

Informal communication through the enjoyment of tourism experience - Identity decomposition as a process of knowledge, integration, and sustainability

A comunicação informal através da experiência turística - A decomposição identitária como processo de conhecimento, integração e sustentabilidade

La comunicación informal a través del disfrute de la experiencia turística - La descomposición de la identidad como proceso de conocimiento, integración y sostenibilidad

António Sérgio Araújo Almeida ¹
Inês Paulo Cordeiro ²

Abstract: This paper aims to demonstrate the strategic virtuosity that stems from identity decomposition and possibilities of identity values communication from the perspective of tourist enjoyment. Identity is the central point of this work that proposes its understanding and possible management in a logic of casuistic stratification of identity experiential attributes which can emancipate local communities, territories, and tourism as an informal actor concerning international relations. To illustrate the scope of social sciences for the understanding and the decomposition of identity, with its impact in the emancipation of communities, we will focus on a literature review, identification of case studies as well as the identification of guidelines that can support tourism management studies and the role of stakeholders in it. This paper concludes that the study, knowledge, and identity communication appear as a powerful tool, capable of providing a convergence of mutual advantages between touristic offers and demand. Identity recognition also appears in Tourism as a factor of integration of the International System. It is important to emphasize the dynamic nature of identity, giving it an operational sense, it appears as a pragmatic solution in the management of tourist destinations.

Key words: Identity, authenticity, emancipation, integration, tourist experience.

Resumo: Este artigo pretende demonstrar o virtuosismo estratégico que decorre da decomposição identitária e das possibilidades de comunicação de valores identitários na perspetiva da experiência turística. A identidade é o ponto fulcral deste trabalho que propõe a sua compreensão e possível gestão numa lógica de estratificação casuística de atributos experienciais identitários que podem emancipar as comunidades locais, os territórios e o turismo, enquanto ator informal das relações internacionais. Para ilustrar o alcance das ciências sociais na compreensão e na decomposição da identidade, com impacto na emancipação das comunidades, centrar-nos-emos numa revisão da literatura, na identificação de estudos de caso, bem como na identificação de linhas orientadoras que possam apoiar os estudos de gestão do turismo e o papel dos *stakeholders* no mesmo. Este artigo conclui que o estudo, o conhecimento e a comunicação identitária surgem como uma ferramenta poderosa, capaz de proporcionar uma convergência de vantagens mútuas entre a oferta e a procura turística. O reconhecimento da identidade surge também no Turismo como um fator de integração do Sistema Internacional. Neste contexto é de realçar o carácter dinâmico da identidade, conferindo-lhe um sentido operacional, surgindo como uma solução pragmática na gestão dos destinos turísticos.

Palavras-Chave: Identidade, autenticidade, emancipação, integração, experiência turística.

¹ Polytechnic of Leiria, Portugal. E-mail: antonio.s.almeida@ipleiria.pt - ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3758-7656>

² Polytechnic of Leiria, Portugal. E-mail: ines.brasao@ipleiria.pt - ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0420-5834>

Resumen: Este artículo pretende demostrar el virtuosismo estratégico que se deriva de la descomposición identitaria y de las posibilidades de comunicación de valores identitarios desde la perspectiva del disfrute turístico. La identidad es el punto central de este artículo que propone su comprensión y posible gestión en una lógica de estratificación casuística de los atributos experienciales identitarios que puede emancipar las comunidades locales, los territorios y al turismo como actor informal de las relaciones internacionales. Con el fin de ilustrar el alcance de las ciencias sociales para la comprensión y para la descomposición de la identidad, con impacto en la emancipación de las comunidades, nos centraremos en una revisión de la literatura, en la identificación de estudios de caso, así como en la identificación de directrices que pueden apoyar los estudios de gestión del turismo y el papel de las partes interesadas en el mismo. Este trabajo concluye que el estudio, el conocimiento y la comunicación de la identidad aparecen como una herramienta poderosa, capaz de proporcionar una convergencia de ventajas mutuas entre la oferta y la demanda turística. El reconocimiento de la identidad aparece también en el Turismo como un factor de integración del Sistema Internacional. Destaca-se el carácter dinámico de la identidad, dándole un sentido operativo y como una solución pragmática en la gestión de los destinos turísticos.

Palabras clave: Identidad, autenticidad, emancipación, integración, experiencia turística.

1 Introduction

The social sciences field, particularly anthropology, was a pilgrim in the study of culture and identity since it was focused on the research for understanding the Otherness (Sarukai, 1997). Anthropologists were the first great experiential “tourists”. They created, from an early age, a sense of respectability for others, as well as a sense of the importance of communicating identity and culture to others (Nogués-Pedregal, 2019). In addition to this perspective, the social sciences’ contributions have been fruitful in equilibrium points between two populations that usually are in tension in the process of tourist travel: local and visitor communities.

The communicational premises are fundamental to determining the success or failure of the communication process itself. As we will see, Tourism and Tourism Experience are a privileged stage for identity communication. These are the central themes of this paper seen as tools for cultural integration and mutual benefit from a supply and demand perspective. In this text, we advocate a set of good methodological practices to ensure that the tourist's authentic experience is faithful and in harmony with the community's sense of identity.

Identity concept includes several dimensions that can be considered in the context of its sociocultural dynamics. From a Hellenic perspective of culture, we can also emphasize identity with the meanings of *Anthropos*, *Chronos*, *Oikos*, and *Ethos* to attest to its multidimensional nature. Identity is assumed as a human construction that over time reflects a material adaptation and evolution around environment and nature with the proper frameworks of the value systems that support it as a mechanism of social evolution.

In addition to the current cultural brand of a certain group, Identity carries a dynamic character that constitutes its permanent adaptation and metamorphic character, reflecting the evolving nature of communities. In postmodernism, identity is seen as a reality with meaning, differentiating from a predominant massification (Castells, 1999) but fluid (Bauman, 2005) enough to illustrate the permanent adaptation and evolution of communities.

The view of these authors is fundamental in the context of tourist activity from the moment it exhorts, on one hand, the appropriation of a meaning, and, on the other hand, a continuous process of sociocultural edification. However, Tourism is a kind of transnational actor who, under certain circumstances, can rescue identity virtuosities as a tool of people integration. It will also be in this context that the World Tourism Organization (OMT) labels this global activity as the "Peace Industry".

Knowing deeply about identity and its wide range of social intervention, is essential to understanding, valuing, and respecting it. These elements were also a reason for taking a qualitative methodology based on ethnography and case studies. Tourism allows this emotional connection, especially when we talk about "slow tourism" (in opposition to fast tourism or mass tourism), a paradigm in tourism activity deeply linked to the sustainability of territories and people. This process of entrancing knowledge is fundamental for the valuation of differences and Tourism is unequivocally an informal transnational actor with a potential response to international integration demands. In the International Relations scholasticism, the States, the International Organizations, and the Non-Governmental Organizations are formal actors.

2 Identity and Identity Decomposition

The understanding of the Identity concept in its multiple dimensions is related to its decomposition process (Almeida, 2018). In other words, its abstract and composite nature is diluted if diverse fields of observation are adopted, whether in sociological, anthropological, economic, or ethical contexts, among many others.

To the extent that, in this identity decomposition process we became able to capture other hidden subdimensions, we are not only perceiving their holistic character, but we are also identifying community dynamics and stratifying its multidimensional attributes that can be processed for knowledge management and should be communicated fruitfully.

Identity decomposition emerges in this context as an essential process, also to the self-knowledge of their communities. Icons can be an eloquent example of this process. Addressing, for example, the “Barcelos Rooster” (Galo de Barcelos), we can easily find that this Portuguese icon is culturally and socially decomposed in experiential attributes as diverse as gastronomic delicacies (for example, the famous "Pica no Chão" in the Minho's style), the songs and popular dances, crafts, and stories.

It will not be a complex process to promote an identity or an icon if we consider their decomposing process and holding a large event that materializes a kind of poster of its attributes. In the background, we will be faced with a stage that illustrates the meaning of a way of life which turns out to be fundamental in the experiential processes.

"Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) are not limited to a single type of travel purpose or motivation. Leisure trips, business trips, exchange programs, ordinary daily life experiences, pedagogical and educational trips, and health trips can all activate long-lasting memories for tourists. This statement helps in understanding that it is not the type of experience itself that makes a trip memorable or not, but how they represent a meaningful moment in the consumer's life" (Coelho et al., 2018, p. 18).

3 Knowledge and Assumption of Identity

The assumption of Identity from the inside of the community is fundamental to facilitating the process of Symbolic appropriation by communities concerning their icons.

Since knowledge is an essential presupposition to cultural appreciation and consequent social valorization in a logic of tourism sustainability, to achieve the personal development of tourists through knowledge, local communities must do it in the first place by themselves.

The identity assumption by communities is thus a central requirement for a more enriching Tourist Experience and it is from this identity knowledge valorization and communication that it is considered the reciprocity based on the emancipation of local communities, on one hand, and the satisfaction of the experiential needs of tourists, on the other hand.

It is important to underline these elements of systemic hospitality. In this context and according to Crepalde et al. (2022) it should be highlighted that some fronts that materialize

hospitality set the tone for the relationships established between the actors involved, comprising different attitudes in the exchange processes. According to these authors, the specificities of the relationships that take place in the hospitality scenario should not be placed as binary oppositions but presented in an axis of social relationships that can be affected by cultural, social, economic, and political differences and by geographical distance.

In fact, identity assumption is a process that has gained increasing relevance concerning the power of communities and as a dynamic process associated with tourism development. After all, these are two social phenomena reactive to the growing globalization with a feeling of nostalgia in the face of something that is being lost. The globalization of consumption has alerted us to the possible fading of local cultural manifestations, the result of the constant bombardment of universal and deterritorialized symbols by the mass media. However, the “McDonaldization” of the world also generated the “globalization of diversity” and the explosion of a variety of cultural references (Simões, 2002, p. 23). Thus, the construction and assumption of local identities represent the other side of the coin in relation to a growing fading of differences.

All over the world, rural areas regained their "aura" due to a growing tourist attraction felt by urban families motivated by the encounter of their roots in the countryside which they left a generation or two ago (Bessière, 1998). Seeking lost or forgotten identities, tourism has opened bridges between the countryside and the city, essentially satisfying urban and nostalgic tourists who have difficulties in the will of recovering childhood memories. Values become a mirage with the migration to urban areas and they launch themselves in search of authentic experiences to get an emotional rescue.

The urgent feeling of "back to basis" and slow travel (Howard, 2012) has helped local rural communities to recover and to preserve their original values (and because of it, they resist better than cities to globalization process), offering tourists a closer relationship with "objective authenticity". It is in this interaction of mutual benefit that tourist behaviors appreciate the value around the artisan in opposition to the craft shop, or the visit to the cheese maker, as opposed to the cheese shop.

In Portugal for example, anthropological studies have suggested that one of the great levels of the process of construction (and reconstruction) of community identities was the EXPO 98 – the great world exhibition, held in 1998, in the city of Lisbon. It was in this very precise

context that it was offered to "(re)start again, rethinking, recreating, and reinventing a whole Portuguese popular culture in this true mega process of objectification, marketing, and emblemizing of the culture that was Expo 98" (Raposo, 2004, p. 2).

Portugal found in that Global Event an opportunity to replace its image and did it not only in the sense of asserting itself as a technologically modern and advanced country, but also as a mosaic of cultural differences, customs, festivities, products, and specific artifacts that lacked to be shown, recognized, visited, and even consumed.

On one hand, it is commonly accepted that interaction with local communities is a differentiating factor in the tourist offer because these communities have the ideal conditions to transmit the so-called Objective Authenticity (Wang, 1999) of their destination. It is also true that, in some cases, these communities do not feel represented in the touristic process. What have failed? A good mediation in the communication process of identity.

The diagnosis of the material and immaterial identity of the destinies and involvement of the communities (that promote them as differentiated tourist products, propitiators of profits for themselves) is a process that must be managed, observing local needs of education and collective formation, adopting the most effective pedagogies for perpetuation of complementarities. In other words, the diagnosis of identity resources, material and immaterial is the basis for the definition of sustainable tourism products based on a holistic vision that brings together cultural, social, economic, environmental, and spatial factors, as advocated by the World Tourism Organization, and that recalls the 1980 Manila Declaration itself (Almeida, 2018, p. 429-430).

In a logic of sustainability of the territories and local communities, it is assumed that it is the development that gives us Tourism and not Tourism that leads to development. The creation of differentiated cultural platforms presumes this principle with obvious repercussions regarding processes of integration between local communities and tourists and consequent learning based on a relationship of reciprocity that provides socio-economic advantages to the first ones and experiential emotions to others. The convergence of mutual advantages turns out to be the dominant focus of a sustainability process based on identity knowledge.

This reality emerges with acuteness in the Solemnities of Holy Week in Braga, Portugal, and in its case study.

One of the recurring discussions about cultural tourism is the need for cultural authenticity being the essential issue that defines the specificities of the tourist activity and not the opposite. In other words, in certain contexts of cultural sensitivity, the demand associated with mass tourism will become counterproductive and the

specificity of this 'sacred authenticity' which, paradoxically, would no longer be there to be enjoyed (Almeida & Pinto, 2017, p. 616).

4 Opportunities and Threats in the Process of Identity Construction/Decomposition

As we have mentioned, these processes of identity mediation between the community and the tourists need to find a fair balance, not only avoiding potential tensions between residents and tourists, but also by making a fair relationship between culture and economy, knowledge, and communication processes. One of the potential threats that can come from the management of identity decomposition is the problem of identity as “a spectacle”. We use this designation to elucidate a process that co-modifies and communicates identity aspects by transforming social and cultural heritage into something to sell with no respect for the community engagement or introducing some bias regarding that community.

Peixoto (2004) gives the example of an urban intervention carried out in the city of Porto for touristic purposes, in Portugal, from 2001, replicating the strategy in Barcelona for intervention in the historic center and reproducing, in an uncritical way, a forged authenticity based in an operation of painting the urban facades of the old buildings, at the historical core of the city, the “Ribeira”. According to his view, these operations have shown themselves to be more like forged identity creation processes. In fact, it was a more oriented operation to function as a business card of cities (as a brand) and less as a space where a lived and shared community identity can be developed.

On the other hand, by making a clear distinction between Objective Authenticity and Postmodern Authenticity, Wang (1999) ends up emphasizing the primacy of local resources that are embodied in tourist products, whose material and immaterial genuineness is easily proven, whether through archaeology, history, or anthropology itself.

In the second case, a distinct focus arises to a kind of "staged authenticity" (MacCannell, 1973) and consists of entertaining tourists with the economic power and through the technicality available as occurs, for example, in large thematic parks that strictly have nothing to do with local values or history.

It is not possible to compare the quality or intensity of the tourist experience that results from each of those scenarios, but it is still evident that the first one provides the proposed sustainability while the second contains immediate and strictly economic motivations. So far, we

have been defending the idea that the process of identity decomposition constitutes an opportunity and a unique means of reconciling experiential tourism with local development through a better communication process.

The recent history of Tourism (and the result of a progressive failure of mass tourism) has manifested a progressive inclination towards intangible experiences and a growing attraction to popular culture and local identity, leaving behind the tourism central model based on visits to the consecrated material heritage like cathedrals, squares, bridges, castles, walls, bridges, or museums). Thus, popular culture, local identities, and their "hidden truths" are progressively achieving the same level and *status* as tangible experiences in tourism.

These new visions for tourist experience have allowed hidden geographies to become a reference on the map. It is precisely in this sense that communities can profit. Now, their heritage and popular culture acquire an interest, a sense and a *status* that should be shared (Lindbom, 2018).

Fragile, intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life. (UNESCO 2018).

Nowadays, the cultural production of the artisans (from the baker to the confectioner, through the ceramist, the shepherd, the bell maker, the artisan of sausages, and other protagonists) come to appear in local stories with relevant interest and a way to make known a tourist destination.

It's important to say that "certain identities are more likely to be associated, or allied, at particular moments and places, thereby, demonstrating some of the more and less permeable boundaries that exist around territories of different collective identities. (...) The strong relationship amongst environmentalist, anti-racist and anti-capitalist identities at the Toronto G20 protest illustrates both the role of these movements in the history of the Global-Justice Movement and the way these identities facilitated collaboration amongst particular sections of the left in Toronto". (Stalker & Wood, 2021, p. 11)

Structurally, the international system in which tourism is integrated is characterized by an ambivalent reality-based, on one hand, on massification and, on the other hand, on the increasing appreciation of local specificities.

There is also an

[...] indirect effect of global identity on global Social Networking Sights usage through increased hedonic, utilitarian and social motivation. These insights are also empirically tested in one developed and two emerging markets, thus allowing managers to explore the cross-cultural differences with regards to this mechanism and to finetune their marketing strategies accordingly (Makri et al., 2021, p. 490).

Globalization presents two sides of the same coin: it massifies and promotes differences. Commonly seen as a process of massification on a planetary scale (a phenomenon largely led by multinational companies, mass media and International Organizations), globalization is also a process that makes available to communities, promotion mechanisms or sociocultural agents that insert their cultural specificities or resources on the global stage. It is precisely in the context of Globalization that the greatest facilities arise for exporting cultural particularities.

This process is easily perceived in several case studies, such as the one that results from the “Fumeiro” fair in Montalegre, Portugal. A big local event that has its roots in an intra-community and intercommunity competition of villages of this municipality that integrates the Peneda Gerês National Park (Almeida, 2010) based on gastronomic autochthonic products, the Montalegre Smokefair is a kind of showcase of art and popular knowledge around the confection of "smoked" products that are based on the pig of the “bízara” breed, an autochthonous species of that region.

The main mentor of this event, the priest Fontes (charismatic figure of that region), observed about 30 years ago families of Montalegre competing among themselves their various ways of making this local resource. Something that aroused our research interest was the fact that this competition is transversal to the various villages, but it blurs (as competition) when outsiders are near.

For tourists or visitors, the gastronomic product was proudly displayed as “our smoked products house” and it was valued considering its intra-community and inter-community competition. This finding encouraged Priest Fontes and the local authorities of the small town of Montalegre to promote the event that today continues to represent the various families of the locality in a tourist poster valued at 5 million Euros.

This event generated visible community impacts, from the increase of hotel and catering units, as well as certified kitchens, job creation, and the emergence of vocational training courses.

In fact, this sense of pride among the community is proof that the mobilization of the local culture must be done in congruence with the processes of identification felt and lived by these same people.

However, stakeholders may be also aware that the marketization of a popular festivity or ritual has numerous risks, such as dropping the original social and cultural functions of that same ritual, and the tourist experience being defrauded for the sake of a spectacle, as mentioned before.

Raposo (2004) has clarified this point concerning the danger of touristification of the “Caretos de Podence” (a rural Carnival festival declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO on December 2019), but whose objective authenticity was worked by the local communities together with ethnologists who promoted this community carnival without forgetting its roots in agrarian festivals, the “Roman saturnais” and the Lupercalis, celebrated in honor of Pan, the god of the flocks (Raposo, 2004, p. 7).

All these case studies consolidate the role of social sciences to avoid errors in reading and abuse of something precious to people’s history. Still within the possible risks regarding identity decomposition processes, we know that certain places may be undergoing very abrupt economic and social conversion processes. It is the case of rural areas that have lost their agricultural identity and shifted to places linked to the service and industrial sector, or the case of spaces that became deserts, becoming no one's places.

In these situations of transition and collective disturbance, it becomes difficult to determine the identity focus: collective memory becomes more unstable and diffuse, something that hinders the feeling of sharing.

We can list the case of Peniche, a historical center of the canning and fishing industry in Portugal: this identity legacy in its material component (the manufacturing facilities, the cold chambers, the tracks of the boats, etc.) is practically in a state of ruin and without possible traces of recovery. On one hand, the land has experienced an important industrial cycle. On the other hand, it is in a state of transition to a service economy, in particular leisure and tourism, in which new identity values emerge. What kind of focus must go on? How to operationalize this decomposition allowing the integration of the community? Is this community willing to give up part of its heritage for the sake of a more efficient economy, such as the one that connects Peniche to the sea, to the waves, and its beautiful beaches and seaviews? These processes must be studied

and framed with the contribution of the social sciences, in addition to management, tourist agents, politicians, environment, among many others.

Finally, we cannot fail to draw attention to the danger of stereotyping the target image. Far from the proclaimed authenticity, many images of destination promotion incorporate idealizations and reductive clichés about their communities (Pérez, 2009). The reduction of communication that stereotypes carry on the image of a community may not, in fact, contribute to its emancipation, but rather freeze and preserve in time part of its existence.

It is important to have this risk in mind, as cultural stereotypes about a community will always have a controversial impact on what would be the natural flow of their lives.

5 Methodology

As we have mentioned at the beginning of the debate, to illustrate the scope of social sciences for the understanding and for the decomposition of identity, with impact in the emancipation of communities, the final stage of this discussion is to identify the working methodology that should support tourism management with benefits for all the stakeholders in this process:

- 1) **Scientific surveillance:** Cultural and touristic agents should monitor the process of identity decomposition to allow the appropriation and promotion of the culture of the visited communities, linked to their customs and traditions, not generate a sense of disconnection, but rather greater participation, pride, and esteem. This monitoring work involves the application of a vigilant and attentive methodology through the whole process, blind to pressures and influences and based on a communication process that respects all the social actors involved in the touristic process. It is in this combination, always vigilant and with a critical eye, that the case studies of Caretos de Podence (Raposo, 2004) and the historical center of Porto fit in (Peixoto, 2004). Both emphasize the role of social sciences as a way to prevent a disconnection between economic agents and the community. In the first case study, the anthropologist played an important role through fieldwork that permitted an in-depth diagnosis on the ground to measure how different players were appropriating this item of popular culture, anthropology plays a key role through fieldwork that permits an in-depth diagnosis on the ground.

2) **Application of quality-based techniques:** the contribution of social sciences techniques for the study of identity is a decisive factor for the achievement of this goal, although perhaps it has been somewhat neglected over time. An enlightening example of the extreme usefulness of the use of social sciences methodologies for the benefit of tourism is the understanding of UNESCO's role in validating and making visible intangible heritage. This global organization calls for an ethnographic demonstration that proves the community's involvement with the cultural items submitted for accreditation. All applications use qualitative methodologies such as oral and written testimonies, participant observation and visual anthropology to better illustrate the community's identification with the heritage in question.

If we consult any of the applications for universal intangible heritage, we can see that the candidates validated their heritage elements with the help of an historical anthropological support, meaning they defended the measure in what extent that cultural expression, being a dance, a song or a ritual are an integral and specific part of the way of living of a people and its preservation contributes to the common good of cultural diversity. For instance, the last item of Portuguese intangible heritage classified by UNESCO, the Campo Maior Festivities, includes a document of consent signed by the community, in particular the women responsible for decorating the streets and making the paper flowers that fill the town with color and beauty, attesting their involvement with a tradition to which they have proudly belonged (UNESCO, 2024).

3) **Build inventories that break down multiple identities:** The use of ethnography has been considered a very effective means of preventing all cultural deformation and safeguarding the integrity of traditions. In fact, anthropology's interest in the study of tourism has always been linked to the concern to understanding the nature of the relationship between tourists and hosts and, in parallel to the concern of promoting cultural singularities without giving rise to an inconsequential commercialization and mischaracterization of cultures (Nogués-Pedregal, 2019). It is precisely this balanced equation that we intend to carry out.

It is a priority to make an inventory of all aspects that give congruence to the identity manifesto, as well as the register of the set of cultural goods that are part of it (Tamaso, 2007). The example of “Morna” of Cape Verde (World Intangible Heritage declared by UNESCO in 2019), helps to understand that this cultural practice generates much more than a musical

identity. On the contrary, it integrates dance, poetry, slave resistance and particular vocal elements. These four strands are closely linked but, without the careful inventory of their separate elements (compilation of the lyrics, inventory of musical instruments, compositions, singers who lead them, social spaces where it arises, from their origin, variations over time, political meaning or resistance) without an accurate inventory of these complex elements and attentive vigilance on hypothetical appropriations and undue promotions, it is easy to defraud this identity component of Cape Verde culture. In the case of Morna, Inge Lindbom's study (2018) brings this social science approach by reflecting how people who describe themselves as belonging to a mixed population and as living in a 'tolerant' and 'hospitable' society deal with local, national and global cultural heritage. These inventories make it possible to establish nuances regarding the uses made by communities, alerting us to generational gaps, regional variations or broken-down elements of this identity (dance, song, clothing, language, rituals, etc.). They should be supported by a combination of methodologies based on focus groups, structured interviews or participant observation.

His study uses a methodological combination that places great importance on semi-structured interviews with people from very different backgrounds: taxi driver, restaurant assistant manager, co-worker at a tourism center, and other stakeholders from the islands of Santiago and Mindelo.

- 4) **Proactive meeting solutions:** An important step in the process of identity decomposition is related to the establishment of a good communication between research and the management of cultural identity. In the case of research, it should not only be descriptive, but proactive in meeting solutions of commitment, and it is important that the social scientist act as gatekeeper of the meaning that communities attribute to that identity element, establishing unshakeable bonds of trust with the community. Inevitably management must be planned and sustained. For the success of this operation, it is necessary teamwork that includes not only experts in the field of heritage, but also anthropologists and managers. But above all, in the sense that this process is effectively participatory and horizontal, it is vital that the protagonists, that is, the people of the community, are involved (Prats, 2006). In "Ribeira do Porto" case study, the sociologist denounces how the "Ribeira" community was not prioritized in the urban and

tourist rehabilitation of their neighborhood, including the creation of a 'Manual of Good Behavior' for them. As the author says,

It is ironic to note that those who, by living there, gave the historic area a *sui generis* character that allowed it to be recognized by Unesco are now being invited to learn how to "know how to live" in this place (Peixoto: 2004, p. 26).

5) **Management of Identity imagination:** Although the field of management should, in essence, be a creative one, it is important to train and control this degree of imagination when working with identity issues. Fruit of the growing scarcity of originality in the world, there has been a perverse effect that manifests itself in culture (which expresses it) and tourism (which appropriates it). Thus, there is the danger of multiplying and "hunting" identity searches in places and territories, without doing work of research, support, identification, and later, promotion. In the case study of Obidos Lagoon's heritage, an important tourist asset in the west-central region of Portugal that is facing a sustainable development problem, the launch of a broad survey of residents and tourists, as well as semi-structured interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including mayors, business owners and entrepreneurs, made it possible to monitor different identity imaginaries and different perspectives on the culture of Obidos' Lagoon (Alves et al., 2015)

On the other hand, (Guerra et al., 2022, p. 19), most of the research on authenticity has focused mainly on tourists' perceptions, as a useful tool to explain tourists' behavioral intentions towards a destination. However, it is crucial to monitor the evolution of the community's authentic identification with these elements, as this tends to be unstable and conflictual. Thus, "identity hunters" are led to the invention of traditions that sometimes do not have a grounded root, causing the relationship with communities to be severely compromised and nothing contributing to their emancipation.

It is important to underline that

Individuals with low identity integration perceive little overlap in meanings across their identities. In fact, these meanings could potentially be incompatible or even conflicting. (...) In contrast, an individual with high identity integration perceives shared meanings across the multiple identities, over time, as well as in different roles and situations, which can make an individual feel more authentic. (Ebrahimi et a., 2020, p. 104).

6) **Risk of media's commodification.** Finally, we must recognize that the media and social media have played an inescapable role in the dissemination of identity belongings. From the

use of influencers to promote a sweet delicacy, to the proliferation of tv programs and series broadcasted by streaming platforms, entirely dedicated to the discovery of the wonders of a place, there is no shortage of examples of the unplayable relations between culture, tourism and mass media. To give just one example, the recent study by Jang and Park (2020) demonstrates the impact that the media and social media have had on overtourism in the traditional residential neighborhood, Ihwa village in Seoul, South Korea, leading to a rapid urban transformation.

As we become more aware of the growing desire for authenticity and identity combined with a certain nostalgia for cultural roots, popular programs have been prolific in creating endless TV shows to sell the "traditions of the land". If it is true that the power of the mass media cannot be overlooked as an agent of tourist seduction, when the dissemination strategy does not follow prior preparation, it can lead to counterproductive aspects of image saturation, disidentification by resident communities, and, later, by tourists.

6 Conclusions

In this text, we suggest a set of good methodological practices and communication processes that will facilitate the management of identity decomposition

Tourism has the power to materialize spaces of convergence of mutual advantages, based on the experiential desires of the Tourist, on the one hand, and on the needs of social emancipation of communities, on the other hand.

Communication that materializes these convergences assumes an integrative nature and at the center of this process is identity and its decomposition into experiential attributes. Attributes that become a vehicle of appropriation and perpetuation of virtues of territorial spaces, as well as a vehicle of knowledge and valorization of cultural platforms, by nature, differentiated.

The rigorous diagnosis of local resources and value systems as a safeguard of identity limits is essential to avoid paradoxical and controversial speculation and effects from the point of view of sustainability, as it happens with staging acts to entertain tourists. It is important to preserve and promote the potential virtues and values of spaces as a benefit to communities and their visitors.

Local self-knowledge, collective self-esteem, and socio-economic development based on value systems are an indispensable basis of sustainability. It is development that leads to Sustainable Tourism and not Tourism that provides sustainable development.

Without great risk, we can say that this process has revolutionized the way we look at culture and had key consequences in valuing different identities, those from cultural minorities, and broadening the tourist view of the world.

The proposal of a management model for decomposing cultural identity elements, through a specific methodology, cannot be achieved without monitoring the obtained results. The monitoring process will allow to adjustment and improvement of the proposed model. The need to register, disseminate, and promote identity in a touristic context must correspond to a process of assessing the impacts on the community and surveillance of the ethical behavior on the part of all the stakeholders involved. Identity attributes can therefore be positively instrumentalized in a way that promotes a desired rapprochement between tourists and local communities, promoting mutual knowledge between the parties involved and consequent integration.

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