Authors
Quality of life	Concerns about security, education, health and culture of residents	Giffinger *et al.* (2017)
Tourist experience	Involves colors, sounds, smells, entertainment, hospitality, service, accessibility and prices.	Pérez (2009)
Destination's sustainable development	Sustainability in the environmental, economic and sociocultural dimensions	Ávila *et al.* (2015)
Innovation	Technologies, processes, services or products, with the objective of increasing efficiency, profitability and competitiveness of the destination	Ávila *et al.* (2015)
Competitiveness	Destination's capacity to provide better goods and services to visitors	Dwyer and Kim (2003)
Technology	When technologies are used adequately, they can improve the use of resources, data collection and decision-making in a smarter way	Cury e Marques (2016)

Source: the authors (2022).

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The main results will be presented in this section, followed by the corresponding analyses and discussions, organized according to the categories defined in the methodology.

Sustainable development of the destination

The interviewees were questioned if Búzios could be considered as a sustainable tourism destination. Interviewee 1, for example, stated that in comparison to other destinations, Búzios can be considered sustainable, but there are challenges to be faced, such as problems related to sewage.

In July, 2019, the sewage treatment plant of Búzios received investments. A grit chamber was installed in the plant to remove solid particles and sand from the sewage, aiming at the modernization of the treatment and the improved quality of the effluent (PROLAGOS, 2019). With this investment, there are more chances that the city can reduce sewage-related problems.

Some interviewees expressed the opinion that Búzios is not a sustainable destination for several reasons, such as problems in basic sanitation, waste collection, quality of jobs offered in the city and permission for activities that cause negative impacts in nature, besides the inadequate exploration of natural resources. Sustainability is related to the reduction of waste, increased efficiency and promotion of human and social capital, aspects that should be assessed from the perspective of business people, as well as cultural and the social perspective (ÁVILA; SÁNCHEZ, 2013; CAMARGO, 2014).

There seems to be awareness about the need for actions that are aligned with sustainable development, which is one of the pillars of smart tourism destinations (SEGITTUR, 2013). These actions can boost innovation, competitiveness, and provide better quality of life and experiences to tourists.

Quality of life

When questioning interviewees about what they consider to be quality of life, and whether Búzios provides such quality to its residents, the answers varied. For the minority of them, Búzios does not provide quality of life due to the little intervention of public authorities to restrain aggression against nature and sound pollution due to the major events that take place in the city. For example, interviewee 10 believes that Búzios does not provide quality of life because of the non-compliance of legislations and the promotion of events that disturb the peacefulness and damage the environment.

On the other hand, for most interviewees, Búzios provides quality of life. They highlight reduced criminality and the closeness to nature as positive aspects. Interviewee 4 mentioned that, in his opinion, Búzios offers quality of life because places are close to one another, so one can ride a bike to work or go to the beach very often. Interviewee 9 states that Búzios “definitely” provides quality of life, because, for him, it means living away from the stress of big cities and excessive noise, which have a negative impact on health.

To become a smart destination, Búzios should follow the teachings of Caputo, Walletzký and Štepánek (2018), who defend that smart cities are those in which the main objective of governos is to increase the citizens' standard of life.

Tourist experience

An improved tourist experience is the main objective of smart tourism destinations. This experience includes aspects that occur before, during and after the trip, involving infrastructure and elements such as accessibility, price, hospitality and service (ÁVILA *et al*., 2015).

Several matters that have a negative impact on the experience are mentioned in the Council minutes, such as harassment from waiters, lack of reliability in schooners, inadequate sidewalks, lack of ordering in spaces and negligence with beach huts. Despite not being a unanimous opinion, interviewees also tend to evaluate the experience negatively, pointing out the high prices practiced by traders who work at the beaches, besides problems related to infrastructure and traffic. In this context, tourism governance in Búzios acknowledges the need to overcome the negative experiences of tourists.

Innovation

Just like sustainable development, innovation is one of the pillars to transform a destination in smart (SEGITTUR, 2013). Innovation can be found in technologies, processes, services or products, always aiming at improving them, increasing efficiency, profitability and competitiveness in the destination (ÁVILA *et al*., 2015). For the destination to become more competitive, innovation needs to be present (DOMARESKI-RUIZ; GÂNDARA; CHIM-MIKI, 2015).

Based on the answers obtained from interviews, it became clear that the city needs to be more innovative to become a smart destination. For example, for interviewee 11, innovative destinations renew themselves and bring News. He mentioned that, in his opinion, Búzios is not an innovative destination because its management is conservative, and some administrators believe that the beaches are sufficient. "Búzios is not innovative because tourism is basically the beach, there are no other attractions. At night there is Rua das Pedras, but besides that, there is no attraction, no advantages", reinforces interviewee 8.

According to Ávila *et al*. (2015), to become a smart tourism destination, the place should be innovative, with tourist structures, technology and cutting-edge infrastructure, with the objective of facilitating the interaction and integration of tourists with the surroundings. In this sense, the installation of more touristic infrastructures could provide new attractions for the destination, so that the visitor could stay in Búzios for a longer period of time, and return more often.

Competitiveness

About competitiveness, it is possible to state that it is related to the ability of the destination to provide better goods and services to visitors (DWYER; KIM, 2003).

The National Tourism Competitiveness Index (BRASIL, 2015) points out that, in order to improve competitiveness, it is important to work on some dimensions, such as: access, general infrastructure, public policies, monitoring, tourist attractions and promotion of the destination.

According to the National Tourism Competitiveness Index Report (BRASIL, 2015), Búzios' main advantages are urban conservation and cleanness in touristic areas, positive image in national and international media, and proximity to International Airport Antônio Carlos Jobim (Galeão), located less than 200 km from the city. Besides, there are other positive aspects that contribute with this destination, such as the work of Convention & Visitors Bureau, the presence of a Tourist Information Center, the use of social network with a promotional profile and the creation of events that attract tourists.

Also according to the 2015 Index, despite the destination's positive aspects, there are challenges to be faced. Some of them are the lack of accessibility in tourist attractions and accommodations, traffic in the peak season, inexistence of bus stations, lack of tourist signs in a foreign language, inexistence of studies of load capacity, lack of an active tourism municipal fund, use of informal workforce during the high season and the low awareness of citizens about the impacts of tourism on the destination.

The interviewees were asked about what they considered to be a competitive destination and if Búzios can be classified as such. In this aspect, interviewee 5 mentioned some characteristics:

> I think it is when a brand is strong. It has a well-defined, right audience, ordered tourism. This work sounds a little elitist, I understand some may think this is an elitist thing, but I see another side. Order is essential so that each person can understand how far they can go. The public sector has to be empowered, know what their obligations are, for example: a beach without public ordering is a mess.

Interviewee 1 believes that, to improve competitiveness, it is important to offer a good experience since the moment the tourist arrives at the airport. He considers that it takes good service and in several languages, both in cabs and in shuttle services, and that hotels need to have good conditions. He also mentioned that the city should have a logotype.

For interviewee 5, the city is already competitive, considering it receives more tourists than it should. However, he believes creativity is a necessity, because the city depends on tourism, and tourism in Búzios is basically about sun and sea; there should be alternatives, especially for the low season.

Interviewee 6 also thinks Búzios is a competitive destination because it receives many tourists. He stated that the city usually receives 500 thousand people in the peak season and "gets ahead of other destinations" regarding competitiveness.

Even though there is a perception that Búzios already is a competitive destination, it is observed that the city can leverage this competitiveness even more by improving its governance mechanisms. It is worth to remember that, according to Xavier (2016), tourist governance allows competitive advantages to the tourism destination.

Technologies

Technologies can bring improvements to tourism destinations in different ways. One example are smart power networks, or smart grid, which guarantee the distribution of energy in a safer, more efficient and sustainable way (REDES INTELIGENTES BRASIL, 2018). Sensors can also be installed, as well as wireless networks and cameras, that are able to help with security, sustainability and local management (BOUSKELA *et al*., 2016). Another idea is the crowdsourcing, which uses the knowledge of the citizens for data collection (NESTA, 2015).

All of the interviewees believe that the use of technologies is able to bring benefits to Búzios. Interviewees 1, 4 and 5, for example, consider that information and communication technologies promote better experiences, especially because of the access to information, such as time of an event or a transport. Interviewee 2 mentions that technologies can also assist the administration of hotels and staff training, even though sometimes they can lead to the loss of "human, friendly and warm aspect".

Technology is beneficial for managing the destination, according to the perception of interviewees, which corroborates the vision of Angelidou (2015) and Harrison *et al*. (2010), for whom technological advances enable cities to become more and more creative, vibrating, healthier and safer to live in.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed at identifying how tourism governance can contribute for a tourism destination to become smart, using Armação de Búzios, in Rio de Janeiro, as a case study.

The first step to reach that objective was to understand what defines a smart tourism destination and to identify its relationship with the concept of smart city. In this sense, it is important to highlight that the concept of smart tourism destinations derives from the concept of smart cities, sharing similar characteristics such as sustainable development and investment in information and communication technologies.

Several factors can influence the tourist experience, including service, the quantity and quality of tourism attractions, local infrastructure, information that is available in different languages, accessibility, safety and prices of products and services. All of these aspects are considered as relevant for the Municipal Tourism Council of Búzios (COMTUR), which is essential, once a tourism destination does not become smart just through sustainable development and the adoption of technologies.

For a place to develop in a sustainable manner, to acquire information and communication technologies, to create innovation strategies, to improve the visitor's experience and to increase its competitiveness, it is essential that governance be efficient. The engagement of local actors, the stimulation to the population's participation and transparency are essential to benefit tourism. Besides, tourism governance is necessary to deal with conflict and to strengthen less influent actors.

Given that the tourism sector comprehends a wide range of questions and affects several areas, it is important that the public and private sectors, as well as the local community, be involved in the decision-making process.

In Búzios, the identified problems related to the participation and involvement in the council, as well as divergent interests between the public and private sectors, which makes it difficult to make decisions and execute tasks. However, as an advisory entity, COMTUR can contribute with the city's tourism sector significantly. Different parties, such as secretaries, businesspeople and institutions' representatives, are part of the entity, which can facilitate the search for a positive experience for tourists and the locals' well-being.

The council tries to solve problems such as irregular accommodation and seasonality, which mainly affect businesspeople and their employees. There is a concern that tourism in the city is restricted to "sun and beach", which contributes with seasonality. A strategy to fight this seasonality is the conduction of events, which are properly publicized in the social media of hotel and inn associations, Convention & Visitors Bureau and the city hall.

Offering a positive experience to the tourist should be the goal of the parties involved in the development and management of tourism destinations. Recognizing strong and weak aspects is essential to elaborate and implement plans that aim at providing better experiences to visitors, but in order for the destination to be smart, it takes investments in innovation, cutting-edge technology and sustainability.

Projects and investments in these fields can bring benefits to tourists, local residents, companies and the environment. The decision-making process should be collaborative, considering the opinion of tourists and residents. Partnerships need to be established for the development of projects and fundraising. In this sense, tourism governance plays an essential role, bringing together the parties involved in the tourism destination and stimulating changes.

Búzios already is a consolidated tourism destination, but it is necessary to maintain its competitiveness to prevent a decline. Making a destination smart is a promising strategy to keep attracting tourists, since this will bring benefits such as innovation, preservation of the environment, access to information, safety and quality of life.

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Articles

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A study on user experience design (UX design) perception and practices by young iPhone users from Rio

Um estudo sobre percepção e práticas de user experience design *(UX* design*) por jovens usuários cariocas de iPhone*

João Renato de Souza Coelho Benazzi[I,II], Sabrina Uderman[I]

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate how UX Design processes are perceived by iPhone users, considering the usability of the interface and what is the impact of this perception on the consumption behavior of the users. Solomon (2016) perspective was investigated in relation to consumer behavior regarding their attitude and perception, directly and indirectly impacting their behavior towards Apple; in addition to the perspective of Nielsen (1993) and Norman (1998) regarding the technical issues that UX (user experience) covers and finally Zikmund and Babin (2011) perspective regarding the implementation, treatment and analysis of the Focus Group. The main contributions of the study point to the high relevance of high-quality perception of UX design in promoting relevant consumer experience, which covers issues related to intuitiveness, usability, UI and even aesthetic values in promoting the construction of long-term customer loyalty with the product and, consequently, with the brand. This can be explained by the fact that the iPhone has an operating system that is perceived as very easy to use. In this way, it ends up being practical for the user to have an iPhone to perform everything from their work tasks to those that are part of their daily lives quickly and conveniently.

Keywords: Consumer behavior. UX Design. Interface. Usability. Focus group.

RESUMO

O presente estudo investigou como os processos de user experience design *(UX* design*) são percebidos pelos usuários de iPhone levando em consideração a usabilidade da interface e o seu impacto na percepção e no comportamento de consumo de jovens usuários do Rio de Janeiro. Investigou-se a perspectiva de Solomon (2016) em relação ao comportamento do consumidor no que diz respeito aos conceitos de atitude e percepção, além da ótica de Nielsen (1993) e Norman (1998) quanto às questões técnicas que a UX (experiência do usuário) abrange e, por fim, das contribuições de Zikmund e Babin (2011) no que tange a realização, tratamento e análise do grupo focal. As principais contribuições do estudo apontam para a alta relevância de percepção de alta qualidade da UX* design *em promover experiência de consumo relevante no que abrange questões relativas à intuitividade, usabilidade, interface de usuário e até mesmo a valores estéticos, promovendo a construção de uma fidelidade de longo prazo do usuário com o produto e, consequentemente, com a marca. Esse fato pode ser explicado por o iPhone possuir um sistema operacional percebido como de muito fácil uso. Dessa forma, acaba sendo prático para o usuário ter um iPhone para realizar desde suas tarefas de trabalho até as que fazem parte de seu cotidiano, de maneira rápida e conveniente.*

Palavras-chave: *Comportamento do consumidor. UX* Design*. Interface. Usabilidade. Grupo focal.*

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC AND STUDY PROBLEM

Mobile technology has played a pivotal role in our lives, revolutionizing how we communicate, access information, and engage with the world. In this context, mobile devices have emerged as versatile and indispensable tools, with the iPhone, manufactured by Apple, standing out as one of the most popular and influential devices in this market.

User experience and design play a crucial role in how individuals interact with and perceive these devices. Through user experience design (UX design), companies aim to create products and services that are intuitive, efficient, and enjoyable to use, while considering users' needs and expectations. As described by Norman (1998, p. 57), "UX Design is the way an individual feels the world, it is the way they experience a service, an application, or a computer system. But it is a system. It's everything!".

Among iPhone users, a particular group deserves special recognition: young people from Rio de Janeiro. The city of Rio de Janeiro (RJ), renowned for its vibrant and culturally diverse lifestyle, is home to a generation of young individuals who have grown up immersed in the digital world. They extensively utilize mobile devices as an integral part of their daily lives.

The object of study in this article is young people from Rio de Janeiro, particularly those residing in the south zone and who are consumers of the Apple brand, specifically iPhone users. The research explores how user experience (UX) influences the consumption behavior of this audience. The study aimed to investigate how UX design practices are perceived by this demographic, with a specific focus on understanding how young iPhone users in Rio de Janeiro perceive UX design practices and the consequences of this perception on their device usage. The ultimate objective of this research was to determine whether young users from Rio de Janeiro perceive a distinct experience when using the iPhone and how this perception influences their relationship with the Apple brand.

Kucheriavy (2015) suggests that UX design is a crucial strategy for customer relationship management and retention. A well-executed design and a seamless and intuitive user experience enhance user satisfaction, thereby strengthening the bond with the brand or product. According to the author, companies that excel in customer experience have notably outperformed the S&P index, yielding returns nearly three times higher compared to their counterparts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: USER EXPERIENCE THROUGH UX DESIGN PROCESSES AND TOOLS

In the 1990s, interface design predominantly emphasized the creation of visual and interactive interfaces for computer systems, emphasizing concepts of user interface (UI) and usability. Donald Norman (1998) recognized the limitations of this approach and advocated for a more holistic view that incorporated users' emotions. At Apple, where he founded the User Experience Architect Group, he spearheaded the adoption of a UX approach, acknowledging the necessity to surpass mere usability. Norman (1998) played a pivotal role in popularizing the significance of considering emotions in the user experience.

Norman (1998) portrays user experience as encompassing everything related to the product/service experience, such that the experience can be conveyed orally when individuals discuss a particular product, even if it is not physically present. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the UX designer to create products and services with humans at their core, ensuring their usability is intuitive, practical, and engaging, thereby evoking positive emotions in the user.

In the digital realm, such as with the iPhone, UX occurs primarily through an interface. The user's interaction with the iPhone interface is examined through the concept of UI. When contemplating UI design, the focus is on creating an interface that minimizes moments of uncertainty for the user, clearly communicates the outcomes of their actions, and enables users to complete tasks in a simple and efficient manner, as outlined by Nielsen (1993).

Hence, alongside UI and UX, it is essential to mention usability, which, as defined by Nielsen (1993), encompasses the quality attribute used to assess the ease of use of an interface. The term *usability* also pertains to methods employed to ensure ease of use during the design process.

Since the early 1990s, Nielsen (1993) has addressed what he refers to as "best practices: methods by which users of a given product/service can achieve maximum efficiency and satisfaction." Among the usability aspects, the author emphasizes five attributes that can be measured to evaluate user experience:

- Ease of learning (learnability): relates to the user's ease when performing basic tasks for the first time during use;
- Efficiency of use: from a quantitative perspective, it is possible to determine the resources used when performing tasks and executing routines;
- Ease of recall (memorability): even after a period without using the product or service, it is possible to identify the ease with which users can work with it again;
- Error prevention and avoidance: when it is identified that usability can prevent or correct errors that are frequently made by users;
- Satisfaction: identifying how pleasant the product or service is, making users more willing to use it again.

In addition to these attributes, there are also goals, which function as indicators and will ensure good usability. Namely:

- Effectiveness: being effective in use;
- Efficiency: being efficient in use;
- Safety: being safe and providing security to users;
- Usefulness: being of good quality;
- Learning: being easy to learn;
- Memorization: being easy to remember how to use.

The shift towards prioritizing UX prompted companies to recognize the importance of investing in its enhancement. Experts like Nielsen (1993) and Goodwin (2009) have offered valuable guidelines, such as the 10 usability heuristics, for developing user-centered products. This underscores the understanding that user experience is pivotal to a company's success in the market. As noted by Zaguetto (2020), user experience represents the significant difference between the success and failure of any business, as a positive experience has the potential to propel the company's business forward, while a negative one can undermine all possibilities for growth.

Zaguetto (2020) highlights that consumers are drawn to stores offering more accessible and user-friendly products, along with services/applications that minimize waiting times and swiftly address their needs, thereby simplifying the overall experience.

In the context of the project aimed at mapping UX design practices among young iPhone users from Rio de Janeiro, adopting a multidisciplinary approach is crucial. This entails developing personas and utilizing tools such as empathy mapping and user journey mapping to gain a comprehensive understanding of users' needs and preferences. The UX research phase, employing benchmarking, interviews, and data collection, is instrumental in gathering valuable insights.

During the ideation phase, creativity is harnessed to generate solutions that address users' needs. Low-fidelity prototypes enable rapid testing of ideas. Subsequently, medium or high-fidelity prototypes are developed, incorporating screen flows utilizing a design system and tools like Figma. Usability and quality tests are pivotal in ensuring the effectiveness of solutions, with application options including Call, Maze, Figma, and Testflight. Finally, documenting all project stages is essential, utilizing collaborative tools such as Notion and Figma.

However, as noted by Agni (2016), it is imperative to emphasize that genuine user or consumer needs can only be identified through direct engagement with people. Technology and innovation can only be effective when aligned with the objectives of human beings.

User-centered design has four basic steps, according to Agni (2016):

- Requirements identification: gathering needs and understanding user pain points through research, observations, and interviews;
- Creation of alternative solutions: ideation phase, in which hypotheses of solutions are raised for the identified needs;
- Building testable prototypes: stage in which ideas are taken from paper and testable models of what the product could become are created;
- User evaluation: stage where prototypes are taken for user testing, collecting feedback on the features that are OK and those that can be improved.

Therefore, as Agni (2016) asserts, the evolution of interface design underscores the transition toward UX. The present project necessitates a multifaceted approach to comprehending users and crafting solutions tailored to them. User-centered design is the process whereby focus is consistently placed on the needs, desires, and limitations of users at every stage of the project, from conception to product launch.

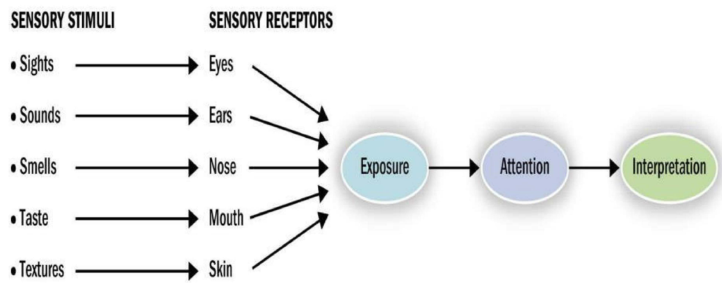
Consumer attitude and perception toward the iPhone usage experience and the Apple ecosystem

The usability of technological products, and consequently, UX, are pivotal in how consumers perceive and adopt innovative devices like the iPhone. Nielsen (1993) defines usability as the ease of use and efficiency in interacting with a system or product. Consumers' perception of usability and their experience while navigating a technological device directly influences their attitudes and intentions toward it, as emphasized by Davis (1989). Consumer attitudes toward the usability of the iPhone directly impact their overall evaluation of the device (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Research such as that conducted by Moon and Kim (2001) underscores that usability is one of the primary factors influencing consumer satisfaction and their attitude toward technological products. Moreover, a positive perception of usability can have a cascading effect, fostering more favorable attitudes toward the brand and purchase intention (Gupta & Kim, 2007). Lee, Park, and Kang (2018) examined the relationship between perceived usability and consumers' attitudes toward the iPhone, concluding that positive usability significantly influences attitudes and intentions for continued use.

Hence, the usability of the iPhone significantly impacts consumer attitudes toward this product. The perceived ease of use and efficiency in interaction directly shape consumers' attitudes toward the iPhone, subsequently influencing their intention to adopt and continue using it. This positive experience may even extend to the purchase of other products within the Apple ecosystem, owing to the favorable experience with one of the brand's products.

Consumer behavior perception refers to how individuals interpret a brand's strategies and actions and respond to them, comprising a three-stage process that translates stimuli into meanings, according to Solomon (2016). The individual perceives only a limited number of stimuli in an environment, as there are numerous stimuli competing for attention in every setting. Each individual interprets meaning in a manner consistent with their unique inclinations, needs, and experiences. As depicted in Figure 1, these stages — exposure, attention, and interpretation — constitute the perception process.



Source: Solomon (2016).
Figure 1. Overview of the perceptual process.

Exposure occurs when a stimulus enters a person's range of sensory receptors. Consumers selectively focus on certain stimuli, while ignoring others, and may even actively avoid certain messages. Stimuli are perceived when they are captured by the individual's receptors, but garnering attention within a certain timeframe, whether short or long, is challenging. Before considering what individuals may choose not to perceive, it is important to understand what they are capable of perceiving. Hence, these stimuli may fall above or below a person's sensory threshold, which is the point at which a stimulus is strong enough to consciously impact one's awareness.

Attention refers to the extent to which processing activity is directed toward a specific stimulus, as outlined by Solomon (2016). This level of focus can vary based on the characteristics of stimulus and receivers (the individuals' mental state at the time), as influenced by their experiences. Despite living in an "information society," too much information may overwhelm consumers. Individuals often experience sensory overload, being exposed to more information than they can or want to process.

Another crucial trend to note is perceptual vigilance, where consumers become more attentive to stimuli related to their current needs. Additionally, adaptation plays a significant role, determining the extent to which consumers continue to perceive a stimulus over time. The adaptation process occurs when consumers cease to pay attention to a stimulus due to its familiarity.

In the case of Apple, a company renowned for its emphasis on design, innovation, and ecosystem integration, consumer behavior perception directly influences the brand's image and its relationship with customers. Research on Apple's consumer behavior underscores the significance of establishing emotional connections with customers, as proposed by Fournier (1998). With its iconic products like the iPhone and its meticulous focus on design, Apple has succeeded in fostering a community of loyal and engaged consumers.

Authenticity theory, as outlined by Gilmore and Pine (2007), underscores consumers' pursuit of authentic and genuine experiences. Apple excels in this regard by crafting products that transcend mere functionality and resonate with the values and aspirations of its consumers. This influences the perception of consumer behavior, as the brand is perceived as authentic and in harmony with the lifestyle of its customers.

Furthermore, Apple's understanding of consumer behavior is intricately connected to the user experience and usability of its products. Research by Parrish (2016), sponsored by Forrester, confirms that a positive user experience greatly contributes to customer loyalty and the recommendation of the brand to other consumers.

In the realm of the iPhone, consumers' attitudes toward usability, design, and integration with the Apple ecosystem directly shape their perception of brand behavior. Research like that of Moon and Kim (2001) delves into how the perception of value and perceived quality impact consumer attitudes and behavior regarding technological products.

Therefore, considering the aforementioned points, it is evident that the perception of Apple's consumer behavior plays a crucial role in forging enduring and meaningful relationships with its customers. Brand authenticity, the establishment of emotional connections, and positive user experience are all factors that influence consumer behavior perception and, consequently, their attitude and loyalty toward the brand.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF STUDY DATA

The research is classified, in terms of objective, as exploratory. In terms of methodology, it draws from literature on the topic under study, aiming to gather data through hypothesis generation.

With a single stage of field data collection, the research employed a focus group to elucidate the sensibilities of young iPhone users from Rio de Janeiro when navigating through such a device, assessing their comprehension of user experience and how this perception influences their relationship with Apple. Through the focus group, evidence was gathered to stimulate future research by generating hypotheses.

According to Zikmund and Babin (2011), exploratory research is valuable for refining a marketing problem or identifying a market opportunity. Therefore, the selection of this research type seems appropriate in terms of the objective, as it aims to potentially uncover opportunities based on the research findings.

The focus group is suitable for gathering information about perception, emotions, products, or activities. In exploratory research, its aims are to generate ideas or hypotheses and stimulate the researcher's thinking, as outlined by Dias (2000).

To conduct the proposed study, a focus group was held in the field phase, comprising six young consumers from the south zone of Rio de Janeiro, of both genders, aged between 18 and 24. All participants were iPhone users, with no restrictions based on income range. This selection criteria were chosen due to the extensive use of technology in the daily lives of individuals in this age range. The objective is to explore how users perceive the usability experience when interacting with the iPhone interface and how this perception influences their relationship with the Apple brand.

The target audience mentioned was defined based on accessibility criteria, as well as similarities in location and lifestyle. This approach was chosen to facilitate access to this group and ensure that the information sought could be obtained efficiently during the focus group stage. As recommended by Gil (2008), the size of the sample used in a focus group should ideally range from six to ten participants. Larger groups can limit the exchange of ideas, hinder recording, and prevent a deep exploration of the topic.

Furthermore, this target audience was chosen strategically due to the growing trend of extensive smartphone usage among young people. A study sponsored by Exame indicates that young Brazilians are among the most frequent users of electronic devices worldwide. The extensive use of smartphones by young people has made Brazil the country with the highest mobile device penetration among preteens and teenagers. Despite parental concerns about screen time, the study reveals that 96% of young people in Brazil use cell phones, surpassing the global average, as reported by Gavioli (2022).

When conducting data collection, Gatti (2005) suggests that the meeting location should be conducive to promoting greater interaction among participants. This aligns with Trad's (2009) assertion that using at least two recorders is essential for capturing the focus group's discussions. Additionally, Flick (2009) emphasizes that moderators should ensure equal participation among participants, avoiding favoritism. Finally, Gatti (2005) addresses the duration of meetings and the number of sessions, suggesting that ideally, sessions should last between 1.5 to 3 hours. The focus group dynamic in this study lasted 1.5 hours, conducted in a single online session, successfully achieving its objectives.

To process the collected data for the study, recordings and videos of the focus group sessions were analyzed. Speeches were transcribed, and content analysis was conducted. Additionally, images were used to study participants' facial expressions and reactions during discussions. This approach is crucial for determining whether group members are genuinely engaged in the conversation and accurately expressing their sentiments.

In the analysis process, the steps outlined by Queiróz (1991) and Bryman (2004) are typically followed. Initially, the data is transcribed, and then content analysis is conducted to establish categories, which are exemplified by excerpts from the speeches of group members.

During the analysis process, it is common to observe asymmetry in participants' expressions or contradictions in the ideas of the same participant. At times, individuals might initially present statements on certain issues and then, as the discussion unfolds, repeatedly change their position. These dynamics become apparent through careful analysis and close observation of the reactions of group members.

According to Silverman (2001), ensuring the reliability of the research involves fidelity in transcribing statements and considering the contextual elements. Furthermore, when conducting content analysis, it is typical to follow the three methodological procedures suggested by Bardin (2009): pre-analysis, exploration of the material, and treatment of results. Pre-analysis involves organizing initial ideas and planning the analysis; material exploration refers to the coding process based on the rules formulated in the pre-analysis; and data processing involves interpreting the results obtained in line with the objectives of the study, comparing the statements of the participants.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: DESCRIPTION OF THE PROFILES OF INTERVIEWEES

The focus group consisted of six young individuals living in the south zone of Rio de Janeiro, all of whom were iPhone users familiar with popular smartphones. They ranged in age from 18 to 24 years, with four men and two women, all with higher education backgrounds. Participants were selected based on convenience and accessibility.

Description and analysis of focus group results

The first question focused on why participants chose Apple as the company they are customers of, since they have an iPhone as their mobile electronic device (Why Apple?).

In response, out of the six participants, five had owned an iPhone for more than three years, and one said they had acquired the device a year ago. Five of them also highlighted that they had been using the iPhone's operating system (iOS) for a long time and found it to be far superior to Android, being more intuitive, simple, and efficient to use. This ease of use made it easy and quick for them to get accustomed to the device, fostering loyalty to the iPhone and consequently to Apple. One participant mentioned that "the iPhone is so intuitive that anyone can use it." The participant who recently purchased the iPhone was simply eager to test it because the previous devices they used had Android as the operating system.

Hence, according to the responses gathered, it is evident that the primary reason participants opt for Apple is largely attributed to Apple's operating system (iOS), perceived as superior to Android. This preference is further influenced by factors such as usability and intuitive navigation. Kucheriavy (2015) highlighted in his research that a seamless and intuitive user experience enhances user satisfaction, thereby fostering stronger connections with the brand or product.

The second inquiry focused on the usability and overall experience of the iPhone as motivations for browsing it. Specifically, participants were asked about the circumstances in which they utilize their iPhones (for what purposes do you use the iPhone?).

All six participants involved in the study utilize their iPhones for similar purposes. These include engaging with social networks (Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, among others); utilizing transportation applications like Uber; utilizing the camera for capturing photos and recording videos; accessing work and college-related applications such as Moodle, Microsoft Teams, and Trello; using streaming applications for watching football games; and employing music applications like YouTube and Spotify.

In conclusion, the study reveals that members use the iPhone for everyday activities integral to their daily routines, spanning professional, academic, and entertainment domains. This suggests a significant amount of time spent with smartphones nearby, as these activities recur consistently in individuals' routines. Gavioli (2022) asserts that the rate of smartphone usage among young people in Brazil stands at 96%, surpassing the global average. Hence, it is crucial to recognize the iPhone as an indispensable tool in the daily lives of young individuals.

One potential hypothesis is that over time, young people, particularly Generation Z, akin to the participants in the focus group, may encounter challenges when separated from their mobile devices. This is because the iPhone has seamlessly integrated into their daily routines, serving as the primary tool for the majority of their activities.

The third inquiry focused on evaluating the usability and experience of iPhone applications, categorized into native applications, which are developed specifically for the iOS operating system and cannot be installed on other platforms, and non-native applications. The question was: how do you see/evaluate the navigability experience of the applications you routinely use, as mentioned in the previous topic, on the iPhone?

Two out of the six participants discussed the layout of iPhone apps, noting that they find it more aesthetically pleasing compared to the Android system — WhatsApp and Instagram were cited as examples of applications with superior layouts in comparison. One participant mentioned perceiving a sense of exclusivity between Apple and Instagram, expressing that photos posted in stories appear to have better quality on iPhones compared to Android devices. He highlighted differences in photo edges, noting that on the iPhone, edges are rounded, whereas on Android, they are straight. This participant believes that using non-native apps on an Android phone may result in a less optimal experience compared to using them on Apple.

One of the participants expressed a preference for Spotify over the iPhone's native music app (Apple Music), citing its superior accessibility and usability. He appreciates Spotify's interface, which allows for interaction akin to a social network, particularly in terms of following artists. Additionally, he highlighted positive experiences with other native applications, such as Safari for browsing and the Notes app for scanning documents, both of which they find easy to use. Moreover, the participant praised the accuracy of the native Weather app in providing weather forecasts. Alongside these native applications, he also mentioned non-native ones like the Office suite and YouTube, which he finds functional and user-friendly on iPhone. However, they expressed confusion regarding the native Files application, feeling unsure about locating files saved from the internet on their iPhone. They stated that if they could navigate it more effectively, they would use the app frequently.

Two members expressed reluctance to learn how to use unfamiliar native iPhone applications. Additionally, one member noted that when Apple Music transitioned to a paid service, he discontinued its use and continued solely with Spotify, as he were already accustomed to using the app.

Two members discussed the usability of the iPhone's native email app, comparing it with non-native alternatives. Both individuals mentioned their familiarity with Gmail, stemming from their history of using it on their computers. One member expressed dissatisfaction with the native app, citing its lack of email filtering capabilities. Conversely, two other members reported using the native email application, citing their long-term familiarity with it since childhood and its automatic backup feature when changing devices. Additionally, one participant mentioned transitioning from the Gmail app to the iPhone's native email app and finding the experience positive. Furthermore, one member highlighted a perspective regarding user preference, emphasizing that the choice between native and non-native apps depends on individual habits and familiarity rather than inherent superiority.

Through this analysis, it is observed that participants interact with both native and non-native iPhone applications on a daily basis. Applications deemed to have superior usability are frequently used by participants, often on a daily basis.

According to Moon and Kim (2001), the perceived quality of technological products influences consumer attitudes and behaviors. Users tend to become accustomed to a particular format, whether native or not, and remain loyal to it, even when switching devices. Solomon (2016) discusses the perceptual process, specifically the adaptation factor, which refers to the degree to which consumers continue to perceive a stimulus over time. This adaptation occurs when consumers no longer pay attention to a stimulus due to its familiarity. Drawing a parallel, participants are so accustomed to applications they have been using for some time that they do not feel the need to download others. They simply continue using the ones they are familiar with and have adapted to.

A hypothesis emerges from the remarks of two participants who expressed reluctance to learn how to use certain applications, suggesting that usability may not be as intuitive or accessible for these individuals. This is particularly evident in their comments about navigating the Files app and other native applications.

The fourth question focused on identifying positive aspects of using iPhone. Participants were asked: what positive aspects are observed when using the iPhone?

One participant emphasized the positive experience of using the iPhone, attributing it to both accessibility and the ease of performing daily activities. Additionally, they highlighted the constant software updates that introduce new features, such as customization options and enhanced security. They also noted the benefit of receiving a greater number of updates over time on the same device.

Another participant mentioned the Airdrop feature, which facilitates quick and efficient transfer of information between iPhones. Additionally, one participant highlighted the functionality of the Find My app, which enables the transfer of photos from a lost or stolen device to another device. They also appreciated the automatic backup feature of the iPhone.

Two participants emphasized the excellent quality of the camera, noting its capability to capture outstanding videos and photos, with each new release improving upon the previous one. Additionally, one participant mentioned that the iPhone camera can easily replace a standalone camera, highlighting the convenience of being able to capture, edit, and store high-quality photos all in one device. The same participant expressed appreciation for the aesthetic enhancements introduced with each iPhone launch, such as new colors and formats, which serve as an incentive for them to upgrade to newer models. The sixth participant agreed with all the points raised by his peers.

Thus, the quality, efficiency, usability, and durability of the iPhone, when compared to its competitors, emerge as standout features that bolster Apple's image. It is evident that users highly value their experience with the device, remaining loyal to the iPhone due to its positive user experience, characterized by efficient, practical, fast, and intuitive task performance. Santos (2018) explains that Brazilians, in particular, highly prioritize the user experience, with 89% considering it a decisive factor in their purchasing decisions. Fournier (1998) explicitly notes the meticulous attention that big tech companies devote to product design, which aligns with the sentiments expressed by one of the participants. Additionally, Gilmore and Pine (2007) underscore consumers' pursuit of authentic and genuine experiences, an area in which Apple excels.

Hence, a hypothesis can be formulated that Apple's native applications boast excellent UI, which significantly contribute to the overall positive user experience.

The fifth question aimed to identify negative aspects of using the iPhone. Participants were asked: what negative aspects are observed when using the iPhone?

All six participants brought up similar concerns regarding negative aspects of using the iPhone. Three of them expressed frustration regarding battery health, which affects their browsing experience when using an iPhone with a degraded battery. They noted that as battery health declines, the overall usage time diminishes. One participant mentioned that with each software update, the battery performance seems to deteriorate further.

Another participant expressed frustration with the Airdrop functionality, noting that it does not work for them even when Bluetooth is turned on, making it impossible to transfer information between devices. Additionally, one participant mentioned feeling underwhelmed by the lack of noticeable changes in new iPhone releases, particularly in terms of new features, which leads to feelings of frustration. The sixth participant highlighted a lack of freedom in terms of customization, contrasting the iPhone's limited interface customization options with the more flexible screen layout organization available on Android devices. Changes on iPhone are restricted to a grid format, limiting the extent of customization.

Many questions surrounding the topic of planned obsolescence are evident in participants' frustrations, as they feel compelled to purchase another device within a short timeframe, perpetuating revenue generation for big tech companies.

The sixth question addressed the topic of customer satisfaction specifically concerning Apple products.

Two out of the six respondents shared a similar perspective on their level of satisfaction with the brand. They both expressed a high degree of satisfaction, citing instances where Apple's customer service representatives provided personalized and efficient assistance, resolving issues promptly and offering optimal solutions to address the situation at hand.

Two other participants highlighted the price of Apple products as a negative aspect, suggesting that they do not offer good value for money. However, they admitted to continuing to purchase Apple products due to the comfort and sense of security they provide. One participant mentioned that their satisfaction with Apple fluctuates based on new iPhone updates, which they feel often fail to meet customer expectations, as there are minimal changes in aesthetics and usability. Additionally, one respondent expressed frustration with Apple's policy of refusing to address certain issues if the product has been serviced by a third-party company. This reflects a negative experience beyond the issue of outsourced stores. The fifth participant had a negative service experience, while the sixth participant expressed overall satisfaction, with the only negative point being the issue of planned obsolescence, which he acknowledged as a common practice in the technology industry.

Hence, the majority of respondents' experiences are positive, despite some reservations about the price. Nevertheless, participants continue to purchase the products, demonstrating loyalty to the brand. Santos (2018) asserts that a customer's experience with a product significantly influences their brand loyalty. In essence, if a customer perceives a product as efficient and satisfactory, they are more likely to develop or maintain a loyal relationship with the brand. This viewpoint aligns with Nielsen's (1993) concept of "best practices: methods that enable users to achieve maximum efficiency and satisfaction with a product or service," particularly in terms of satisfaction. Among the various aspects of usability, satisfaction stands out as a crucial attribute that contributes to the evaluation of user experience. Satisfaction denotes how enjoyable the product's use is, thereby increasing the likelihood of the user returning to use the product or service again. Therefore, a pleasant experience fosters satisfaction, which, in turn, cultivates loyalty to the brand.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW STUDIES

This section provides a concise overview of the key findings of the investigation, emphasizing the contributions to the topic under study, as well as the theoretical and practical implications, in addition to the conclusions reached by the study.

This study explored how young iPhone users perceive UX design processes and examined the usability of the interface, along with its impact on consumer behavior. To delve deeper into the analysis, Solomon's (2016) perspective on consumer behavior, including attitudes, perceptions, and their influence on brand behavior, was investigated. The study also drew on the theoretical insights of Nielsen (1993) and Norman (1998) concerning technical aspects of UX design. Additionally, Zikmund and Babin's (2011) work on focus group dynamics informed the implementation, treatment, and analysis of data collected during the study.

To accomplish the intended objectives, dynamic field research was conducted with a focus group to investigate how UX design practices are perceived by young iPhone users residing in the South Zone of Rio de Janeiro, aged between 18 and 24 years old, and how this perception influences their consumer behavior toward the Apple brand.

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that participants perceive UX design practices during the usability and navigability of the iPhone, even without explicit reference to technical terminology in the field. This experiential aspect significantly influences consumption behaviors and shapes perceptions of the Apple brand.

The results confirmed that the user experience of the iPhone is directly correlated with individual satisfaction and plays a significant role in fostering customer loyalty to the brand. Additionally, the research revealed an intriguing finding: iPhone users exhibit a consistent consumer behavior of routinely upgrading their old devices for new iPhones, without contemplating the purchase of devices with alternative operating systems.

In comparing devices with different operating systems, the study highlighted the remarkable intuitiveness of navigating iOS devices, particularly when contrasted with Android devices. Furthermore, the consistent updates to the iPhone, both in terms of aesthetics and usability, were noted as advantageous factors favoring Apple.

In terms of the purposes for which the iPhone is utilized, participants' daily routines are significant. The device is employed for various purposes, including entertainment, commuting, and work, on a daily basis. Participants expressed that the layout on the iPhone is perceived as more beautiful and intuitive compared to Android devices, which are seen as having lower quality and less intuitive layouts. A notable observation was made regarding the social network Instagram. Participants notice that Apple presents clearer photos in stories, in addition to a higher quality layout when reposting stories, which have square edges, instead of curved ones, as on the iPhone.

Regarding the profile of iPhone users, it is suggested that individuals from Generation Z may comprise a significant portion of the user base for this device and the Apple brand overall. This concentration of users within this demographic group is assumed to be due to the considerable amount of time that Generation Z individuals spend using their devices.

Regarding the consumption behavior of iPhone users, the study confirmed a strong relationship between having a positive experience in areas such as intuitiveness, usability, UI, and aesthetic values, and the development of long-term user loyalty to the product and, consequently, to the brand. This phenomenon can be attributed to the iPhone's user-friendly operating system, which facilitates the efficient completion of daily tasks.

Among the negative aspects of the brand, the price of its products stands out. Participants mentioned a lack of good value for money, as well as concerns about planned obsolescence. Additionally, there were comments regarding the annual updates and releases, which were perceived as not sufficiently innovative to meet users' expectations.

For future developments, it is suggested to investigate the behavior of other demographic groups and explore more segmented Apple products. This could involve studying adults, residents of other regions within the city of Rio de Janeiro, and users of devices such as iPads, Apple Watches, MacBooks, iMacs, among others, with the aim to assess whether the user experience and design consistency remain constant across different products, and whether they have a similar impact on fostering brand loyalty. Furthermore, conducting case analyses of Apple consumers, tracking their journey from initial product purchase to integration into the Apple ecosystem with interconnected devices, could provide valuable insights. Sequential studies of this nature could guide the company in prioritizing strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing the Apple ecosystem, with a focus on design and user experience. This could ultimately lead to the development of strategic priorities that promote a positive impact on ecosystem development, by aligning planning and UX design.

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