



The Integrated Administrative Development Region of the Petrolina/PE - Juazeiro/BA hub, Brazil and its creative cities

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ABSTRACT

The creative city is one of the ways found by UNESCO to highlight new ways for cities to carry out their economic processes, related to or applied to the routines of regions. The aim of this study was to identify the characteristics that make the Integrated Economic Development Region (RIDE) of the Petrolina (PE) - Juazeiro (BA) hub a potential candidate for a place in the select group of the Creative Cities Network (CCN) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In addition, the aim was to point out the benefits of the region's inclusion in this Network which, among other objectives, seeks cooperation between cities, cultural, tourist, creative and economic development and the reduction of social inequalities through the Creative Economy. This is a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive and bibliographical study, which used a systematic literature review (SLR) to meet relevant criteria. The main findings indicate that the RIDE region of Petrolina has characteristics and elements such as transport infrastructure and socio-environmental and cultural potential, that could make it a hub region for creative economic development.

RESUMO

A cidade criativa é uma das formas encontradas pela UNESCO de ressaltar novas maneiras de as cidades realizarem seus processos econômicos, relacionados ou aplicados nas rotinas das regiões. O objetivo deste estudo foi identificar as características que fazem da Região Integrada de Desenvolvimento Econômico (RIDE) do Polo Petrolina (PE) – Juazeiro (BA) uma potencial candidata a uma vaga no seleto grupo da Rede de Cidades Criativas - RCC da Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, Ciência e a Cultura (UNESCO). Complementarmente, pretendeu-se apontar os benefícios da inserção da região nessa Rede que, entre outros objetivos, busca a cooperação entre as cidades, o desenvolvimento cultural, turístico, criativo, econômico e a diminuição das desigualdades sociais, através da Economia Criativa. Desse modo, trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, exploratória, descritiva e bibliográfica, em que para seu desenvolvimento utilizou-se a revisão sistemática de literatura (RSL) com vistas a atender a critérios relevantes. Os principais achados apontam que a região da RIDE de Petrolina possui características e elementos como infraestrutura de transporte e potencial socioambiental e cultural, que podem torná-la uma região polo de desenvolvimento econômico criativo.

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Introduction

The world is undergoing major transformations caused by the advance of technology, where social inequalities are growing and jobs are being reduced as people are often replaced by machines. These changes have increased the need to reinvent societies and ways of promoting a sustainable world.

Although Brazil is considered by many experts to be the world's leading country in terms of natural beauty, according to the World Economic Forum, it is only in 32nd place when it comes to the number of foreign tourists (Resende, 2019).

In this regard, applications are open annually for the Creative Cities Network (CCN) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "The promotion of cooperative actions at an international level is one of the objectives of the CCN", in order to establish joint policies in which "the cities involved can interact in favor of creative investments aimed at urban development and sustainability, social inclusion and cultural dissemination" (Mirshawaka, 2017, p. 94).

Among the main benefits of the cities' participation in the program, we can mention the promotion of tourism, the strengthening of cultural activities, the protection of public goods, urban equipment, historical heritage and the stimulation of the Creative Economy, conceptualized by Howkins (2013) as one of the measurements of the use of intellectual activities within the economic environment. Also, according to Soete (2018), this economic methodology promotes a new observation of the market regarding the process of using resources beyond those measured by products.

One of the forerunners of this concept was Landry and Bianchini (1998), in a work entitled *The Creative City*. The authors argued that creativity has become an important aspect for cities today and that creativity is a central quality for economic success and should therefore be used to solve problems in urban life. For the authors, cities need to think beyond the traditional, especially when it comes to professional specializations. The authors' perception is that creativity has always been central to any city throughout history, but that the process of deindustrialization increases the need to use creativity in the search for new products and services.

Landry and Bianchini (1998) explain that a new set of problems has appeared on the urban agenda in recent decades, including new work rhythms that go beyond the logic of the factory and the traditional office, an increase in violence and insecurity in cities, greater access to information, while the effects of globalization are also present, such as an increase in poverty. For the authors, this is a period of transition that requires a new look at urban life, with greater creativity.

The authors also point out that the industries of the 18th and 19th centuries relied heavily on raw materials and the development of machinery. The industries of the 21st century, on the other hand, depend on innovation and the development of information and communication

technologies, which in turn require creativity and knowledge management. This requires an interdisciplinary view of the world and holistic thinking about human life, breaking with the traditional.

In this scenario, cities need to place their universities and research centers at a strategic point, because they are the spaces in which innovation is created. In this context, the industries themselves move from being mere producers of goods to producing innovative knowledge.

Landry and Bianchini (1998) show that, throughout history, cities have been living spaces par excellence. But today, based on the concept of the creative city, they have become spaces for people to experience life. The city also becomes an aesthetic movement, in which individuals co-create and recreate themselves in the urban space.

The Creative Economy in Brazil is not consistently defined or measured. Increased strategic awareness of the Creative Economy has resulted in a plethora of approaches, notably in 2011, with the creation of the Creative Economy Secretariat (SEC), subordinate to the Ministry of Culture, which led to the development of the Creative Economy Secretariat Plan for the period 2011-2014. Within the federal government, the document was classified as an inter-ministerial plan, articulating various institutional partners, development agencies, bilateral and multilateral agencies (Howkins, 2013).

In addition to the two cities, the RIDE of the Petrolina-Juazeiro hub is made up of Casa Nova, Curaçá and Sobradinho, in the state of Bahia; Lagoa Grande, Orocó and Santa Maria da Boa Vista, in the state of Pernambuco. It was established by Complementary Law No. 113/2001 and regulated by Decree No. 4.366/2002, with the aim of articulating and harmonizing the administrative actions of the Union, states and municipalities to promote projects aimed at economic dynamism and the provision of infrastructures necessary for development on a regional scale (Brasil, 2015).

Strategically located, the RIDE serves as a link between various regions of the country and has a total area of 33,442 km² (Brasil, 2015). It is important to note that by law, only these cities are part of the RIDE, but in practice, around 50 cities within a radius of 300 kilometers from the conurbation of Petrolina (PE) and Juazeiro (BA) depend on the region and vice versa.

With regard to the Integrated and Sustainable Action Plan for the Petrolina - Juazeiro RIDE, drawn up by the Ministry of National Integration in 2010, the creation law “prioritizes investment in resources for projects with an emphasis on irrigation, water resources, tourism, agrarian reform, the environment, transport systems, the others relating to basic infrastructure and job creation” (Brasil, 2010, p. 27).

In order to provide opportunities for economic development by diversifying the systematic structure of the organizations that participate and share these objectives, RIDE promotes actions aimed at these goals as a way for the Federal Government and the São Francisco and Parnaíba Valley Development Company (CODEVASF) to promote internal performance capable of stimulating creative cities and coastal capitals. In this sense, “such

advances represent a nature that promotes the development of these cities, based on the assumption that they should act to strengthen these municipalities” (Brasil, 2010, p. 40).

Regulated by Complementary Law No. 113/2001, as well as Decree No. 4.366/2002, the RIDE of the Petrolina hub includes eight municipalities which, through these laws, have their administrative activities maintained in coordination between the federal entities. In this context, there is joint action between the municipal, state and federal spheres in order to promote the development of infrastructure and economic and cultural diversification aimed at the evolution of the respective regional projects (BRASIL, 2015). According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the population of the RIDE in 2010 was 686,410 inhabitants, spread across its eight municipalities (BRASIL, 2010), a population which has been increasing, being estimated at 779,351 inhabitants in 2017 (Brasil, 2018).

Considered to be a prosperous and innovative region, the RIDE still encounters difficulties in resolving problems that involve the common interests of the federal entities that make it up, including the public transport system, public safety, the conservation of public goods and urban equipment, the protection of historical and cultural heritage and the promotion of the Creative Economy.

Thus, in the area that is the subject of this study, there is a great deal of natural and cultural potential, but little use is made of it by the managers and the population of the cities belonging to the RIDE. We therefore sought to question what the region has in the way of attractions that could put it in a position to take part in UNESCO's Creative Cities Network and what benefits could be enjoyed by the populations of the cities if it were to be included.

Given this context, the aim of this work was to demonstrate to the managers and society in general of the cities belonging to the Integrated Administrative Development Region (RIDE) of the Petrolina (PE) - Juazeiro (BA) hub the relevance of applying, as an Integrated Development Region, to UNESCO's Creative Cities Network. The objectives of the work are directly linked to the promotion of economic, social and environmental sustainability and aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Theoretical framework

One of the main aspects underpinning this study is a presentation of the main characteristics of the economy in creative cities, promoting an assessment of how economic issues directly influence the process of understanding a city as creative. The creative city is one of the ways found by UNESCO to highlight new ways for cities to carry out their economic processes, related to or applied to the routines of the regions. It is understood that in locations where economic activities are promoted without a productive or industrial nature, through the intellectual actions of individuals, they come to be understood as a different form of economy.

In Table 1, we describe some general information about the municipalities in the region of our object of study in order to contextualize this area as a possible creative region:

Table 1.

General information on the municipalities belonging to RIDE Petrolina - Juazeiro.

MUNICIPALITY	AREA KM ² (2016)	POPULATION (2010)	ESTIMATED POPULATION (2017)	GDP (2015) X 1000	R\$ GDP CAPITA (2015)	PER R\$
Casa Nova (BA)	9,647	64,940	73,382	541,675	7,505	
Curaçá (BA)	5,935	32,168	35,524	258,510	7,342	
Juazeiro (BA)	6,721	197,965	221,773	3,131,076	14,241	
Lagoa Grande (PE)	1,850	22,760	25,294	254,805	10,292	
Orocó (PE)	554	13,180	14,794	154,974	10,728	
Petrolina (PE)	4,561	293,962	343,219	5,533,900	16,670	
Santa Maria da Boa Vista (PE)	3,000	39,435	41,652	471,365	11,415	
Sobradinho (BA)	1,154	22,000	23,713	362,188	15,358	
TOTAL	33,442	686,410	779,351	10,708,493	11,693*	

Note: Brazil (2010, 2015, 2018, online).

*Average.

A city can be understood as a set of social relationships. Different societies and various groups within them tend to have very different social networks, which is why understanding this diversity is important. In many so-called slum clearance projects, it is often assumed that better physical conditions in new public buildings or apartments would lead to improvements in social conditions, while the importance of social networks has been ignored (Mehedff, 2012). Thus, preserving social networks later became much more important to some residents than physically improved housing in less accessible locations with less space for social relationships.

According to Lerner (2011), the creative city must know how to detect its problems in any order, study them, evaluate them and carry out the corresponding actions, and these, in turn, must be creative. All creativity presupposes a change that responds to a project, and this is inscribed in a context. There is another way in which cities are defined and known as creative: by exploiting their existing resources or putting their potential into play. A city must not fail to value its history, its traditions, but must activate them to a degree of perfection and historical memory and, at the same time, through innovation, update their meaning, anticipate the future by remembering it.

In the view of Reis and Kageyama (2011), the so-called creative city is one that takes advantage of all aspects of society (culture, economy, innovation, opportunity) to promote profitable activities or a return to the point of social equilibrium. The authors consider it to be one of the current ways of observing new opportunities within the business field, improving the process of products or services according to the intellectual aspect.

Among the main Creative Cities in the world that are part of UNESCO's CCR are: Fortaleza, Belém, Salvador, João Pessoa, Florianópolis, Curitiba, Brasília, Paraty, Santos and

Belo Horizonte. These are all Brazilian cities which, due to the economy or business routines applied, have become fundamental to the management or organizational forms of these cities being considered creative.

Creative cities benefit from their historical importance as a geographical and economic focal point. According to Reis and Kageyama (2011), a creative city should be focused on establishing a process that guarantees demographic integration and the stimulation of people and companies that care about issues such as cultural values, community, attention, justice, innovation, gender, racial and religious equity, thus generating a value-based economy.

According to Florida (2012), the idea of the Creative City is the policy of the day, on everyone's menu, and raises some questions: What's not to like? Who would want to be a 'non-creative city'? What if we could be the most outstanding creative city among many others? In a world where many cities have suffered from deindustrialization or mass immigration, there has been a disbelief in the traditional economic bases to deliver; the desire of the majority is to attract the dwindling stock of mobile foreign direct investment and therefore generate new jobs.

Creative cities in the modern world are typically organized around production systems marked by shifting inter-firm networks and flexible labour markets of the types described above. These structures provide an essential basis for high levels of information generation and exchange, and for frequent experimentation by individual companies in relation to industrial processes and products (Reis, 2017). The very fluidity of city economies like these means that the companies and workers that make them up are constantly in contact with each other in ways that help unleash diverse innovative energies.

One of the most observed aspects in the development process of a creative city is the cultural process, since these have an impact on the region's economic process. For Silva (2012b), culture is one of the main contributors to creative economies, since by promoting events within the cultural sphere, a city can achieve financial stability or even evolve economically.

One of the main ways of evaluating culture as an economic instrument can be exemplified by the carnival in Rio de Janeiro, where a large part of the economic progress occurs with the development of carnival programs. Matos (2017) points out that the creative economy in the case of regions where cultural traits are expressive has been growing, providing an opportunity for financial stability in many places.

Still on the subject of creative economic aspects, it can be seen that gastronomy is also a way of promoting a turnover of consumption linked to local culture, giving cities an economic base that is considered stable (Santos; Pinto; Guerreiro, 2016). Gastronomy is an important cultural manifestation, in which cuisine is a symbol of culture, memory and also the identity of a people, so much so that it has been recognized as cultural heritage, which contributes directly

to the process of valuing cultural tourism, as it offers unique experiences to tourists and contributes to the permanence of regional cuisines (Pires; Queiroz; Rodrigues, 2013).

Reis (2008) also believes that gastronomy goes beyond the kitchen, which he defines as an improvement in food that has passed through the kitchen stage and reached a level of specialization never seen before. Food, an action of culture on food, gains distance from nature as this transformation becomes more complex. Gastronomic practice expresses everyday life: Work, health, the political moment, ideological conflicts, inflation, famine, bonanza, cultural heritage and customs. Many people now define themselves as vegetarians, carnivores, macrobiotics, among others.

In view of the information presented, it can be seen that in the gastronomic market some processes are fundamental and must be duly observed by managers, as is the case with the menu and the particularities of the places where the ventures will be established (Richards, 2010).

Just like any other activity, cooking requires certain precautions and practices in order to minimize the contamination of the food or products used in the preparation of dishes. There are many cases of people contracting diseases after eating contaminated or poorly preserved food. It is worth noting that, according to the points made by Vieira (2013), the economic conditions and procedures brought about by the cities highlighted throughout this article present all the conditions or requests to be included in the process of identification as creative cities.

Methodology

Geographical location

One of the theoretical contributions used as a basis for this research is the book by Mirshawaka (2017), entitled *Creative Cities*. In it, the author presents the results of a series of studies focused on creative cities in the global context, ranging from a literature review on concepts, applicability and elements of cities considered creative, to studies focused on the transformations that hundreds of cities around the world have undergone to earn their Creative Cities titles.

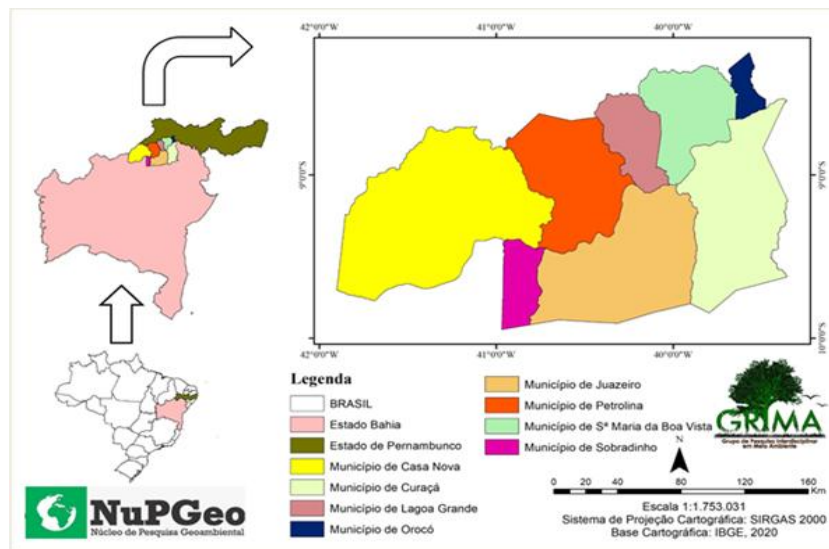
In addition to Mirshawaka's work (2017), the research used scientific articles from the systematic literature review, secondary data such as news published in the regional media, consultation of specialized tourism websites, public documents made available on the internet, data, photographs and documents collected during data collection activities in the field.

In addition to the two cities, the RIDE of the Petrolina - Juazeiro hub is made up of Casa Nova, Curaçá and Sobradinho, in the state of Bahia; Lagoa Grande, Orocó and Santa Maria da Boa Vista, in the state of Pernambuco. It was established by Complementary Law No. 113/2001 and regulated by Decree No. 4.366/2002, with the aim of articulating and

harmonizing the administrative actions of the Union, the states and the municipalities to promote projects aimed at boosting the economy and providing the necessary infrastructure for development on a regional scale (Brasil, 2015).

Figure 1 shows the cities that make up the Ride and makes it possible to see where creative cities are being applied in Brazil.

Figure 1.
Cities that make up the RIDE.



Source: Research data (2022).

As far as the objectives are concerned, this study can be considered descriptive, in terms of the concepts recovered on the subject of Creative Cities and Creative Economy; it is also informative, since one of its objectives is to inform managers and the population belonging to the RIDE of the Petrolina - Juazeiro hub of the possibilities and benefits of the region participating in UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, and it can be considered qualitative.

The first step in constructing the study was to carry out a bibliographical survey on UNESCO's Creative Cities Network and the characteristics that give cities this status.

Once the concepts and norms stage had been completed, further secondary research was carried out on websites and newspapers about participation in the network and examples of cities that have had major transformations in their social context through creativity.

The third step was to carry out a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on the subject, covering scientific articles published between 2015 and 2020, with a focus on Brazilian Creative Cities, in order to fulfill the objectives proposed for the study.

As for the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) articles, Van Wee and Nanister (2015) cited by Loureiro et al. (2016) point out that "they are useful for both researchers and readers because they provide a general, up-to-date and structured overview of a specific area of knowledge". The SciELO platform and Google Scholar were used for the RSL.

The following steps were followed in the databases: first, the platform's search area was accessed, where the keywords “Creative City” were used in the “with all words” field, in quotation marks, the “anywhere in the article” field was checked and the “include patentees” and “include citations” fields were unchecked, giving a total of 1,640 papers.

Exclusion criteria were publications prior to 2015 and published in a language other than Portuguese, resulting in a new number of 891 papers. The next step was to mark the field “in the title of the article” in order to accurately search for actions aimed directly at the subject, resulting in 46 papers.

The next step was to read the titles and abstracts of the papers selected so far, excluding materials other than scientific articles that were not linked to the experiences of Brazilian cities with UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, resulting in 5 articles. The following table shows the exclusion criteria and the number of papers selected.

Table 2.
Criteria used in the Systematic Literature Review

ORDER	EXCLUSION CRITERIA	NO. OF WORKS SELECTED
1 st	The platform's advanced search area was accessed, where the keywords “Creative City” were used in the “with all words” field, in quotation marks, the “anywhere in the article” field was checked and the “include patentees” and “include citations” fields were unchecked.	1,640
2 nd	Publications prior to 2015 and published in languages other than Portuguese were excluded (due to the fact that the research focused on the applicability of genuinely Brazilian experiences).	891
3 rd	Marking the field “in the title of the article” in order to accurately search for actions directly related to the topic.	46
4 th	Reading the titles and abstracts of the papers selected so far, excluding materials other than scientific articles and which were not properly linked to the experiences of Brazilian cities with UNESCO's Creative Cities Network.	5

Source: Research data (2022).

The aim of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was to bring the study up to date, including contributions from recent publications (from the last 5 years) which were in line with the objectives of this study. Chart 1 lists the papers, organized by year, title, authors, type, source and Qualis CAPES:

Chart 1.**Relação dos artigos utilizados na Revisão Sistemática de Literatura**

TITLE	AUTHORS	YEAR	TYPE	SOURCE
History of the city of Juazeiro da Bahia	COSTA, Rosy.	2015	Article	SciELO
In the São Francisco Valley, the Agro Census collects data on fruit that is making its way around the world.	LIMA, Alana.	2017	Monograph	SciELO
Creative cities: Talents, technology, treasures, tolerance. Vol. 1.	MIRSHAWAKA, Victor.	2017	Book	

Source: Research data (2022).

As we have seen, there is not a great deal of literature on the subject, precisely because it is an innovative topic for Brazil. However, the texts analyzed are optimistic about the possible consequences of applying creative city practices.

The data was analyzed qualitatively, contextualizing the results with the objectives of the study, always taking into account the regional aspects that served to guide the researchers on the practical applications of the study in the RIDE of the Petrolina - Juazeiro hub.

According to Closs and Oliveira (2014), regional issues are the main impact when it comes to the economy and the creative city, giving even greater success to the work or enterprise developed in the intellectual field. We therefore highlight which instruments or business processes are relevant methodologies for creative cities in UNESCO's view.

Results and discussions

The creative potential of the RIDE Petrolina - Juazeiro cities.

Irrigated fruit growing

The region is a hub for the technological development of irrigated fruit growing, making it the largest fruit exporter in the country (BRASIL, 2015, online). The vast majority of fruit is planted and harvested in the various Irrigation Projects (IP) spread across the territory of the municipalities belonging to the RIDE, demonstrating the great financial and social importance of rural areas. According to data from CODEVASF:

In economic terms, in 2016, the most significant results in terms of Gross Production Value were the Senador Nilo Coelho IP (R\$ 1.39 billion), Curaçá (R\$ 135 million), Manicoba (R\$ 116 million), Tourão (R\$ 101 million), Bebedouro (R\$ 44 million) and Mandacaru (R\$ 9 million). It is estimated that these irrigation projects currently generate around 81,000 indirect jobs and 54,000 direct jobs, totaling 135,000 jobs in 2016 (Lima, 2017, s.p. online).

The job creation provided by irrigated fruit growing keeps residents in the region and attracts outsiders looking for work opportunities. It is estimated that more than 130,000 direct and indirect jobs are generated in the region's irrigation projects alone. According to 2010 estimates, more than 20,000 jobs are generated by irrigated fruit growing outside the IPs (Brasil, 2010).

In addition to generating jobs and the development brought about by irrigated fruit growing, the local population can benefit from the quality of the fruit produced and sold at fair prices in the region's markets and supermarkets, raising the quality of life of the RIDE population.

The wine-growing area

Recently, RIDE Petrolina - Juazeiro became Brazil's second largest wine-growing area, with an annual production of 7 million liters of wine or 15% of national production. Of this percentage, 30% are fine wines, awarded nationally and internationally, produced in the eight wineries located in the municipalities of Lagoa Grande-PE, Santa Maria da Boa Vista - PE and Casa Nova - BA (Brasil, 2015, online).

It's important to note that none of the wineries installed in the region operate in the cities of Petrolina - PE or Juazeiro - BA, reinforcing the idea that all the cities belonging to the RIDE are of great importance to regional development. In addition to the wines and sparkling wines produced and sold to the domestic and foreign markets, these cities also boost the RIDE's economy through trade, tourism and related products.

Transport infrastructure

The RIDE has the infrastructure of Petrolina International Airport, the São Francisco River Waterway, with Lake Sobradinho (one of the largest artificial lakes in the world) and road connections to the main capitals of the Northeast (Brasil, 2015). Crossed by BRs 122, 235 and 407, which also give access to other important highways in the country, the region sees a lot of traffic on the Presidente Eurico Gaspar Dutra bridge, which connects the cities of Petrolina-PE and Juazeiro - BA, with a daily traffic of 38,000 vehicles (Brasil, 2010).

Senador Nilo Coelho Airport was created in 1941 and its construction was completed in 2004 (Brasil, 2010, p. 95). As well as representing another major axis of development through the rapid movement of passengers, it is also home to much of the region's fruit production, which is exported to Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. According to Neves (2016, online), the airport has the second longest runway in the Northeast region, with a length of 3,250 meters and the capacity to receive large cargo planes, such as the Boeing 747-400, which can carry more than 100 tons at a time, with a flight autonomy of 13 hours.

The medical-hospital hub

The health sector also deserves special mention in the Petrolina - Juazeiro RIDE, as it attracts thousands of patients every day from various cities in the region, seeking out the public and private health networks. As well as generating thousands of jobs, it attracts investment and contributes to improving the population's quality of life.

According to the Brazilian Hospital Services Company (EBSERH) (2018, online), the Petrolina University Hospital is the largest hospital unit in the RIDE and serves as a reference for a population of approximately 2,068,000 inhabitants spread across 53 municipalities in the states of Pernambuco and Bahia. Together with the HU's Polyclinic, they are part of the Unified Health System (SUS) and are fields of study for health courses run not only by the Federal University of the São Francisco Valley (*Universidade Federal do Vale do São Francisco*), but also by other higher education institutions and health technical schools in the region.

According to the RIDE Petrolina Juazeiro Integrated Action Plan (Brasil, 2010, 108), in 2007 the region already had 25 hospital units and 1,160 hospital beds, with around 86% of these beds located in the cities of Petrolina-PE and Juazeiro-BA.

The educational hub

Education is one of the main axes of development in the RIDE and attracts students from various regions of the country. The region stands out for the number of places on offer at public and private secondary, technical and higher education institutions and for the quality of the courses certified by the Ministry of Education (MEC). Meeting the demands of public transportation for all these students requires harmony between public authorities, operators and users of the public transportation system.

The main universities located in the RIDE include: The Federal University of the São Francisco Valley (*Universidade Federal do Vale do São Francisco* - UNIVASF), the Petrolina Faculty of Applied Sciences (*Faculdade de Petrolina* - FACAPE) and the campuses of the University of Pernambuco (*Universidade de Pernambuco* - UPE) and the State University of Bahia (*Universidade do Estado da Bahia* - UNEB), based in Petrolina and Juazeiro, respectively. The Federal Institutes of Science and Technology (IFs) are also present in the region, offering secondary, technical and short-term vocational education, undergraduate and postgraduate courses, both lato and stricto sensu, as well as numerous private colleges.

The region also has a wide range of technical and vocational courses. The “S” System, defined as “the set of organizations of corporate entities focused on professional training, social assistance, consulting, research and technical assistance, formed by entities that, in addition to having their name beginning with the letter S, have common roots and similar

organizational characteristics” (Brasil, 2018, n. p., online), trains professionals for the job market. Institutions such as the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae), the National Industrial Apprenticeship Service (Senai), the Commerce Social Service (Sesc), the Industry Social Service (Sesi), the National Commerce Apprenticeship Service (Senac) and the Transportation Social Service (Sest) offer health, education, sports and cultural services to the community in general, in addition to vocational courses.

The wealth of culture and heritage

Throughout the year, important cultural events take place in all the cities of the RIDE, ranging from religious events to popular festivals, especially the “Nossa Senhora da Grotta” festival and carnival in Juazeiro - BA; the “São João Festival” in Petrolina - PE; the “Grape Festival” in Lagoa Grande - PE; the “Festa dos Vaqueiros” and the pilgrimage to the “Gruta de Patamutê” in Curaçá - BA; the “Serenata da Saudade” in Santa Maria da Boa Vista - PE; the “Orocó - PE Cultural Festival”; the “Forró do Vaqueiro” in Sobradinho - BA; and the “Festa do Interior” in Casa Nova - BA. As well as boosting the local economy, these festivities help to publicize the towns and maintain a regional identity.

The “Juazeiro Carnival” was made official in 1914 (Costa, 2015), with great artistic performances, street blocks and electric trios, representing part of Bahian culture in the form of a party. The “São João Festival” in Petrolina, Pernambuco, which takes place every June, also hosts national-level attractions and usually draws crowds to the “Ana das Carrancas” events courtyard. The “Festa dos Vaqueiros” from Curaçá - BA involves religiosity, festivities and regionalism, providing a true immersion in Northeastern culture.

The region is also full of material cultural heritage. Churches, museums, theaters, event centers, sculptures and statues help beautify the cities and attract tourists. The “Raul Coelho” theater in the city of Curaçá (BA), founded in the 19th century and still in full swing today, is a symbol of local history (CARVALHO, 2011).

More vocations for the Creative Economy (EC)

The Creative Economy has become a great alternative for cities to develop through the use of their natural wealth and human talents. In all the cities of the RIDE, we can identify the potential for exploiting the Creative Economy, but unfortunately, in many of them, managers and the population have not yet specialized themselves to take advantage of its full potential. Mirshawaka (2017) details the characteristics that can make a city be considered creative, all of which are covered by the RIDE Petrolina - Juazeiro creation law and have the potential to

give the region this status. These include tourism, the potential for generating energy from renewable sources, corporate events held in the region, food engineering, among others.

Tours of the wineries and grapevines, the various river islands along the São Francisco River, the dunes of Casa Nova - BA, the various archaeological and historical sites, the farm hotel in Curaçá - BA or even the sunset on the 800-meter boat ride between the cities of Petrolina - PE and Juazeiro - BA make tourists fall in love with and spend money in the region.

The Sobradinho lake is another important vector of regional development. Over 300 km long and 20 km wide, it provides a wide variety of economic activities ranging from passenger transportation to electricity generation (Brasil, 2010, online). Thanks to it, the region has become a major producer of energy generated from renewable sources. According to the São Francisco Hydroelectric Company (CHESF, 2016, online), the Sobradinho Hydroelectric Plant, which has been operating since 1979, has an installed capacity of 1,050,300 kW and is responsible for around 7% of the supply to the Northeast region.

Recently, the lake has received major investment for the pioneering installation of the Sobradinho Reservoir Floating Photovoltaic Plant. According to CHESF (2018, online), in the first phase of implementation, 7,300 solar panel modules were installed, at a cost of 13 million reais, providing an installed capacity of 1 MW peak (MWp).

These characteristics may well include the cities belonging to the RIDE in the Creative Cities Network (CCN) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an inclusion that depends on the political will of managers and some adjustments to legislation and structures.

It's worth considering that these are just some of the attractions of the cities in the RIDE Petrolina - Juazeiro hub. Trade, nightlife, the relative tranquillity of the cities and the hospitality of their people also tend to attract many visitors and new residents to the region.

The benefits of including ride in UNESCO's CCR network

Taking into account all the characteristics of the RIDE listed in the previous subsection, there is great potential for the region to be included in UNESCO's Creative City Network.

Among other benefits, joining the Network could: a) boost tourism and consequently increase the number of jobs; b) stimulate information sharing and cooperation between the cities belonging to the RIDE; c) make public managers and the population value public goods and urban facilities more; d) stimulate the protection of natural assets; e) bring investment to the region; f) disseminate and enrich regional culture through exchanges with other cities and countries; g) strengthen regional ties; and, h) increase the capacity to encourage the Creative Economy.

Therefore, we believe that the development of coordinated actions between the cities belonging to the RIDE and the promotion of public policies in the region could be fundamental

for the consolidation of the region as a creative area, due to the various characteristics that have already been listed above.

Final considerations

With this study we were able to gain an initial understanding of our object of study, as well as a deeper insight into the research problem chosen for this work. We can see that the RIDE has attractions that have been listed and contextualized according to the vocations required for cities to be included in UNESCO's Creative Cities Network.

The results of this work could serve as a basis for the development of various studies focused on the Creative Economy and sustainable development in the RIDE region, as well as raising awareness among the population about their role as inspectors and those responsible for this transformation, given that the RIDE has characteristics of the creative cities economy.

Among the obstacles to creativity and sustainability, we can mention the political and power disputes between authorities belonging to the various federal entities that make up the RIDE, and it is essential that there is educational work with the whole of society in order to absorb the philosophy of the Creative Cities.

As an extension of the studies and actions, the aim is to deepen the reading on the subject, produce new scientific articles and disseminate the transformative capacity of the Creative Economy among the academic community, public managers and society in general.

Finally, another lesson learned during the course of the study was that, no matter how much a city or region seems to be developing, there will always be room for innovation and the construction of integrated actions capable of fostering creativity and sustainability.

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