

# Creative Economy and Cultural Heritage: A Proposal to Tourism Development and Appreciation of Local Identity

Raquel P. Canaan  <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Universidade do Estado de Minas Gerais, Programa de Pós-Graduação: Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Corresponding author: Raquel.pcanaan@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage refers to characteristics of a particular place that constitute its identity, making them distinguish themselves from others through certain aspects. The addition of cultural value to services is a strategy widely used in social development programs and companies in various sectors of the economy. According to Albagli (2004), the expression "cultural value added" refers to the different characteristics of a given local culture, used to increase the competitiveness that is associated with them. Each time more, this subject has been discussed, on a task of preserving cultural heritage and commitment to find solutions about the future of localities. In this scenario, design as an activity capable of identifying potential in human, cultural, material and economic aspects, developing them in a strategic way, is configured as a way to enhance local identity. This article aims to discuss the importance of creative sectors and their role in valuing local culture and identity, reflecting about possible ways for tourism and strategic planning through design. It is a study that was part of a doctoral research developed in the scope of design to value local resources and presents some of its results. It is expected to be a way of turning the spotlight on heritage assets in order to work towards their enhancement and drive ways of differentiating destinations by bringing out a new way of doing tourism.

*Keywords:* Design, Tourism, Cultural Heritage, Identity, Territories.

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, it can be seen that there has been a change in behavior towards enjoying culture, where a growing portion of the population of emerging countries reserves a larger percentage of their results in exhibitions, entertainment and leisure. An important definition of culture was presented in the Final Document of the Icomos World Conference on Cultural Policies, held in 1982 in Mexico:

“Set of spiritual and material, intellectual and emotional characteristics that define a social group (...) encompassing ways of life, fundamental rights, value system, traditions, beliefs and development as a complex, holistic and multidimensional process that goes beyond economic growth and integrates all the energies of the community (...)” (1985)

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Creative Economy has been much discussed various organizations spheres, such as UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), UNDP (United Nations Development Program) and UNESCO (United Nations for Education, Science and Culture) and, according to the Plan of Brazil's Creative Economy Secretary (2012), has been considered a strategic guideline for the various countries and continents in the new century.

In 2009, UNESCO published a Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS) aimed at economically and socially measuring of culture. This new milestone includes a broader notion of activities related to "production, diffusion and uses of culture", and proposes a classification of cultural activities into two more domains: transversal, which includes education, intangible heritage, preservation; and related, which brings up tourism and sport, which demonstrates the importance of production and transmission cycle of culture.

Machado (2012) states that, despite the abundance of creative talent, rich heritage and cultural diversity, the potential of creative economy in Brazil and throughout Latin America has been underused. In this paper, it is important to point out that Creative Economy is envisioned as a strategy for local development, considering the aspect that will be activated (cultural), but also the economic, social and environmental ones.

Given this scenario, the research that originated this article aimed to investigate the possibilities of development linked to the appreciation of local culture and identity through design and service development. One of the ways found was the tourism sector, which moves millions of people every year but, on the other hand, is still done in many places in a predatory manner. Studies focusing on the sustainable development of tourism, in order to activate almost forgotten aspects of culture and involve the local community in the process, have been increasing every day, bringing to light a new way of doing tourism that away from predatory, encompassing concepts such as experience, sustainability, culturalism, ancestry, among others. The aim of this paper is to present a part of this research, demonstrating the great potential found in the interconnection of concepts as design, identity and culture applied to tourism sector, to be worked out not only in Brazil, but also throughout Latin America, cradle of a very rich and often unknown culture.

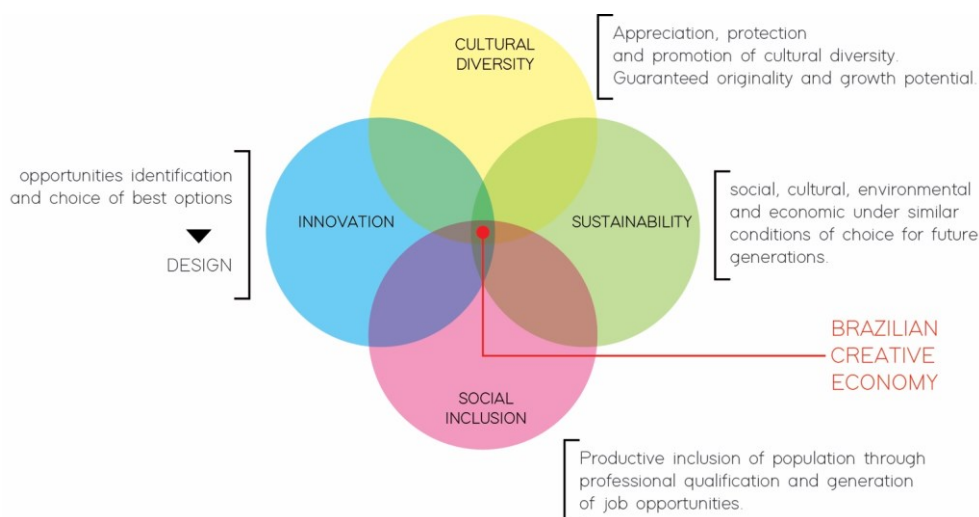
## **1. CREATIVE ECONOMY AS A POSSIBILITY**

According to Acco (2016), a Creative Economy has come to be characterized as a field of activity that employs a large number of people, pays better and grows more like other economic activities, even in the period of world crisis. It is characterized by a more inclusive economy, which has a strong presence of small and medium enterprises, as well as activity

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information, or that provides income for a significant number of people. In addition, its actions can reverberate satisfactory results in other sectors such as education, tourism, science and technology, bring benefits and more easily dialogue with sustainability principles, generating locally relevant impacts and setting them as opportunities for developing countries.

A publication developed by Creative Economy Secretary of Brazil (2011-2014) demonstrates the potential for development of enterprises that involve the creative sector through four guiding principles. Figure 1 has been adapted to represent the possibilities within this project, also demonstrating the ways in which these principles can be worked.



**Figure 1. Creative economy and its main guides.**

The principles are based on the understanding that the Brazilian creative economy has as support and differential the country's cultural diversity and that its creativity as a whole is a process and product of that diversity. Therefore, it is understood that the Creative Economy must be inserted in a dynamic of valorization, promotion and protection of national cultural expressions as a way of guaranteeing their originality, strength and growth potential.

The second principle concerns sustainability and it is understood that development must be built in such a way as to ensure social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability under similar conditions for all. The principle of innovation according to the Creative Economy Plan requires identifying opportunities, choosing better options, taking risks, critical view and strategic thinking, connected to design concepts.

The Brazilian scenario presents a disparity in terms of educational and work opportunities, where access to culture is still precarious and the rate of violence increases every day. The principle of social inclusion then emerges as a fundamental principle to be considered in planning the current scenario of the country. The productive inclusion of the population through vocational training and qualification and the generation of job and income opportunities is an important condition for sustainability.

According to Dias (2006), on 2010 data, the Creative Economy in Brazil already had about 400,000 active companies, which corresponded to 7.8% of Brazilian companies. More than 90% of the enterprises were micro or small, demonstrating the importance of small initiatives in the economy, a fact that should be considered and worked in the sector, because encouraging these small enterprises they will have more chance of sustainability. These operating companies generated a significant amount, which corresponds to more than 11% of the Brazilian economy, plus a potential number. In addition, as previously mentioned, the large contingent of people formally employed in the sector receives around 27% more than the average Brazilian worker. This without considering the informal performance, which is very large.

Paglioto (2016) says that many benefits could be generated by the Creative Economy and it is important to point out some of them here, such as generating quality jobs; growth, income and innovation; expansion of export trade through unique, competitive and high value-added goods and services; fostering environmental sustainability, social and political inclusion and empowerment, including young people and minorities; appreciation of heritage, local values, diversity and cultural identity, among others presented. It can be concluded, then, that the creative economy would be an important way to achieve human and sustainable development. It is a sector that encompasses design as a creative activity and considers its potential to work for territories. Thus, we will present some concepts related to this theory, which justify the choices of this research, encompassing creative activities, especially design, tourism and local development.

## **2. DESIGN CONTRIBUTIONS TO TERRITORY PROJECT**

According to Krucken (2009), in order to boost the territory's resources and value its immaterial cultural heritage, it is essential to recognize and make recognizable local values and qualities. In this context, design enters as a project actor. According to Coelho (2011, p. 205), the design project is associated with the idea of reflecting distinct aspects of a given society. This involves both its history, its culture, its ideologies, added to its architectural

constructions, available materials, which are intrinsically linked to immaterial characteristics.

Magalhães, in the mid-1980s, was already discussing the identity aspects of Brazil and how they could be activated. The author said that “national memory need not be sought. What needs to be done is the mobilization and dynamization of this information, so that they are part of the national life, its history, its present and its future.” (MAGALHÃES, 1985, p.67) Aloísio Magalhães talked a lot about the identity of a place, especially in South America, emphasizing Brazil. The author believed that awareness and recognition of our roots is very important in the cultural process. Moreover, he always pointed out that it is right there, in our roots, that the elements for the conservation and valorization of cultural identity are. His speech remains very current, since one of the major problems that we encounter in country's reality today is the reduction nation's own values, the peculiarities that differentiate its culture, which leads to the loss of local cultural identity.

The act of design as a tool to identify and develop latent potential in the territories, both human, material, environmental, economic and cultural, is a path that is understood as an opportunity for action worldwide, but especially in Brazil Latin America, where there is a large amount of material and human resources that are often under-exploited or under-exploited, and that could be generating more benefit for the communities themselves. Development designed in a sustainable manner, that utilizes available resources responsibly can be a tool for the valorization of territories, bringing a new positioning for small productive groups, communities, organizations. Lucca (2012) states that a territory valorization project should be inclined towards endogenous development through actions internal to the territory and communities.

Manzini (2008) says that it is necessary to promote a balanced interaction between the local dimension and its relationship with the global dimension, in order to value local resources. Design can contribute to the conversion of cultural, environmental, social and economic traits into solutions to promote the territory. Within this aspect was born the concept of design applied to the territory, which is approached by some authors, sometimes with another name to define the term. We chose to bring some of these concepts here, in order to present what is currently discussed and register possible paths.

Eduardo Barroso, Brazilian designer who for some time works and discusses the theme, names it territorial design. He puts it in an oral presentation held in Brazil that this theme of study allows “to deepen the vision of territory as a collective space, rich in possibilities and

meetings, conducive to the creation of new products and services and entrepreneurship.” Still Barroso points out that the development of design projects for the valorization of territories allows the balance between the “needs and desires of its inhabitants with a vision of the future based on their vocations and possibilities.” From their point of view, it is understood that “Territorial design consists of a design methodology whose result is the proposition of a vision of the future about a given geographical space, which takes into account the local vocations, opportunities and desire of its habitants

For him, it is necessary to rescue people's self-esteem to project this vision of the future, desirable and possible. This can be, according to the designer, by discovering the values that define his way of life or by recognizing his unique and differentiating attributes, in order to value his identity and emotional ties to his history and past. Barroso quotes Aloísio de Magalhães saying that the past is inheritance and identity and through this identification a unique and singular reality is built. His way of working proposes to think first of the territory, with its skills and weaknesses, from which to think of the product that is most appropriate to its appreciation.

Design and territory, for Tamborini (2012), means designing and producing. For the author, when making choices and exploring resources in a project, one must keep in mind the territory in question, as well as how to meet the real needs of its inhabitants. Celaschi (2008) corroborates this view by stating that design is characterized as an ability to modify a reality from a programmed action and locally available resources.

Reyes and Borba (2007) state that Territorial Design is concerned with the recognition of internal values, the transformation of the territory into a product, the possibility of communicating it and the potential that the territory has (p.2). For the researchers, the discipline proposes a new way of looking at the development of the territory, which goes beyond a recognition of local community values and refers to a revaluation project within the community itself, in order to be recognized as a local specificity. Thus, for them, the focus of Territorial Design is to recover, enhance, draw, project, articulate values that are now forgotten, organized in a strategic development project (p.8).

Franzato (2008) mentions that Territorial Design has developed a particular approach “that puts it across the various disciplines that traditionally deal with the territory” (p.105). The author points out that the Territorial Project is multi-authored, multidisciplinary and interactive (territory - authors) and that design has been trying, in recent times, to mature its

own vision with its potential to look at the territory with a strategic vision focused on its competitiveness and innovation.

The researcher places Territorial Design as an action research process that aims to “identify and then value the territorial resources that shape the identity of a territory and offer it the best chance for development.” (2008 , p.110) He further mentions that the challenge is to use the typical design methodology to design and innovate the territory, and adds by saying that the discipline approaches the territory in a multidisciplinary way and project using knowledge from other branches of design, such as Design. Services, Communication, Cultural Goods, Experience, among others.

Within the proposal of territory’s aspects valorization, some paths are already outlined for design. It is possible to work towards enhancing identity values without losing local references, such as the knowledge established there, committing to build dialogue between tradition and innovation. In addition, it is possible to activate the identity of territories from cultural, racial and linguistic elements, as well as existing vocations and competences, providing the productive inclusion of individuals in the community and regional development.

Champredone (2011) questions how to mobilize tools for valuing the cultural characteristics of Latin American countries, considering that they are characterized by contrast between territories, domination of multicultural societies and strong presence of more recent migratory currents. Developing and promoting products and services that carry our cultural roots, according to Krucken (2009), is a challenge. However, it is also understood that we have, to our advantage, the great wealth of resources and cultural pluralities that exist.

It is possible to realize that the views presented here, from different researchers who also practice design practice within this theme can be combined, in order to take advantage of the characteristics of each one of them. What is proposed then, with the design applied to the valorization of territory, is to explore its potentiality, which differentiates it from other places, generating value for that place and the people who live there, from the projection logic of design.

### **3. TOURISM AND LOCAL PRACTICE: BENEFITS TO BE GENERATED**

Dias (2006) points out that tourism is inseparable from culture and this becomes more evident at the beginning of this century, due to the increasing awareness that cultural diversity is the main ingredient for the development of the sector, which has become the

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main economic activity. in many regions responsible for job and income generation. In this context, studying how this relationship is established is fundamental to harnessing the possibilities for the growth of sustainable tourism while preserving cultural diversity and making it an effective component of socially just development. "(DIAS , 2006, p.1)

Scótolo and Neto (2015) state that the concern with sustainability and development practices to ensure the balance of a place in terms of equal enjoyment for future generations has had a direct impact on the tourism sector. The activity, as published by the Brazilian Ministry of Tourism, essentially induces and, at the same time, depends on sustainable regional development. Dias (2006) states that tourism is the fastest growing sector of the economy, surpassing even more traditional sectors, such as automotive, electronics and oil, besides being considered the main world economic activity.

The economic potential of tourism, related to employment and income, as cited by Merigue (2005), has been a source of attraction for most governments in the world, that consider the activity a strategic instrument of relative importance in overcoming social problems (p.9). Gomes, Coriolano and Portugues (2014) point out that tourism involves people and actions in the most varied sectors of economy and, therefore, needs planning with objectives that meet the needs of the people involved, whether residents, visitors or entrepreneurs of given destination.

The document *Tourism is Wealth* cites, among the good practices of tourism, the conservation of heritage, as practiced in Mexico, where young Mayan descendants were taught to carve figures of gods according to traditional customs, and these objects are much sought after by foreign tourists in the area. While earning a living, these young people discover the art and religion of their ancestors.

This is one of the examples of sustainability and cultural valorization combined with the social and productive inclusion of local actors, which generates economic returns. Currently, there is the rise of sustainable tourism development, seeking a closer relationship of visitors with culture, nature and the local population. This is because tourism as an activity is capable of involving the aspects of human existence and its surroundings, transforming natural resources and tangible and intangible heritage into a products or services, generating work and income.

From the moment visitors get to know the local culture better (history, art, music, food, religion, language, among others), this factor renews the pride of population for its culture



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and at the same time, strengthens local identity, local actors start to create and spread new ideas and values, appropriating the local culture, which remains and renews itself. New services can be deployed and improve not only the tourist experience but also the life of local population. Tourism enables a greater cultural exchange between different peoples, which increases tolerance and understanding between them. (DIAS, 2006)

According to Dias (2006), using culture as a tourist attraction has implied the growth of tourism and that, when well planned, the activity can promote local development by increasing the income with the expenses made by visitors in local commerce, in the means of lodging, in restaurants, in stores. (DIAS, 2006)

According to Dias (2006), cultural heritage of any kind constitutes an economic resource that can be used by tourism as a tool for development. The author also points out that the activation of heritage for tourist attraction, in order to generate an economic movement that contributes to local development, is a little addressed bias on tourism. The partnership between design and tourism is still little explored and, according to the studies developed in this research, it is clear that it is a partnership with great potential in terms of spreading the attractions of a territory.

Nascimento et al (2012) mentions that an authentic experience of local reality, exchanging knowledge with the visiting community, can contribute to the intellectual enrichment of the visitor. In addition, the possibility of recovering manifestations, such as artisanal practices, dances, songs, parties, which had significance at a given time is very valuable to both the community and Brazilian culture. Although they may have their meaning changed for tourism exploration, they are legitimate manifestations of Brazilian cultural diversity and, when presented to tourism, can become a source of income for various population groups. (DIAS, 2006)

From the study developed in this research, it was possible to confirm the potential of tourism for income generation and local appreciation, if conducted correctly, to provide the place and the people who live there, a higher quality of life, which means that The benefits that can be generated will impact both tourists and the local population and the possibility of improving this service through design. The application of design in the tourism sector is practicable and desired, providing an opportunity for improving the quality of service, as well as the appreciation of territories, benefiting the local community. This does not mean that tourism is the immediate solution to economic problems, but it can be an important activity complementary to the income of local actors.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

With the economic valorization of places, the dynamization of local commerce and services, new jobs are generated and the population's income is increased (DIAS, 2006). By activating the place's cultural potential, the pride of receiving communities in relation to its heritage is strengthened, which also strengthens its cultural identity. Dias (2006) also states that tourism finds new functions for cultural goods, so as to make them a valid instrument for sustainable development, and the result is the cultural and spiritual enrichment of all involved, not only tourists, like the locals too.

The insertion of a locality in the tourism market is nowadays a development strategy that, if properly planned, has everything to be successful due to the growth potential of the sector. In the cultural context, the stimulus given by the tourist activity contributes to the rescue of many traditions and customs that may be getting lost.

Some trends found throughout the research bring the possibility of territory development through culture and identity, such as the offer of cultural attractions, like events and festivals. They are one of the ways to add cultural value to public spaces and expand the number of cultural attractions possibilities, including folklore, festivals, craft fairs, gastronomy, among others, as a way for tourism to spread beyond the major centers.

Local development through tourism, according to many authors studied, can enable the strengthening of local identities without impairing their existence or changing their characteristics, contributing positively to local development, as well as minimizing possible negative impacts of tourism activity.

The design approach applied to the territory aims to benefit both producers and consumers. For this, it is necessary to plan actions at the systemic level, through the collaboration of several areas and the establishment of favorable networks for local development, with emphasis on small producers. In addition to producing according to local potential and characteristics, small associated producers are stronger because they do not rely on a single production to place the product on the market, which reduces the risks. Small actions on a local scale have the potential to bring about greater change that can reverberate throughout the locality.

Design then acts to interpret emerging values and apply promising technological capabilities, leading to innovation. To promote the design of sustainable and innovative solutions, it is necessary to develop a systemic vision and integrate competences of various actors in the territory project, where the designer assumes the role of facilitator of collaborative

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innovations, promoting interactions in society. Design is inserted in context so that it considers products, processes and relationships that develop locally and acts as a manager, strategically, tactically and operationally. This view facilitates the understanding of the scenario and application of design in all its spheres in the search for differentiation, market positioning, cost reduction, among others.

The studies developed so far show that it is possible, through design strategies, to preserve and develop the memory of a place, its contemporary and historical characteristics, as well as iconography and popular imagination, ways of doing, thinking and living through actions with a design project focused on the tourism experience. There is a long way to go, but it is possible to work with the community by activating its potential and self-esteem, following this path in a sustainable way.

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