

*2nd International Tourism Conference*

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# *Póvoa Dão Village: an instance of 'heritagization' for tourist attraction and local development*

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# Introduction: the changing rural space

## Characteristics:

- Decline of agriculture and the rural population;
  - New uses of the land;
  - Dissociation between the rural population and the rural areas;
  - Overlapping of the rural and urban.
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# Heritage

- "Heritage" is the set of tangible artifacts and intangible attributes that pass from one generation to another.
  - As a legacy, in every generation it can be accumulated, lost or transformed.
  - It ensures the survival of social groups and linkage between generations.
  - It provides a sense of permanence as opposed to a sense of temporariness caused by the fast pace of modern life and globalization.
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# Concepts of Culture

- **Aesthetic;**
- **Sociological;**
- **Anthropological:** it comprehends people's ways of living – what they think, what they say, do or produce, how they behave, etc..

All cultures have equal dignity. It is a rejection of ethnocentrism and elitism.



# Cultural Heritage

- “Set of material assets of cultural interest, including historical, paleontological, archaeological, architectural, linguistic, documentary, artistic, ethnographic, scientific, social, industrial or technical, reflecting values of memory, antiquity, authenticity, originality, rarity, uniqueness or exemplariness, as well as intangible items that pertain and structure Portuguese identity and collective memory” (*Law 107/2001*).
- It reflects the identity of human groups

# Cultural Heritage

- It adopts an anthropological perspective of culture;
- It reflects the public character of assets;
- It redefines the notions of folklore, popular culture and traditional culture;
- Every item of cultural heritage is a piece of culture but not every piece of culture is subjected to a heritage process (a process of “heritagization”).



# Cultural Heritage (CH)

- Culture implies change and evolution, CH provides a greater degree of permanence linking generations;
  - CH is the result of a collective choice of what is “heritagizable”, which involves discussion, selection, conflicts and compromise;
  - CH tends to represent culture, in material or immaterial objects, symbolically, that is, a symbolic representation of culture;
  - The sense of belonging bestowed by these objects redefines social meanings, reconstructs memories and collective identities.
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# 'Heritagization' as process

- The activation process of a cultural heritage;
  - It follows the conservation trends which originated in the Romantic movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> C;
  - It allows for the discussion and perspectives around the forms of protection, conservation and restoration of heritage: preservation of existents, respecting historic stratigraphy; reconstitution of the original with the elimination of the elements added; adaptations to new uses, etc..
  - Recent expansion of what is "heritagizable", particularly in rural areas.
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# 'Heritagization' in rural areas

- Recent **overproduction of CH** is due to:
    - Relative scarcity of cultural items, given the huge increase in the supply of other goods;
    - Loss of utility of cultural items for loss of their usual functions;
    - Re-valorization of CH, from the point of view of identity and, in particular, economically;
    - The changes taking place in rural areas provide an increasing tendency towards the "heritagization" of cultural items;
    - "Heritagization" has been used as an instrument of local development policies.
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# 'Heritagization' in rural areas

Recent trends, particularly important in the transition that is happening in rural areas:

- Assignment of new values, uses and meanings to:
  - Objects (material heritage);
  - Traditional know-how, forms and ways of living (intangible heritage);
- A way of asserting and legitimizing collective identity (related to migration processes);
- A process of activating memory (intra and inter-generations);
- Creation of economic value: Rural Tourism.

# 'Heritagization' in rural areas

Perspectives to consider:

- Experts/technicians; inhabitants; natives; migrants and outsiders (Identity of whom and for whom?);
- New facilities?; Leisure (for local people?); for Tourism?
- Realities and representations: dance or performance; the real activities or scenery for the photography ...?

'Heritagization' is a reinvention of the past, with the risk of an uncritical and idealized ideological interpretation.

# 'Heritagization' in rural areas

**Legitimation of heritage value:** who creates or gives value?

- The scientific community. E.g.:
  - Universities and other research institutions;
  - Technicians, researchers and specialists in various areas;
- The society and its representatives. E.g.:
  - Local government;
  - Private associations;
- The market. E.g.:
  - Private investment;
  - Market exchange.

# The Project *Póvoa Dão Village*







# The Project *Póvoa Dão*

## ➤ The basic idea:

– Full reconstruction of a village of medieval origin, with Roman ruins, respecting original architecture and building materials, providing it with infrastructures, accommodation, catering and leisure.

## ➤ Special features:

– Passage of a totally private space to a mixed space, private and public (sale of property and creation of open-access public spaces).



# The Project *Póvoa Dão*

- Keeping the farm as an agro-forestry unit, to provide agricultural products for consumption in the village (completed);
- Construction of additional infrastructure – restaurant, shop, swimming pool and multi-sports facility (completed);
- Recovery of common spaces: the chapel, 4 communitarian ovens, the Roman road (completed);



# The Project *Póvoa Dão*

- Rehabilitation of the farm houses for sale to private individuals (mostly) and for accomodation in the form of “village tourism”:
  - 32 restored houses (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> phase) (near completion);
  - 35 houses scattered across the farm (3<sup>rd</sup> phase, not yet started).



# *Póvoa Dão Village*



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# *Póvoa Dão Village*

















# Cultural Heritage: basic questions

- The market as a heritage valorization factor;
- Identity strengthening;
- The memory of the old sociability practices;
- The new sociability practices;
- Tourism activities and environmental concerns;
- Impacts on local development.



# Cultural Heritage: basic questions

## The market as a heritage valorization factor

- The sale of the rehabilitated houses and the creation of the tourist complex was the main motivation for the heritage recovery;
- The value of built heritage was secured by the maintenance of the architectural features and the use of traditional materials (granite and wood);



# Cultural Heritage: basic questions

## Identity Strengthening

### Former residents:

There is only one couple who decided to stay and keep the link with the new residents.

*– "I never thought it would be better now than before ... this is a beauty."*

### Descendants

The few who live nearby are very proud of the rehabilitation, although they have lost the precise places of their memories (with partial reorganization of space in the houses interior divisions).



# Cultural Heritage: basic questions

## Identity Strengthening

The surrounding society (Parish of Silgueiros, municipality of Viseu):

*– "It is the pride of the land and the business card of the region"*

New residents:

*– A "rustic space" to "rest and feel free", "to escape the routine," with "stone and natural elements, a "return to the origins and the land"...*

Tourists and visitors:

*– A place of memories of other places that were once theirs and were lost to development.*



# Cultural Heritage: basic questions

## The memory of the old sociability practices

- Saint Amaro's Festival – January 15, protector of the bones and hunting (tradition of hunters shooting down thick pine trees in the farm);
  - Dances and other kinds of entertainment in the village square;
  - Isolation: in the long winters, the pontoon over the river remained covered with water, preventing connection to the rest of the parish, going to school, to church or the burial of the dead;
  - Community life: the shared utilization of 8 ovens; the occasional exchange of "purchased products"; in farming activities.
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# Cultural Heritage: basic questions

## The new sociability practices

### ➤ Residents:

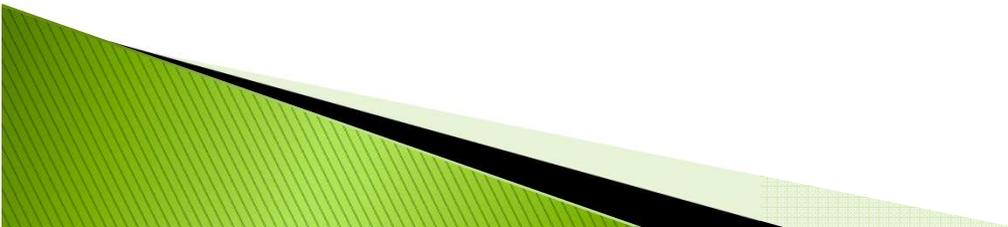
Adaptation of urban sociability practices to rural ways of living (e.g., a couple of residents who became the "grandfather" and "grandmother" of the new generation of children ...).

### ➤ The local community:

- Rehabilitation of Saint Amaro's Festival (prohibition of shooting pines down);
- Revitalization of a visitation and socializing site.

# Cultural Heritage: basic questions

## Tourism activities and environmental concerns

- Residents can participate in the agricultural and livestock activities in general;
  - Organization of specific activities in the grape harvest e.g. “Adiafa”, a special dinner prepared with local produce, which marks the end of the harvest;
  - Temporary exhibitions of paintings in the village restaurant;
  - Creation of pedestrian trails.
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# Cultural Heritage: basic questions

## Impacts on local development

- Local installation of a tourism complex (tourism and visitation);
  - Temporary residence (2<sup>nd</sup> house) of about 20 families;
  - Employability factor: almost all employees of Póvoa Dão Company are from the region;
  - Activation of an agro-forest unit of 120 ha;
  - Preference for the supply of local and regional products;
  - Complementarity with other regional tourist facilities.
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# *Póvoa Dão Village*

## Main weaknesses pointed by local institutions:

- Inability to use the full potential of the site;
- Little request for partnerships;
- Weak collaboration with the national and local institutions;
- Insufficient tourism activities.

In short:

- They expect more ...
- They expect from a private firm the action of a "development agency" ...



# Conclusion

- Póvoa Dão can be presented as an example of a heritage activation via the market;
- The investment allowed the re-creation of identity value directly to former residents and local inhabitants and indirectly for visitors identified with the rural world;
- It also allowed the reactivation of memories of past sociability practices;
- Creation of new sociability practices for new residents;
- Despite the weak interaction with the local population and the insufficient use of resources, in the opinion of the local inhabitants and institutions:
  - The impact on local development is positive, but without significant weight in the local dynamics.



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*Thank you!*



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