

## Cultural and Creative tourism in Portugal

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**Abstract:** A new paradigm in the tourism industry is changing the meaning of culture and its use in promoting several touristic products/experiences and destinations. The questions we want to answer are the following: How can creative tourism be important in a destination and what are its implications in its organization? Methodology was based on the bibliographic review related to the object of study, data and content analysis, “snowball sampling” technique, surveys and participant observation technique. This paper analyzes how the event MED Festival in Loulé, Algarve has improved local economy, solved urban problems in the historical center (venue of the event) and helped to differentiate touristic supply in the mature touristic destination in the Algarve, Portugal.

**Keywords:** Cultural and Creative Tourism; Cultural Event; Urban Regeneration; MED Festival; Algarve.

### Turismo cultural y creativo en Portugal

**Resumen:** Un nuevo paradigma en la industria turística está cambiando el significado de la cultura y sus usos de forma a promocionar productos o experiencias y destinos otros. Las cuestiones que ponemos son las siguientes: ¿Cuál es la importancia del turismo creativo en un destino turístico y cuáles serán las consecuencias para su organización? La metodología seguida se basó en una revisión de la literatura relativa al objeto de investigación, estudio de caso, análisis de datos, análisis de contenido, toma de muestras, “bola de nieve”, encuestas y observación participante. Este artículo analiza cómo el evento Festival MED en Loulé, Algarve ha mejorado la economía local, ha resuelto problemas urbanos en el centro histórico (área del evento) y ayudó a diferenciar la oferta turística en el destino turístico maduro, en el Algarve, Portugal.

**Palabras Clave:** Turismo cultural y turismo creativo; evento cultural; Regeneración Urbana; MED Festival; Algarve.

### 1. Introduction

The paper starts by reflecting about the paradigm shift in the tourism industry where a change from cultural tourism to creative tourism is analyzed. We argue that a wider use of culture by touristic destination managers has real implication in the tourism supply which leads to the use of different cultural and creative policies. In the following sections we analyze the connection between the destination image

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and its benefits for local communities and the reality of creative events in Portugal. In the last sections we pay deeper attention to the case study, festival Med in Loulé, Algarve where we show the importance of creative inputs present in the cultural event and its contributions in terms of urban regeneration, better quality of life, increase in local pride, preservation of local cultures through creative venues and experiences. The object of study allowed us to see how cultural and creative tourism is being developed in the Algarve region, known as a sea, sun and sand tourism destination of excellence. The conclusion of this paper allowed us to measure the creative contributions that a cultural event can represent to a mature touristic destination such as the case of the Algarve.

## 2. Creative tourism as a form of cultural tourism

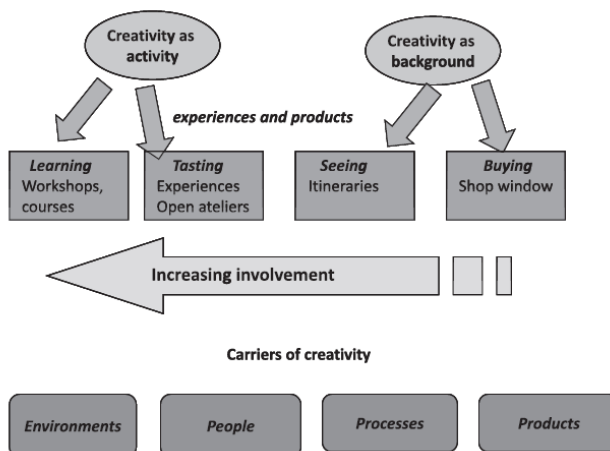
The intense relationship between tourism and creativity has been studied by several authors (Richards, 2009, 2011); (Richards and Wilson, 2006, 2007); (Ferreira, A. 2010); (Filipe, C. 2009); (Carvalho, 2011); (Carvalho, R. *et al*, 2011), (King, B. 2009), throughout the last decade. Creative tourism is a form of cultural tourism (Ohridska-Olson, 2010). A different paradigm has been emerging in the last years - the creative reaction to a highly massive cultural tourism market and the commodification of tourism products and experiences (Richards, 2009; Carvalho, 2011). The contributions of the creative industries, Florida's "Creative class", Landry's "Creative cities", Pine and Gilmore's "Experience economy" and the commoditization of culture, have been the object of study of many researchers. To this ongoing discussion Richards and Raymond's definition of Creative Tourism, has been fundamental. They postulate that "*Creative tourism is a type of tourism related to the active participation of travelers in the culture of the host community, through interactive workshops and informal learning experiences based on the characteristics of the holiday destination where they are undertaken*" (Richards and Raymond, 2002) *apud* (Richards and Wilson, 2006, 2007). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), creative tourism is a travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage or special character of a space and it provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture (UNESCO, 2006). Been a special interest tourism niche, (Richards and Wilson, 2007) argue that it's very difficult to find many tourists that are highly motivated to participate only in this kind of learning activities. Instead, we argue that the inclusion of these so called creative activities, work better as secondary motivators in events like the Festival MED in Loulé, and help to differentiate the destination's touristic image during the summer using their endogenous resources (Carvalho, 2011). In this type of tourism, the tourist acts as the co-creator of his/her touristic experience being authentic and allowing the tourist to learn effectively about the host community's culture *idem*. Richards identified the change behind the use of cultural resources to build attractive cultural and creative tourism products, where he points out that destination tourism planning used to be based mainly in physical attractions such as built heritage, landscapes, monuments, museums, beaches and nowadays destination marketing managers are using images, activities, life styles, narratives, atmospheres and the media to differentiate and promote their countries and regions (Richards, 2009); (OECD, 2009); (Carvalho, 2011). A wider perspective of a cultural use is gained in creative tourism (Carvalho, 2011). Is important to this discussion to point out the contexts of creativity in tourism as Richards and Wilson argue: In terms of timescale activities are influenced by the past, present and future elements; the cultural context represents a creative process; it privileges the consumption of experiences and co-makemanship; learning orientation results in an active skill development; the intervention is realizing the tourist's creative potential (Richards and Wilson, 2007: 258). By stepping outside the confines of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990), cultural and creative tourists are engaging their creative skills to develop new relationships with the everyday life of the destination (Richards, 2011). It is well known that the postmodern tourist needs something different and authentic, he wants everything now and manages its own travelling features, uses the internet, "tripadvisor" and the social networks to inform people what he has "*been up to*." A recent study concluded that people visit on average 23 websites before choosing their touristic destination (Hosteltur, 2011). An attempted was developed by us to characterize the creative tourist (Carvalho, 2011), (Carvalho *et al*, 2011). Following the opinions of several authors along with our research, we came forward with the following provisional profile: the creative tourist belongs to a high social class and has at least one academic degree; is highly motivated to participate actively in learning activities or courses which are based in the destination's local culture; he can arguably be connected professionally to the cultural and academic sector, media, fashion, performing arts, research or others sectors or professional areas;

he looks for different contexts where he can live authentic experiences in order to develop his or hers creative “*baggage*” and enhances his or hers cultural capital (Carvalho, 2011), (Carvalho *et al*, 2011). This special interest tourism also helps to boost local economies, helps urban regeneration, pride of place and helps to re-activate intangible resources (Carvalho, 2011).

### 3. The creative use of cultural policies

Creative tourism is the type of tourism that allows a larger “*exploration*” of culture where concepts of tangible and intangible heritage, endogenous resources among others are used in touristic destinations to improve sales, become more attractive and differentiate them from other touristic destinations (OECD, 2009). At a macro level we can easily point out several examples of cultural policies developed in several countries. The construction and latter franchising of the Guggenheim concept (iconic structures), mega events (Olympic Games, World cups), special themes (world cities, creative cities, cultural capitals) and mining heritage being the case of Florence where in a city with a strong heritage value, attempts to rehabilitate it in order to preserve their high rate of visitation by using new technologies (Richards, 2011); (Richards e Wilson, 2007); (Filipe, 2009); (OECD, 2009). According to Ferreira cultural policies have changed. In the nineties in Portugal, local cultural strategies were based mainly in the construction of physical infra-structures, the subsidization of artistic production and the promotion of equal opportunities, nowadays it changed to supporting cultural and creative businesses linking subsidies and incentives for co-financing (public and private sectors) and encouraging the use of culture as an element of regional identity and a factor-based regional differentiation (adapted from Ferreira, 2010). In this discussion the cultural spatial organization of destinations has also been object of study of many researchers where cultural districts, cultural corridors, creative hubs among others, are result of the use of creative and cultural strategies. This however provides in some cases precarious forms of labor which are sustained by a belief in the “one hit wonder” which will deliver riches and fame (McRobbie, 2007) apud (Richards, 2011). The creative industries can therefore count on a significant pool of part-time and casual workers (Currid, 2007) apud (Richards, 2011). There is even the problem of gentrification when attempts are done to import the creative class to other countries or places which can translate in the raising of the prices on local houses (Carvalho, 2011). Several creative tourism business models (C.R.B.M.) have been presented in more recent studies. The example of Ohridska-Olson’s (C.R.B.M.), where both supply and demand factors for creative tourism are analyzed, as well as its tangible and intangible benefits. The main results postulated by the author are the increased success for local business and prosperity for local community (Ohridska-Olson, 2010) and as (Richards, 2011: 1239) points out, there are different styles of creative tourism ranging from more active to more passive types of tourism of creative activities involving different types of creativity as shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Modes of creative tourism (Richards, 2011: 1239)



In this fruitful relationship, three types of possible creative developments strategies have been displayed by (Richards and Wilson, 2006) which are creative spectacles, creative spaces and creative tourism. Creative spectacles where events can act as concentrators in terms of time and space, forming nodes in creative networks and providing a direct link between creativity and tourism. Creative spaces (...) which are driven by both production and consumption functions (Richards, 2011). And as argued before, creative tourism has several advantages over cultural tourism: a) Creativity can add value more easily because of its scarcity and is possessed by only a few people, b) It allows destinations to innovate their products rapidly and differentiate themselves from other destinations, c) usually creative resources are more sustainable and renewable than tangible ones, d) creativity is generally more mobile than tangible cultural products and e) creativity involves value creation from both tourists and destination managers among others (Adapted from Richards and Wilson, 2006: 1215). This represents a problem to both experience consumers and experience suppliers (Carvalho, 2011). As identified by the authors, to develop creative tourism businesses, is necessary to recognize that tourists (and others) contribute to the touristic product with their own cultural capital, knowledge, emotions and tastes; creative products are personalized; the opposition of creative tourism to the standardization of tourism packaging and everything that the experience providers can do is to facilitate experiences and suggest meanings – they can't supply any of them (Prentice e Anderson, 2007) *apud* (Felipe, 2009). So this means that both creative tourists and destination managers need to develop their creative skills (Carvalho, 2011).

#### 4. Destination image and benefits for local communities

In this recent paradigm already identified, creative tourism has an important role where local communities seem to have an increasing pre-disposition to support tourism. This happens because creative tourists are interested in learning actively about local cultures and engaging in unique experiences. Aref argues that local communities are the main reason why people choose a holiday destination (Aref *et al*, 2010). The contribution of local communities to the destination image formation has been studied by several authors (Da Cruz, 2006); (Richards and Wilson, 2006, 2007); (Richards, 2009); (Pimentel *et al*, 2006); (OECD, 2009); (Walker, 2010); (Carvalho, 2011). According to Buhalis, an image is the set of expectations and perceptions that the potential visitor has about the destination (Buhalis, 2000). “*Word of mouth*” is probably the most reliable source of information in the formation of the destination image (Gartner, 1993; Assael, 1999 *apud* Chagas, 2009). An image that represents local history can have a positive effect on local communities. As Walker argues, tourism stakeholders don't interact enough with tourists and the local communities when the essence of local history is not reflected in touristic images, brands and cultural products (Walker, 2010). For the benefit of local communities, history acts as a mechanism which protects cultural integrity and allows authentic touristic experiences (Adapted from Walker, 2010). For this to occur, Walker defends that three things must happen: a) Congruence between the tourism image and the tourist product; b) Prioritizing host community self-knowledge and c) Both image and cultural brand should represent the every member of the local communities (Walker, 2010). The host community can benefit from an active participation in the local tourism business, sell their own handcraft products, rent their houses, boost their local economy, create jobs, become active tourism stakeholders promote their history, lifestyles, habits, traditions, cultural events and place.

#### 5. Creativity in Portugal, cultural events and their creative elements

In recent studies the contribution of the creative sector was analyzed in what concerns to Portugal. According to the author Mateus, the cultural and creative sector represented 2.8% of the Gross Value Added (GVA) generating 3.7 billion Euros in 2006, corresponding to 2.6% of jobs created in Portugal in the same year (Mateus, 2010). In terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), creative industries contributed to 1.4% of the GDP of Portugal (KEA, 2006) *apud* (Albuquerque and Esperança, 2010). If we analyze cultural statistics in Portugal, in the study elaborated by the National Statistics Institute, the percentage of jobs in cultural and creative activities diminished from 84 thousand in 2008 to 75 thousand in 2009 (INE, 2010, p43). It's also important to point out the recent European program named “Creative Europe - A new framework program for the cultural and creative sectors (2014-2020)”, <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/>, where better networking connections between sectors are needed and where 1.8 billion Euros is the estimated amount to finance several cultural and creative business, projects and

events around Europe through the period of six years. According to (Getz, 1997), events are temporary occurrences planned or not, which have the power to attract huge media coverage, people know they are ephemeral and this characteristic represents great part of its attraction. Events popularity and singularity are directly related with their ability to pursue several goals (Getz, 2001 apud Ribeiro and Ferreira, 2009). On this matter we were interested in studying festivals as cultural events (Carvalho, 2011); (Carvalho et al, 2011). A festival is a cultural, public and thematic celebration (Getz, 1997, p7) and constitutes an opportunity to share what is unique about local communities to visitors (Derret, 2000). They reinforce communities social cohesion, the development of their potential, the exchange of ideas in the image of local communities, they allow their participation in the event's activities (Silberberg, 1995); (Getz, 1997). Cultural events are used to create new atmospheres, magical environments, different images, urban regeneration, job creation and cultural development (Carvalho, 2011). In terms of image, events are "image builders" that help to overthrow negative images (Getz, 1997). As argued before, cultural events and specifically festivals where creative elements are present, help to differentiate destinations from one another. There have been several attempts to develop creative events in Portugal with the goals of improving both urban and rural areas. One of the best known examples has been the case of Óbidos, where an increase of cultural events have resulted in several positive effects among the local community with the development of the international chocolate festival, natal village (Vila Natal), Opera Festival, medieval market, among others. Óbidos is also part of the European Network Creative Clusters in Low Density Urban Areas (<http://urbact.eu/?id=94>) where since 2009 the village of Óbidos has been sharing its creative ideas. In 2012, Guimarães European Capital of Culture, where the cultural and creative program deserves some attention (<http://www.guimaraes2012.pt/>). Our study was focused in the Algarve region, more precisely in Loulé with the organization of the MED Festival.

## 6. Contextualization of the study

Algarve is by far the most important touristic region in the country being the favorite holiday destination for Portuguese domestic tourists and several European countries such as England, Spain, France and Germany. It is the sea and sun strategic product which characterizes its touristic market along with its hot climate. In terms of cultural supply in the region of the Algarve, the Strategic National Tourism Plan (P.E.N.T.) identifies cultural heritage influenced by Arab Heritage, the Portuguese Discoveries, among others (PRTA-PENT, 2009). The same study also identifies five "old cities" in the Algarve region with strong touristic and cultural potential: Silves, Lagos, Tavira, Faro and **Loulé** for their monuments, but mainly their unique historical centers. It was identified a recent cultural policy organized mainly by the public touristic institutions and local city halls. In 2007 the events and promotion program "*ALLGARVE*" started to add quality to the touristic region by promoting international cultural and musical events in order to attract more tourists to the region throughout the year ([www.allgarve.com](http://www.allgarve.com)). In the same year the region founded the Algarve Museum Network with the goal of a better cooperation and work among the museums of the region.

## 7. The Cultural and Creative discourse of Loulé

The municipality of Loulé is the largest county of the Algarve region. According to (Partidário et al, 2006) the county's economy is dominated by the tourism sector representing 66% of the regional GDP. While consulting several literature and websites about the area, we've notice that Loulé was one of the cities in the region of the Algarve had the premises of creativity present in the bibliographic review. Mainly in terms of cultural and creative policies programs, the organization of cultural events using creative details and the use of local culture to differentiate the city from other destinations. In 2010 the cultural area represented 3.5% of the total city hall's budget. The project "*Charme*" initiated in 2010 had the goal of restoring life to the local historical center through the organization of a creative ideas contest where everybody had the opportunity of starting their business in this urban area but also come and live there. The recovery of old buildings and the transformation of old buildings in tearooms, art galleries, handcrafts shops among others, the development of services and products based in the use of creative industries, where similar goals of this project (Carvalho, 2011). The MED Festival was the main driver for the project's success according to the city hall. We've confirmed that the concepts of creativity, creative class and creative industries were present in the region of Loulé.

## 8. Case Study - Loulé MED Festival

According to the website of the festival, this musical and cultural event began in 2004 during the 2004 Euro Cup program. The MED Festival had three main objectives: a) To promote and revitalize the city's historical center; b) To divulge the culture of the Mediterranean and c) the promotion of the destination's touristic image during summer season (Carvalho, 2011). Through participant observation we've witness this fact while participating in the Festival's last edition. The MED Festival is a festival of World Music whose cultural basis is part of the Mediterranean area. In its first edition in 2004 nineteen bands played in one stage, in 2010 forty one bands used seven stages resulting in the enhancement of the venue's event. This included almost the totality of the historical center (Carvalho, 2011). The event also offers contemporary art exhibitions; local, regional, national and international quality gastronomy; street theater; handcrafts sales, entertainment and workshops (music, step-dancing, percussion, yoga, construction of musical instruments among others); a venue for kids and their parents where the entire family is induced to participate in creative activities (Carvalho *et al* 2011). The event is organized by the City Hall through a public enterprise named "Loulé Concelho Global" where the cultural programming, bands contacts, local and regional stakeholders, sponsors and all work is done in benefit of the event. In 2010, 1731 professionals where accredited and the MED Festival brought 22.000 visitors to the city between 23 and 26 of June (Carvalho, 2011). It's possible to imagine an old Arab Almedina (City) while visiting the venue, the aromas of the Mediterranean, the reality of multiculturalism, the active participation of the host community in the event and its activities, the market, art exhibitions in unusual places that "catches you" off guard. This led to the choice of our object of study where the presence of creativity was a proved fact during our field research.

## 9. Conclusions

It was our objective to measure how creativity and cultural tourism were been developed in the southern region of Portugal. Through content analysis used in several official websites, local and regional newspapers, touristic promotion material, cultural agendas and cultural programs, we've detected the repetition of terms as "revitalization of the historical center" and "workshops" in the context of cultural events organized in the Algarve during 2010. "Snowball sampling" technique was used to conduct several surveys where professionals directly connected to the organization of the event, were inquired about the variables of study (Carvalho, 2011). The data collected through surveys in 2010, allowed us to identify the presence of the characteristic of creativity in terms of co-markership (Richards, 2011), co-production in experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) and the active role of tourists in music related workshops (Carvalho, 2011). The key theme and main decision of choice for the participants of the event is World Music. This makes creativity a secondary factor to the visitor, functioning in terms of diversification of the tourism supply in the region of the Algarve (Carvalho, 2011). According to the people inquired, workshops are the true creative components present in the Festival *Idem*. It was identified by all respondents the will of every stakeholders involved in the organization of the event, to develop creative spaces where participants and develop their creative skills (Richards, 2011); (Carvalho, 2011). We can characterize such spaces as small venues where people of different cultures can interact, learn effectively something new about the music and about themselves. Public formation and personal awareness based in the creative industries are main objectives to be achieved by the City Hall. The historical center constitutes the main factor of differentiation of other cultural events organized in the region. The MED Festival allows the conservation of the secular Arab heritage of the historical center, the creation the "magical atmospheres", the presence of white colors and the smells characteristic of the Mediterranean area, the participation of the host community, pride of place and an effective interaction between tourists and locals (Smith and Forest, 2009); (Carvalho, 2011). Restaurants outside the official venue of the event follow the theme celebrated, providing local Portuguese and Mediterranean gastronomy menus, and decorating their establishments according to the theme of the event. Respondents also argued that the event allows the formation of a different destination image based in the variation of the cultural and touristic supply, several experiences created which leads to both tourists and locals own cultural self reflection. In terms of the event's contribution to the local history (Walker, 2010), this happens when we think of the presence of local handcrafts, regional gastronomy, local architecture conservation but also the presence of international art, music, culture and mainly international music bands (Carvalho, 2011). Finally we think that the main contribution of the MED Festival is to allow the repositioning of the city of Loulé in the region of the Algarve, as a touristic destination that offers more than sun, sand and sea but also a quality cultural and touristic supply through

the organization of cultural and creative events. We think that this model should be replied as several events working together may help to change a destination's touristic image faster.

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