

ALGARVE- MEMORY AND IDENTITY REPRESENTATIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Our work has its basis in immersion in the Algarve territory in Southern Portugal, where our research is made, in the scope of Tourism Anthropology, concerning the dynamics of cultural changes, with the overcoming of tourist massification, and their impacts on tangible and intangible heritage. Our scientific approach has its basis in ethics and emic perspectives,¹ with the support of a literature review about heritage memory and authenticity and with data collected within the local population in the scope of participative fieldwork.

Territory and spatial identities, seen as elements essential to mark the landscape in its private and public aspects, also serve for creativeness branding for touristic purposes as attraction factors. However, the demographic growth throughout the timeline generates populations that no longer know their space, in the way that Marc Augé referenced in his work.²

Geography loses its meaningful animation to the communities that host newcomers and tourists, with consequent loss of symbolic interpretation of profane heritage. The perennial crystallizes in oblivion, and cultural products appear to be sold, depriving their identity. We notice this, including the unanswered questions about authenticity by some guests/tourists to host populations, which are getting used to the clichés of local touristic territorial marketing, that uniformizes what has been different.

Fragmented information traps local populations, and tourists are lost in meaningless jungles. How can a tourist or an outsider be like a local, and how can locals be knowledge transmitters? Furthermore, how can it be quality on communicational channels to heritage safeguard? These are the main issues that have oriented our work for several years and, subsequently, the present, mirrored in this paper.

As we find differences in the balance of questions and answers that can transform information into knowledge and, subsequently, identify an attraction with something more, we see in artificial intelligence a possibility to enlighten tourists and residents.

Sustainability is the conducting wire for our research.

THE TERRITORY

The Algarve region is located at the western end of Europe to the south of Portugal, limited to the north by *Alentejo* region, to the east by the Guadiana River and the south and west across the Atlantic Ocean, highlighting the coastline with a length of 320 km. As part of the Portuguese political Portuguese state, the oldest of Europe, with unchangeable frontiers that are culturally hegemonic in all kept within.

We focus on three sub-territories, from the four in Algarve, by their bio-sociocultural specificities: Vicentian Coast, Barrocal,³ and Mountain. The territory of Baixo Guadiana,⁴ in the right upper part of the figure, is excluded from our analysis in this paper.

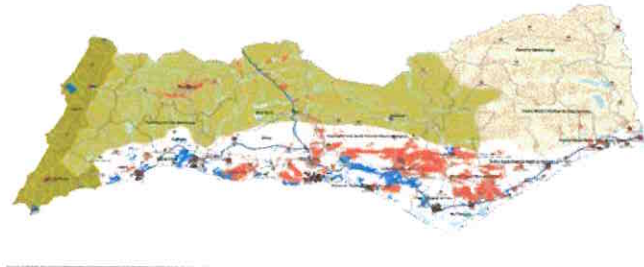


Figure 1. Algarve's territorial units and subunits

In the territory, which name is a reminder of Garb Al- Andalus,⁵ there are sixteen municipalities and only three of them⁶ do not have in their heraldry the figures of a Muslim and a Christian King. Past is still a symbolic remembrance in the representation of local identity; however, according to Edward T. Hall⁷ "Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough, what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants". The spaces lived by locals, are embedded of its immediate meaning and personal interpretations, voided of collective knowledge.

How we see these spaces in this uni-ethnic and plural territory in terms of creative expressions broadly identifies with what had previously been mentioned by Boaventura Sousa Santos⁸ regarding Portuguese culture and identity. Thus, our culture can be understood as acentric, favoring the plurality of localisms and the appropriation of what comes from outside, or what is alien, is more consistent in terms of form than content. However, we see in rurality, concerning its family ownership over hundreds of generations, the marks of the genesis of tradition mirrored in the discourses of material and immaterial heritage specific to each sub-region that we present.

The relative position, both to Europe, in external terms and with all other more globalizing realities, in which tourism is a vehicle for the transmission of ideas as an accelerator of change, can serve as a factor in understanding the devaluation of rooted traditional culture. The constant recreation, almost carnivalesque, to fill the symbolic void in the staging of spaces mediated by architecture is an alluring factor for our research. Our regard upon spaces, essentially, is focused on the municipalities of Aljezur, Lagos and Monchique .



Figure 2. Algarve's municipalities

Aljezur

The first of these municipalities represents in Portuguese History a great achievement in the conquest of muslim territory and for the portuguese nation-state consolidation.⁹ In recent History, Aljezur has been voted for development oblivion by political interests for being the only Algarve municipality that gave the majority of votes for the Presidential candidate Humberto Delgado, in 1958, during the dictatorship period. Its lifestyle kept its almost medieval essence till the 90s of the XX century.¹⁰

Aljezur, for its peculiarity of landscape, which includes the specificities of the seashore, almost unknown for decades for tourists¹¹ become, in the '90s, to seem an attraction for estate investment. Most parts of its territory began a process of mischaracterization and hiperbolization of capitalistic use of spaces. Building construction, part of them built in naturally protected areas, gains strength against good sense policies that favor circular economic development and sustainable ecological balance. By the end of the 80s, the inauguration of the new townhouse building, in a traditional agriculture first class soil, for that symbolic purpose, namely in the *várzea*,¹² generates polemics concerning the ecological balance. The building, with a Davidian star shape, was implanted in a water table area, creating future risks for the urban centre flooding.

The traditional dwellings that kept ways of living which include heritage logic of storage, production, and consumption of food, located in kitchens in the innermost part of the back of the house, disappear. Property identity marks, bright painted bars that identify families,¹³ and embordering the four edges of the houses, start a whirlpool of possible new significative narratives with different aesthetics marked only by the new owners' taste, transformed frequency quantity trends in capitalistic modernity fashions.

Outside stairs, pilasters, and all the imported materials and shapes came to the renewal of places, within the municipality territory, with a great tendency of occupancy of the seashore near landscape, mainly in quaternary dunes, that were preserved from those purposes for hundreds of generations of territorial occupancy by humans.



Figure 3 New dwellings in Aljezur

The crescent number of local accommodations,¹⁴ a phenomenon that increased in all Portuguese territory in the last decade, despite its formal creation in 2008,¹⁵ generates polemics mainly in what concerns the social issues underlying the overvalue of consumption goods, mainly those of essential choice for subsistence.¹⁶

Traditional products such as those related with sweet potato¹⁷ from Aljezur agricultural wetlands, obtain status with the foreign classification of *gourmet*, amongst others included in gastronomic heritage, and lose part of their symbolic meaning. Branding places with flavors are part of the commonly known strategy of touristic marketing. Being a guest in a promoted tourism territory is something other than something that includes the physical presence in situ. All the material that is

vehiculated by media and computer technologies in use, in the present times, give information for those, that even by virtual means, can visit a sort of places within a territory.

The process of discover other places and people, as an active form of obtaining knowledge¹⁸ by making dialectics of simple things, is also to be applied to the ones who want to know their place, significantly if they have yet to gain knowledge throughout cultural heritage.

Lagos

Lagos, as mentioned before, is the name of the territory known as the city of the Discoveries, where the caravels sail, as the beginning of the globalization process that started to motion with the arrival to India's territory.

The built city territory has at its genesis a military configuration within fortified walls that keep safe people and merchandise from external attacks. Within the old walls that kept it growing during the XVIII century, the places are occupied mainly by buildings related to governance functions, mainly with the military, the clerical, and the noble social classes. The people that lived within walls occupied less relevant buildings, in terms of size, regarding the visitor's gaze.

Outside the city walls, the soil use of dryland agriculture, which characterizes social occupation, configured most parts of local folklore, profoundly rooted in secular tradition that looks to the seashore as a gate opened to perils, especially those related to piracy raids.

The traditional way of living kept its essence in a circular economy based on the exchange of subsistence products within the territorial vicinity, exchanging fisheries for fruits, such as oranges, porc-smoked products, and arbutus is an example.

Dryland products, mainly figs, almonds, and carobs, configured the outland territorial skirts of city walls like liminal cultural markers. These products were mainly for outer consummation; their selling was necessary for the familiar economy. However, part of these products was kept for internal consumption as long-duration sources of caloric nutritional elements due to their transformation into a pastry that soon became part of the welcome products for foreigners, in the first pastries commercial establishments of the Algarve.¹⁹

Sun has its seasonal importance for primary economic activities, as well as water. These elements are essential for most local heritage stories²⁰ that fix traditional territorial knowledge-based information. Flourished almond trees in springtime were also a theme in local storytelling, as in all of *Barrocal*, where the traditional Moorish agriculture left its marks with all products and production techniques that survived throughout centuries. The legend of the almond trees is related to a Muslim Prince that saved one of his wives, of Nordic European origin, from severe depression, by the promise that in Springtime snow will come to their country. When that season came, the promise was accomplished with the sightseeing of fields full of snow-white flowers.²¹

With the massification process of tourism, due mainly to the Faro airport inauguration in 1965, the bias of commodification of tastes focused on the newcomers started, leaving its marks on the seashore, the city walls and the expansion of construction outside its limitation. New models of activities related to leisure fixed vocational purposes.

Sea sight became an attraction for buildings' seasonal occupancy and investors. The higher, the better sight and the best-selling price. Outside the city walls where buildings with more than five floors and condominiums made their fixation; social neighborhoods were built to accommodate dislocated families from the wall's historical town centre, which is almost empty of local residents, but full of local accommodations for tourists.

Dwelling owners see profit in the valuation of the urban and seashore view for foreigners; the clandestine construction of *Açoteias*,²² in the centre of the historical town, mischaracterizes the narratives of the context, with the hidden connivance of municipal authorities, upon payment of fines.

The town center, which includes buildings from the XVI century, loses its cultural traces²³ and starts gaining others based on new social and cultural premises.



Figure 4 Style amalgam within city walls of Lagos

Salty water gains protagonism in leisure activities and potable water is transformed with chlorine for the same purposes. Swimming pools on top floors in restored buildings give social value to the disruptive commodity consumption of urban spaces. Dryland soils become green with golf camps on grounds where water is scarce.

Monchique

This municipality, in terms of cultural heritage, is related to Aljezur, partially by kindred relations, that served almost as economic survival warranties, since the Christian conquest. Contained in mountain territory with the same name, kept for centuries genetic pools of kin, that upholds proudly their real estate, and family names, by endogamic marriages.

Historically, part of this territory was weakly connected by roads to the rest of the Algarve, and to the Alentejo province.²⁴ The economy based mainly in Florestal production,²⁵ granite stone extraction, agriculture, and porc product, started to obtain some relevance in tourism activities²⁶ in the last two decades of the twentieth century.

The traditional dwellings, made of granite and covered with mortar colored with lime mixed with natural pigmentation, are scarce to actual visitors' sight. The few left, almost in ruins, by local families are bought by foreigners²⁷ allured by the uniqueness of the buildings, integrated into the natural landscape, and keeping all its traditional architectural elements.

The landscape is modeled in *socalcos*²⁸ by generations of local inhabitants for arboriculture and agriculture purposes. The resulting products from the harvests went to the markets of the southern coast, namely to Portimão and even the capital of Portugal, *Lisboa*, distinguished by its formal look and exquisite flavor.

Due to its relatively late discovery by tourists and governance promoters for that particular mean, local tradition, namely gastronomy and artisan craft related to essential production technologies and shelter and conservation, kept its essence and soon became a territorial means of attraction.

SENSORIAL-BASED KNOWLEDGE AI FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Despite local political concern in facing sustainability challenges, by innovative, creative answers supported by scientific knowledge, technology, and society,²⁹ this last appears to be seen as a whole number of users and consumers of spaces and services that fit in competitive global economic perspectives, that seems not caring for carrying capacity in tourist destinations,³⁰ followed by intelligent governance.

The focus of governance concerns is mainly on the digital technology that links the territory's cities through shared access to open data that permits management issues concerning territorial matters; however, the immaterial knowledge for practical use needs to be included. However, the local population from these municipalities make efforts to pass information for future memory in scientific papers blogs, and books,³¹ with debates promoted by local civic associations³² and cultural recreational/educative happenings³³

We inform that AI technologies can be helpful to transmit knowledge, in an educative way, as helpful interpreters of individual senses of the local host population and tourists because individual choices for consumption are mainly made by available information and sensorial means. However, these require interpretation. Traditional food can be interpreted, not only by a receipt of its ingredients' authenticity but also by chemical smell interpretation, by words and scent emission on a mobile application,³⁴ as well as by the image and sound of its cooking confection.³⁵ A virtual holographic host³⁶ can show the landscape with all its stories, interpret all the app user sees and hears, and teach how to use the soil, keeping it without damaging it for future generations.

The individuals' free will to choose is always kept by those who turn in and turn off technology for knowledge purposes. In this sense, the holistic purpose of sustainable tourism, in particular, in its educational/pedagogical means,³⁷ can include individualistic positioning for creative itineraries with a recreation of memories and new uses of time and space.

The humanist era,³⁸ coexisting with intelligent technology, has more focus on senses filters. The words of *Eugénio de Andrade*³⁹ express the importance of feelings in place' memories and subsequently experienced knowledge that endures the fascinating tales of territories with alluring impact to those who visit it.

*Does a homeland have any meaning?
when is the mouth
who kisses us, talking about her,
to bring in your syllables
the wheat, the cicadas,
the vibration
of the mud or the body or the air,
or the light that breaks through the house
with the freesias and make, friend, the heart so light*⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

The dynamics of economic and sociocultural changes in Algarve territory in the last fifty years, operates in an almost complete change of a *Gemeinschaft* into a *Gesellschaft*⁴¹ with inadequacy of the integrational rhythm of novelties by local populations⁴² and subsequently knowledge oblivion of heritage typologies that were identity markers of territorial specificities, being these attraction factors for foreigners who come to experience *Europe's Most Famous Secret*.⁴³ The alluring factor for discovering the difference and the will of fixation in a territory by summer residents, in places where they seem to want to belong⁴⁴ vanishes by the overfull of typified information, made for capitalistic purposes.

Culture seems to be shown in a pragmatic way to quick profit, and the quality of its offer is absent in its originality. A rearrangement of products, with imported goods, is transforming places in all its concerning specific characteristics; natural people from these places, outnumbered by permanent immigrant residents⁴⁵ no longer apply local knowledge to interpret and protect their territories. The apparent feasibility of their tradition relies on the payment of outsider knowledge for its application. However, the results have pernicious results on daily lifestyles, especially for those natural residents who feel they do not belong in their places. Better inclusive places are needed for everyone and technology can be useful for those purposes.

AI is an exciting technology for personal use daily of choices, in real-time and not in the virtual one, whether for scientific purposes,⁴⁶ communication, or knowledge, based on realistic sensorial training. Metaphors could gain more sense; different senses for different users and territorial narratives would be enhanced by real discourses, with new perspectives, generating more pieces for the gamification of discovering nature and creational innovation processes.

Production and consumerism could majorate its quality with positive effects on local economies.

This way, the humanist era could be accomplished, opening the way to the new one, the post-humanist, where memories are fixed, recalled and reused as new information systems in meta reality.

NOTES

¹ These perspectives were applied to the cultural context by Marvin Harris. See Thomas N. Headland, Kenneth L. Pike, and Marvin Ed Harris *Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate* Sage, 1990.

² Marc Augé. *Non-Lieux Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*. Paris: Seuil, 1992.

³ This Portuguese term comprehends the Algarve Territory between the Southern Coast and the Mountain, shown in Figure 1, retrieved from: <http://prot.ccdr-alg.pt/Storage/pdfs/PG08.pdf>

⁴ The term means Low Guadiana, the river name establishing the political Frontier between Portugal and Spain.

⁵ The western part of the territory of the muslim Alandalus civilisation. For better information, António Borges Coelho. *Portugal na Espanha árabe*. Leya, 2019.

⁶ Lagos, the city of the Discoveries, Olhão and Faro. This last one is the District capital and head of the Episcopal Seat. Olhão has its essence as a place of commerce and fisheries. Nonetheless, these cities have Moorish/Muslim heritage easily identified in the traditional buildings and lifestyles.

⁷ For better information, consult Edward T Hall, *The Silent Language* Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973 53.

⁸ See B de Sousa Santos, "Modernidade, identidade a cultura de fronteira." *Tempo Social* [online] v. 5, n. 1-2, 1993: 31-52 ISSN 1809-4554.

⁹ Its castle is situated in an elevation in the middle of two others with the designation of *Cabeças* and *Deguladoiro*, portuguese terms that have the meaning of Heads and Decapitator, referring to the remembrance of the slaughter that happened by the Christian conquest by the portuguese king, Afonso III, in the XIII century. A specific name still identifies all landscapes that can be seen from there by older natives and residents of this municipality. To belong and being belonged by places within the cultural frontiers of Aljezur includes identification of symbolic dominion and identificational meaning of private estates that still keeps the names of the owners' families. Private lands for agriculture in wetland soil, which characterizes most of the municipality by tradition, did not need walls to divide.

¹⁰ Despite the dictatorship's fall in 1974, the referred period marks the beginning of the materializing of innovative transformation in the municipality with the application of EU funds. This fact favours the accelerational process of cultural changes, increased by newcomers of several sociological sorts, such as former emigrants' descendants, tourists and foreign entrepreneurs.

¹¹ The only airport of the Algarve is in Faro, opening in the early '60s. The roads that existed in that period did not favour the dislocation of Aljezur, and touristic promotion of the region of Algarve was beginning. The characteristics of images passed for the tourists that came first, the British, were those of sunny beaches and easy-going lifestyles. This fact generated an amount of demand for these people and others from northern Europe that do not have many sunny days in their countries.

¹² Portuguese term that identifies first wet-class soils for agricultural purposes.

¹³ These identifying signs also served as identifiers of places where the ancient meaning of traditional inn's law could be applied, especially for broad sociological issues concerning people and goods, in terms of enlarged parental ship alliances. These were part of the mortar that kept the alliances of power between the families from the municipality and those to whom they had connections in the mountain territory, mainly in Monchique. These people had no cultural identification with the Southern and Eastern populations of the Algarve. A non-formal endogamic policy forbids alliances throughout marriages with the algarvians, also called by people from Aljezur and Monchique as people with dark skin, mainly for these were not pedigreed by family names associated with landowning.

¹⁴ According to the data from portuguese statistics, the number of local accommodations in this municipality, considering the territorial population density, is one of the highest in the country.

¹⁵ By Decree-Law 39/2008, from 7 March, due regulated by Decree-Law 128/2014, from 29 August.

¹⁶ The central market in the head village, whose name is the same as the municipality, sells in estival periods, primal goods such as legumes, fish, amongst others, with prices that are, in percentage, three or four times more than in the city capital of the country.

¹⁷ The municipality contributes to the highest productive soils for the plantation of sweet potatoes within the territory that received EU PGI Certification, which includes Odemira, with its coastal territories.

¹⁸ Referred by Gaston Bachelard (2021).

¹⁹ The brand of Taquelim Gonçalves is still a reference to the traditional pastry, namely in the production of *Dam Rodrigo*, a delicacy with its origins in Lagos. Dry fig paste with almond cakes and almond paste with egg filling cake are some of their specialities. The establishment has been in operational functions since 1935 in the same place in the middle of the town centre, a privileged place for social encounters.

²⁰ Such as the legends of *Moiras*, enchanted virgins associated with hidden treasures, and water caves, all feminine-related myths rooted in all Portuguese territory with a particular incidence in the South.

²¹ Storytelling has a vital role in knowledge related to local sustainability. Traditional dryland agriculture is no longer active in Lagos territory; however, small families' production of vegetables and legumes is a factor of attraction in a centre near the open market to sell the so-called biological products, in function one day a week. Each production has its season and its meaning. The buyers are, in its essence, all-year residents.

²² Portuguese word that identifies an open flat top floor where, by tradition moorish women could interact socially with other women in the vicinity, without going to the streets. This is still a characteristic of the houses of the city of *Olhão*, that enroots the moorish tradition. We can say that is a private space for public interacting. In summertime hot nights, entire families used these spaces for sleeping. These places are still used nowadays for meal cooking, as before.

²³ The subsequence of the quantity number of this loss puts the cultural meaning of the city heritage system in peril.

²⁴ For better information on the isolation that the mountain territory of Algarve had till the '80s of the twentieth century and the sociocultural relations system, see Robin Jenkins. "Exploitation: The world power structure and the inequality of nations." (1970).

²⁵ In these products, we can refer to wood, and arbutus brandy, known in Portuguese as *aguardente de medronho*.

²⁶ Especially with the investments in restoring the old hotel's park within the Spa village of Caldas de Monchique. This village, much before the inauguration of the Faro airport, till two decades after it, hosted an elite of portuguese families that gathered in the summertime for water treatments and conviviality means. For marital, economic and political alliances were facilitated in this secluded mountain, where anonymity was a warranty.

²⁷ Most of them are from the European Union, for private residence use or rental.

²⁸ Portuguese word for terraces.

²⁹ See <https://smart-cities.pt/>.

³⁰ This issue, debated mainly since the late 70s of the twentieth century, still lacks discussions that relate carrying capacity with accommodation and transportation, issues of importance for local and regional development and its population wellbeing.

³¹ Some of them of local popular poets, and some of scientists, with municipalities support for editions.

³² We leave here the reference of *RACAL Club*, seated in Silves municipality, which has most of its territory in the Sierra, the promotor/organizer of *Congresso do Algarve*, which started in 1980, with more than ten years of an international call for papers on Algarve thematic.

³³ Like those promoted by the artistic cooperative *Lavrar o Mira e a Lagoa- Artes Além Tejo*. See, for better information <https://lavrarmiraealagoa.pt/>.

³⁴ Although this app does not exist, all the available technology has already been created, as shown in our previous work (Neto, Ana Pereira 2020). Even textures interpretation is available to be applied in portable devices for personal use.

³⁵ Sound mapping can be refined in a micro-objective way for more objective and effective communication.

³⁶ This holographic character can interact with emotional language. That can speak all languages in the world, and who may have, at the choice of the APP user, the somatic characteristics that are most pleasant to him. However, it is still limited to rational, factual information based on a win-win relationship between the customer's tastes/desires and the available data.

³⁷ See (UNWTO *Tourism Definitions | Définitions Du Tourisme de l'OMT | Definiciones de Turismo de La OMT* 2019).

³⁸ See Jean Paul Sartre, *L'Être et le Neant*. Paris: Galimard, 1976.

³⁹ A portuguese poet from the twentieth century. See Eugénio Andrade, *de O sal da Língua – Precedido por Trinta Poemas*, Barcelona: Associação Portuguesa de Escritores Bibliotex, 2001

⁴⁰ Nonofficial free English translation of the poem *Frésias Andrade, Eugénio de. (2001) 37* written in Portuguese.

⁴¹ See Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (Classical Reprint), Grundbegriffe der Reinen Soziologie*, Forgotten Books, 2018

⁴² Due mainly of tourism impact, see data for a more profound analysis in: *Municípios: Proveitos totais dos alojamentos turísticos: total e por tipo de alojamento | Pordata*. The local population includes not only the natural from the municipalities, with Portuguese nationality, but also foreign residents from several countries, most of them from the UK and EU countries.

⁴³ Phrase of use to promote, in 2011, the whole territory of Algarve, by the official regional tourism Channel. See the promotional video for UK, in Visit Algarve Youtube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbG4M--OlsU>

⁴⁴ See Urbain, Jean-Didier (2003).

⁴⁵ Consult *Anuário Estatístico de Portugal* (2022).

⁴⁶ For instance in building structure analysis, hydrology.

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