

Creative Economy: an urban development strategy in Belo Horizonte

Economia Criativa: uma estratégia de desenvolvimento urbano em Belo Horizonte

Renata de Leorne Salles [1]

Abstract

This article intends to build a basis for reflection on Creative Economy as an urban development strategy, adopted in Brazil in recent decades. An overview will be drawn about the new sector through a bibliographic review, taking as an example the city of Belo Horizonte, state of Minas Gerais, where state and municipal governments have incorporated that segment through cultural public policies aimed at valuing the local plan. The proposals mapped in the capital city will allow us to think about the hypothesis of adopting Creative Economy as a model of economic growth that corroborates the logic of spatial transformation through the practice of local urban entrepreneurship – based on a rentier-financial dynamics –, stimulating new studies in the area.

Keywords: creative economy; urban development; space production; public policy; neoliberal inflection.

Resumo

Este artigo pretende construir uma base de reflexão sobre a Economia Criativa como estratégia de desenvolvimento urbano, adotada no Brasil nas últimas décadas. Será traçado um panorama acerca do novo setor através de uma revisão bibliográfica e, para exemplificar, tomaremos a cidade de Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, onde tal segmento vem sendo incorporado pelos governos estadual e municipal através de políticas públicas culturais visando a valorização do plano local. As propostas mapeadas na capital nos permitirão pensar sobre a hipótese da adoção da Economia Criativa como um modelo de crescimento econômico que corrobora com a lógica de transformação espacial por meio da prática do empreendedorismo urbano local – baseada numa dinâmica rentista-financeira –, incentivando novos estudos na área.

Palavras-chave: economia criativa; desenvolvimento urbano; produção do espaço; política pública; inflexão neoliberal.



Introduction

This article aims to build a basis for reflection on the so-called Creative Economy as an urban development strategy, adopted in Brazil in recent decades. Thus, an overview of the new sector will be outlined through a literature review and, to exemplify, we will take the city of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, where this segment has been incorporated by the state and municipal governments, in recent years, through public policies around culture aiming at valuing the local plan. In this sense, the proposals mapped in the capital will allow us to think about the hypothesis of the adoption of the creative economy as a model of economic growth that corroborates (or not) with the logic of spatial transformation through the practice of local urban entrepreneurship, determined by a rentier-financial dynamics, encouraging new studies in the area. This premise can be seen in several urban policies today in global terms, whose foundation in the neoliberal inflection of global capitalism can establish new conditions of unequal development to the detriment of social and urban welfare policies. The importance of reflection, therefore, concerns the effects promoted by the new sector in the production/restructuring of the contemporary space, in addition to other developments. In this sense, the proposals mapped in the capital of Minas Gerais will allow us to think about the hypothesis of the adoption of the creative economy as a model of economic growth that corroborates (or not) the logic of spatial transformation through the practice of local urban entrepreneurship determined by a rentier-financial dynamics.

As a research methodology, a literature review was carried out on creative economy as an idea disseminated at the international level and incorporated by the Brazilian federal government in the 2010s aiming at the construction of the Creative Brazil project. In this sense, the proposition of public policies focused on this segment is relatively recent (Milan, 2016; Pacheco & Benini, 2015) is perhaps the reason for the scarcity of literature on the subject and, mainly, on the qualitative consequences and effects of actions already implemented. In addition, many cultural and creative activities take place from civil society initiatives without the support of the public authorities, which makes it even more difficult to measure such policies (Ipea, 2013; Milan, 2016). In the case of Belo Horizonte, most studies refer to the metropolitan region and have a macro sociological approach, contemplating more quantitative aspects (Leitão & Machado, 2016; Machado et al., 2016; Fundação João Pinheiro, 2018). Nevertheless, it was possible to identify some proposals already implemented in the city and others in progress, demonstrating that the contributions to the creative sectors seem to be in evidence as we will see later.

It is intended, therefore, to shed light on the discussions about the reproduction of patterns of inequality and socio-spatial segregation, since the new segment may favor groups with intellectual capital and information technologies related to the creative sectors, in addition to the cultural agents already established; to the detriment of broader social interests and the valorization of local cultural specificities,

which allow the opening of new fields for the expansion and circulation of various cultural goods and services.

After this introduction, the definition of Creative Economy and the description of the creative service sectors that compose it will be presented. In subsequent sections, a debate on the production of space in metropolises and its relationship with the expansion of the service sector is proposed, a phenomenon that contributed to making the creative economy an urban development strategy. Next, it proposes the debate on the centrality acquired by culture in contemporaneity, whose relevance was consolidated in favor of increasing local economies through the (re)valorization of cultural heritage and, more recently, the promotion of the creative economy. We will also discuss some international models linked to culture and incorporated by several countries to address the Brazilian historical context only then, to understand how the stimulus to the creative sectors was adopted by the State in the 2000s, linked to social inclusion processes. Finally, we will raise some actions implemented in Belo Horizonte which may serve as a basis for future investigations on the subject.

The concept of Creative Economy

The definition of Creative Economy presented at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) – *Creative Economy: a viable development option* – treats the new segment broadly, whose

main foundation for achieving the desired innovation and development effects would be creativity. Therefore, the new economy is seen as a

[...] strength of contemporary economy and in the understanding that cultural and economic developments do not take place in isolation but integrated as part of a broad process of sustainable development. The Creative Economy incorporates economic, cultural, and social aspects, interacting with technology, intellectual property, and tourism. (UNCTAD, 2012, our translation)

In this sense, we can consider creative economy as a policy that integrates and articulates culture and economy, with creativity as the main engine for the objective socioeconomic development. Thus, through the creation of cultural and creative products and activities that support intellectual property and new information technologies, these are used to increase productivity and efficiency in knowledge-based economies (Florida, Mellander & King, 2015 apud Cauzzi & Valiati, 2016), it is expected to achieve innovation (in the sense of originality), sustainable development and cultural diversity, resources that have been considered essential, in global terms, for the strengthening of local economies.

By proposing economic and cultural development jointly, considering that there is no longer dissociation between these two dimensions, the creative economy suggests a form of connection to the global economic network. Therefore, investing in cultural and creative activities aimed at generating employment and income would be a viable way

to promote development in different locations, considering the growing demand for leisure and entertainment in addition to the emergence of more autonomous cities, capable of dealing with the challenges of contemporaneity (Marx, 2006; Losada, 2018), such as intercity competitiveness, increased cultural and tourist consumption, among others.

Moreover, as the sectors of the creative economy are connected to global workflows and cultural circuits, the importance of this segment within the city is due to the possibility of connecting its workers to the circuits of global capital (Lees; Slater; Wyly, 2008; Sassen, 2005). In this sense, it is assumed that the so-called creative class, composed of members of this new workforce, would be able to promote changes such as innovation, diversity, professional opportunities and, therefore, greater local economic development (Florida, 2002).

It is important to note that the sectors that make up the creative industries are derived from the cultural industries. According to *Framework for Cultural Statistics* by Unesco (2009), they encompass both the dominant/traditional creative sectors of the cultural industry (heritage, arts, literature, and related activities) as well as the sectors of the creative services industry (design, fashion, architecture, etc.), plus new media and technologies and other activities correlated to the cultural and creative industries:

[...] those that combine the creation, production, and marketing of intangible and cultural content by nature, which includes audiovisual products, design, new means of information, the arts

of the show, editorial production, and visual arts. (Ibid., p. 140, our translation)

This material resulted in a kind of tool that, since then, has been serving as the basis for the formulation of public policies directed to the sector. In addition, the UNCTAD (2012) report contributed to the international dissemination of the concept of creative economy tied to the creation of creative symbolic products as essential for the development of nations.

Space restructuring and the expansion of the service sector

If the urban space of the metropolises has been undergoing several socio-spatial and cultural transformations since the last decades of the 20th century, many of them resulting from the insertion of the creative economy within the city, it is worth remembering that this process is related to the restructuring of advanced capitalist economies (Smith, 2007) due to the deindustrialization of cities, which triggered the phenomenon of outsourcing activities, with the growth of service-based economies.

In Brazil in the 1980s, the phenomena of redemocratization and suburbanization, in addition to the economic crisis, corroborated the spatial restructuring of economic activities concomitantly with the outsourcing process, whose service sector began to generate more jobs. Thus, it can be said that the productive activities and services of the creative economy

were expanding and gaining greater economic importance, becoming responsible for promoting several changes in the socio-spatial structures of cities (Caldeira, 1997).

In addition to the migration of capital, through the expansion of economic activity in the urban space, part of the population from the central areas to new emerging centralities was also migrated. Consequently, most of the historical/traditional centers were physically deteriorated and stigmatized by many, with abandoned and/or obsolete buildings due to the decrease in residential function and activities related to the middle and upper layers that occupied such regions. Thus, several processes were initiated to recover such localities.

Smith (2007) discusses the actions of the public authorities directed to the central regions as an expression of the division of labor in the urban space, that is, the emergence of new companies in the service sector in these locations would be determined by the interests of capital. In addition to the rent gap factor, investments for urban centers would be able to contribute to the concentration of advanced services in or near these areas.

In this sense, several cultural public policies have emerged linked to urban interventions and considered as corroborative strategies, aiming at the socioeconomic (re) activation of areas considered degraded, and then recovering them, promoting the occupation of public space, and promoting cultural and tourist consumption, often counting on contributions from the private sector. Therefore, a paradigm shift in the pattern of urban development is demarcated

so that the cultural appeal has become a strategy of investment of the public authorities to promote the desired transformations in the most diverse territories, in search of local growth, besides creating attractive conditions for the performance of the private sector.

However, in most cases, such measures have focused on market interests – profitability, control and security measures, tourism, real estate valuation – generating the commercialization of heritage and cultural activities, offered predominantly to the middle and upper classes of the population, disfavoring the democratization of culture or the implementation of policies that ensure broader social benefits.

The models for fostering the creative economy

The role of culture and its growing commercialization in contemporaneity, at first, were linked to cultural industries and, therefore, with the expansion of this concept, to the creative industries. As Adorno and Horkheimer (1985) points out, culture reveals the structure of social power within capitalist logic, that is, it highlights the hierarchical system that makes up society and, in turn, conforms the spaces of the city. In this sense, we can say that the regulatory economic reasons of the "Cultural Industry" – the authors' name (1947) for the phenomenon then known as "mass culture" – standardize it according to status and, thus, delimit consumption itself by making the subjects objects of this industry.

Such mechanisms, by being incorporated by public policies through planners and urban managers, entail processes of socio-spatial exclusion, as they benefit the classes with greater economic power, besides being systematically reproduced and disseminated with the help of the media, which materialize the discourses of the promoters of such dynamics.

Thus, we can say that the cultural industries, whose production turned to consumption practices in contemporaneity, became a mechanism of (re)production of space. Control instruments (such as the spatial division of labor) are reproduced and materialized in the territory through organizational arrangements of uses and activities/services, which tend to prioritize certain locations in favor of the interests of the actors involved. Therefore, many of the current public policies end up being guided by the demands of private agents and market logics. Thus, such regulatory concepts of cultural and intellectual production were being disseminated and adopted in different urban realities, such as investments aimed at the sectors of the creative economy.

It is also worth mentioning another aspect: the importance of some international organizations in the construction and propagation of economic development models based on culture. The appreciation of heritage (material and intangible) promoted by Unesco (United Nations Educational, Science and Culture Organization) in the 1970s has eased international urban discussions since then, creating models of revitalization of central areas linked to culture – and which were adopted in Latin America

later – generating a worldwide awareness around the maintenance of cultural goods, for the preservation of the memory and history of citizens. In Brazil, in the same period, the anthropological notion of culture was adopted, and the heritage left the artistic and historical spheres and entered the cultural sphere, expanding its content and evolving in this sense (Moreira, 2009).

About the creative economy, debates on the subject have been taking place since 1980. After identifying this segment as essential for the economic development of nations in the context of globalization, a basis was built for the formulation of public policies considering creativity as an anchor, especially for cultural activities. It is noted here, implicit to this new model, a rearticulation between society, economy, and culture, since the incentive to service sectors shows changes related to the process of economic restructuring of cities.

Since then, the promotion of policies in the cultural sphere has gained prominence, contributing to recover the attractiveness of rehabilitated areas and/or increase the competitive intercity market, through the promotion of cultural and tourism consumption (Arantes, 2000), these considered capable of leveraging more investments. Thus, cultural practices, in addition to significantly impacting urban development, acquired a new meaning, becoming a fundamental resource "[...] not only as social practices, but as a key element for the appropriation and transformation of space. Territories are redefined by local decision-makers together with sociocultural organizations" (Corte-Real, 2015, p. 88, our translation).

In Brazil, revaluing territories through cultural policies has become a recurring agenda in urban agendas since the 1980s. At first, the elaborations were made around the cultural heritage, aiming to resume the symbolic and affective references of the population to revalue some regions. Thus, several central areas and/or old industrial areas became the main focuses of urban policies, which began to rely on the private sectors to recover relatively empty and/or abandoned localities aiming at promoting new services and attractive activities, especially for the higher layers of the population.

In addition, issues related to constructed heritage and local cultural identity were also considered to reinvent such urban landscapes. This aestheticism in many cases, has been supported by contemporary artistic manifestations, lasting (such as paintings in buildings) or ephemeral (exhibitions, performances, etc.), held in the public space to create places of visit. An example is the urban art festival called CURA which has been taking place in Belo Horizonte since 2017 through contributions from the municipal government together with private investors to promote street occupation (Veloso & Andrade, 2019).¹ In addition to aesthetic concern, there is an interest in stimulating the appropriation of public space and social interaction (Corte-Real, 2015).

In recent decades and in the face of the consolidation of the processes of deindustrialization and suburbanization of cities, it is possible to note, in general, the displacement of regional economies in the direction of neoliberal capitalism, with the market acting in Latin American cities as never before (Roberts & Wilson, 2009). This fact has

been promoting an economic restructuring of the Brazilian urban space, the effects of which are evident from the change in the productive structure and in the organization of the labor market. We are talking about outsourcing economic activities and services, which gradually transformed the territories into financial and entertainment centers, from the tourist and commercial point of view (Frúgoli Jr., 2000). Therefore, with the expansion of the service economy, the promotion of the creative services sectors has become relevant in the state and municipal urban agendas.

In this sense, investing in the service chain of the creative economy has become fundamental for the development of many cities, since the proposition of public politic renewal soured to culture, in a context whose demand for cultural consumption is increasing, has become a way to prepare the ground for the performance of the real estate market and/or entrepreneurs. However, as this new pattern acquires hegemony, the appropriation of contemporary urban space is the responsibility of private actors, in general, feeding some processes of socio-spatial segregation.

Thus, we can say that the relevance of the creative economy has become the guiding of cultural policies in the most diverse local areas and identifying the promotion of creative sectors in Belo Horizonte seems to reveal the eagerness not only for urban development, but also for the desire to renew the role of the city. Through urban renovations related to culture, the capital of Minas Gerais seems to be seeking to increase its local economy to better articulate itself on a macro level. According to De Marchi (2014) on the Unesco report (2009):

It (report) stated that the creative industries were a strategic means of achieving fairer international trade. With the emergence of globalization and the increasing appreciation of intangible work, a unique opportunity has been created for developing countries to access developed economies through not the export of commodities or disqualified labor but of goods and services with high added value. (De Marchi, 2014, p. 199, our translation)

The previous excerpt raises an important issue as it places the creative economy as a viable opportunity also for developing countries. Thus, the importance of local cultures is put on the agenda – opposing the developmental experience of the industrial period – becoming a way to generate economic growth through public policies capable of promoting connections with the global economic network and, therefore, with developed countries. That's why the valorization of cultural diversity, in global terms, falls within the scope of economic and socially inclusive development strategies.

Creative Nation, an Australian government project implemented in the early 1990s, can be considered the initial milestone in fostering cultural policies based on creative industries. But it was with the experience led by the British Labour Party at the end of the decade that a paradigmatic change was established about the implications of this type of policy for the new sector. In this case, some basic principles of social policies were adopted by the government and submitted to market logic (ibid., 2014).

Thus, cultural production, previously destined to private initiatives (trade/industry), has come to be considered

fundamental for the participation of the population in the public sphere as well as the processes of distribution and consumption of cultural goods. Hence the paradigm shift from traditional "cultural industries" to "creative industries". Activities related to the creative sectors, in this way, began to be considered essential to disseminate culture and increase the british economy in an inclusive way.

With this, the role of culture in society is expanded from the perspective of the State to the extent that "creativity", combined with the generation and exploitation of intellectual property, has become a unique instrument for the creation of products capable of generating jobs and increasing the economy. Analyzing the bias of the economic crisis in Great Britain at the time, which suffered the consequences of deindustrialization, the creative industries offered the opportunity to rebuild the national economy through culture (ibid.), that is, through the production of symbolic goods whose insertion would take place in the global market, with the State as a facilitator, and no longer as a promoter.

The insertion of the creative economy in Brazil

In Brazil, from 1985, when the redemocratization of the country began, the conception of culture adopted by the State began to change. The functionalist perspective was left aside for the adoption of the anthropological concept of the term – culture as a way of life. Thus, from locus to the creation of solidarity or social cohesion (in the durkheimian sense),

culture has come to be considered a key element for the reconstruction of national democracy. In this sense, the new type of ambitious development could only be achieved through the valorization of creative practices of the population (*ibid.*), these linked to local cultures. With this, it would be possible to promote social inclusion and economic growth, in concomitance and without dependence on other countries. It is noteworthy that this period is the creation of the Ministry of Culture (MinC), configuring the kickoff of cultural policies focused on the field of creative activities.

However, it was only with the arrival of the left in power, in 2003, represented by president Lula (PT), that culture as a purpose of national development was adopted.² There was the resumption of the MinC in order to make it responsible for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of cultural public policies, retaking the State its role in the sector.³ The anthropological notion of culture was also recovered, by contemplating its conforming dimensions – culture as symbolic expression, potentiality of economic development and as a right to citizenship – distinct social and minority groups were appreciated (*ibid.*), creating adequate conditions for the proposition of a national policy based on national cultural production, considered as an economic and symbolic asset that generates local development.

Thus, from 2005, the National Culture Plan (PNC) began to be elaborated through several governmental debates with the participation of civil society. The objective was to set goals and guidelines that contemplated the preservation of our cultural diversity through the definition of public actions of culture. Soon, at the end

of 2010, the PNC was approved, in the form of law, situating culture not only within the federal government, but also in the agenda of states, cities and civil society, besides allowing the collaboration of public and private agents to comply with the propositions.⁴

Shortly thereafter, in 2011, the Plan of the Secretariat of the Creative Economy was launched through the MinC (Brasília, 2011). The project contemplated the particularities of the national territory favoring the promotion of cultural and creative activities in congruence with the Brazilian economic potentials. Allied to the intentions of the PT, still in power, it was intended to carry out its own project of creative economy, equating development and social inclusion through the cultural diversity of the country. Considered as a social resource, economic and political asset, it was expected that this diversity would promote the insertion of Brazil in the world economy, although this economic view was not explained in the institutional discourse (Bolaño, Lopes & Santos, 2016).

According to the Plan, four would be the interactive forces capable of promoting a new alternative of economic growth based on a local dynamic for the construction of the Creative Brazil Project: "[...] the flexible organization of production; the diffusion of innovations and knowledge; the change and adaptation of institutions, and the urban development of the territory" (Brasília, 2011, p. 14, our translation).

In this sense, the Plan indicated methodologies and programs for the promotion of propositions of creative territories in places considered, in a way, favorable to corroborate the economy and job creation, prioritizing "[...] the cultural diversity

of the country as a strategy for the production of inclusive and equitable wealth, which is not completely guaranteed in the discourses of international organizations" (Pacheco, Benini & Mariani, 2018, p. 145, our translation).

Still seeking to adapt the imported model to the Brazilian reality, the term "creative industries" was replaced by "creative sectors", contemplating the enterprises in which productive activities come from a creative process (therefore, of individual competence), generator of goods or services whose values are linked to the symbolic (immaterial) dimension.

Thus, by proposing a policy for the promotion of the creative economy in Brazil and adhering to several other ministries, the MinC became the main articulator and agent of national planning and development, "[...] with the mission of transforming Brazilian creativity into innovation and innovation into wealth: cultural wealth, economic wealth, social wealth" (Brasília, 2011, p. 30, our translation). Moreover, culture has become the central pillar in the political and economic context, and the active participation of the State in the regulation of the creative economy is necessary, since we are talking about a context whose desired macroeconomic development should occur together with social inclusion measures.

After this debate on how the international model was adapted and incorporated by the Brazilian government and aiming at possible investigations about the unfolding of creative sectors in the country, it is worth remembering that the recurrence of this pattern of development tends to provoke, in general, urban expropriation, reflecting the interests of globalized capitalism, which incorporates business models in urban

management in favor of economic growth. Thus, urban areas are transformed into modern and profitable spaces. Such processes can be exemplified by the great revitalization projects, the privatization of public spaces, the urban operations, or the promotion of so-called "mega events", causing major changes in the socio-spatial structure of contemporary metropolises. Thus, an urban landscape is produced unrelated to the place, disregarding cultural and local characteristics.

Moreover, with the dismantling of the Social State (retraction of social and labor policies), aggravated after the departure of President Dilma Rousseff (PT), in 2016, in addition to the scarce investments in research, new technologies, and diversification of the economy, it is necessary to understand, again, how culture has been treated. It is important to remember that the flexibilization of the labor force in contemporaneity originates, precisely in the field of culture,⁵ with the restructuring of the capitalist model. Therefore, the promotion of self-employment/informality or the individual form-company/entrepreneurship as an emancipatory means of the subject became the main discourse to value the precariousness of labor relations and the subordination of intellectual production to capital (Bolaño, Lopes & Santos, 2016).

Thus, the generalization of the creative economy, at the global level, seems to legitimize the economic perspective, as evidenced by most institutional discourses focused on the ideals of generating employment and income, opposing the sociocultural development desired by Brazil, at least at first, when the idea of a creative economy was adopted as an inclusive social policy.

The creative sectors in Belo Horizonte

The creative economy has gained worldwide relevance, as it has been considered capable of leveraging a series of joint actions used as urban development strategies in several cities aimed at generating jobs and income. It is noted that the investment in cultural policies often occurs with processes of urban renewal or through the stimulation of cultural production of goods and activities, with the incentive to small production (autonomous professional, microenterprises, community organizations) as a mode of socio productive inclusion of certain groups (Machado, 2016). There are already studies that prove that these sectors have been contributing more and more to gross domestic product according to data collected in several countries (Yúdice, 2008). In Minas Gerais, research indicates that activities related to the creative economy corroborate the increase in the supply of employment in addition to diversifying the state economy (P7 Criativo, 2018).

Thus, we identify the promotion of the creative sectors in Minas Gerais, either through implemented actions or by fostering debates⁶ to diagnose demands and potentialities of the segments that make up the creative economy in the state, we will add the city of Belo Horizonte – where this segment has been receiving investments from the state government, in a more expressive way, since 2015, especially in the central area – to raise some proposals implemented in the capital.

The Codemge Program for Encouraging the Creative Industry, with edicts directed to cultural actions, and the inauguration of

the President Itamar Franco Cultural Center (Figure 1), which houses the Minas Gerais Concert Hall, a high-tech space that promotes large national and international classical music orchestras, as well as socio-educational programs for the formation of a new audience are exemplary. Within this space, there are also the offices of the public broadcasters Rede Minas of Television and Radio Inconfidência (Codemge, 2018).

In 2017, the first creative industry development agency in the state was inaugurated: the Creative P7 (Figure 2). The enterprise is the result of the union between the state government and several institutions.⁷ The move from its head office at the end of 2019 to an iconic building in the city center will allow the agency to offer, in addition to the entire physical structure, a range of activities to support the creative sector, such as training, support programs and financing mechanisms, advice on fundraising, studies and market research, according to the institutional discourse.⁸ Thus, the enterprise has presented itself as a facilitator for companies and professionals, adopting a position of agent responsible for stimulating a new sector, aiming to integrate the creative segment of the state to foster a productive chain of creation and distribution of goods and services based on cultural and intellectual capital for the generation of innovative solutions and jobs. Thus, and with contributions from the private sector, it is intended to promote the economic development of Minas Gerais in search of the promotion of a national and international pole of the creative sectors, expanding the reach of the city in the national and international market.

Figure 1 - President Itamar Franco Cultural Center



Source: Secult (s/d).

Figure 2 – In the center of the image, the building that houses the Creative P7



Source: photo by Ramon Bittencourt.

In 2018, the city hall launched the Creative Horizon program, with the support of the Economic Development Bank of Minas Gerais (BDMG), to create opportunities for professionals and creative economy companies. The first region to receive investments is the Lagoinha neighborhood, located near the center of Belo Horizonte. This locality has been developing actions resulting from civil society initiatives for social benefits, since 2007, with the Viva Lagoinha Project which, in recent years, has gained a new breath. Faced with the dismay of public power and the negative stigmas that have consolidated in the neighborhood since the last decades, this project has tried to bring together local leaders to map the main demands and, thus, promote changes through culture, connecting people linked to the creative economy, cultural heritage, education, etc., to revalue the region.

Since then, in addition to the insertion of some companies and startups in the neighborhood, the place has been moved by artistic and cultural events held in the public space (Figure 3), such as the Urban Art Circuit (CURA Lagoinha 2019), photographic exhibitions (Residents Project), carnival processions, parties organized in partnership with the city hall, among others. In addition, dialogues with some public agencies have generated several improvements in urban infrastructure, in promoting trade and in the training of local entrepreneurs. Health and public health problems of homeless people have also been the target of social programs to address issues such as crack consumption in the region.

Apparently and with the performance of the government in this area as has not been seen for a long time, it is likely that private contributions are already being directed to

Figure 3 – The colorful paintings in some buildings are part of CURA, in the Lagoinha neighborhood



Source: photo by Raquel Freitas.

the region, whose central location seems to be one of the reasons for public efforts aimed at the Lagoinha neighborhood aiming at attracting more investments. In addition, there is already the prediction of tipping some historical buildings to value the local cultural heritage. This scenario seems to fit the urban development molds discussed in this work. Moreover, to contribute to future critical analyses, it is revealed the need to investigate, also, whether the service companies of the creative sectors already installed have generated change, in socioeconomic and/or spatial terms, as expected to occur in the presence of such cultural platforms in strategic locations of the cities.

Final considerations

Reflecting on the effects of the creative economy in the contemporary space has become relevant, as several public policies to foster the new sector have been tied to urban renewal processes, since the last decades, as another strategy of local economic

development. However, it is noted that public-private partnerships or strategic agreements between these spheres, in many cases, are used as marketing to (re)value cultural heritage and rescue social interaction through the insertion of new uses in the public space (Corte-Real, 2015), to achieve competitive advantages in the face of the challenges imposed by globalization, in market terms (Arantes, 2000).

Therefore, the construction of a research base on the insertion of the creative economy in Brazil and, consequently, on how it has been implemented in some metropolises, as in the case of Belo Horizonte, is necessary to understand the possible effects in the urban space of today. The creative sectors can also be efficient in achieving innovative solutions, in economic and socio-spatial terms, contributing to the improvement of urban conditions to promote new sociability and, thus, reformulate the senses of citizenship through a new mode of appropriation of the city, with the inclusion of local communities and creating meanings of belonging for all citizens. But it is necessary to ascertain whether such developments are present in our territory.

[1] <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5722-3753>

Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais, Faculty of Social Sciences, Graduate Program in Social Sciences. Belo Horizonte, MG/Brazil.
renatasalles2020@gmail.com

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Notes

- (1) CURA was the first festival to propose paintings in cables of walls and buildings. Its first edition, in 2017, took place in the city center. To foster the event, which has been taking place every year in Belo Horizonte, several parallel actions are promoted, such as debates, fairs, and parties, encouraging the occupation of the street. See <https://cura.art/>.
- (2) In 1990, when Fernando Collor's neoliberal government became in force, the absence of the State in the field of culture promoted a setback with no continuity in the national culture policy of the previous government of José Sarney. The private actors oversaw fostering the sector, to the detriment of collective well-being, which aggravated the inequalities in the supply of cultural equipment and activities in the country with the prioritization of the Rio-São Paulo axis.
- (3) In 2003, the MinC was restructured and expanded, with six departments.
- (4) The law n. 12.343/2010, approved by Congress in December 2010, defines that the PNC have ten years, that is, until December 2020.
- (5) In 2019, during the current neoliberal management and far-right the president Jair Bolsonaro, the MinC has been officially extinguished, together with the Ministries of Sport and Social Development. The three were incorporated into the Ministry of Citizenship, and then, the Special Secretariat of Culture (old MinC) was created, linked to the Ministry of Tourism, which the National Secretariat for Creative Economy and Cultural Diversity (SECDC) is part of.
- (6) In 2016, João Pinheiro Foundation (FJP) – research and teaching related to the State Secretariat and Planning and Management of Minas Gerais – promoted the Seminar *State Plan for the Creative Economy in Minas Gerais*, together with some state agents and other entities, aiming to find alternatives for economic development based on the demands identified by the creative sectors themselves. In 2018, the FJP promoted *Seminary Return Colloquium State Plan of Creative Economy in Minas Gerais* to advance in the state planning to promote the sectors mentioned.
- (7) In addition to the state, Development Company of Minas Gerais (Codemge), the Support Service for Micro and Small Enterprises of Minas Gerais General (Sebrae Minas), the Federation of Industries of the State of Minas Gerais (Fiemg), the Secretary of State for Economic Development, Science, Technology and Higher Education (Sedectes) and the João Pinheiro Foundation.
- (8) The building of the agency's new office was designed by architect Oscar Niemeyer in the 1950s. It is owned by the government and has housed the former Production Bank of Minas Gerais and the former Bank of the State of Minas Gerais (Bemge). It was overturned by the IEPHA in 2016 and, therefore, recognized as cultural heritage. It was restored by Codemge and reopened in 2019 to house entrepreneurs, *startups*, artists, collectives, investors, public agents, and companies from various segments of the creative economy.

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