

DESIGN AND HANDICRAFT IN COLLABORATION: a mapping of the handicraft ecosystem in Recife (Pernambuco - Brazil)

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ABSTRACT

This article is the result of research from the master's degree in Creative Economy, Strategy and Innovation (PPGECEI/ESPM RIO) whose objective was to identify the main agents in the crafts ecosystem in the Metropolitan Region of Recife (PE) and how they perceive collaboration practices between design and craftsmanship to maintain it in the market. The theoretical framework mobilized is divided into two complementary axes, one that debates actions through which design can collaborate as a driver of artisanal production and then, we will present the mapping of the artisanal ecosystem in the Metropolitan Region of Recife (PE), pointing out its main agents. Finally, insights extracted from the analysis of semi-open interviews with a semi-structured script will be shared with the participants of this ecosystem, exploring their perceptions about the interactions between design and crafts.

Keywords: Crafts, Design, Recife, Ecosystem.

INTRODUCTION

A characteristic that fundamentally distinguishes human beings from other animals is their ability, to produce their own survival, to consciously modify nature. If we consider craftsmanship as a praxis of configuring artifacts, we can say that it emerged with the oldest

people, who began to modify their surroundings intentionally, creating objects that helped in the task of feeding, protecting themselves and expressing themselves. According to Lima (n.d.: 2) “all antiquity was constructed in this way and until the European Middle Ages”, it was through craftsmanship “the way in which humanity was created”. Mazza, Ipiranga and Freitas (2007) argue that it is possible to state that the majority of contemporary objects are modified versions of ancient artifacts. However, in addition to products constantly undergoing changes in their shape and appearance, production processes are also always changing.

Through this process, as Canclini (1983) points out, it is not surprising that artisanal products change their meanings when relating to the capitalist market, tourism and mass media. Thus, “conceptual contemporary crafts have other values, meet other needs, and promote the individual's interaction with the environment in which they live [...]. The artisan-artist provokes controversies and reflections through the unusual use of materials” (Domingues, 2004 apud Freitas, 2017: 61).

Crafts, the object of study in this article, have been affected by social changes, the technological revolution, marketing concepts and designer initiatives. In order to contribute to the maintenance and expansion of craftsmanship, designers have been working on getting closer to the segment. For Freitas (2017: 119), “design can approach craftsmanship in different ways. In addition to being partners, [designers] can act as instructors or consultants. In any case, the designer should consider mainly the context in which the craftsman lives, while seeking to understand his mode of production”. For her, this collaboration should contribute to artisanal production without distorting traditional knowledge, serving as a driving force for production.

Based on this contextualization, the objective of this article is to present the mapping of the main agents and actions of the crafts ecosystem in the Metropolitan Region of Recife, in Pernambuco, Brazil, and how they perceive the collaborative practices between design and crafts for their support/maintenance in the market.

In this article, we understand Recife-PE as a creative territory. Creative territories must be recognized for their ability to create environments that inspire creativity and the evolution of concepts and experiences, with the ability to enrich local cultures, policies, societies, environments and economies through their communities and inhabitants.

Pernambuco is the seventh most populous state in Brazil, is located in the Brazilian Northeast and has a lot of economic representation in the region. According to data from the Pernambuco Economic Development Agency (ADEPE) website, the federation represents 90% of the Northeast's GDP. In 2017, crafts generated more than R\$45 million in the State. However, in order to make the research viable, we focused the study on the Metropolitan Region of Recife, which concentrates a large part of the actions and agents responsible for the sector.

To achieve the objective of this article, through a bibliographical review, we will present actions through which design can collaborate as a driver of artisanal production and a generator of competitive advantage. Continuing, we will present the mapping of the crafts ecosystem in the Metropolitan Region of Recife (PE), pointing out its main agents. Finally, insights extracted from the analysis of semi-open interviews with a semi-structured script will be shared with the participants of this ecosystem, exploring their perceptions about the interactions between design and crafts.

DESIGN IN COLLABORATION WITH CRAFTSMANSHIP

It is possible to observe, in the history of design, its relationship with three major processes that intensified throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The first was the consolidation of industrialization with the diversification of products, reorganization of the manufacturing and distribution processes of goods to serve more consumers. The second is called modern urbanization, as there has been an increasing concentration of population in large cities. And the third process is what we know as globalization, which culminated in major commercial integrations and the development of transport and communication technologies (Cardoso, 2008).

Due to this history linked to industrialization, when we talk about design, what immediately comes to mind are images related to innovative industrial products with aesthetic quality. For Golfetto, Fialho and Pellizzoni (2019), for design to be valued in the business world, it is not enough for it to produce beauty. It must offer effective solutions to the problems formulated and contribute to achieving business objectives. And, in fact, the role of design has been given new meaning according to the social transformations specific to each historical phase it has gone through since its emergence in the Industrial Revolution.

According to Lipovetsky (2015: 252), “a large part of purchasing decisions today is based on emotional elements, and design must communicate, tell a story to seduce, make people dream, give pleasure”. According to the author,

An entire category of design thus separates itself from its old positioning, very close to engineering, and proclaims its new narrative status. Design no longer seeks to translate solely the objective and neutral function of objects, but, through them, a universe of meanings that speaks and moves us (Lipovetsky, 2015: 250).

Corroborating this view, Freitas (2017: 119) states that “design is an integrated activity that goes beyond functional and formal considerations. It is a strategic, communication and innovation activity”. Furthermore, the designer is a professional who can contribute to commercial strategies and the organization of craft production, as he “is prepared for design activity in the most diverse production systems, for the analysis of consumer behavior and perceptions of opportunities for new markets”. This contribution is welcome because, according to the author,

[...] generally the craftsman worked more due to a tradition, the need for survival, or a need for expression of himself or the community in which he lives. The concern with serving the consumer market, innovating, and having sales success did not always prevail (Freitas, 2017: 49).

Borges (2012: 137) argues that “the connection between designers and craftsmen is, without a doubt, an extremely important phenomenon due to the social and economic impact it generates due to its cultural significance”. For this, designers can act in some ways, which are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Dimensions of the designer’s role with crafts.

PRODUCT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction of raw materials.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the quality of objects. • Conversation about design and colors.
STRATEGY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction or organization of labor. • Moving objects from one segment to another that is more valued by the market. • Intermediation between communities and the market. • Contribution to the strategic management of actions.
INNOVATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimization of manufacturing processes. • Combination of processes and materials. • Function adaptation.
VALUE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased conscious perception of this quality by the customer. • Communication of the intangible attributes of handcrafted objects. • Facilitating access for craftsmen or their production to the media. • Explanation of the story behind the handcrafted objects.

Source: Adapted from Borges (2012: 129).

The actions were divided into four dimensions, established in this research. The first being related to the product, with activities focused on its quality and functional aspects; the second concerns strategy, with actions that point to the market; The third deals with innovation, with interference in process improvements. Finally, there is the value dimension, with actions that contribute to increasing the perception of added value.

Due to his training focused on the market, the designer is able to collaborate with increasing the quality of products and, when we talk about handcrafted products, we take into account that the quality

it is related to the sociocultural values of which [the craft product] carries, but it is also related to its usability, durability, reliability, safety, and consumer satisfaction. The quality related to the artisanal production system concerns achieving a desired minimum standard, which does not mean dictating rigid specifications for production, especially because the topic discussed here is about handmade objects (Freitas, 2017: 120).

Furthermore, quality also means fitness for use, even if it is transcendent to practical function. If the product meets the customer's needs, it is a quality product (Freitas, 2017).

In view of the above, we therefore argue that it is possible to apply design as an innovation tool, being able to contribute significantly to craftsmen, not only with the generation of more business, but also in preserving the competitiveness and meaning of crafts for the current scenario. After all, as Golfetto, Fialho and Pellizoni (2019: 33) point out,

Design can act as a tool to promote innovation in areas considered fundamental to a business, providing better conditions for competitiveness through aesthetic, functional and symbolic aspects of a product, for example. It can also bring more rationality to the production process, qualify communication with the company's various audiences, contributing to its positioning, diversify and/or replace

product lines and build a brand identity more in line with the proposed new reality.

Therefore, it is possible to apply design as an innovation tool, which can contribute significantly to craftsmen, not only by generating more business, but also by preserving the competitiveness and meaning of crafts in the current scenario.

It is important to highlight that the designer should consider mainly the territory in which the artisan lives, seeking to understand its social context and traditional modes of production. The challenge is to promote productivity without losing the peculiarities of the process, combining tradition and modernity, discovering new uses, and sharing ideas (Freitas, 2017).

With this, we will address in the following section the main agents that operate in the crafts ecosystem in the Metropolitan Region of Recife (PE) to facilitate the understanding and relevance of the territory in production.

CRAFTSMANSHIP ECOSYSTEM IN THE METROPOLITAN REGION OF RECIFE – PE

Certainly, the success of designers' contributions to the maintenance and expansion of crafts will depend on mapping the broad network made up of all stakeholders involved in this activity, such as craftsmen and the government. Stakeholders have different origins, behaviors, beliefs, and interests, therefore requiring the use of analysis tools capable of dealing with such diversity. One of these tools is the so-called “Business Ecosystem”.

Ecosystem analysis is a process that aims to understand the dynamics and interaction of the different participants in an ecosystem. This analysis is essential to identify the roles played by each participant, as well as the exchange flows between them. An ecosystem can be defined as

a community supported by a base of organizations and individuals that interact with each other – the agents of the business world. This economic community produces goods and services of value for customers, who are also members of the ecosystem. Other members are suppliers, producers, competitors, and other stakeholders. Over time, these members jointly evolve their skills and duties, and tend to align with the direction defined by one or more central firms (Moore, 1996: 26).

For Tsujimoto et al. (2018: 7), an ecosystem is “a multi-layered social network, historically self-organized or deliberately designed by managers, composed of agents who have different attributes, principles and beliefs, whose objective is to offer a system of products/services”.

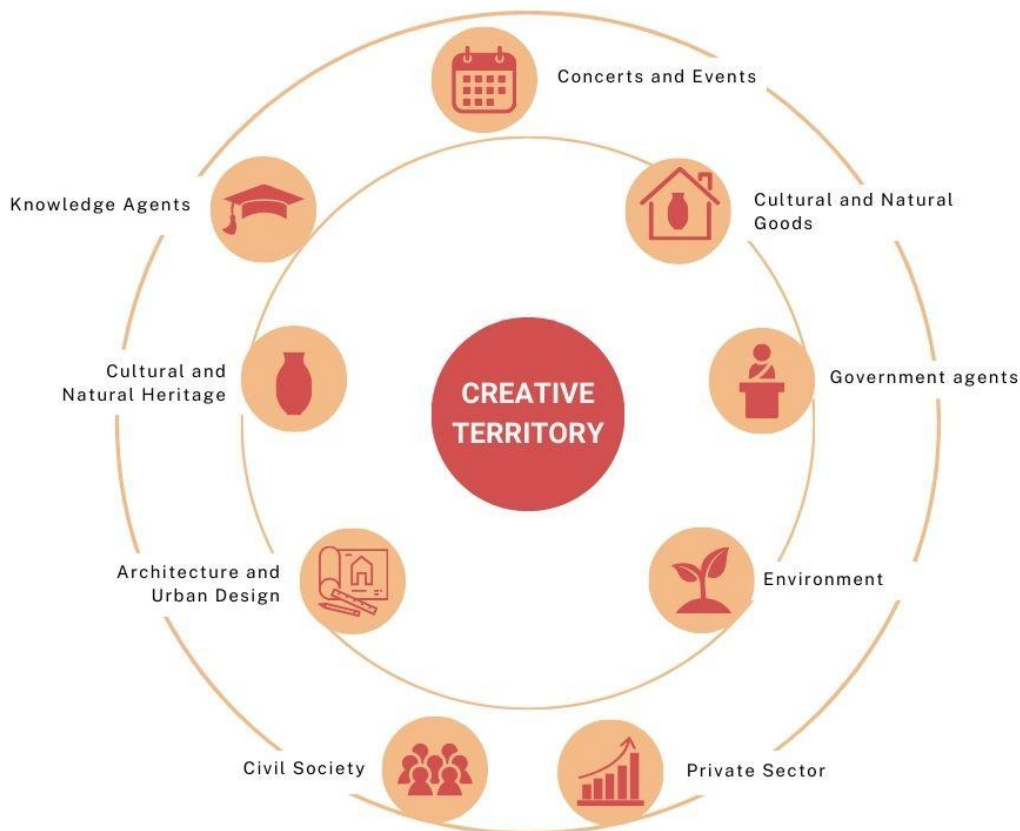
In the technology environment, this network is formed to promote innovation and business success, after all, the more uncertain the segment, the more necessary this mapping. Crafts can also be considered a segment with many uncertainties, after all, it is a sector with weaknesses. Some of them are lack of recognition of the value of the intangible heritage present in handicrafts by the community; lack of recognition or use of master craftsmen; national artisanal products priced below their cultural and economic value; and informality in the sector (Freeman, 2010: 84).

For Oliveira (2023: 175), a creative ecosystem can be defined as:

every system in which creative activity emerges, including three basic elements, namely: the creative people centrally involved, the creative activities and the creative environment, as well as the relationships that connect them. Therefore, creative territories must be recognized for their capacity to structure ecosystems that stimulate imagination and the transformation of ideas and experiences, with the potential to contribute to the expansion of the cultural, political, social, environmental, and economic wealth of their communities and populations.

The author believes that the success of the advancement of creative territories will depend on the effectiveness with which its human and non-human agents are able to articulate themselves within socioeconomic networks composed of tangible and intangible elements. Since these spatial dimensions represent the scenario in which the social and economic interactions of productive and institutional agents take place, it is appropriate to identify some of the agents that play crucial roles in this context of creative territory, as can be seen in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Creative territories and their agents.



Source: Oliveira, 2023:175.

The dynamics between the agents and the respective associations, connections, and interactions they produce form what we call a creative ecosystem (Oliveira, 2023: 175).

This relationship is confirmed because it is possible to identify in the graph a (I) network of (II) autonomous and (III) interdependent agents from (IV) different origins, that is, the four essential attributes for describing an ecosystem attributed as a consensus for Rodrigues, Kamlot (2022: 188).

Borges (2012: 179) reinforces the importance of observing the multiplication of agents, after all, the number of government and civil society organizations with requalification programs for Brazilian crafts has been growing in recent years.

METHODOLOGY

The research was developed based on bibliographical, descriptive, and exploratory analysis and interpretation, of a qualitative nature, through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews combine scripts containing pre-formulated and open questions, offering the interviewer control over the aspects they wish to explore in the field, while allowing the interviewee to reflect freely and spontaneously on the highlighted topics (Minayo, 2018). The main advantage of this research method is its flexibility. It allows you to obtain deeper insights into the opinions of respondents, while also allowing you to direct questions in a way that maintains the focus of the research and avoids digressions.

The perspective of this research is related to the thinking of Minayo (2017: 2), who argues that qualitative research must pay attention “to its sociocultural dimension that is expressed through beliefs, values, opinions, representations, forms of relationship, symbols, uses, customs, behaviors and practices”. Considering these characteristics, qualitative research focuses on the individual and their relationships and interactions with the environment. Therefore, the concern here was not with numbers, but with the depth, scope, and diversity in the process of understanding the ecosystem. Therefore, no concept of saturation was used, however, the aim was to substantiate the research and make it justifiable, as Mason (2010, apud Minayo, 2017) argues. All 7 interviews were carried out on-line, via Zoom application, due to geographic distance and to facilitate recordings, all with prior authorization. In total, 252 minutes of audio were generated, transcribed into 81 pages of text.

To understand and reflect on the data collected, content analysis was developed. Pre-analysis must follow four steps: skimming reading, selection of documents, reformulation of objectives and hypotheses, and formulation of indicators. These steps aim to comprehensively prepare the material for analysis (Bardin, 1977).

Soon after, the material exploration stage takes place, a phase whose objective is categorization or coding in the study. At this stage, it was found that the development of the question guide alone partially met this stage, since, based on the theoretical basis, relevant categories were established. By establishing correspondences between the data obtained and relevant theories, it is demonstrated how the research results relate to existing knowledge. This strengthens the credibility of the research and provides a theoretical context for interpreting the data. Finally, the results were processed and interpreted, aiming to find the meaning of the messages.

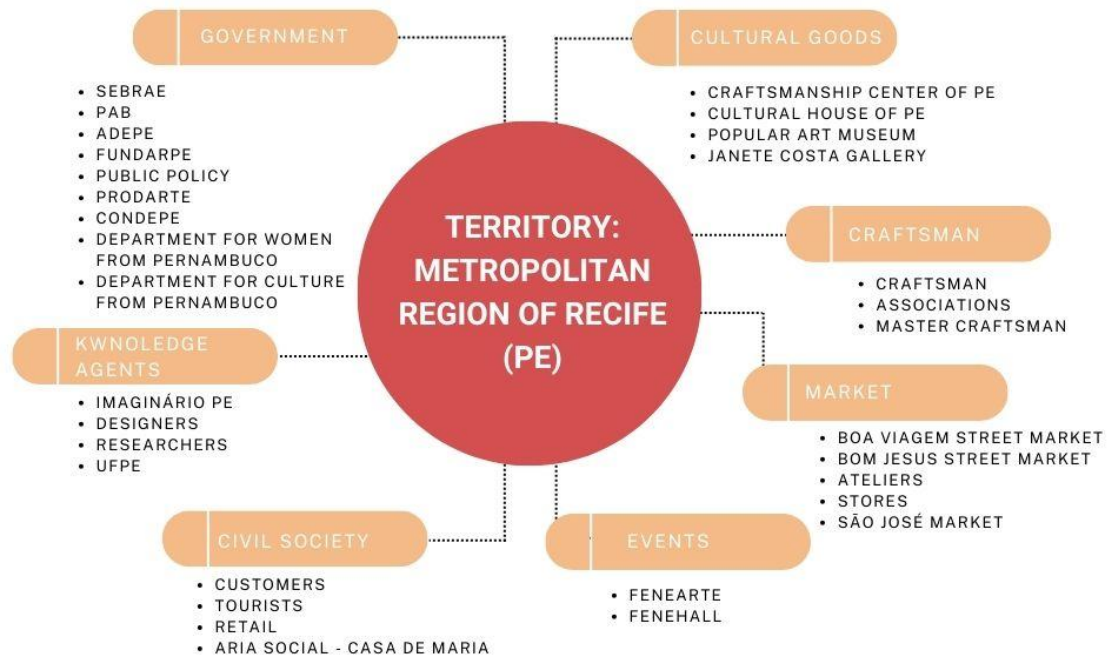
ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OBTAINED

Based on the concept and structure of Oliveira's creative ecosystem (2023), presented in the previous section, an initial proposal was developed for the Creative Ecosystem of Crafts in the

Metropolitan Region of Recife (PE). The graph was enriched with contributions from the agents involved, after the interviews, culminating in its final version as shown in Figure 2.

The interviews were carried out with 7 people who work and participate in the crafts ecosystem in the Metropolitan Region of Recife (PE), including 3 craftsman, 1 government agent, 1 knowledge agent, 1 knowledge and market agent, 1 civil society agent, presented in figure 2 of this article. These people were selected due to their relevance in the market and ease of access and availability for this research.

Figure 2: Craft Ecosystem in the Metropolitan Region of Recife – PE.



Source: Own authorship, 2024.

Therefore, we have the **government** as an agent in the ecosystem, after all, public policies generate a great impact on the sector. Among them we mention the Culture Incentive Laws, which help and promote the local production chain. Another important agent for the State of Pernambuco is the Pernambuco Economic Development Agency (ADEPE), which is a mixed-capital company, indirectly administered by the State, linked to the Department of Economic Development (SDEC). The Brazilian Crafts Program (PAB) takes care of issuing licenses for craftsmen in the state. We also have the Recife Handicraft Development Support Program (PRODARDE), existing since 1987 and coordinated by the Department of Labor and Professional Qualification, which was created with the aim of guiding and supporting artisanal production, as well as facilitating access to training aimed at the qualification the work of these manual artists.

As **agents of knowledge**, we have the Imaginário Pernambucano as a major regional case. The initiative emerged as an extension project at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE) in the 2000s, with the objective of “preserving, promoting and disseminating our culture through the valorization of Pernambuco crafts, and in partnership with other institutions, intended to support the development and the commercialization of products from different craftsmen” (Andrade; Cavalcanti, 2020: 23).

In **civil society**, people responsible for the consumption of handicrafts enter, whether they are locals, tourists or middlemen, who buy for resale. Already in the **market** we have workshops, stores and fixed fairs, such as Bom Jesus and Boa Viagem Street Market.

Events are understood as activities that take place temporarily, for example, the National Crafts Business Fair (FENEARTE) and the National Crafts Fair (FENEHALL). Another agent for the craft ecosystem is the **craftsman**, who can promote their work individually, in groups or associations and can become masters. A professional Master Craftsman is an artisan who has distinguished himself in his craft, legitimized by the community he represents and who disseminates knowledge about the processes and techniques of the craftsmanship to new generations. Finally, we have **cultural goods**, which are spaces dedicated to promoting and selling handicrafts in the city.

The first point addressed in the interview was in relation to the interviewee's profile and his professional trajectory and, based on the answers, table 2 below was generated to summarize the information collected.

Table 2: Profile of interviewed people.

INTERVIEW NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	ECOSYSTEM FIELD	NOMENCLATURE ADOPTED IN THE TEXT
Interviewee 1	Designer graduated from UFPE, with an MBA in marketing from the same institution. He works professionally at Imaginário Pernambucano and has served on the curatorship of FENEARTE.	KNOWLEDGE AND EVENTS AGENT	KNOWLEDGE AND EVENTS AGENT (E1)
Interviewee 2	Graduated, master and doctorate in Design, she also has a degree in Administration and is doing a post-doctorate in Materials Sciences. She has worked at the Federal University of Pernambuco in the Design course at the Agreste Academic Center since 2006 and as a researcher and extensionist in the area of design, crafts, education and materials development	KNOWLEDGE AGENT	KNOWLEDGE AGENT (E2)

Interviewee 3	PhD student in Design at UFPE. He has a master's degree in Information Design and a degree in Design from the same institution. He is currently a Management Advisor in the General Management of Cultural Heritage Preservation. He has experience in the area of public design management, having worked as Design and Fashion Advisor at the Department of Culture of the State of Pernambuco.	GOVERNMENT	GOVERNMENT AGENT (E3)
Interviewee 4	An artisan, currently 66 years old, she began working exclusively with crafts at the age of 40. Provides services for various projects and designers.	CRAFTSWOMAN	CRAFTSWOMAN (E4)
Interviewee 5	An artisan since the age of 17, currently 53 years old, she works with ceramics in a collective of craftsmen in Cabo de Santo Agostinho ¹	CRAFTSWOMAN	CRAFTSWOMAN (E5)
Interviewee 6	An artisan since the age of 10, currently 64 years old, she works as a volunteer teacher at the NGO Gabriela Feliz ² , offering crafts classes to around 10 women from the Vila Felicidade community.	CRAFTSWOMAN	CRAFTSWOMAN (E6)
Interviewee 7	She started in 2018 as a volunteer for the Casa Maria	CIVIL SOCIETY	CIVIL SOCIETY AGENT (E7)

1 Cabo de Santo Agostinho is a Brazilian municipality in the state of Pernambuco. It is part of the urban concentration of Recife and is part of the Metropolitan Region of that capital.

2 According to its website, the NGO Gabriela Feliz has existed since 1995, developing innovative educational work in the Community of Novo Caxangá, in the West Zone of Recife. The focus is the integral development of children aged between 3 and 6 years old, in addition to expanding their work in the sphere of social support and sustainable development of the community.

	<p>project . ³She is currently responsible for the commercial area of the project, which has already gained notoriety by participating in fairs such as Rosenbaum⁴, Nordeste⁵, Instituto C&A, FENEARTE, among others.</p>		
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Source: Prepared by the author, 2023.

After identifying the interviewees, the results were segmented into the following categories:

- **Importance of Ecosystem Agents to support Crafts in the Region**

For knowledge agents and government representatives, without this ecosystem nothing would work. The government agent (E3) believes that the importance of the ecosystem is to make the business (craft) more sustainable and give more visibility to the people who need to be reached by public policies. This relevance is also defended by the knowledge and events agent (E1), who believes that the ecosystem helps the artisan in their work. She believes that, without these agents, the artisan will not be able to act so independently.

The government agent (E3) argues that the relevance is also due to the sector still being economically fragile. This is why the dependence on public policies is so visible, but he also believes that access to these policies is even greater in the capital and that it is necessary to ensure that these actions reach the outskirts and the countryside.

This issue was not addressed so directly with the craftswomen interviewed, as the concept of ecosystem could be outside their repertoire. Even so, it was possible to observe in their speeches how the ecosystem is present in their professional careers, and the most cited agents were fairs and events and, therefore, the topic was segmented as another category for analysis.

- **Participation in Fairs and Events**

The first point to be clarified is the difference between fair and events. For this research, we consider fairs to be those that occur with some recurrence, whereas events are markets that take place occasionally, for example, FENEARTE and FENAHALL, which only take place once a

3 Casa de Maria aims to promote the training of craftsmen, the production and sale of handmade products. Using recycled and low-cost material, it contributes to restoring local culture and generating income for the mothers and families of Aria Social students.

4 According to its website, the “Feira na Rosenbaum” is a meeting that brings together independent artists and designers to bring to the public original creations with a Brazilian identity, curated by Cris Rosenbaum. The Fair welcomes everyone from traditional creative communities in Brazil to contemporary artists and designers.

5 According to its website, Nordeste defines itself as a collaborative platform whose mission is to document, amplify and foster the talent of entrepreneurs and creatives from the nine states of the Northeast, with an emphasis on authorial design and the rescue of traditions, knowledge and raw materials of region.

year. FENEARTE, highlighted by its long existence and economic impact in the region, is cited as a significant example of a fair, being mentioned repeatedly by interviewees due to its market consolidation over more than two decades.

For many craftsmen, such as interviewees (E5) and (E6), participation in FENEARTE represents a consistent source of sales and business opportunities, while for others, such as interviewee (E4), it also offers opportunities for networking and learning, facilitating connection with new projects and professional contacts.

Despite the perceived benefits, some interviewees, such as craftswomen (E5) and (E6), mention the challenges faced in participating in FENEARTE, including the rigorous selection of craftsmen and the significant investment of time and money required. However, the civil society agent (E7) shares a different perspective, illustrating how exclusive dependence on an annual event like FENEARTE can be unviable in the long term. In response to this reality, she reports alternative sales strategies adopted by her project, such as participation in other fairs and regional and national events, in addition to establishing partnerships with recognized brands, highlighting the importance of diversifying strategies to ensure sustainability and visibility of the artisanal business.

- **Design and Craft Collaboration (Product, Strategy, Innovation and Value)**

Respondents expressed a positive perception about collaborative projects between design and crafts, highlighting the significant contribution that this partnership can offer uniqueness and success in the market. The civil society agent (E7), for example, described collaboration with a designer as crucial to the excellence of her project, highlighting how this partnership can add value and highlight to the final product. Likewise, the knowledge agent (E2) emphasized the importance of respecting the essence of both the designer and the craftsman during the collaborative process, recognizing that both professionals have different knowledge that must be integrated in a complementary way.

However, interviewees also highlighted the need for attention to avoid mischaracterization of the products resulting from this collaboration. But they believe that it is possible to work with designers without compromising the identity and authenticity of the craftsmanship, as long as there is a sensitive and collaborative approach, as advocated by Borges (2011). The government agent (E3) views these interactions with optimism, considering that they can contribute to innovation in crafts, as in a context of globalization, control is lost a little over where they will look for information and trends as references.

Furthermore, interviewees highlighted the importance of effective communication and building trust over time in these collaborative projects. The ability of designers to understand the needs and contexts of the craftsmen, as well as their ability to express themselves and be understood, were highlighted as fundamental aspects for the success of these partnerships. The lack of time, especially in projects financed by cultural notices, was identified as a significant challenge that can affect the quality and sustainability of collaborative projects, as mentioned by the knowledge agent (E2).

Finally, following the theoretical reflections of Borges (2011), actions were identified through which designers can contribute to collaboration, including the development of new products, material innovations, effective market strategies and the creation of value perceived by customers.

- **Public policy**

The interviews highlighted the importance of government and public policies. The government agent (E3) notes a significant increase in policies in recent years, expressing the hope that this will result in greater investment. However, the craftswoman(E4) and the knowledge and events agent (E1) point out challenges, especially the discontinuity of actions during government changes, which undermines the consistency and effectiveness of projects. Furthermore, they highlight the need for more comprehensive public policies, mainly reaching the countryside of the state and outskirts, and for the long-term development of crafts.

The lack of investment by the government is also noticed by the craftswoman (E4), as she believes that crafts are an important way of promoting the municipality, but that political interest often does not translate into effective support. The government agent (E3) emphasizes the importance of investments that aim not only at immediate economic gains, but also consider the long-term benefits that crafts can provide to society, suggesting a more holistic approach in the planning and execution of public policies for the sector.

With this, we can conclude that crafts as an economic activity can bring benefits to society such as social inclusion, sustainability, appreciation of territory, among others. Some challenges were also mapped by the interviewees, such as: access to information and resources for the outskirts and the countryside, lack of stability in sales and the discontinuation of projects and public policies.

The challenges and opportunities identified in the research were summarized in Table 3, which summarizes the main insights of the sector in the region studied:

Table 3: Challenges and Opportunities of Crafts in the Metropolitan Region of Recife- PE.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass on artisanal techniques through generations. • Develop products that meet the demands of the globalized market. • Compete on price with industrial and technological production. • Access to information and resources for the periphery and the countryside. • Discontinuation of projects and public policies. • Lack of stability in sales and income. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion. • Valorization of the territory. • Income generation, especially for women. • Improving public health, especially mental health. • Sustainability. • National and even international recognition of the pieces. • Networking and friendships.

Source: Own authorship, 2024.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to identify the main agents in the crafts ecosystem in the Metropolitan Region of Recife (PE) and how they perceive collaborative practices between design and crafts in the market. From the bibliographical survey and interviews, it was possible to develop a preliminary model of the ecosystem. It is worth mentioning that the agents and programs are not limited to those presented here. Therefore, understanding the structured concept is the most important point for its application in different creative territories.

Therefore, mapping the craft ecosystem has the potential to contribute to the development of strategies that aim to strengthen these interactions, optimize exchange flows and promote partnerships between agents. Furthermore, it is expected that this study will provide more information so that craftsmen can improve their techniques and understand all the opportunities that can be explored, resulting in the emergence of new projects and partnerships.

The research also promotes discussion about design collaboration in the artisanal environment. Thus, it was observed that the professional improvement of craftsmen through training and collaborations with designers can bring improvements to the sector. Borges (2012) argues that aesthetically pleasing products with technical quality are not enough to sustain themselves in the market. Craftsmen need to have knowledge of certification and marketing, think about logistics for good distribution of products; they need public incentive policies from the government and civil society institutions; and it is essential that producers develop dissemination strategies, promoting artisanal production, marketing and reaching new markets. This only reinforces the relevance that ecosystem mapping can bring to crafts. After all, all agents need to perform functions to maintain craftsmanship on the market.

For future work, it is expected that these issues will be investigated with more interviewees from the ecosystem and by other researchers, in other regions, enabling a greater scope and a comparative analysis of these studies according to territories.

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