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***Creative Tourism, Cultural Heritage and
Entrepreneurship: The Project Micultura***

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ABSTRACT

The sustained growth of tourism in Portugal, particularly in the Central region of the country, motivated the establishment of a project dedicated to the artistic production, as a way of appreciating endogenous resources and the cultural heritage. MICULTURA is the denomination of a business project that arises in response to the growing demand for creative tourism, based on experiences inspired by the cultural and historical identity of the region.

The development of the project MICULTURA had as its starting point the carried out survey on motivating tourists in the acquisition moment of souvenirs during the visit to a certain patrimonial resource. There was a lack of supply of differentiated goods on these same heritage resources, one of the main indicators of tourists' preference at the time of purchase. Another relevant project was also responding to the search of genuine and close experiences of the visited places, through the traditional techniques of artistic production, also valuing the endogenous resources and the tourist attraction of the region.

Despite of being recent, this project has been designed in the region through the establishment of differentiating products before the traditional attraction, as well as the

partnerships' establishment aimed at promoting tourism development in the Central region, as well as interacting with other audiences, namely the school and the senior audience.

Key Words: Creative tourism, Cultural heritage, Entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION

The trend of cultural consumption by tourists has turned. This change is quite visible by the growing interest in the "culture of the territory visited". The tourist, however, when visiting a certain territory is no longer satisfied only by cultural dynamics. There has therefore been a growing recognition of the role of creativity in the development of regions and the innovation of new products in order to create attractiveness.

It is in this context that we introduce the importance of creative tourism that responds to a need of the territory (re) invent itself to differentiate from other territories, through the promotion of creative tourism products, enhancing in this way, the singularity and authenticity of the territory. In this perspective, creative tourism is based on the authentic experience that is given to the visitors, not only implying that the tourist is creatively involved, but also that the territory itself promotes experiences about the essence of the place (RICHARDS & WILSON, 2006).

The contribution of tourism to the local / regional / national / international visibility of local culture depends a lot on how cultural manifestations are perceived by tourists. Cultural and creative events mark the emergence of a society based on immateriality as a social and economic resource.

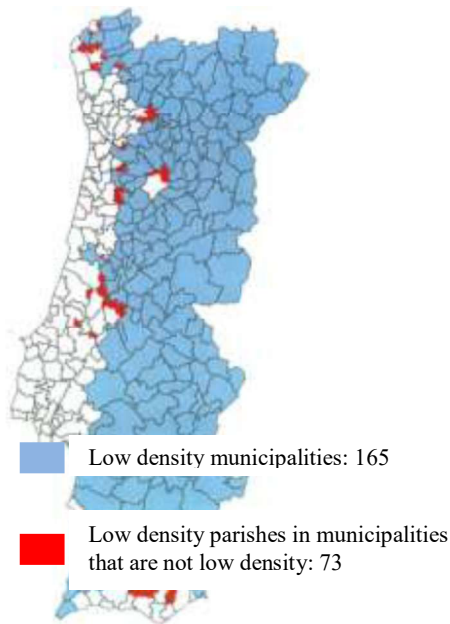
Space, economy and culture are aspects that shape the identity of the place and differentiate it in the global economy. Therefore, creativity, today is an element absolutely crossed to all sectors of human activity (LOPES, 2017). In this sense, PUTNAM (1993) argues that territories that stimulate participatory and cohesive initiatives will be more efficient (p. 67). Inclusion and socio-cultural innovation is measured by the collective and transformative character of social relations (André and Abreu: 2006). We would say in this line of thought that a territory should allow an engagement of experiences in communion with the "cultural and tourist spirit" and creative diversity before the territory.

According to AMARO (2003), the development of the territory is the process of satisfying needs and improving the living conditions of a local community, based essentially on their capacities, assuming itself as the main protagonist in this process (p.26).

Creativity requires an exercise of perception in search of what escapes traditional interpretation (NAVEGA, 2007, p.74). It is in this context that this article / project emerges, seeking to highlight the artistic production, as a way of valuing the endogenous resources of the territory, where the motivation for the search for creative tourism is based on experiences inspired by the cultural and historical identity of existing patrimonial elements, as a form of empowerment the tourist attraction of the territory.

TRENDS OF TOURISM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONS

The demographic evolution in Portugal has shown, in the last years, a concentration near the regions of the coast where approximately two thirds of the territory is considered as territory of low population density (Figure 1).



1. Figure 1 – Low density territories in Portugal, NUTS III. Source: CIC, 2015.

There are many factors that influence the development of regions, such as climate, natural resources, location, accessibility, employability, the cost of living and the local economy, among others. In spite of the desertification of the interior of the territory, tourism in Portugal has been reaching quite significant numbers, presenting itself as one of the areas in greatest expansion (Table 1) (TURISMO DE PORTUGAL, 2017).

The reasons for migration are changing, with a growing demand by some publics of the quality of life provided by the rural world (LOURENÇO, 2011; NELSON, BEYERS, 1998).

If we take into consideration the current trends in tourism, particularly with regard to the evolution of cultural tourism to creative tourism, where visitors are increasingly looking for unique, sustainable and innovative experiences (CATALANI, 2013; CHANG, 2013; MANSFELDT, VESTAGER, IVERSEN, 2008; MATEUS 2010; VIRGINIJA, 2016), it is urgent to think of strategies for preserving and disseminating our heritage with equal creativity, sustainability and innovation (TRIÃES, FALCÃO, LOUREIRO, 2013; LOUREIRO, TRIÃES, FALCÃO, 2016).

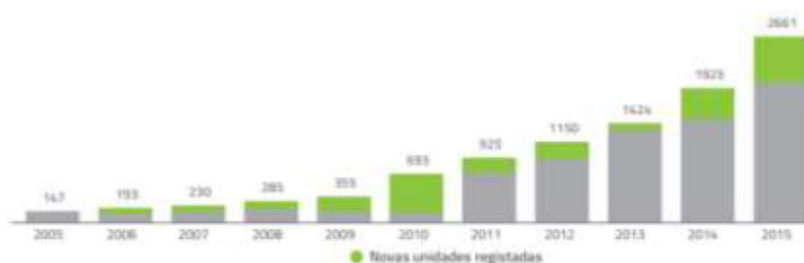
2. Table 1- What tourism represents today

	2015	2016 ^{PO}	Variation
Sleeps	48,9 millions	53,5 millions	+4,6 millions +9,4%
<u>Revenue</u>	11,5 thousand millions	12,7 thousand millions	+1,2 thousand millions +10,4%
Guests	17,4 millions	19,1 millions	+1,7 thousand millions +9,7%
Exports	15,4% of the total Exports of goods and services in the Country	16,7% of the total Exports of goods and services in the Country	+1,3%
Balance of Tourism	7,8 thousand millions €	8,8 thousand millions €	+ thousand millions +12,8%
Employment	280 thousand	328 thousand	+48 thousand +17,1%

Employment comprises accommodation, restaurants, travel agencies / tour operators and other booking services.

Source: INE and Social Security. Employment data correspond to January 2015 to *January 2017. PO: provisional data.

Conscious of the fact that tourism has promoted the cultural value of heritage, the image of the country and the regions, creative tourism has in turn revitalized, developed and diversified tourism products (Figure 2) (OCED, 2014). In this way, this new trend has allowed the tourist products of the regions to cease to be concentrated only in the existing material heritage, and also extend to the intangible heritage of the regions (CATALANI, 2013; GHANGH 2013; CABRAL, 2009; OLIVEIRA, s.d.).



3. Figure 2 – Annual evolution of the registers of tourist animation companies, p. 21. Source: TURISMO DE PORTUGAL, 2017.

However, even if this new tourism trend enhances the economic level and the consequent improvement of living conditions, intercommunal communication and the preservation of heritage in these regions, it is important to be aware that it can also be a form of degradation of the heritage. Territorial disorder, disinterest and lack of investment in the recovery of heritage and abandonment of traditional activities in these communities may, in some extreme situations, contribute to the loss of identity (LOURENÇO, 2011; CATALANI, 2013; CABRAL, 2009).

With the new tourism tendencies, the heritage gains another scope and value, leaving it to focus only on material heritage, extending to intangible heritage, where the memories, traditions, symbolism, iconography and identity of the places are equally valued and constitute a tourism resource.

Preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage

The preservation of the cultural heritage takes place at various levels, from the concrete actions of study, documentation and inventory of assets, registration and surveying of conservation status, conservation and restoration interventions, heritage management and musealization, and its disclosure and access to the general public.

In this way the cultural heritage as a tourism resource presents some limitations, namely as a way to guarantee its preservation. The cultural heritage as a tourism offer is also very heterogeneous, both in the typology of goods, historical and cultural importance, geographical location, patrimonial classification, among others, which provides a different attractiveness. On the other hand, we find other patrimonial resources with an important relief, but by its location and isolation make it harder to search in a more consistent way. At the limit we find a vast unclassified heritage, isolated, protected by local and independent bodies among themselves, and sometimes without a well-defined dissemination strategy and with a much smaller historic-artistic and local expression.

The dissemination of heritage and its valuation as a tourist resource also represents a different investment by the various agents. The cultural heritage in Portugal is essentially owned by the state, through several national or regional management bodies, with a public management as well. In this sense, the tourism agents that use this resource are relatively unrelated to the decision-making process regarding investment, promotion and development strategy.

In the last few years we have witnessed a greater diversification of the tourist offer with regard to cultural heritage, giving emphasis to other forms of cultural identity of the territory, namely through the applications to UNESCO intangible heritage of various artistic and cultural manifestations such as recently the dolls of Estremoz, ‘chocalhos’ or ‘fado’.

This valorisation of popular culture, which is the identity mark of some regions or places, has as its objective the preservation of techniques and materials through the maintenance of these activities as a way of disseminating the territories, culture and endogenous resources.

MICULTURA: A CREATIVE TOURISM PROJECT

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

The project MICULTURA comes about through a business ideas contest, integrated within the scope of the activities of the Polytechnic Institutes of Portugal, Poliempreeude. The strategic objectives that were defined at this time are for the preservation and dissemination of memory and cultural identity; preserve and disseminate the culture of each place/region through its symbolic and patrimonial identity; promote the identity and cultural memory of each place/region through traditional materials and techniques; create new objects, events/activities, starting from the heritage, culture and identity of each place, proposing new objects for tourism promotion and for different environments.

After the positive participation in this entrepreneurship contest, we were selected for the 1st Business Ideas Contest promoted by the Business Association of the Santarém District (NERSANT) within the scope of the Ribatejo Empreende project and exclusive to the participation of individual people. In this first edition of the contest, the themes "Heritage, Cultural and Creative Industries and Tourism" and "Valuation and efficient use of endogenous resources" were privileged. The second place obtained in this contest, besides the financial incentive, made possible the participation in a program of acceleration of business ideas and the direct contact with [businessmen](#) and other entrepreneurs and, therefore, to improve the previously defined business model.

The business plan is essentially based on the creation of decorative/utilitarian articles produced from traditional artistic production techniques. The main focus of the project is to collect data on several places/regions of the country with high tourist potential in order to create new objects of a traditional nature as a way of promoting and disseminating these places. Another relevant aspect is the corporate customer, seeking to promote their brand/product in an original and distinct way in relation to the competition, either in the creation of events or articles for these events, promotion actions, among others. The selected motives will be those with the greatest potential, inspired by history, traditions, legends, symbols, culture, that is, the collective memory of each place / region / company. The materials and techniques of artistic production for each article are chosen in order to achieve innovative and attractive products.

It is not intended to create typified articles, but rather, to respond to the different needs in each location. The placement of the products in the market is based on several business partners, which facilitates production management.

This project has now led to the company Alcançar Memórias Lda, whose mission is the preservation and dissemination of heritage, culture and local identity, and intends to generate

partnerships with companies already implemented in the region. It is located in a small farm with an agricultural purpose, which has also exploited the existing resources, namely through the rehabilitation of built heritage and conversion in tourism in rural areas. A senior residence and a space for the development of activities with schools in the region are currently being completed.

Activities e Events

This interaction between the partners allowed us to create a more ambitious project that involves exploring the endogenous resources of the agricultural farm itself and creating activities that favour creative development based on the discovery of materials and traditional techniques of artistic production.

The activities developed intend to reach different types of public, those directly related to the touristic exploration and senior residence of the farm, as well as the school public during the school activities. The different activities that develop there can be grouped in:

Activities of Fauna and Flora (Figure 3): make possible the knowledge of the flora and fauna of Quinta Casal das Flores, being able to acquire knowledge of the rural environment and the typical agricultural and livestock activities of the region (visit to the farm of the animals, olive harvest (between September and November), [flowered](#) tour, organic vegetable garden, tractor ride, production of a scarecrow, veterinarian for an hour).

Nutrition Activities (Figure 3): to encourage children for food education, being able to have contact with different food groups, perceives their origin, and how they were transformed into different foods (bread production; cooking atelier with native products).

Activities of Plastic and Artistic Expression (Figure 4): to develop creativity through the learning of traditional artistic production techniques (atelier of ceramics, atelier of moulding and painting of tile, atelier of marbled paper, atelier of mosaic, atelier of binding).

Environmental Activities (Figure 4): we consider that conservation of the environment, especially of forests, and awareness of the recycling and reuse of materials that we no longer use is extremely important. Thus these activities intend to awaken and encourage these good practices (atelier production of handmade paper, atelier 3R (recycle, reuse and reduce)).



4. Figure 3 - Images of fauna, flora and nutrition activities.



Figure 4 – Images of plastic, artistic expression and environmental activities.

Physical Activities (Figure 5): stimulate the motor, social and intellectual capacities creating activities that work both components, but also where you can have fun (traditional games, orientation activities).

Environmental and Social Projects (Figure 5): the preservation and conservation of the environment, as well as social solidarity are of extreme importance, we intend to carry out different projects in order to awaken and encourage these good practices (stubble harvest, cleaning the forest, planting native trees, community artistic projects).



Figure 5 – Images of physical activities and environmental and social projects.

Conclusions

The development of cultural tourism, more concretely the component of creative tourism based on genuine experiences, needs a new approach in the management of tourism resources. On the one hand, the need to improve the management of dispersed and on various guardianships has been verified, and on the other hand, the need to find in the immaterial identity of each place the factors of innovation and differentiation that supports this new trend in tourist demand.

The bet on existing endogenous resources, such as the heritage built through their rehabilitation, promote the creation of new structures for tourism, housing units, restoration, museology or the development of traditional or artistic activities. The exploitation of endogenous resources and local

culture contributes to the strengthening of local identity, development of economic activity, establishment of the population, development of public policies of greater sustainability and without significant changes in territorial identity.

The project MICULTURA assumes itself as an agglutinative tool of these strategies that aim at the sustainability of endogenous resources and their transformation into tourist products. It is integrated in an area that has preserved its authenticity, an agricultural land that has sought to diversify its investments, focusing on tourism and cultural and creative activities. Through the partnership with the MICULTURA Project, efforts are being made to increase the number of contents/activities contributing to the preservation of their identity. The synergy created allowed the use of existing and underutilized spaces, with a reduced investment, contributing to the creation of qualified employment and population setting.

As shown in this article, we can conclude that the project MICULTURA seeks to create value in existing endogenous resources, through artistic production whose techniques are supported in the traditional, giving it a distinctive character of the territory increasingly wanted by visitors whose motivation is stimulated by a cultural and creative tourism capable of perpetuating local history and "tourism and cultural experience", lived in this territory.

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