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Creativity Economy and Sustainable Human Development

Guilherme Nobre

Creative Economy and Sustainable Human Development

Guilherme Nobre¹

This text aims to analyze and compare the creative economy (CE) and the sustainable human development (SHD) so to establish some potential convergences and/or divergences. The point is to see if the creative economy promotes both economic growth and human development, or not, and in a positive scenario, how sustainably it does. The paper defines CE and SHD, and shows how the later constitutes its index - the human development index. Before tabling the potential convergences and divergences at the last section, the creative economy and the human development are put together in a quest for community. Although the already existing well-documented link between economic growth and the creative economy, the conclusion is that there are only inferences in its connection with the human development.

Keywords | Creative economy; Sustainable human development; Economic growth; Sustainability

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Este texto pretende analizar y comparar la economía creativa (CE) con el desarrollo humano sostenible (DHS) de manera a establecer algunas potenciales convergencias y/o divergencias. El punto es ver si la economía creativa promueve tanto el crecimiento económico cuanto el desarrollo humano, o no, y en caso positivo, si lo hace con sostenibilidad. El artículo define CE y DHS, y muestra cómo el posterior constituye su índice - el índice de desarrollo humano. Antes de la presentación de las convergencias y divergencias potenciales en la última sección, la economía creativa y el desarrollo humano se ponen juntos para una búsqueda de su comunidad. Aunque el enlace entre el crecimiento económico y la economía creativa ya sea bien documentado, la conclusión es de que sólo hay inferencias para su relación con el desarrollo humano.

Palabras clave | Economía creativa; Desarrollo humano sostenible; Crecimiento económico; Sostenibilidad

Introduction

The creative economy looks specially promising due to its natural propensity to the dematerialization of production and immaterialization of consumption – see (Nobre, 2016). Its vocation to promote services and spread digitization does contribute, at least in theory, to a greater level of sustainability – since economic growth could happen with less-to-none environmental harming. But creative economy is also about development, meaning qualitative progress of/to society – either as an assumption that takes the form of the creative classes and cities, or either as the consequence of their existence and productive activities. In short, a development that is based on, pivoted around, and targeted towards (creative and talented) persons. This text aims to analyze and compare the creative economy and the sustainable human development, in order to establish some potential convergences and/or divergences. A query that may arise is: does creative economy promote both economic growth and human development, and, if does, in a sustainable way?

Sustainable human development

While economic growth is often measured by the increase of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), generally presented as a monetary amount, the “basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives” (UNDP, 1990, 9). It is interesting to note that the former is focused on things, whereas the latter on persons; that the former is based on monetary accountancy, whereas the latter is based on lives ‘enjoyment’; that the latter is restricted to the economic sphere, whereas the latter also has socio, political, and cultural dimensions; that the former highlights the quantitative gains, whereas the latter is quite sensitive to the qualitative improvements; that the former aims endless increases on monetary wealth, whereas the latter targets rather on the intra- and intergenerational fair distribution of the welfare; and that the former is driven by a ‘I can get no satisfaction’ spirit, whereas the latter seeks exactly the opposite.

Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. (At) all levels of development, the three essential (choices) are for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. If these essential choices are not available, many other opportunities remain inaccessible. But human development does not end there. Additional choices, highly valued by many people, range from political, economic and social freedom to opportunities for being creative and productive, and enjoying personal self-respect and guaranteed human rights.

Human development has two sides: the formation of human capabilities -such as improved health, knowledge and skills- and the use people make of their acquired capabilities -for leisure, productive purposes or being active in cultural, social and political affairs. (...) According to this concept of human development, income is clearly only one option that people would like to have, albeit an important one. But it is not the sum total of their lives. Development must, therefore, be more than just the expansion of income and wealth. Its focus must be people (UNDP, 1990, 10).

Since the contrast between economic growth and development became so sharp, the word 'human' was added to development as a form to emphasize such gap. Then, even if 'human development' sounds redundant in some extent, it also works to remember and warn that both (growth and development) belong to distinct realities. In spite of the fact that there is no development without economic growth, the problem is that their connection is not direct, nor free of contradiction. To put it differently, the "simple truth is that there is no automatic link between income growth and human progress" (UNDP, 1990, 10). An example is given by poorer countries that present a relatively better human development, and the contrary as well, when richer countries do register a relatively worse human progress (e.g. UNDP, 1990, 56-57). Nevertheless, the human development is dependent of the income/wealth created on the economic sphere; in such a way that the challenge is to find out how both can converge and merge – which brings sustainability into debate, or their ability to do so without putting in danger either the persons, the economy, or the nature; now or in the future.

There are four major elements in the concept of human development -productivity, equity, sustainability and empowerment (...). Through enhanced capabilities, the creativity and productivity of people must be increased so that they become effective agents of growth. Economic growth must be combined with equitable distribution of its benefits. Equitable opportunities must be available both to present and to future generations. And all people, women and men, must be empowered to participate in the design and implementation of key decisions that shape their lives (UNDP, 1995, 12).

Sustainability means both intergenerational and intra-generational fair coexistence through time (apologies for any redundancy). 'Fair' here is the most important concept, given it evokes justice, respect, rights, compassion, dignity, recognition, and limits – towards persons, beings, environments, resources, etc. Therefore, sustainability does not lay restricted to the distribution (of goods and wealth along the countries and eras) only, for it goes beyond to reach better and longer lives, more and diverse opportunities offer, and greater and far meaningful personal experiences – for instance. The question still remains whether this can happen with few-to-none changings over the current economic growth model, or what further changings on it would be necessary to really engender the so called 'sustainable human development'. In other words: what would be necessary to make economic growth and human development compatible, and increasingly convergent, in an everlasting way.

Agreement is fairly broad on some aspects of the human development concept:

- Development must put people at the centre of its concerns.
- The purpose of development is to enlarge all human choices, not just income, so the human development concept focuses on the entire society, not just the economy.
- Human development is concerned both with expanding human capabilities (through investment in people) and with ensuring the full use of these capabilities (through an enabling framework).

- Human development is erected on four essential pillars -productivity, equity, sustainability and empowerment. It regards economic growth as essential but emphasizes the need to pay attention to its quality and distribution and analyses at length its link with human lives. And it addresses sustainable choices from one generation to the next.
- The human development approach defines the ends of development -and analyses the options for achieving them (UNDP, 1995, 122).

But the core handicap to sustainability seems to reside on the lack of knowledge and control over environments and persons: first, new deposits and new species are still appearing every day, and although the planet is finite, there is no full knowledge about what it really contains; second, even when science knows enough to state that the human interference (e.g. extraction, production, discarding) is annihilating beings, resources, and persons, there is no power to bring such tendency to a halt. After all, it is quite contradictory as economics presupposes full-knowledge over resources as a pinnacle for its own definition, and full-control over allocation (given by prices) as the spine of its management. The economics' tentative inclusion of less-than-perfect or partial knowledge/behavior assumptions into its models is also not performing as expected, since extinction (of beings) and exhaustion (of resources) have still been reported. Not to mention the maintenance of poverty as the reality for millions of persons, or the global warming – to cite only those.

Is economic growth a meaningful goal? Or is human development the real objective? If it is human development, growth should be judged not by the abundance of commodities it produces, but by how it enriches people's lives. (...) This Report moves beyond the debate on whether economic policies are "pro-growth" or "antigrowth" by addressing the central issue of the quality of growth -whether it is genuinely serving human development in a country, in a region or in the world. Is the character of growth advancing people's human security, freedom and empowerment? Is it promoting equity -today and between generations? Does it respect nature and its life-supporting

functions? And is it leading to greater social cohesion and cooperation among people -not greater conflict and social disintegration? (UNDP, 1996, 43).

Perhaps the experts should use more (not less) economics: when the model says “extinction means asymptotic prices, therefore shut the system down”, then obey to the model. Or perhaps the authorities should use more (not less) the already existing regulation: when a Constitution says that “all and everyone is entitled to a decent life”, then and again obey to it. In fact, it is not clear on how economics (as a field of studies) or economic growth (as a set of productive arrangements) may ‘internalize’ so diverse aspects without a significant changing. For instance, can freedom and equity be translated to variables and therefore be drawn into a Cartesian coordinated graphic? Maybe they can. But in the case they cannot, it would be convenient to introduce an alternative – either for the theoretical models, either for the practical arrangements. The only thing that shall not be left aside for sure is the ‘sustainable human development’, no matter the cost to both economics and growth.

Qualifying the sustainable human development

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is quantified through the prices’ sum of all that is created in a period of time, say a year. The prices are used here, instead of value, because prices are the ‘monetary translation’ of value – being in fact the parameter registered into the markets and transactions. Actually, although in theory GDP presents the amount of the whole wealth generation, in fact it only accounts for those products and services that exist for the market. Therefore, GDP is only designed to catalogue measurable prices on formal markets and transactions; i.e. numbers for things. Inversely, the Sustainable Human Development (SHD) is qualified through indexes that, if not exempt of quantification, try to bring value back to the economic discussion – displacing currency as the main/unique criteria. More than that, SHD was thought to put persons (not things) in the center of the economy, in order to build comparable forms to acknowledge the complexity of their lives (way beyond markets and prices). Although nobody can prescind of such inventories, the truth is that SHD is about value for persons – rather than number for things.

The human development index was constructed to reflect the most important dimensions of human development. A composite index, the HDI contains three indicators: life expectancy, representing a long and healthy life; educational attainment, representing knowledge; and real GDP (in purchasing power parity dollars), representing a decent standard of living. The HDI shows how far a country has to travel to provide these essential choices to all its people. It is not a measure of wellbeing. Nor is it a measure of happiness. Instead, it is a measure of empowerment. It indicates that if people have these three basic choices, they may be able to gain access to other opportunities as well. The HDI, imperfect though it may be, is thus a viable alternative to GNP per capita(.) The HDI gives *only* a snapshot of the status of human development in selected areas and thus is not a comprehensive measure of human development (UNDP, 1995, 12).

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a tentative model to give visibility to very complex concepts such as choosing power, personal life quality, family viability, social dignity, political determinacy (to make any difference in politics), etc. As a first approach, the index combines longevity, schooling, and income. In other words, the quantity of time spent alive and, from it, dedicated to formal education, and also the quantity of money earned in a period of time. Such method seems to relate time spending with income earning: the available amount of time and the use one can do from it (e.g. studying), and the available amount of money. The use one can do from money may be, for example, investing in balanced nutrition and health care (to improve longevity), and in longer and better education (tutored by schools at first and by posterior independent readings). Anyway, there is a perhaps unintentional *vinculum* between 'who earns' and 'who pays for it' here; which brings the question: are they the same person or does the State (a non-person) play any distributive role? Yet the HDI's main purpose was simply to advance comparable realities from existing data.

The HDI has three components: life expectancy at birth; educational attainment' comprising adult literacy, with two thirds weight, and a combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratio, with one-third weight; and income. (...)

The HDI reduces all three basic indicators to a common measuring rod by measuring achievement in each indicator as the relative distance from a desirable goal. The maximum and minimum values for each variable are reduced to a scale between 0 and 1, with each country at some point on this scale. The HDI is constructed by (1) defining a country's measure of relative achievement in each of the three basic variables and (2) taking a simple average of the three indicators. The detailed method for constructing the HDI is explained in technical note 3. (UNDP, 1995, 18)

The major step of HDI was probably the proposition of a methodology for reducing the basic indicators "to a common measuring rod". Although the scientists have resisted the temptation to convert units of time into money (e.g. the cost for each year lived or studied (focus on the past) or for any extra year to be lived or studied (focus into the future), so to establish each one's ability to afford for it – via purchasing power parity), thus escaping the discussion about who should be hold responsible to cover any potential gap between personal spending and earnings (State, market, or citizens alone), the fact is that HDI has a long journey ahead. The grand defy still remaining the same: one, how to translate persons and lives onto quantifiable units; two, how to translate such diverse units into a common index; and three, how to avoid universal 'currency translation'. The tension between what can be only qualified *versus* what can be easier quantified is in the very heart of the matter. Ironically, it is not clear whether the subjective immateriality (e.g. human values) can peacefully be converted to the objective materiality (e.g. market prices), or not – nor the convenience of proposing such a thing.

Creative economy

It seems as some sectors of the economy do perform above the average in intriguing ways, for example: they grow more and faster than the others, they are more resilient to crisis, the education level of their workforce are higher, their paid wages are better, and so on. Such sectors also share something in common: the quality of the persons dedicated to them. It supposes that those persons are more talented, creative, open to novelties, and

prone to changes – to say few. Based on that, some scholars have proposed to unite them in a coherent group labeled as “creative economy” – as a matter for research and public policy. Albeit the effort to understand the phenomenon of creativity, the fact is that there has been no single definition for “creative economy”. As a set, the creative economy’s sectors may vary in types and quantities across countries, depending on the methodologies and frameworks used.

Moreover, creative work is encompassed in a long list of names. While this in a way reflects the diversity of the creative sector, it potentially adds to the confusion — policy makers often need concepts clearly defined (even if, as commonly seen, they may not act on the relevant information available). Consider these names: cultural industries, creative industries, leisure industries, entertainment industries, content industries, copyright protected industries, cultural economy, and creative economy. The names may differ slightly here and there, but they all have a ‘common area’ glued by creative work. The Inter-American Development Bank therefore proposed “a practical definition [named] the ‘Orange Economy,’ starting from the common area.” Whether this definition will gain traction remains to be seen (Kabanda, 2016, 8-9).

In spite of that, the multiple forms to approach the creative economy also permit to capture partaken traits, such as: creativity, arts and culture are productive endeavors; which generate goods and services that are strongly related to the intellectual property rights; and which encompass activities with a direct role in the value chain that transforms ideas into products (Restrepo; Márquez, 2013, 34-36). In other words, the creative economy deals both with tangible and intangible *itoputs* (inputs, throughputs, and outputs), with monetary and non-monetary transactions, with markets and anti-market environments, with formal and informal market niches, with traditional and disruptive forms of exchange (e.g. donation and volunteering), with quantifiable and solely-qualifiable activities, with resources-centered and persons-centered approaches, etc. But beyond that multiplicity, the creative economy is about gifted persons creating social wealth while self-expressing in holistically

meaningful ways: meaningful to the whole community, holistic because non-reducible, wealth understood in a very broad sense, and gifted due their talent, sensibility, creativity, empathy, compassion, and much more than just management skills and rationality.

The term “creative economy” was popularized in 2001 by the British writer and media manager John Howkins, who applied it to 15 industries extending from the arts to science and technology. According to Howkins’ estimates, this creative economy was worth US\$2.2 trillion worldwide in 2000 and growing at an annual rate of 5 per cent. The notion is and remains a very broad one as it embraces not only cultural goods and services, but also toys and games and the entire domain of “research and development” (R&D). Therefore, while recognizing cultural activities and processes as the core of a powerful new economy, it is also concerned with manifestations of creativity in domains that would not be understood as “cultural”. (...) The term Cultural industries traces its genealogy back to earlier work in the Frankfurt School in the 1930s and 1940s, which scathingly decried the commodification of art as providing an ideological legitimization of capitalist societies and the emergence of a popular culture industry. (...) Hence, by the 1980s the term cultural industries no longer carried pejorative connotations (, and) referred to forms of cultural production and consumption that have at their core a symbolic or expressive element (, such as) music, art, writing, fashion and design, and media industries, e.g. radio, publishing, film and television production. Its scope is not limited to technology-intensive production as a great deal of cultural production in developing countries is crafts-intensive. (...) The term creative industries is applied to a much wider productive set, including goods and services produced by the cultural industries and those that depend on innovation, including many types of research and software development. The phrase began to enter policy-making, such as the national cultural policy of Australia in the early 1990s, followed by the transition made by the influential Department for Culture,

Media and Sport of the United Kingdom from cultural to creative industries at the end of the decade (UNESCO, 2013, 19-20).¹

A remarkable feature of the concept is that, in it, persons come literally first (given persons are the ones who are creative), and the economy comes after into the expression. Even though the term 'economy' stands for as the noun to be adjectivized by 'creative', the latter highlights the quality of the former. In short, it is the humanized economy. The creative economy is also supposed to acknowledge "inequality, environmental sustainability, nonmarket production and quality of life" (UNDP, 2010, 12) – for instance. Therefore, the creative economy surpasses the economics' approach to creativity – does not matter the complexity of the technical models and statements presented. Thus, the creative economy is about persons being creative and the impacts (personal, familiar, social, cultural, political, and economical) that may have in their lives. The vocable 'economy' should be taken then in a broader sense, as an art of accommodation between multiples elements that are, sometimes and somehow, contradictories. Otherwise, there would be a shortage of creativity on seeing the economy as confined to economics.

The outcomes (of an investment in the creative economy) and their corresponding indicators may be grouped into the four following sustainable development categories:

- Economic: An outcome of primary importance may be the boost to the local economy generated by the cultural industries, reflected in such indicators as the value of regional output, employment, business investment, skills development in the workforce and growth in tourism; in addition, outcomes relating to the distribution of the benefits of economic growth might be of concern, such as progress towards poverty alleviation.

¹ To access an extensive table with the different classification systems for the cultural and creative industries, see (UNESCO, 2013, 22).

- **Social:** Indicators relating to social outcomes revolve around the central notion of social cohesion and the contribution that the creative economy can make to promoting an intercultural dialogue, celebrating cultural identity, strengthening social capital and protecting human rights; education can also be seen as an indicator of outcomes laying the foundation for future social progress.
- **Cultural:** Advancement of community well-being through the active participation of citizens in artistic and cultural consumption, production and participation may be an important outcome from development of the creative economy; indicators in this group also relate to the sorts of intrinsic benefits that the arts can yield.
- **Environmental:** The indicators in this category highlight the important links between culture and the environment in the context of sustainable development; these outcomes reflect not only awareness-raising in the community, but also benefits to be derived from the close relationships between culture, traditional knowledge and the management of natural resources (UNESCO, 2013, 128).

Nonetheless the creativity is important and plays a major role here, it is just one aspect amid others. Paramount to the creative economy is the profile of the persons involved in its activities (who does and for whom), as well as the configuration of such dealings: what is done, how is done, and with what purpose and consequences. For example: consequences to the persons' lives and families, to the environments, to the community; extra monetary purposes such as happiness, peace of mind, feeling of belongingness, respect and decency, and freedom from stressful routines. In order to be creative the persons do need a complex and dynamic set of arrangements, which is partly inaccessible to economics. The handicap of the '*creative economics*' resides perhaps into the monotone monetization²; whereas the advantage of the '*creative economy*' comes with the recognition of

² "measuring the creative economy in economic terms alone provides only part of the picture, particularly in the human development perspective." (UNESCO, 2013, 84).

multiple forms for value expression and circulation. The creative economy transcends (to use a metaphor) selling Picasso's canvas for millions of dollars; it is much more about how to enable and multiply "Picassos" in all and every creative sector – making sure that the welfare created is fairly distributed into the community.

Shaped by a very uneven spatial, economic and organizational distribution, the creative economy is also characterized by inequality. While ideas and creativity are globally sourced, the dominant transnational corporations, usually those that control distribution, are still concentrated in the global North. The creative economy is also associated with large cities and/or dominant regions within countries, or even concentrated within cities where a prosperous creative industry sector may be a small enclave surrounded by poverty and social deprivation. (...) Unrealistic expectations should not be placed on the creative economy. It cannot solve issues of poverty or uneven development single-handedly. Yet, development of a creative economy can form an integral part of any attempt to redress inequality, provided that the process also brings about broader structural changes to ensure that creative workers are themselves not disadvantaged in relation to other workers (UNESCO, 2013, 30).

It is worth to note that there have been critics to the concept of creative economy as well. For example: its lack of a more well-defined subject (starting in the definition of creativity and on the election of it as a token for the field), the fact that the personnel turn-over on the creative sectors are greater than the average, the lack for comparable data between sectors and countries, the focus on the qualitative side impairing the economics' quantification needs – to cite a few. Moreover, it is not realistic to expect that the creative economy would be the answer for the problems originated elsewhere, by flawed models and activities. Of course, it is a promising field for public policy and research, but shall not be taken as a panacea.

Creative economy and human development

As the UNESCO had once said (2013, 11), at a “time when countries are striving to reach the Millennium Development Goals (...) we must recognize the importance and power of the cultural and creative sectors as engines of sustainable human development”. The development dimension of the creative economy (CE) and its linkage to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was also analyzed by Kaur, who clearly related the creative economy vis-à-vis the poverty eradication, universal education, equality promotion, mortality reduction, health defense and improvement, environmental sustainability, and global partnership (2014, 23-24). Such interface between CE and MDGs brings the creative economy to the center of the sustainable human development debate, inviting to consider its plausibility, applicability, extension, and limitations.

The “creative economy” is an evolving concept based on creative assets potentially generating economic growth and development. It can foster income generation, job creation and export earnings while promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development. It embraces economic, cultural and social aspects interacting with technology, intellectual property and tourism objectives. It is a set of knowledge-based economic activities with a development dimension and cross-cutting linkages at macro and micro levels to the overall economy. It is a feasible development option calling for innovative, multi-disciplinary policy responses and interministerial action. At the heart of the creative economy are the creative industries (UNCTAD, 2010, 10).

The creative industries that use these resources (creativity and culture) not only enable countries to tell their own stories and to project their own unique cultural identities to themselves and to the world but they also provide these countries with a source of economic growth, employment creation and increased participation in the global economy. At the same time, the creative economy promotes social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development (UNCTAD, 2010, 10).

The idea that the creative economy can foster development, human development, sustainable human development, is very promising indeed. It is also encouraging that such possibility does not mean any neglect towards the economic growth – in part because “economic growth is (...) a subset of human development models” (UNDP, 1995, 12). Or because, to state it differently: “economic growth is not sustainable without human development” (5), and “economic growth is essential for human development” (122). Therefore, the endeavor relies rather in trying to show how the creative economy melds with such schema of economic growth and human development. The connection between economic growth and the creative economy is less complicated, for example: “In 2013, cultural and creative industries worldwide generated revenues of US\$2,250b and employed 29 million people” (EY, 2015, 15); “The global market for traded creative goods and services totaled \$547 billion in 2012. (...) Growth rates stood at 8.6 per cent annually from 2003 to 2012” (UNCTAD, 2015,ii); and “If we were to include them (creative goods and services exports) within the classification system of the International Trade Centre (ITC), they would be the fifth most traded commodity on the planet” (Restrepo; Márquez, 2013, 17-18).

The first two editions of the Creative Economy Report touched, albeit lightly, on evidence that the creative economy is an important fountainhead of creativity and component of growth, and that it impacts non-economic human development goods. Notably, the 2010 Report found that “adequately nurtured, creativity fuels culture, infuses a human-centered development and constitutes the key ingredient for job creation, innovation and trade while contributing to social inclusion, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability”. This special edition of the Creative Economy Report argues that creativity and culture are processes or attributes that are intimately bound up in the imagining and generation of new ideas, products or ways of interpreting the world. All these have monetary and non-monetary benefits that can be recognized as instrumental to human development. Transformational change is thus understood within a broader framework of human development and is recognized as a

process that enhances the effective freedom of the people to pursue whatever they have reason to value (UNESCO, 2013, 16).

Unfortunately it is less evident how the creative economy couple with the sustainable human development – whenever taken apart from its traditional economic facet. Although intuitive, sometimes such a bond may suffer from plain demonstration and harder indicia. In spite of that, some authors do support that the “creative industries also contribute to sustainable development” (UNCTAD, 2010, 26). For example, UNESCO has presented “three non-economic ways in which creativity and culture contribute to development” (2013, 18), saying that there have been countries capable to conjugate “a coherent creative economy policy that is “in tune” with human development thinking” (54); whereas Acker; Gröne; Lefort; and Kropiunigg have put forward a correlation between the digitization of the creative industries and the human development index, stating that “the higher a country scores on the Digitization Index, the higher it is likely to rank in dimensions such as GDP per capita and the Better Life and Human Development indexes”³ (2015, 11). The main assertion to retain is that human development goes far beyond economic growth, and that “creativity and culture also have a non-monetary value in that they contribute to inclusive social development” (LAEDC, 2015, 10).

Convergences and divergences between CE and SHD

The concept of sustainable human development (SHD) has, at a first sight, a higher degree of complexity than the concept of creative economy (CE). The main reason is that the SHD contains both the creativity and economy, but not only. For instance, SHD is about sustainability (social, environmental, and economical), human rights (freedom, justice, and dignity), and development (quantitative growth and qualitative advances over each person’s live); whereas CE has been mostly studied as a set of more-or-less traditional sectors that, when considered together, looks superiorly promising than the average of the remaining sectors.

3 To access the graphics depicting such correlations, see (Acker; Gröne; Lefort; Kropiunigg, 2015, 12).

Put this way, the sustainable human development does include the creative economy – the later configuring just a subset of the former. Nevertheless, the creative economy conveys important features that help to strength the SHD concept, such as: the central role played by persons, the relevance of the qualitative personal traits, the focus on the value creation, the possibility of an extensive digitization, the higher intensity on services, the renewability of the creative goods, and so forth. The following table depicts some of the convergences and divergences that can be established between the SHD and CE.

Criteria	SHD	CE
Persons are	The reason for everything	The source of the creativity
The goal is to	Enlarge persons' lives	Promote the creative sectors
The strategy is to	Empower persons	Invest in these sectors
The drive is the	Human freedom / security / power	Human creativity / talent / skills
Standard	Long, healthy, and creative lives	Wealth produced / acquired
Quali x Quanti	Qualitative over quantitative	Quantitative over qualitative
Values	Fair intra/intergenerational welfare	(In)tangible assets maximization
Focus	Entire society, not just economy	Creative sectors / agents / areas
Elements	Productivity Equity Sustainability Empowerment	Productivity Decoupling ¹ Sustainability Debound ²
Approach	Index: longevity schooling income	GDP / Growth / Trade / Income
Methodology	Generation of a new composite unit	Units: matter, energy, and dollar
Technology	To fix persons' problems / needs	To dematerialize the economy
Assessment	Number of years and purchase power	Money transactions on markets
Remarkable	Aim the quality of growth	Immaterialize the consumption
Public spirit	Value for persons	Prices for goods and services

Table 1. Comparative estimation between SHD and CE

It can be inferred from the table that the 'creative economy' approach is narrower than the one on 'sustainable human development'. However, despite such explicit gap (given that CE is primarily centered on the relationship between creativity and economy), UNESCO has been associating the creative economy with employment, skills improvement, distribution of the benefits of economic growth, poverty alleviation, social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, social capital strengthening, peace and security promotion, human rights protection, education, citizens participation, community awareness-raising about sustainability, etc. (2013, 128-131). Surprisingly, the majority of those items (if not all) are closer to the concept of SHD. Such a fact discloses two supposedly antagonistic realities: one related to a more limited treatment of the economy, that sees it through the lens of the traditional market and agents; and other that faces the economy as an *oikos* for a more holistic development – not only growth. Therefore, the evidences allow the election of one or another: to approximate the creative economy and growth, or with the development theory instead.

Conclusion

The usual approach for the creative economy stresses the contribution of its sectors, industries, and classes to economic growth: jobs creation, GDP increasing in absolute and relative terms, and national and international trade promotion – for instance. Although some authors believe that the creative economy may couple sustainability and economic growth (Nobre, 2016), and the optimism shown by the United Nations (via UNESCO, UNCTAD, and UNDP) that it can also generate development, the truth is there is no general agreement, nor irrefutable proofs, on this matter. Despite its auspicious features, the creative economy stands still as a research open field when it comes to sustainable human development (SHD) inducement. Future researches may want to check on how the creative economy impacts the human development index's elements, for example, as well as on how it can be related to the Millennium Development Goals' components. To rescue the query made at the introduction, it seems possible to answer *partially* yes to both questions – based on intuition and good sense. However, some academics may find this inaccurate and unsatisfactory. Whether further measurements and indexes could bring any appeasement to the field, it has to be seen in the future.

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Table footnotes

- 1 “increasing independence from natural resources to keep fostering growth and development” (Nobre, 2016, 270-271)
- 2 “how much one unit of relative dematerialization impacts over the absolute dematerialization” (Nobre, 2016, 273).