



The challenge of transforming creativity into innovation: the case of rio criativo

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ABSTRACT

This paper is the result of a research that had as its goal to understand the differences and similarities, in conceptual and practical terms, between what is defined as “creativity” (or creative projects) and what is meant by “innovation” (or innovative projects), in organizations dedicated to promoting creative/innovative entrepreneurship, using the case of Rio Criativo (Creative Rio), an incubator for companies in the creative industry in the State of Rio de Janeiro. The aim was to verify how those concepts are interpreted by the organization and applied to creative/innovative entrepreneurial projects in the city of Rio de Janeiro, assessing the training process, selection and incubation of chosen companies. The research took place from August 2012 to February 2013, through a bibliographical review on “creativity” and “innovation” in Brazil; the analysis of documents about the history of Rio Criativo and its methodology of selection and incubation of enterprises; and in-depth interviews with key professionals in the conception, implementation and current management of the Incubator. The conclusion drawn from the research is that the concepts of creativity and innovation are interpreted subjectively, and are applied to the selection process of companies according to opinion-givers. It is also possible to verify the difficulty the creative industry entrepreneurs face in planning their own business. The paper intends, ultimately, to contribute to the understanding about the definition and application of the concepts of creativity and innovation in public and private sectors, as well as in understanding the difficulty the entrepreneurs face in transforming creativity into innovation, improving their competitiveness and their capability of managing their own business.

Key-words: *Creativity. Innovation. Entrepreneurship. Incubator.*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Since Brazil started growing significantly, the term “innovation” has been used exhaustively in business, economic and education spheres. In many instances, it is confused with another word that has always been in our vocabulary: “creativity”. This word, until very recently considered a natural “gift” of Brazilians, became a central prerequisite for new entrepreneurs and businessmen in large companies.

But what is the difference between these two concepts when speaking of entrepreneurship in Brazil? How are they applied? A research carried out by Sebrae (Brazilian Service of Support to Micro Businesses) between April and May 2012 shows that the number of individual entrepreneurs grew 84% in the country. (Website Globo.com: “Número de empreendedores individuais cresce 84% no Brasil.” Renata Capucci <http://glo.bo/VgGbFu>). However, the same cannot be said about investment in research, competitiveness, pioneering and, naturally, in innovation.

In an interview for the newspaper Folha de São Paulo, in May 2012, Marcos Troyjo, one of the mentors of BRICLab, a forum created by the magazine The Economist aiming to discuss the trajectory and impact of Brics, states:

If it is true that the country has grown in a significant manner in the last six years, it is also true that the investment in research is very low, it ranks among the lowest in international business transactions and has submitted a small number of patents in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Brazil is more creative than innovative. (Folha de São Paulo newspaper website, “O Brasil é mais criativo do que inovador.” – Brazil is more creative than innovative. Daniela Paiva, <http://bit.ly/VgEyr9>)

It seems like real innovative business ideas are not becoming a reality in the same proportion as the growth in the number of entrepreneurs. But how do we transform the creativity of the Brazilian into innovation? Many steps need to be taken to change this. Some of them have been taken, one in Rio de Janeiro.



In 2010, Rio Criativo: Incubadoras de Empreendimentos da Economia Criativa do Rio de Janeiro (Creative Rio: Venture Incubators of Creative Economy in Rio de Janeiro) was launched. It was a partnership between Instituto Gênesis of the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and the State Department of Culture of Rio de Janeiro. It was the first incubator directly aimed at the cultural and creative entrepreneurship in Brazil, and, from this experience, became the object of study of this paper.

The intention is to understand how the concepts of creativity and innovation are thought of and used in the promotion of the new creative entrepreneurship in Rio de Janeiro, analyzing the creation, selection and incubation process of the chosen companies. What are the expectations and main difficulties? The objective is to start a reflection on how Rio Criativo is taking advantage of the privileged moment in which Rio, and, by extension, the country, is, in a productive manner, preparing for the future.

This project adopted a qualitative methodology that comprehends desk research (bibliographic review and document analysis), participant observation and in-depth interviews.

The desk research included an investigation on creativity and innovation in Brazil and in Rio de Janeiro; the differences between these concepts in Brazil and in the world; the concept of creative entrepreneurship in Brazil and in Rio de Janeiro; the history of Instituto Gênesis and Rio Criativo.

The field research took place in Instituto Gênesis, at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, with the objective of analyzing where Rio Criativo was born. At the time of this research, the incubating companies worked remotely, and the professionals responsible for Rio Criativo were not on site. The contacts of those professionals and printed material were collected to assist in the desk research.

Soon after, two in-depth interviews were conducted: one with Julia Zardo, manager at Instituto Gênesis, at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro; and the other with Guilherme Velho, chief-executive of the Rio Criativo incubators. Julia Zardo led the conception and implementation of the project. Guilherme Velho coordinates different operations of Rio Criativo, including teaching Business Plan and Market and Innovation classes.

This article has been structured as follows: in section two, the concept of creativity, from the point of view of entrepreneurship, is presented; section three presents the concept of innovation in entrepreneurship; section four discusses and analyzes how these concepts are interpreted and applied by Rio Criativo; and in the end, conclusions are presented.



2 THE CONCEPT OF CREATIVITY IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

There is no simple definition of “creativity” that encompasses the various dimensions of this phenomenon. In the field of psychology, where individual creativity has been amply studied, there is no consensus if it is a personal attribute or a process through which original ideas are generated. However, its characteristics in the different areas of human activity can be articulated. According to UN’s Creative Economy Report, human creativity is manifested in the following way: artistic creativity, which involves imagination and an ability to create original ideas and new ways of interpreting the world; scientific creativity, which involves curiosity and a will to make experiments and new connections to solve problems; economic creativity, a dynamic process which leads to innovation in technology, business practices, marketing, etc., and is connected to the achievement of competitive advantage in economy; (UN, 2011, p. 3)

In Brazil, it seems like artistic creativity is highlighted. In the areas of music, art, and even soccer, the country is known for its creative spirit. Spirit which is supported by our diversity and rich cultural inheritance: there are many reasons why Brazil is seen as a creative nation. Many stem from one of the most delineating characteristic of its population: the diversity [...]. Even outside the sphere of formal creative sector, there are reasons to believe that the Brazilian diversity could nurture the creative momentum that endorses science and innovation. (KIRSTEN; REI, 2012: p. 36-37)

What seems to be missing is the ability to visualize this creativity as business and put it into practice efficiently. In other words, what is missing in Brazil is the innovative attitude.

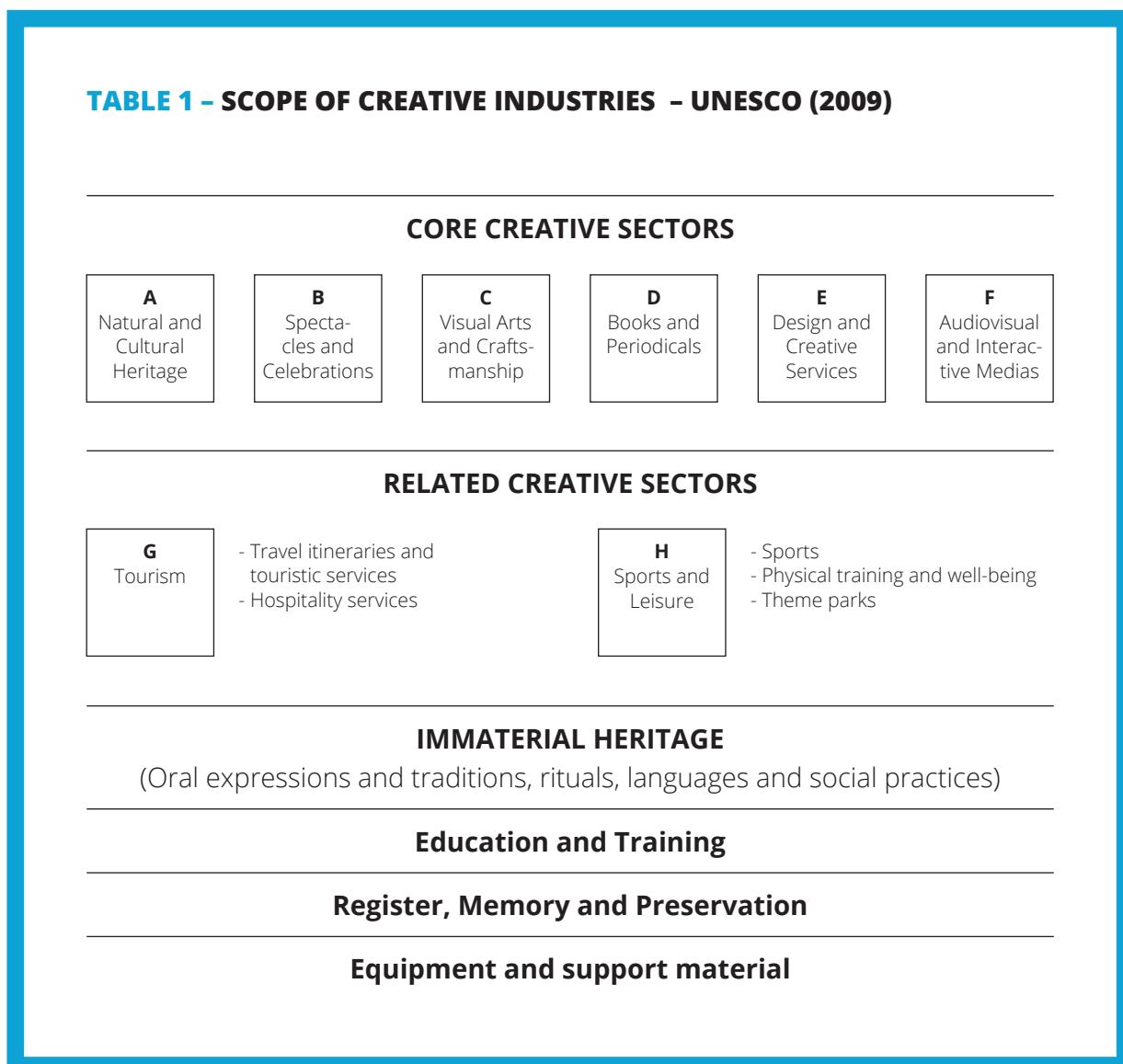
2.1 CREATIVE INDUSTRY AND ECONOMY IN BRAZIL

“Creative Industries” was first defined in a study by the Ministry of Culture, Media and Sports of the United Kingdom, in 1998: industries which have as origin creativity, expertise and individual talent and which carry a potential to generate wealth and jobs through the creation and exploration of intellectual property. (Firjan - Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro, “A Cadeia da Indústria Criativa no Brasil”, 2011, p. 7)



The chain of Creative Industries was divided into three spheres: the Nucleus, composed by 12 leading sectors, whose main input is creativity; Related Activities, involving segments of direct provision of goods and services to the Nucleus, mainly industry and service companies which supply materials and key items to the Nucleus; and Support Activities, supplying goods and services more indirectly.

TABLE 1 – SCOPE OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES – UNESCO (2009)



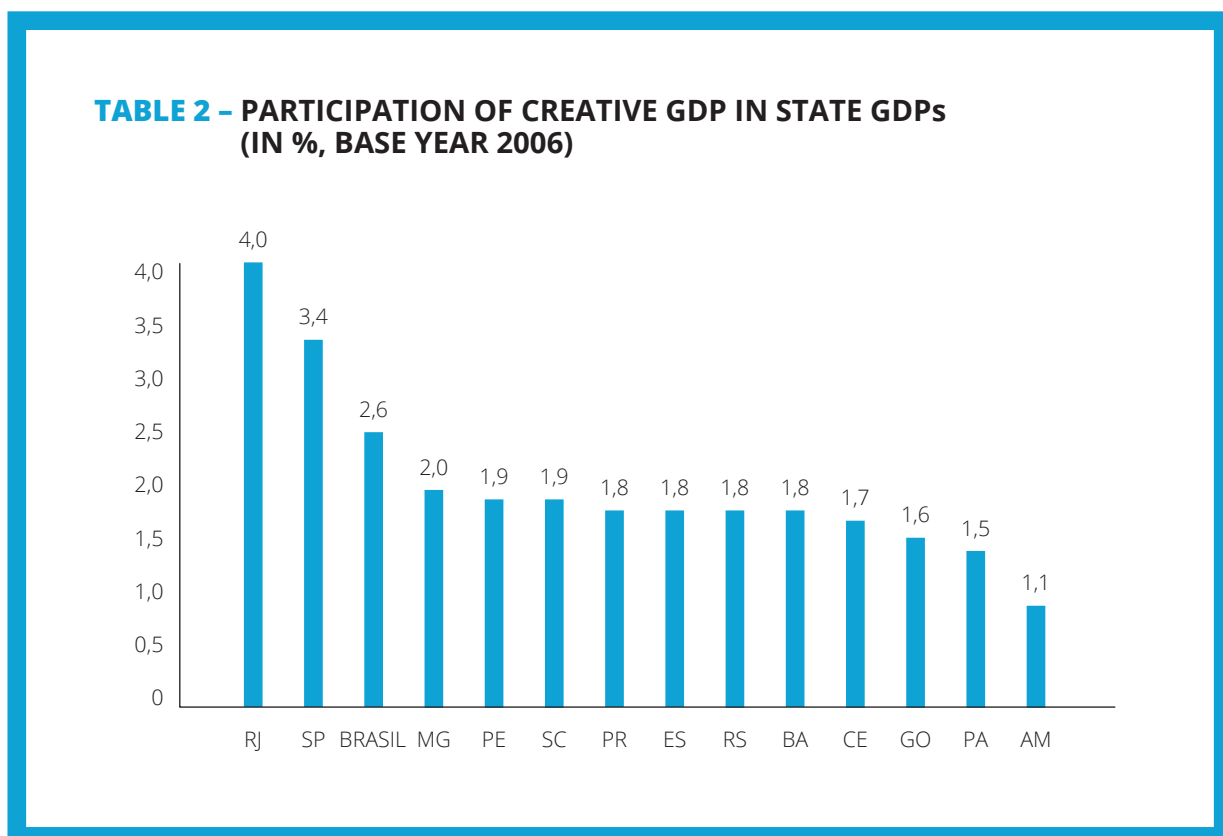
SOURCE: PLAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVE ECONOMY. POLICY, GUIDELINES AND ACTIONS. 2ND REVISION. MINISTRY OF CULTURE, 2011 TO 2014, P. 27.



Over a decade later, in 2012, the Department of Creative Economy was created in Brazil, as part of the Ministry of Culture, formalizing the concept of creativity from economy: creative industries are those whose productive activities have as main process a creative act that creates a product, good or service, whose symbolic dimension is a determinant of its value, leading to cultural, economic and social wealth. (Ministry of Culture. Plan of the Department of Creative Economy. 2011 to 2014, p. 22) The Department used the Unesco table to define the creative sectors in Brazil (Table 1).

The concept of creative economy aroused more interest in Rio de Janeiro. In 2006, Firjan developed the *Map of Development of the State of Rio de Janeiro 2006/2015*, where creative industries were pointed out as anchor sectors in the economy of the state. An important fact for the development of Rio Criativo.

In 2008, the institution carried out the study *The chain of creative industry in Brazil*. With regard to Rio, the complete chains of 12 creative industries were responsible, in 2006, for 2.4% of formal employment and 17.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), especially in television, visual arts and software. Taking into consideration the con-



SOURCE: THE CHAIN OF CREATIVE INDUSTRY IN BRAZIL, FIRJAN, 2008



tribution of the creative center in these chains in comparison to other federal units in the country (Table 2), Rio de Janeiro becomes the state in which creative industries have the most representation in Brazil.

Today, the creative industry is considered the third largest in the world, surpassed only by oil and arms. In Brazil, the sector has a turnover of over BRL 667 billion yearly, corresponding to 18% of the Gross National Product (Firjan, 2010).

3 THE CONCEPT OF INNOVATION IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

If creativity is related to the creation of ideas, innovation can be considered the delivery. It is as if the idea is the initiative, and innovation, the result. According to Govindarajan and Trimble (2010, p. 4), “most of the companies focuses completely on the Hunt for the Great Idea, in its effort to increment innovation. Focusing on ideas can lead to a more immediate energy, but focusing on execution is far more efficient”.

But who defines what is innovative? Firstly, the Oslo Manual: A Proposal of Guidelines for the Collection and Interpretation of Data on Technological Innovation, published in 1990, by the Organization for Technological Cooperation and Development (OTCD), aimed at orienting and standardizing concepts, methodologies and data and statistical indicators of R&D research in industrialized countries.

Used in Rio Criativo edict as a consulting reference, the manual explains the difference between technological and non-technological innovation:

a product technological innovation is the implementation/commercialization of a product with performance characteristics improved in a way that objectively presents to the consumer new or improved services. A innovation of technological process is the implementation/adoption of new or significantly improved production or commercialization methods. (Oslo Manual, 2004, p. 21 and 30)



Non-technological innovation covers all innovatio activities that are excluded from technological innovation. [...] The main kinds of non-technological innovation tend to be organizational and managerial innovations. (Oslo Manual, 2004, p. 130)

If the Oslo Manual defines what innovation is, the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI) controls and registers what is innovative, guaranteeing the originality and intellectual property of industrial product or service. Created in 1970, INPI is linked to the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade (MDIC).

3.1 INNOVATION IN BRAZIL

Brazil, with its promising entrepreneurial setting, is placed among the highlights in the world. However, entrepreneurship in this country still happens more out of need than opportunity, and with little innovation. Although it is the sixth economy in the world and having the fifth largest population, Brazil ranks in 44th place in the global ranking of innovation, and 53rd in competitiveness (Table 3).

TABLE 3 - BRAZIL IN NUMBERS

6th	World economy
5th	World population
10th	World domestic market
4th	Destination for foreign investment
•	
•	
•	
44th	Innovation (among 142 countries)
53rd	Competitiveness (among 142 countries)

SOURCES: MINISTRY OF FINANCE, 2012; IMF, 2011; WEF, 2011-2012; GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX, 2011



In terms of creativity, Brazil has an advantage when compared to other countries. It is the county of biodiversity, a multicultural nation, linguistically united. On the other hand, it has an enormous challenge: how to insert this diversity in the organizational context, transforming creativity in innovation.

According to data from Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, only 3.4% of Brazilian ventures launch new products (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor and IBQP – Brazilian Institute of Quality and Productivity, Entrepreneurship, 2008, p. 70) (Table 4). And for this reason, entrepreneurs with an innovation potential have to pay close attention to their potentialities.

TABLE 4 – ENTREPRENEURIAL POTENTIAL ACCORDING TO VENTURE CHARACTERISTICS

Venture Characteristic	Entrepreneurial Potential %		
	Non-innovative	Intermediate Innovative Ability	Innovators
Product Knowledge	83,5	13,1	3,4
Number of Competitors	65,0	27,8	7,2
Age of Technology and Process	85,7	12,7	1,7
Export Expectation	84,8	14,7	0,4
Job Creation	78,3	13,8	7,9

SOURCE: GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP MONITOR AND IBQP – BRAZILIAN INSTITUTE OF QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, 2008, P.70



4 RIO CRIATIVO: CONTEXT IN RIO DE JANEIRO

In Brazil, historically, Rio de Janeiro has seen many creative manifestations. According to Guilherme, “here, we have creativity to spare. We can still here today: ‘Rio is the cultural lighthouse in Brazil’”. However, when the capital of the country was transferred to Brasília, in 1960, Rio started losing its economic vitality. As explained by the Brazilian magazine Istoé Dinheiro website, on May 20th, 2011, “besides losing its financial sector, the exodus of power led to a precocious deindustrialization with no substitutes to the service sector, a phenomenon that was amplified with the privatization of state companies”. (IstoéDinheiro website, “Rio de Janeiro”. Juliana Schincariol. <http://bit.ly/l0rjCr>)

But, since Rio was chosen to host the 2016 Olympic Games, it has been progressively improving, attracting national and international companies: Cisco Systems, an American multinational, has open an Innovation Center in Maravilha Harbor. “In business, BRL 60 billion are expected in four years (Época magazine, Rio de Janeiro Special Edition. April 2012. Solange Gozo). In culture, six cultural centers and museums are to be open. All that on top of the discovery of the subsalt oil in the Brazilian coast, ranking the country as the fifth greatest oil holder in world.

It is in this context that Rio Criativo is born. Founded in 2010, it had its origins in Gênesis Institute, an incubator of companies led by the students of the Catholic University of Rio, which started its activities in 1997. In associating technology and culture in an incubator, it became the first incubator project with this focus in Latin America. Today, there are four incubating segments – Technological, Cultural, Jewelry Design and Social Community.

But it was in the beginning of 2009 that the State Department of Culture of Rio de Janeiro, represented by Adriana Rattes, recognized Gênesis Institute. Since then, the institute qualified 40 companies per year, and the biggest problem was scale. The contact with the Department of Culture resulted in a partnership, and the concept of Rio Criativo was started. Idealized with the participation of researchers, planners and executers of the state and Mayor’s Office, IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), Sebrae (Brazilian Service of Support to Micro Businesses), Firjan (Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro) and UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro).

The intention was to create one incubator in the city of Rio de Janeiro, one in São



João de Meriti, in the Fluminense Lowlands (in the state of Rio de Janeiro), and another one remotely; with the objective of selecting 28 ventures from the creative sectors to be incubated for 18 months.

4.1 CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN RIO CRIATIVO

Rio Criativo was born from the perspective of creative economy, with a basic understanding of the difference between the concepts of creativity and innovation. For Julia, institute manager, “creativity is the idea, and innovation is putting it into practice. The biggest challenge is this: transforming creativity into innovation”.

Encompassing 19 sectors of creative economy, Rio Criativo followed what was outlined by Firjan and the Ministry of Culture, however, it included important areas to Rio de Janeiro, such as tourism, which was added to the education sector. According to Julia,

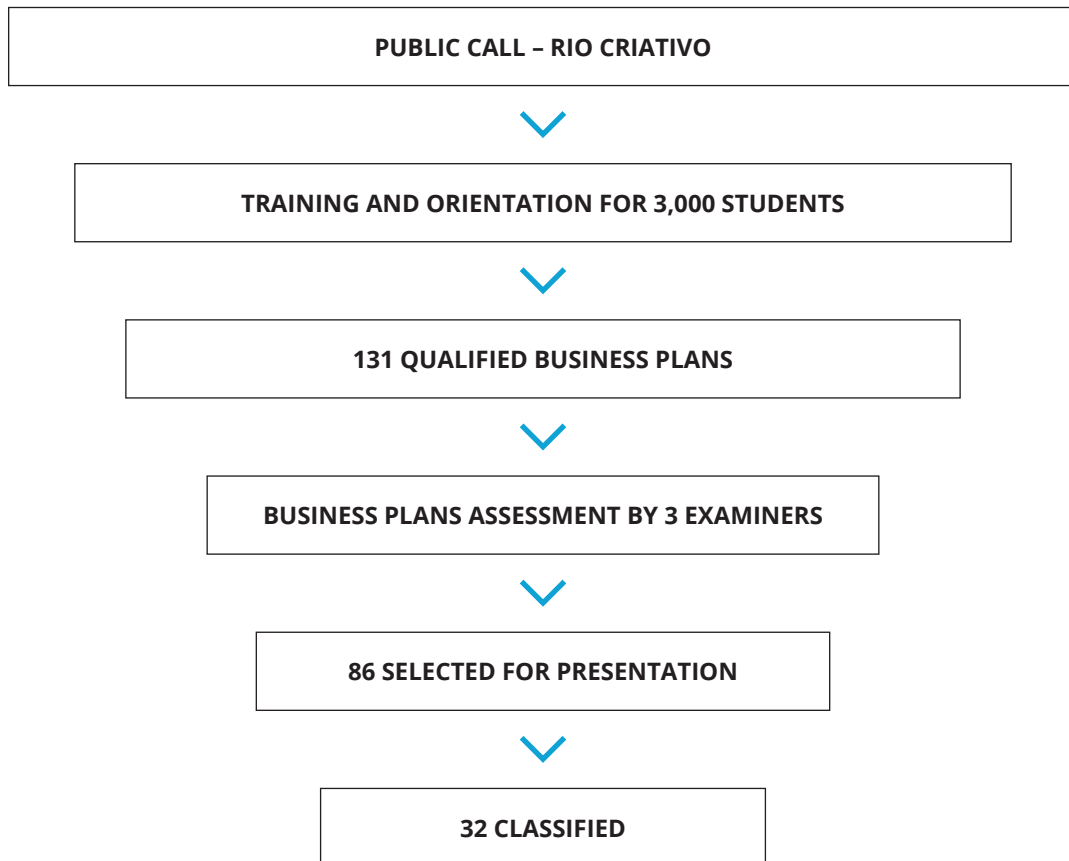
we defined the 19 sectors. It was complicated because it is not exactly what Firjan deals with, what London deals with... Not what the Ministry recommends... But it was what made sense to us. Because we could not work with creative economy disconnected from tourism, for instance.

When the edict was released, in August 2010, the expectation was to have 500 enrolled companies. But there were over 3 thousand registrations up to January 2011. Between September 2010 and January 2010, the project offered qualifying courses in “Entrepreneurial Basics” and “Advanced Business Plan”, reaching 2,941 entrepreneurs and teaching 413 hours. Those enrolled had access to free lessons and training, besides individual consulting. However, from the three thousand enrolled, only 131 sent business plans. Approximately 2,869 people gave up or did not manage to conclude the planning and were unable to continue the process.

In February 2011, each plan was assessed by two appraisers from the selected sector and a general appraiser who graded the plans, leading to a ranking. In this first stage, 86 processes were classified (Table 5).



TABLE 5 - GENERAL DIAGRAM OF THE RIO CRIATIVO 2011 SELECTION PROCESS



SOURCE: RIO CRIATIVO: DESCRIPTION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE INCUBATION OF CREATIVE VENTURES. GÊNESIS INSTITUTE - CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF RIO DE JANEIRO, 2011, P. 3.

In the second stage, from April to May 2011, the final selection took place, when the 86 projects were presented to a board of examiners. What carried the most weight was the onsite presentation, with 10 points. In second place, innovation, with 4 points, which was assessed according to the experience of the examiners, who are specialists in



the area (Table 6). According to Julia, the onsite presentations was in first place because the intention was to assess the ability to be an entrepreneur in the selected company:

you can hire someone to make your business plan and it may turn out great. But it does not reflect what you do, where you came from. With an onsite presentation, we were able to see all this. Plans which were excellent failed. The entrepreneur couldn't live up to what was written.

TABLE 6 – CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF PROJECTS

Criteria	Grade	Weight
Quality of Onsite Presentation	From 1 a 10	10
Innovation Degree of Venture	From 1 a 10	4
Qualification of Proponents and Team	From 1 a 10	3
Economic feasibility and growth potential based on market analysis and competitiveness degree	From 1 a 10	3
Technical feasibility of project	From 1 a 10	2
Adequacy of Business Model	From 1 a 10	2

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO, STATE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, PUBLIC CALL # 16/2010 SELECTION OF VENTURES IN THE SCOPE OF CREATIVE ECONOMY IN THE STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO, P. 7-8

In order to assess what was innovative or not, as with the other criteria of classification, Rio Criativo sought out partners, specialists in the areas, and generalist consultants in business plans to form the onsite board of examiners that attended the presentations for nine days. That is, the perspective of what was innovative or not came from the hired



specialists for the selection. This informality in the process of choosing the companies, especially regarding to the high assessment of the onsite presentation and the valuing of oratory; the ability to sell an idea not only in a rational, written way, but also spoken, gestural and empathy can be traced back to aversion Brazilians have to pragmatic rituals, be it in social life or business:

the unawareness in any way of familiarity of what is not dictated by an emotional ethics represents an aspect of Brazilian life that only a handful of foreigners can easily penetrate. Yet it is so characteristic of us, this way of being, that it does not even disappear in certain activities that are normally regarded as competitive. (Holanda, 1995, p. 148-149)

Result of the final edict of Rio Criativo: 21 companies were selected for the incubation process, which started in August 2012 and will finish in April 2014. To the “incubated”, the program offers shared rooms, support services for the legitimation of the venture, legal and press consultancy, visual programming, human resources, strategic planning and marketing plan.

Since January 2013, the program can rely with Rio Criativo School, which offers courses and consultancy to the general public in Cultural and Innovative Entrepreneurship, Business Plans, Project Planning and Management, Finances, among others.

5 CONCLUSION

When the concepts of creativity and innovation and how they are used in Brazil are analyzed, it is clear that creativity is associated to sectors that are already defined as creative, whether they are really creative or not. This means that in order to be part of the creative economy one needs merely to work in one of the areas which were already stipulated by Unesco as creative, even if the company is copying something that has already been created. The Brazilian Institute of Intellectual Property (IBPI) protects the rights to literary, artistic and scientific work, among others. But it is not clear and does not develop



such an efficient work as the institution that analyzes and registers innovative projects: National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI).

This difference between intellectual property and industrial property exists because, in most countries, including Brazil, the economic policies and the regulatory system are not adapted to the industrial era and the production of material goods. In the business world, ideas, innovations and other expressions of human creativity are converted into private property and protected by law through the Intellectual Property System, which is not yet adapted to the innovation era, including strategic innovation.

For decades, Brazil has been a center of artistic and cultural creativity. The challenge now is to move to the next level – transforming creativity into technological and strategic innovation, economic competitiveness and creation of value. If we are in the innovation area, the main asset is intellectual property, a tangible good, it needs to be managed in a different way in order to be transformed into a powerful economic tool, and lead to global platforms of “property” knowledge to the companies.

Rio Criativo was a pioneering project in Brazil. Nevertheless, despite the success in implementation and the great number of enrollments, the institute faced some common problems in most of the registrations: the lack of vision in business, strategic and financial planning. How can we talk about innovation when most of them had never written a business plan? And 80% of the companies could not deliver it, even having access to free courses and training.

Even so, the fact that the edict privileged the onsite presentation with the highest number of points – 10 – is questionable. In preference to innovation, in second place, with 4 points. Does this mean that those who presented a project that was not so innovative, but with good oratory, had a better chance of being approved? Could it be that the weight of the onsite presentation can be analyzed as an evidence of the difficulty in attributing value and degree to the innovation of the project? In other words, more than oratory, under these criteria, would Rio Criativo be trying to value the entrepreneurial spirit of the candidate over the preconceived notions of innovation?

In this researched, two items require a more detailed analysis. First: the lack of criteria to define and register what is creative seems to be a global deficiency. Most countries, including Brazil, simply classify companies as creative because they belong to a segment



that is considered creative, even if they are repeating formulas. The second item is the selection process that prioritizes onsite presentation, a characteristic of Rio Criativo, which formulated the edict following this criterion.

Indeed, there is a lot of criticism and lack of consistency in the different classifications that have been adopted in many countries. Some criticism is due to the fact that these classifications include, in the same model, activities that are subject to incentives, such as films – and others that are not subsidized, as in the case of entertainment software. The interviewees to this research themselves recognize that the first edict was a pilot and that Rio Criativo, just like the incubated companies, is also a company in an experimental phase, and can and has to be improved.

Another open question is territory. Rio de Janeiro is often mentioned, even in the name of the incubator, but the relationship between territory and creativity is not brought up at any stage of the selection process. There is no distinction between the selected companies from any other company with the same activity in another city in the country. The consideration of determined “carioquidade” (the quality of being from the city of Rio de Janeiro) in the projects relies only on the choice of creative sectors that are specific to Rio. Besides that, there is no other factor that distinguishes the companies of creative sectors in Rio from other companies in the country, only the fact that they are in Rio de Janeiro.

If the main question in this research is the challenge of transforming creativity into innovation, what is noticed is that Rio Criativo, just like Brazil, still has a long way to go. Be it from the conceptual, organizational or strategic point of view. The positive point is that it was a kick-off. Now an improvement of the process is needed, so that the creativity from people of Rio de Janeiro can be the boost to big and promising business, just like what happens at carnival. This competence must be brought to other products and services. It is fundamental that the innovative ideas from artists and entrepreneurs from Rio de Janeiro and Brazil be registered.

The future of global competitiveness is strongly linked to the commercial exploitation of the rights over property innovations. In order to become a creative and innovative country, Brazil needs to take many steps. One of them is to know how to protect and commercially exploit the rights over its creativity and innovations. Another one is to know how to put great ideas into practice.



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