



WHEN CREATIVITY DIES: CREATIVE ECONOMY IN BRAZIL'S 2018 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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ABSTRACT

The aims are to identify the main proposals by Brazil's 2018 presidential candidates on issues related to creative economy in their government plans and programs and examine the similarities and differences in the treatment of these issues in the documents. The central argument points out that there has been little deepening and detailing of the proposals, which reveals that, for political parties, creative economy would not be the engine of national development. Although some candidates brought general references to the potential of creative economy in expanding cultural access and generating income and employment, the proposals remained vague and imprecise and, in certain situations, they did not even exist.

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INTRODUCTION

Creative economy refers to a set of productive activities that generate goods and services based on symbolic and intangible elements and formulated from individual or collective talents (Miguez, 2007). It includes advertising, architecture, arts and antiques markets, handicrafts, design, fashion, cinema, interactive software for leisure, music, performing arts, publishing, radio, TV, tourism, museums, galleries and activities related to cultural traditions (Bendassolli *et al.*, 2009). Although many decision makers gave prominence to creative sectors because of their ability to generate income and employment and their stimulus to cultural diversity, there were challenges such as the structuring of an educational system that emphasized creative freedom and independent thinking, investment in innovation, risk reduction for creative ventures and facilitation of access to capital for creative initiatives (Venturelli, 2000). In addition to coping with such dilemmas, public policies must also enable cultures to participate in the flow of ideas and trade, provide all the people with access to multiple cultural manifestations and preserve cultural identity to ensure that creative industries express diversity. In addition, creative economy can act as an agent of regeneration of urban areas and attract investment and tourists (Reis, 2006). However, Brazil still has numerous socioeconomic contrasts that hinder the development of creative sectors and faces obstacles related to the

difficult valuation of creative products due to its intangibility. In addition, it is difficult to incorporate technologies necessary for the elaboration of goods and services into the productive processes in the light of the high costs and the lack of formal training for their use. Educational processes in Brazil typically do not stimulate critical thinking and the development of professional talents (Reis, 2006). Because of the opportunities for employment and income generation, access to culture and revitalization of urban areas brought by the creative sectors and the undeniable obstacles to the full development of these sectors, themes related to creative economy have gained greater space in political campaigns and debates not only in city and state elections in Brazil, but also the presidential elections since the 2000s. However, important changes occurred in the 2018 presidential election regarding the proposals for creative economy by the candidates. The aims of this article are to identify the main proposals by presidential candidates on issues related to creative economy in their government plans and programs and examine the similarities and differences in the treatment of these topics in the documents. The central argument points out that there has been little deepening and detailing of the proposals, which reveals that, for political parties, creative economy would not function as an engine of national development. Although some candidates brought general references to the potential of creative economy in expanding cultural access and generating income and employment, the proposals remained vague and imprecise and, in certain situations, they did not even exist. It is important to emphasize that there is no interest in studying how proposals aimed at creative sectors necessarily oriented voters, but rather I

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aim to investigate the depth and detail of creative economy's proposals in the government plans.

Theoretical framework and methods: The idea of development has historically been related to the notions of modernity and progress, in a context of the advance of Western industrial capitalism, and conceived as a universal process, independent of the cultural specificities of each community (Silva, 2012). The more contemporary thinking about development – particularly the one elaborated by Amartya Sen (2000) – brings the idea that culture may not only transmit ideas and values, but work as an engine for the expansion of national and international goods and services. The mobilization of culture in proposals and conceptions of development becomes clear in the economy created by the production, circulation and consumption of cultural goods and the perception that culture can point the way to social development. In this context, creative economy demonstrates how culture conditions development by bringing together activities whose productive process presupposes a creative act that generates symbolic and intangible value and enables social modifications by its productive, innovative and employer potentials (Reis, 2006). Regarding the generation of employment and income in the light of the potentials of local cultures, governments can encourage public policies focused on the creative sectors to produce goods, technologies and services. This stimulus makes it necessary to innovate the public management agenda to identify and take advantage of the special characteristics of each part of a country, a state or a city, such as the knowledge and skills of its citizens. By placing creative economy as the engine of development, this economy can be considered as a cultural process that generates innovation and promotes the productive inclusion of the population, prioritizing citizens in situations of social vulnerability, through professional training and qualification and the generation of job opportunities (Jesus, 2013).

The urban regeneration and the expansion of the quality of life promoted by public policies related to creative economy can also act as agents of recovery and solution of socioeconomic problems. The positive effects of creative economy transcend the generation of taxes, jobs and commerce and include the elevation of the local self-esteem, the strengthening of social cohesion, the consolidation of public-private partnerships and the affirmation of local image. At the international level, the improvement of the image of the country with the stimulus to creative economy may increase its capacity for the attraction of investments and business and leisure tourists (Reis, 2006). The implementation of revitalization projects generally aims at the sustainable economic development and the attraction of investments. Architectural initiatives designed to cultural spaces – such as museums – are parts of the revitalization process. Such transformations may result from changes in the public management structure, the country's greater engagement with international dynamics and the greater concern with its international identity and the attraction of foreign capital necessary for development (Mercher, 2013; Jesus, 2018). Regarding the expansion of access to culture, public policies related to creative economy can also stimulate cultural democracy by offering all the people the right of access to multiple cultural manifestations and allowing them to know the possible cultural repertoire and broaden their options. New technologies – particularly digital media – can facilitate access to cultural production and markets. In addition, the reinforcement of cultural identity – which places in perspective the influences of other cultures – ensures that creative industries can express thematic, sectoral, territorial and authorial diversity, thus granting the true values and potentialities to culture (Reis, 2006). In terms of data collection, a bibliographic research was initially conducted in this article to gather information related to theoretical and conceptual aspects related to creative economy. A document

research was also carried out. For the identification of the proposals of each candidate for the Presidency of the Republic related to creative sectors and activities in Brazil's 2018 presidential elections, the considered documents were the ones with their government proposals, made available by political parties and coalitions on the Superior Electoral Court website. In the gathering of information, expressions such as “creative economy” and “creative industries” were considered in the search in these documents. When no such expressions were detected, terms referring to specific creative sectors, such as “audiovisual”, “tourism”, “fashion” or “cinema”, were sought. If no such terms or expressions were found, the candidates' proposals regarding the areas of culture, socioeconomic development and sports were specifically verified in order to identify if they were related specifically to the activities developed by creative sectors, although the terminology used in the documents did not refer precisely to the thematic universe of creative economy. The qualitative perspective of document analysis developed by Glenn A. Bowen (2009), which requires the information collected in the documents to be examined and interpreted, was used to develop an in-depth investigation of the documents that presented government proposals by presidential candidates – in this case, the ones related to creative activities and sectors. The document analysis proposed by Bowen (2009) is adequate to the study presented in this article, since it allows access to information about the background of the collected information and contextualizes the insertion of the themes associated to creative economy in the political discussions. Once the initial bibliographic research and the first revision of the documents – in which significant passages of the text for the study were identified –, the pertinent information related to creative activities and sectors were separated from the non-pertinent ones into two categories: income generation and employment and access to culture. As Bowen (2009) points out, the next steps were to interpret data and, afterwards, analyse the information by comparing the empirical data with the theoretical concepts in the discussion of the obtained results.

RESULTS

The candidate Jair Bolsonaro – from the coalition “Brazil Above Everything, God Above All”, formed by the political parties PSL and PRTB – won the first round of Brazil's 2018 presidential election, counting on more than 46% of valid votes. The result of the election in the first round is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Result of the election for the Presidency of the Republic in 2018 (first round)

Candidate	Valid votes (%)
Jair Bolsonaro	46,03
Fernando Haddad	29,28
Ciro Gomes	12,47
Geraldo Alckmin	4,76
João Amôedo	2,50
Cabo Daciolo	1,26
Henrique Meirelles	1,20
Marina Silva	1,00
Álvaro Dias	0,80
Guilherme Boulos	0,58
Vera Lúcia	0,05
José Maria Eymael	0,04
João Goulart Filho	0,03

Source: TSE, 2018.

In the second round of the presidential election, Bolsonaro defeated the candidate Fernando Haddad, from the coalition “People Happy Again” – formed by the political parties PT, PC do B and PROS –, with more than 55% of the valid votes, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Result of the election for the Presidency of the Republic in 2018 (second round)

Candidate	Valid votes (%)
Jair Bolsonaro	55,13
Fernando Haddad	44,87

Source: TSE, 2018.

The proposals of the presidential candidates regarding creative economy are divided into two categories, which are described below:

Income generation and employment: In Haddad's political program, the economic role of culture is mentioned only once, when the document deals with the increasing links between culture and diverse areas such as education and sports, which can generate income and jobs. The document also criticizes the monopoly of the companies that operate in the cultural sectors by the "strict logic of the market" and suggests the creation of opportunities for national video on demand (VOD) production, including streaming platforms like Netflix and YouTube (Coligação O Povo Feliz de Novo, 2018). The political proposals of presidential candidate Ciro Gomes (from the coalition "Sovereign Brazil", formed by political parties PDT and AVANTE) highlight that the stimulus to creative economy can generate jobs and important economic activities (Partido Democrático Trabalhista, 2018). However, they do not deal specifically with the ways in which the creative sectors can be encouraged, as they appear side by side with agribusiness and commerce. The candidate Geraldo Alckmin, from the coalition "To Unite Brazil" (formed by the political parties PSDB, PP, PTB, PSD, PRB, PR, DEM, SD and PPS), considers culture as a transforming social element as well as an engine for the economic development, according to his political program. The main proposals include the guarantee of legal and economic security to finance cultural activities, the reduction of bureaucratic obstacles regarding the access to financial resources for these activities, the enhancement of the National Culture Fund and the development of complementary credit sources and low-budget public notices. These initiatives would be followed by the progressive reduction of tax breaks for foundations of the same economic groups, which would be redirected towards institutions ruled by the third sector, artists and independent producers (Coligação Para Unir Brasil, 2018). Although Alckmin's proposals are more precise than the previous candidates, the ways in which they would be implemented are not described in his political program.

The presidential candidate Marina Silva, from the coalition "United to transform Brazil" (formed by the political parties REDE and PV), indicates in her political proposals that creative economy should emphasize professional formation and capacitation, the support for start-ups, less bureaucratic obstacles and more access to credit sources. Her political program also defends that new technologies are engines for more access and distribution of the cultural production, especially regarding sharing economy (Coligação Unidos Para Transformar Brasil, 2018). However, there are no clear guidelines of the ways in which the mentioned activities would be developed. The same can be said about presidential candidate Álvaro Dias's proposals. The candidate from the coalition "True Change" – formed by the political parties PODEMOS, PRP, PSC and PTC – includes in his political program the idea of culture as a part of triad also composed by tourism and science and says that these sectors should be stimulated to generate income and employment in one of the 19 government goals described in his proposals (Coligação Mudança de Verdade, 2018), but the ways in which this would occur are not described in his 15-page political program.

The candidate Guilherme Boulos, from the coalition "Let's change Brazil fearlessly" (PSOL and PCB), proposes in his political program a "new cultural policy for a new world". The proposals indicate the necessity to replace tax incentive laws with programs, laws and public notices which offer direct access to the public budget and be built in the partnership between the government and civil society. The National Culture Fund would act as the main distributor of the public budget in the cultural sector, which would end the benefits for private companies and cultural industries with tax incentive laws. Boulos's program also defends the simplification in the application and accountability of public notices and programs to facilitate the access of marginalized groups to the budget dedicated to culture, as well as a system of social protection for cultural workers, whose professions are characterized by intermittence (Coligação Vamos Sem Medo de Mudar o Brasil, 2018). However, there are no indications of the ways through which the candidate would make the proposals become a reality.

Access to culture: According to Haddad's political program, culture must be an agent of social change, as well as a tool to promote citizenship and value diversity. The document indicates the necessity to strengthen policies from previous administrations of the Workers' Party, which would include participation mechanisms of the cultural community and the Live Culture Law. Haddad wanted to build a more decentralized creation system and increase resources for the Ministry of Culture, with the goal of reaching the 1% target of the federal budget. His political program also promises to expand the resources of the National Culture Fund and defends affirmative policies for women and black people in the Audiovisual Sectorial Fund, as well as cultural policies that contemplate indigenous peoples, quilombolas and riverside populations (Coligação O Povo Feliz de Novo, 2018). Although the program describes many initiatives regarding the access to culture, it is not possible to identify the ways in which they would be implemented. Gomes's political program indicates that culture may be a way to fight the "frustrating consumerism" in young people and consolidate as a "strategic sector" for Brazilian identity, with the respect for regional differences, traditions and new aesthetics. The social inclusion provided by cultural activities of the peripheries, such as dance, graffiti and poetry slams, should be stimulated according to his proposals, as well as a National Digital Inclusion Policy, which would broaden access to the internet. The proposals also include the decentralization of cultural policy management, the balance of resources among federal states, the establishment of a regulatory framework for culture to consolidate the rules for the cultural and creative sectors and the improvement of financial incentive legislation for culture (Partido Democrático Trabalhista, 2018). As in Haddad's political proposals, there are many initiatives, but the obstacles for their implementation are not addressed and the ways in which these initiatives would be put in practice are not described precisely.

According to Alckmin's political program, public policies should be developed to guarantee artistic freedom and allow the access to all types of culture. The program also mentions the necessity to attract the organized civil society for national projects to manage public cultural equipments. To enhance the access to culture, the candidate also proposed the strengthening of Brazil's international cultural action, a campaign to value the Portuguese language as well as the Brazilian Institute of Museums and the enhancement of tourist activity which involves Brazilian artistic and cultural heritage (Coligação Para Unir Brasil, 2018). Again Alckmin's proposals are more precise than many other candidates, but details of the initiatives are not provided. Based on the idea of the promotion of diversity, Silva highlighted the economic and social pillars of culture, but her political program brings more promises

and intentions than political proposals. The program shows the relevance of the social role of culture and instruments such as public notices and awards, as well as the candidate's intentions related to protect cultural heritage and traditional cultural expressions, such as maracatu, bumba-meu-boi, artisans and embroiderers (Coligação Unidos Para Transformar o Brasil, 2018). Dias only cites that free culture means the creation of a card to guarantee free access to cultural services and equipment (Coligação Mudança de Verdade, 2018). João Amôedo, the candidate from the NOVO political party, presents only one reference to culture, which appears in the last position in the list of his political proposals in the field of education. He indicates the necessity to finance culture, sports and science with endowments, something that is not very common in Brazil (Partido Novo, 2018). Boulos's program indicates the proposal of strengthening collective, local and peripheral cultural initiatives (Coligação Vamos Sem Medo de Mudar o Brasil, 2018), but does not develop precisely how the candidate would do this. The candidate José Maria Eymael, from the political party DC, indicates in his political program that culture should be stimulated through public policies and partnerships with private actors. It is also highlighted twice in his program that the concept of "national identity" should be developed in schools to show the value of culture (Democracia Cristã, 2018), but these ideas are brought only in general terms. The candidate João Goulart Filho, from the political party PPL, defends the state as a formulator and an inductor in the cultural area in his political program, which also says that it was necessary to strengthen institutes related to publishing, music, cinema and performing arts and create a special secretariat for digital cultures, which would operate as a repository of Brazilian cultural memory (PPL, 2018).

DISCUSSION

Creative economy and culture cannot be considered main issues in the political proposals of Brazil's 2018 presidential candidates. Some candidates such as Fernando Haddad, Marina Silva and Ciro Gomes dedicated whole sections of their political programs to these issues, while Geraldo Alckmin dedicates only two topics, even though his proposals are more precise than many other candidates. It is possible to say that general sentences including "stimulate", "democratize" and "enhance access to" culture and creative economy predominate. Haddad, Gomes, Silva and Alckmin consider the role of culture in economic development, but the issue is mentioned mainly in a superficial way. In Bolsonaro's political program, the word "culture" only appears when it deals with foreign relations, more specifically the approximation with countries that were abandoned by previous Brazilian administrations because of "ideological reasons". The program indicates that these countries can contribute in terms of commerce, science, technology, innovation, education and culture, but there are no specific aims regarding creative economy or cultural activities (Coligação Brasil Acima de Tudo, Deus Acima de Todos, 2018; Rocha, 2018). The candidates Henrique Meirelles, Cabo Daciolo and Vera Lúciado not mention cultural policies or initiatives regarding creative economy in their political programs. In this sense, it is possible to say that the creative economy's potential to generate income and employment, as pointed out by authors such as Reis (2006) and Jesus (2013), and its capacity to expand access to culture, also pointed out by Reis (2006), were not enough to turn creative economy into a priority issue in the proposals for Brazil's 2018 presidential elections. The themes that dominated the political debates at that time focused mainly on the fight against corruption – especially in the light of the accusations made by Operation Lava Jato – and urban violence, which had reached alarming levels in several Brazilian cities. Bolsonaro won both rounds of the 2018 presidential election, without assigning, on his political platform, a great

relevance to the themes related to culture and creative economy. He focused on the fight against crime and corruption and the revitalization of the "traditional values of the Brazilian family". As for culture, many Bolsonaro's speeches and tweets during the electoral campaign were directed against cultural and artistic expressions of black, indigenous and LGBT people, which motivated the reaction of countless members of the artistic and creative classes. In addition, the proposals of the candidate for areas such as education did not stimulate the critical thinking and creativity of students and, in terms of innovation, the focus was predominantly on more traditional sectors of the economy, not the development of creative industries.

Conclusion

Even though creative economy generated almost 3% of Brazil's gross domestic product and created more than 850,000 jobs in 2015, it was not considered a priority for many candidates in Brazil's 2018 presidential elections. Besides, a growing number of Brazilians is using more cultural goods and services. Beyond its economic relevance, culture is a central aspect of a country's identity and can also be used as source of soft power, the capacity to persuade and influence other actors through values and ideas (Rocha, 2018). It is important to say that, during former president Michel Temer's administration, the Ministry of Culture suffered difficulties, even the possibility of its extinction. Since June 2018, the federal government had reduced the percentage dedicated to culture of the income generated with lotteries to enhance the budget dedicated to public security issues. The access to cultural goods and services remain irregular in Brazil in the light of the discontinuities of the public policies adopted in this area (Jesus, 2018; Rocha, 2018). When Bolsonaro came into power in January 2019, the Ministry of Culture was extinct and became a Secretariat under the newly created Ministry of Citizenship, which also included the previous Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Social Development. With no favourable political and productive systems, creative ideas and business do not grow in the lack of specific legal frameworks and the facilitation for small entrepreneurs, for example. With no robust institutionalization, the expertise to produce market analyses to rethink investments, infrastructure and business models, from the production to the consumption of creative goods and services, is not created (Leitão 2017). The increasing limitation of resources for creative projects in the light of the economic crisis and the political instability of previous administrations were intensified in the beginning of Bolsonaro's government, fuelled by the discontinuity of more specific and strong measures with a focus on creative economy as the engine of socioeconomic development.

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