# Cultural and Urban Strategizing for Creative Cities

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## ABSTRACT

In the year of 2019, the city of Fortaleza-CE became a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN). The UCCN is a network that aims to promote cooperation with and among cities that recognize creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable development. This achievement is investigated in this study through the theoretical perspective of strategy-as-practice (WHITTINGTON, 1996). This paper presents how the Fortaleza's candidature process occurred, to become a Creative City of Design. The findings show that the choice of Fortaleza as a new UCCN partner was reached by a planning built over decades with popular participation and with support from public policies involving a good mind set about culture and creative cities.

**Keywords:** strategy-as-practice; culture-driven; creative cities; creative economy.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Since 90's, several studies developed by both universities and public authorities have demonstrate the relevance of creative and cultural-based ventures (COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA, 1994; DCMS, 1998; CAVES, 2000; FLORIDA, 2002; WECKERLE; PAGE; GRAND, 2016; DCMS, 2019; BERLIN, 2014). Such ventures are part of a symbol economy called creative economy, in which immaterial and intangible aspects are vital both in the perception of value and for the definition of its monetary price.

During the 11th United Nations Ministerial Conference on Trade and Development, held in 2004 in the city of São Paulo (Brazil), the theme creative industries was introduced in the international economic and development agenda (UNCTAD, 2010). In Brazil, this event was the basis for the emergence of a set of research, with a scientific (CUTT, 2005; BENDASSOLI ET AL., 2009; MENEZES; BATISTA, 2015) and governmental aim (FIRJAN, 2008, 2012, 2014), as well as for the holding of several conferences, such as: I International Forum of Creative Industries in 2005; the Creative Economy module inserted in the World Cultural Forum in 2006; In 2007, two international seminars were held, one in the city of Fortaleza and another one in São Paulo (SEBRAE, 2008).

The goods produced by the creative industries carry the symbolic expression of the culture of a people, and once inserted in the arena of the economy they acquire both symbolic and economic values (Adler, 2011; Reis, 2007). In numbers, the creative goods market more than doubled worldwide from 2002 to 2015, from US $ 208 billion to US $ 509 billion (UNCTAD, 2019). Particularly and among the subsectors, for example, in the design category, the ones that have stood out the most are: fashion design, interior design and jewellery design. These represent a total of 54% of goods exported in the category, which presents an emerging market for the fashion and clothing design sectors in Latin America including countries like Argentina and Brazil (UNCTAD, 2019).

The city of Fortaleza is in the northeast region of Brazil and is among the five cities that receive the most tourists (Ministry of Tourism, 2019). The State of Ceará (in which Fortaleza city is its capital), has shown an increase in the number of formal creative professionals, and more than half of them (50.3%) work in: Advertising & Marketing; Architecture; Design; and Fashion. Fashion stands out with 13.3% (the largest share among all Brazilian states), and Advertising & Marketing with 18.1% (the second largest share among

all states) (FIRJAN, 2019). According to the UNCTAD (2010) classification, the Architecture, Design and Fashion activities are part of the "Functional Creations" group, which is the most demand-driven and service-oriented activities. Advertising & Marketing is in the Media group, which covers the production of creative content for large-scale communication purposes.

Based on the recognized economic relevance in the field of Design, in 2019, the city of Fortaleza became a Creative City of Design, through the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN). UCCN is a network that aims to promote cooperation with and among cities that recognize creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable development (SKOGLUND; LAVEN, 2019). In this way, joining the UCCN can allow the city of Fortaleza to share its best practices and develop partnerships with the government, the private sector, and the civil society. These practices can be in form of the integration of urban and cultural plans to modify the city image and offer spaces for the creative economy development (WÅHLIN ET AL., 2016). Considering this context, how did the process of strategic formulation of this public policy, UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project, take place?

For this study, the strategic making of the processes and practices that constituted the day-to-day organizational activities implemented at the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project was investigated through the theoretical perspective of Strategy-as-Practice (WHITTINGTON, 1996, 2006; JARZABKOWSKI; SPEE 2009; SEIDL; WHITTINGTON 2014; VAARA; WHITTINGTON, 2012).

Considering this discussion about the influences of culture in the formulation of urban strategies-as-practice, this work aimed to understand how the strategic process occurred in the Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project for the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).

The present work is organized in six chapters. After this introduction (chapter 1), the theoretical perspective of SAP will be presented (chapter 2), and then, the chapter 3 will deal about urban strategies culture-driven. Chapter 4 presents the methodology of the work, which in turn is based on a qualitative approach. Chapter 5 deals with the analysis of the results and contribution of this work. Then, chapter 6 presents the conclusions followed by the references.

## 2 STRATEGY AS PRACTICE

In theoretical terms, the perspective of strategy-as-practice (SAP) (Dobusch & Mueller-Seitz, 2012; Whittington, 1996, 2006; Jarzabkowski & Spee 2009; Seidl & Whittington 2014) that advances in the use of theories of practices (Bourdieu, 1990; Giddens, 1984; Foucault, 1977; De Certeau, 1984), articulating them with the classic approach to strategic planning (Mintzberg, 1994; Granovetter, 1985) to emphasize its vast social context, its activities and the actors involved in strategic doing process, emphasizing the understanding of "how" instead of "what" (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). According to Whittington (2006), the SAP approach has been investiganting since 1990s (WHITTINGTON, 1996; JOHNSON ET AL, 2007; JARZABKOWSKI; SPEE 2009; VAARA; WHITTINGTON 2012; SEIDL; WHITTINGTON, 2014).

The set of collective practices carried out by people in an organization, when understood as a "social practice" (WHITTINGTON 2002; 2006) allows for an in-depth analysis of what actually occurs in activities that involve strategy. In this way, this approach allows the researcher to connect the strategy research with the practice research oriented to organizational studies (GOLSORKHI ET AL., 2015).

According to Whittington (2006) and Vaara and Whittington (2012), there are three central dimensions when considering: (1) "practice", which concerns norms, behavior routines and the way of acting using material resources in the social field; (2) the "praxis", which refers to the activities that people perform in practice, giving importance not only to "what is done"

but also to "how it is done"; (3) and the "practitioners", who are the actors who both carry out the strategy and carry it into their daily practices. Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl (2007) develop this perspective and present a framework (Figure 01) in which the strategizing process and or the way the strategy is being implemented is seen as a reflection between the dimensions of "praxis", "practices" and the "practitioners".
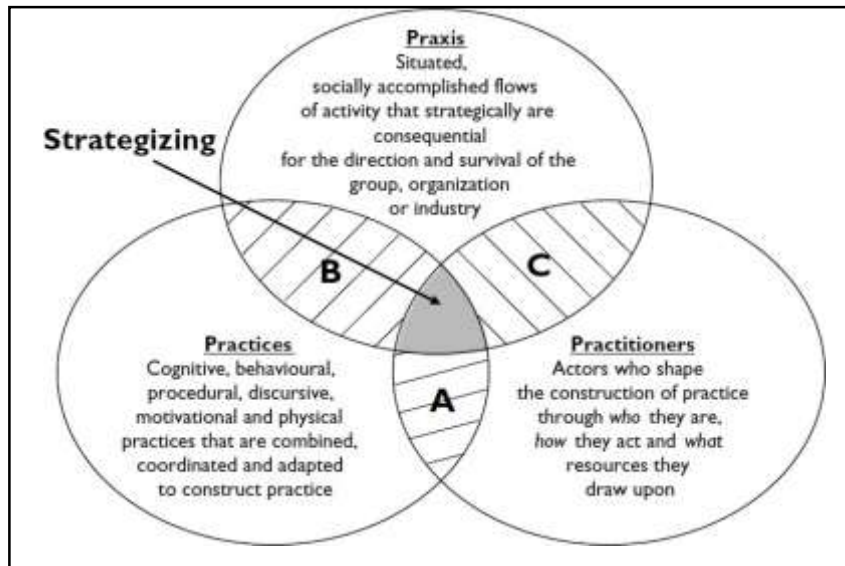


Figure 01: Conceptual Framework for Analysis of strategy-as-practice.
Source: Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl, (2007, p. 11).


Although the three main central themes are interrelated, a research can focus on only one of these, or a combination of them, without disregarding their interrelation. Figure 01 presents the strategizing as a reflection of the "praxis", "practices" and the "practitioners". The intersections A, B and C indicate the interconnections between themes, which can be focus of scientific investigation.

For Golsorkhi et al. (2015, p. 1), the SAP approach it is concerned with the "micro-level of social activities, processes and practices that characterize organizational strategy and strategizing processes". Balogun, Huff and Johnson (2003) stressed that strategizing deals with the study of the practices performed by their practitioners in the place where it occurs. Thus, the strategy is no longer understood as structured only top- down, but by different actors, being in all the practical activities and processes that are developed in the day to day of an organization. Strategies are therefore implemented at different organizational levels, deliberately and / or emergently, leading to an integrative process of strategy formation (middle-up-down). Also, according to Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl (2007, p. 8), we emphasize that strategizing refers to strategy making, as a construction of processes and activities through "actions, interactions and negotiations of multiple actors", thus configuring co-creation practices (WÅHLIN ET AL., 2016).

Based on conceptions of site ontologies (SCHATZKI, 1996, 2002, 2006), the set of these collective practices as well as social idiosyncrasies, thus form the social context. This context is composed by a mesh (the place where life happens), which involves multiple actions carried out by an individual (or a group) in certain (one or more) "scenarios" in which "human beings" and "non-human material entities" cohabit together.

Santos and Alcadipani (2015) claim that it is in this mesh that human and non- human entities act positioning themselves in relation to each other in order to gain identity (when it's about people) and meaning (when it's about other elements). The scenarios and the entities are

physically connected, since the practices developed by human agents happen with the use of non-human entities (machines, utilitarian objects, raw material, etc.) in a scenario (space, building, street, city, office, etc.) that can relate to other scenarios and entities. The central themes of Whittington (2006), Vaara and Whittington (2012) and Schatzki's (1996; 2002; 2006) site ontologies, have being incorporated with the study of strategy and the strategizing (KAPLAN, 2011; WRIGHT; PAROUTIS; BLETTNER, 2013; BURGELMAN ET AL., 2018; KORNBERGER; CLEGG, 2011).

## 3 CULTURAL TURN: URBAN STRATEGIZING PROCESSES CULTURE DRIVEN

Ponzini and Rossi (2010) point out that, in the context of cities, the cultural turn can be widely perceived through phenomena ranging from issues related to the economy of culture (Scott, 2000), to sets of artistic and cultural activities heterogeneous occurrences in the city (Strom, 2004), up to prescriptive narratives with recommendations for economic development (Gibson & Klocker, 2005).

In this context, the urban space is then seen both as a receptacle for culture and as a constituent element of it. Considering cultural values in order to think about strategies as practices in cities is to consider not only the participations and actions of the actors who participate in this process, but also to emphasize cognition and feedbacks about cultural values, since culture is the soul of the city (Huang & Zhao, 2013).

Considering the nature of Schatzki's concept of contextual practices (1996; 2002; 2005), and the perspective of investigating culture-driven urban strategic plans (Wåhlin et al., 2016) under the strategy-as-practice approach, these articulations are in line with the epistemic proposals of the central themes proposed by Whittington (2006) and Vaara and Whittington (2012). For Hall and Hubbard (1998), the adoption of culture-driven urban strategies aims to position the city at the center of global and or national competitiveness.

After following the steps for a systematic literature review proposed by Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003), the panorama of publications on culture-driven urban strategizing processes was shown to be concentrated on themes such as blocks and cultural districts (McManus & Carruthers, 2014; Nuccio & Ponzini, 2016), the impact of cultural planning in urban space (Trumbull, 2014; Haas & Olsson, 2014), theoretical concepts (Lysgård, 2013; Sacco, Ferilli & Blessi, 2014), creative economy (Aubry, Blein & Vivant, 2015) and strategy (Tölle, 2016). The subject that had the greatest integration with classic urban planning guided by culture was that of urban regeneration (Wang, 2009; Liu, 2016; Mcmanus & Carruthers, 2014; Lin & Hsing, 2009; Shin & Stevens, 2013). Thus, the survey revealed a gap in this pertinent literature regarding studies that articulate the urban strategizing processes driven by culture, in the context of the approach of strategy as a practice (strategy-as-practice SAP).

Wåhlin et al., (2016) argued that the alignment between the urban and cultural planning is essential for the regeneration of the city to occur. The transformation of urban design along with cultural regeneration occurs through actors linked to the cultural field, who bring with them the intangible capital that shapes cultural and creative goods (Wansborough & Mageen, 2000).

The strategizing process, which for Jarzabkowski (2004) happens through a fluid interaction between actors and contexts, offers a conceptual theoretical basis for articulating the concept of co-creation practices (Vallaster & Von Wallpach, 2018). Thus, it is assumed that the cultural direction of these processes can become an important theoretical nexus for

understanding how creative cities are organized, through the development of the Creative Economy (Sacco & Crociata, 2013; Jarzabkowski, 2004).

## 4 METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective research, the qualitative methodology was adopted through the case study (Flyvbjerg, 2011). The case study focused on the strategic formulation phase of the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project, which is expected to be implemented between 2020 - 2022.

For the collection of data, a documentary survey of research for which materials were collected in different institutional databases was constituted, among them Fortaleza City Hall, Fortaleza City Observatory, Iracema Institute, Ceará State Development Agency (ADECE), Federation of Industries of Rio de Janeiro (FIRJAN), Federation of Industries of Ceará (FIEC), Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (SEBRAE), among others.

Documents and images from internet websites were also compiled, such as interviews published in different newspapers with various agents who participated in the process of elaborating the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project. Nine In-depth interviews were also conducted with: an actor from Fortaleza Secretariat of Culture; three main actors from the Iracema Institute; an actor from the Association of Graphic Designers of the Brazilian State of Ceará; two main actors from the Fortaleza City Hall Observatory; two consultants; a special adviser from the Special Coordination of Federative Relations; and a tenured professor and also secretary from the Creative Economy Chamber. Each interview took about 50 minutes to complete, most of them online due to pandemic of COVID-19.

In the years 2019-2020 participant virtual observations were made during the meetings of the ADECE Creative Economy Committee, and a field diary was written. The choice to interview these actors was since these institutions were responsible for the elaboration of the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project. The interview script, as well as the observation procedures were constituted based on the objectives of this study.

For the analysis, the Thematic Analysis was used, which constitutes one of the techniques of the Content Analysis approach (Bardin, 2004). Thematic analysis is based on the counting of one or more themes or items of significance in a coding unit previously determined according to the study's questions and purpose. To assist these procedures, we used ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development, which assisted in the organization of the repertoire of materials that constituted the research analytical archive.

## 5 MAIN FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTION

As the objective of this study the analysis procedures highlighted the main thematic dimension that guided the related coding units, which will be discussed below related to the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project.

In 2018, the main strategies as culture-driven urban practices were conceived by the Fortaleza City Hall (FCH) through the Fortaleza Planning Institute (IPLANFOR) in order to generate an alignment between the Creative Economy Plan contained in the Plan "Fortaleza 2040", which in turn presents as its main practice the creation of a Cultural, Intelligent and Creative District (CICD) (MONTENEGRO; SIMÕES, 2019; SILVEIRA, 2019). Based on this pilot project that describes the set of strategies-as-practices for organizing the CICD, the FCH, through IPLANFOR and other public and private institutions, proposed the elaboration of the candidacy of the city of Fortaleza for joining the Network Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in the design category.

The project of the Cultural, Intelligent and Creative District (CICD) of Fortaleza, which covers the neighbourhoods of downtown and Iracema Beach, seeks to foster synergies among entrepreneurs in this territory (through clusters, start-ups, incubators, coworking's, and micro and small businesses) businesses), residents and public service providers, aiming to produce innovative solutions to the daily problems of their populations (Silveira, 2019: 20).

However, and according to the interviewed director of the IRACEMA INSTITUTE, the initial idea of elaborating the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project was put forward in the sense top down by the Fortaleza City Hall, however, initiatives of this type are unusual because:

In other cities, the idea usually comes from professionals in the area who come together and propose the project to their city hall. In our case, it was a proposal from the city's public management that called on the creative professionals involved (Interview with an actor from the IRACEMA INSTITUTE).

Also, according to the director of the IRACEMA INSTITUTE, within the scope of the FCH, the Observatory of Fortaleza City linked to IPLANFOR, had a relevant role for Fortaleza to obtain the seal of UCCN, characterizing, therefore, the Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project as a public cultural policy that aims to develop the creative economy in the city of Fortaleza.

On the other hand, in the context of Fortaleza City Hall, the Observatory of Fortaleza City played a relevant role for Fortaleza to obtain the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) seal. According to an interviewed Observatory actor, the UCCN seal was granted by the fact that the city of Fortaleza has a broad planning built over decades with a large popular participation of more than 10,000 people, which gives it legitimacy. This broad range of popular participation is result from strategies developed by public institutions linked to the FCH and related to the culture and creative economy, as demonstrated the documental analysis of documents such as the Fortaleza 2040 Plan, Ceará 2050 Plan and others plans that deals with issues related to the city economy and culture.

According to interviewers, the actors involved in the process to create the UNESCO Fortaleza City of Design Project were selected by the Fortaleza City Hall and the SEBRAE (organization focused on training and promoting the development of micro and small companies) because of their strong connection with the field of design and the creative economy. Then, the Fortaleza Culture Secretariat (SECULTFOR) took charge of the Fortaleza City of Design Project in order to lead the working team.

The IPLANFOR announced to the public in general the intentions of the project at the Belchior Cultural Center. After that, there was a meeting with a experienced consultant from SEBRAE, an then was decided what other institutions (from inside and outside the FHC) would be invited to be part of the working group. (Interviewee, actor from the Observatory of Fortaleza).

We invited professors and members from the academic field from all universities of Fortaleza that deals with bachelor's courses of design, fashion, design thinking and all others related to design. So, we were alble to heard them about what we could include in the project and was very interesting to work with them. (Interviewee, actor from the Fortaleza Secretariat of Culture).

I did visits to institutions like Senai, SESI, FIEC, Universities in general. We reunited with all of them to in order to have capilarity of ideas. We also had a broad participation from the Tourism Secretariat, Fortaleza Observatory, International Relations Secretariat, amongst others. The participation was really good and the SEBRAE helped in order to control the meeting reports. In the end, everything went well. (Interviewee, consultant from SEBRAE).

The UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project was developed through strategies as culture-driven urban practices (Whittington, 1996; Seidl & Whittington 2014),

evidencing its relational character of co-creation (Steyaert & Looy, 2010; Wåhlin et al. , 2016), in which several actors participated, among them: (1) CEARÁ DESIGN, the Association of graphic designers from the Brazilian State of Ceará; (2) FECOMÉRCIO CE, an organization dedicated to the development of commerce in Ceará; (3) SENAC, a Brazilian professional education institution focused on trade in goods, services and tourism in Brazil; (4) SEBRAE, an organization focused on training and promoting the development of micro and small companies; (5) Federation of Industries of the State of Ceará (FIEC), an entity that represents the industries of the Brazilian State of Ceará; (6) INSTITUTO IRACEMA, a non-profit organization that aims to promote culture and education in the city of Fortaleza; (7) Fortaleza City Hall (FCH) through its Fortaleza Department of Culture; and the (8) Government of the State of Ceará through its Secretary of Culture of the State of Ceará (SECULT); the Economic Development Agency (ADECE); the FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF CEARÁ (FUC); STATE OF CEARÁ UNIVERSITY (SCU), FORTALEZA UNIVERSITY (UNIFOR), in addition to other institutions.
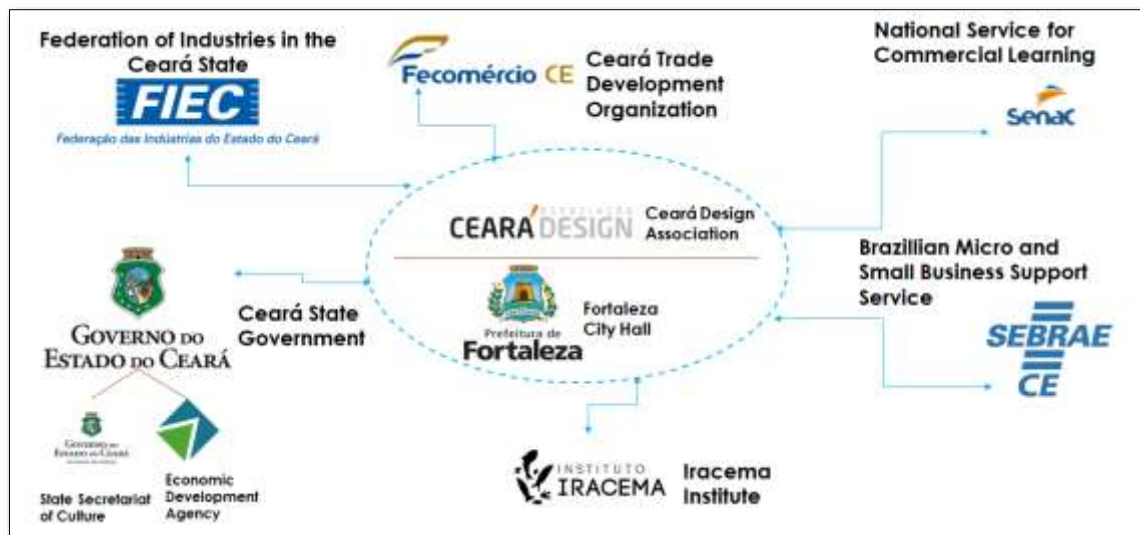


Figure 02: Institutional actors that contributed to the development of the " UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project".
Source: Author.

Co-creation processes were identified along the interviews, given the fact that were interactions and negotiations amongst the actors. Reports and other kinds of documents used to be shared to all actors, and decisions about the final content on the project to be submitted were taken colectively.

The actors (practitioners) shared from common routines (practices) in the first and second parto f the Project. For the first part, all of them had to search what their institution had done for the field of design in the last four years. For the second part they thought and discussed collaboratively in in actions to be implemented for the next four years. It is observed that the proposals for the creation of the CICD, as well as for the preparation of the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project were based on different strategizing processes, while reflecting the strategies as culture-driven urban practices carried out by different practitioners in their routines daily rates (Golsorkhi et al., 2015; Balogun, Huff and Johnson, 2003; Whittington, 2006).

Finally, the documentary analyses showed that UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project was approved by UNESCO in 2019, emphasizing the importance of design in the history of the city of Fortaleza, as well as its economic and cultural assets, as well as projects

developed in the last years related to the design sector and related areas. Therefore, it is observed that an integrative process of strategy formation (middle-up-down) occurred, characterizing strategizing practices through actions, interactions, and negotiations of multiple actors, thus configuring co-creation practices (Wåhlin et al., 2016; Jarzabkowski, Balogun & Seidl, 2007). In addition, and according to an actor from the Observatory of Fortaleza:

> The Fortaleza 2040 Plan emphasizes the role of sustainable development because of Creative Economy actions that are envisaged in 33 actions of the total strategic practices that make up the Fortaleza 2040 Plan (Interviewee, actor from the Observatory of Fortaleza City, Interviewee).

It is also evident from the analysis that the Fortaleza 2040 Plan, in which the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project is inserted, is being driven by the Creative Economy, highlighting the influence of culture as the main strategies as culture-driven urban practices in its elaboration (Wåhlin et al., 2016; Whittington, 1996, 2006; Seidl & Whittington 2014). Interviewees reinforces this evidence stating that during the next phase of implementation-related UNESCO Creative City of Design Project, a Creative District (CICD), in the Iracema Beach neighborhood, should be organized. So that this set of strategies as culture-driven urban practices to materialize, it will be essential to bring this project into the Multi-Annual Plans of the city of Fortaleza, which define resource management for the realization of public policies, including cultural policies.

> We look exhaustively to the Fortaleza 2040 Plan so we could map the city's creative economy. The Fortaleza 2040 plan also gave us information in order to identifying the potencial regions of creative economy. For instance, the Iracema Beach has a strong potention in the innovation field. (Interviewee, actor from the Fortaleza Secretariat of Culture).

> The Fortaleza 2040 Plan was one of the greatest influences for us, specially the creative economy plan. It contains a lot of information, and some texts were taken from Fortaleza 2040 Plan and included in the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project. In the submitted project to UNESCO we stated clearly that the Fortaleza 2040 is an important plan for the city's urban design. (Interviewee, actor from the Fortaleza Observatory).

The interaction between these different actors in different contexts, portrays one of the premises of relational practices in the context of organizing (Steyaert & Looy, 2010), emphasizing that the organizing remains alive through differences (Rhodes & Wray-Bliss, 2012; Kersten & Abbot, 2012) when considering the multiple perspectives and actors involved. When asked about the role of art and culture in organizing the city's urban and social infrastructure, an actor from Iracema Institute stated that:

> It has a particularly important role, and our main argument in the Project was that design is a tool to solve the city's problems. For example, the city has an agreement with New York's Bloomberg, and they have a lot of that smart city footprint. City Hall staff takes care of mobility, so it is not just a visual action, but there is an urban redesign with a preponderance for pedestrians (Interviewee, actor from Iracema Institute).

It was also considered in the interview that the integration of urban and cultural plans (Wåhlin et al., 2016), will allow a creative organizing through the participation of actors in situations of vulnerability who live in marginalized spaces of the city. In this sense, the interviewed actor of the Design Association of the State of Ceará described strategies as culture-driven urban practices that are being idealized for a later moment:

> The objective of the Social Design Laboratory is to try to take the design thinking of projects to communities at risk and socially underprivileged so that design goes to these communities to try to find solutions for the daily lives of these people. So, this laboratory would work as small offices within these

areas, so that together with the community, think about actions aimed at solutions for them from the design thinking. But for now, the idea is on paper, in the project promised to UNESCO (Interviewee, actor from Design Association of the State of Ceará).

This transformation of urban design along with cultural regeneration should take place through intermediary actors, as well as on a micro-level of performance, linked to the cultural field of design, among others, academia, business, non-profit and citizens, as well as government, characterizing strategizing urban processes (Jarzabkowski, Balogun & Seidl, 2007; Wansborough & Mageen, 2000). It was evidenced that the actor's representatives of these institutions, they will be actively involved in the co-creation (Wåhlin et al., 2016) of the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project implementation phase. Also, according to an actor of the Observatory of Fortaleza City interviewee:

We need to plan new governance practices, rethink the role of municipal, state, and national councils, because these were decimated by the current federal government in Brasilia. We still need to find more creative ways for the population to participate in the decision-making processes, making protagonists of our own development practices. (Interviewee, actor from the Observatory of Fortaleza City).

In addition to proposing these strategies as culture-driven urban practices for a new governance in the city of Fortaleza, a actor from the Observatory of Fortaleza City cited other examples of relational practices of co-creation with cultural direction (Steyaert & Looy, 2010; Wåhlin et al., 2016), among these:

Organized governance based on popular juries, community initiatives, small group discussion with opinion makers, the population and neighbourhood leaders. If we want a creative city, technology needs to be in favour of that governance, through social networks, consensus building, discussion of problems and translation of complex issues to make them simpler and more palatable to the population. (Interviewee, actor from Observatory of Fortaleza City).

According to an actor from the Observatory of Fortaleza City: "it is necessary to think about alternative forms of city diplomacy, without passing exclusively through the central power of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brasilia". This same actor also cited as an example the Brazilian Consortium of Governors of Northeast Brazil as a possibility to implement this diplomatic alternative and to think of a more regionalist vision, with a focus on the culture of the place through the Creative Economy (Huang & Zhao, 2013; Steyaert & Looy, 2010; Vallaster & Wallpach, 2018; Sacco & Crociata, 2013; Jarzabkowski, 2004; Czarniawska, 2010).

The initial implementation of UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project made it possible to infer that this set of strategies as culture-driven urban practices, of a relational character and co-creation, were configured in an urban strategizing process, while inserted in a wide network of relationships (Czarniawska, 2008; Shotter, 1996; Steyaert & Looy, 2010; Wåhlin et al., 2016; Jarzabkowski, 2004). The analysis of these themes showed how the alignment between urban and cultural plans is essential for a regeneration of the city to occur, bringing with it the intangible capital that shapes cultural goods.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the influence of culture in the formulation of urban Strategies-as-Practice, this work aimed to discuss the strategic process as urban practices of the Fortaleza Creative City of Design Project, approved by UNESCO.

Among the results were presented the main practitioners that acted in the elaboration of the project in a creative way, characterizing the strategizing processes. In addition, the main

strategies as culture-driven urban practices were evidenced, among these: (i) an urban planning built over decades with popular participation, (ii) the Fortaleza 2040 Plan, emphasizing the role of sustainable development as a result of the actions of the Creative Economy, iii) the future organization of a creative district (CICD) with the support of the Fortaleza City Hall Multi-annual Plans, (iv) the planning of innovative urban governance practices, (v) as well as the future formulation of city diplomacy alternatives, with connections with the culture.

This is paper is part of a broad research that intend to go deeper in the analysis of the data along with the chosen literature. Also, a limitation of this work was the difficulty, due to pandemic of COVID-19, for the field research through participant observations. The meetings of the actors involved in the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City Project slowed down (even online), also slowing down the data gathering. For the second part of this research, the procedures of Ground Theory methodology are intended to be utilized to understand the implementation processes of the UNESCO Fortaleza Creative City of Design project in the period of 2021 to 2022.

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