Sharing Cultures 2011

Proceedings of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} International Conference on Intangible Heritage

\textit{Tomar, Portugal}

3-6 July

Edited by

Sérgio Lira
Rogério Amoêda
Cristina Pinheiro
“Heritage” while development tool. The case of two Portuguese city councils

A. Duarte
University of Porto, Portugal

ABSTRACT: The dominant conceptions of development that marked the post-World War II period identified the development especially with economic growth. Such industrialist model was adopted in Portugal from the 60s on, still under the dictatorship named Estado Novo. For Portugal, this economic-based development model has never reached the spectacular increase in productivity and growth achieved in some advanced societies, although the country was not immune to some of its “perverse effects”, such as the territory mess caused by the concentration of urbanization and industries on the coastal areas. The 70s, however, coincide both with the arrival of democracy and the emergence of first critics to that traditional concept of development. The alternative model seeks to incorporate cultural and environmental aspects, struggling to reconcile the needs of modernization and the preservation of cultural and/or natural singularities. Translating a new philosophy, there is now a concern of supporting the development on the endogenous potential of regions, with “heritage”, in its various forms, appearing as an essential element for the quality of life of populations. The new concept of development is concerned with the values associated to quality of life in general, and is assumed to be intrinsically connected with the “cultural goods”. Bearing in mind these new conceptions of development, this paper presents the analytical evaluation of effective politics and heritage events promoted and/or valued for two Portuguese city councils. The aim is, firstly, to elucidate the increasingly active role that cultural policies have in the modern political systems and, moreover, check the kinds of cultural and environmental assets most mobilized for such purposes. In terms of methodology, the research makes a comparative analysis of the “heritage projects” operated by two city councils, using data provided by them directly and/or made available on their digital sites.

1 INTRODUCTION

The dominant conceptions of development that marked the post-World War II period identified development with economic growth. Such industrialist model was adopted in Portugal from the 60s on, still under the dictatorship called Estado Novo. For Portugal, this economic-based development model never reached the spectacular increase in productivity and growth achieved in some advanced societies, although the country was not immune to some of its “perverse effects”, such as the territory mess caused by the concentration of urbanization and industries on the coastal areas. It was a model of industrial and technological development where the economic criteria and calculations overlapped with any other assumption and was a general effect of modernization triggered by the sphere of industrial activities.

The 70s, however, coincide both with the arrival of democracy and the emergence of first critics to that traditional concept of development. The alternative model seeks to incorporate cultural and environmental aspects, struggling to reconcile the needs of modernization and the preservation of cultural and/or natural singularities. Translating a new philosophy, there is now
a concern of supporting the development on the endogenous potential of regions, with “heritage”, in its various forms, appearing as an essential element for the quality of life of populations. The new concept of development is concerned with the values associated to quality of life in general, and is assumed to be intrinsically connected with the “cultural goods”.

It will be important to clarify that during the dictatorship of the Estado Novo, the preservation of heritage received a tremendous boost, both in terms of legislation and through the creation of the Directorate General for National Buildings and Monuments (Direcção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais), by which the State carried out a direct intervention in the recovery of monuments and historical buildings (Neto, 1996). But the promotion of cultural heritage under that political regime served mainly its nationalist and triumphalistic ideology of past glories, and these values superimposed all others. The institution of democracy in 1974 and the revolutionary period that followed forced the Portuguese society to both overcome the idea of heritage as being monuments of great architectural and historical value, and with the use of memorial heritage especially in terms of constructing a national identity. The new political and ideological context is favorable to the emergence of a broader concept of heritage that separates it from the previous restrictive sense connoted with traditional elites and tends to be closer to the anthropological notion of culture, covering too the manifestations of the so-called “popular culture”. At the same time, the same political and ideological context also favors the idea of the need to strengthen the political participation of people, with its cultural and/or natural resources becoming potential means of revitalizing their local identities.

Beyond the unique Portuguese context, the adoption of a more integrated view of development capable of valuing non-productive components and to highlight the interests and specific local conditions is reflected in the valuation of “culture” as one of the most important ingredients for the process of change and the achievement of the well-being of populations. The new development model is essentially cultural and is understood as a complex process whose purpose is the full satisfaction of the population’s social needs, from the most basic to the symbolic ones. The objectives, means and development strategies should emerge as being subordinated to the modes of feeling, thinking and acting of the communities. Their aspirations and projects are to be goals to be achieved, by placing special emphasis on the participation of agents and social actors as a means to capitalize on the strengthening of their local/regional identity. In a fairly comprehensive way, cultural practices and representations gain more visibility as key components of the processes by which communities seek to reconfigure their image and identity.

Playing on the same ideas, from the 80s on in Portugal, “culture” is present in many forms in the universe of activities of city councils and their arrangements. While strategies of empowerment of local populations, such activities produce two main types of effects. They contribute to an effective increase and diversification of existing cultural facilities, as well as to implementing mechanisms for the promotion and participation of different social agents. These effects tend to be non-negligible in terms of strengthening local cultural identities. At the same time, however, contemporary culture and its manifestations must necessarily be recognized as increasingly globalised in the sense that they are increasingly interconnected with the global system of trade and increasingly participate in global networks of intercommunication. Recognising this interplay between local ownership and global flows (Inda & Rosaldo, 2002), the cultural policies and programmes of city councils become an interesting means of analysing the influences of global and local flows in strengthening local identities. Or, to put it differently, the activities of city councils emerge as a good way to see how a new local identity is recreated by mixing local and global influences.

Bearing in mind the new concept of development mentioned and driving our attention to how the local government institutions manage their “cultural resources” with the aim of revitalising their local identities, this article presents the analytical evaluation of effective heritage policies and initiatives promoted and/or valued by two Portuguese city councils. The aim is, firstly, to elucidate the increasingly active role that cultural policies have in the modern political systems and, moreover, provide the kinds of cultural and environmental assets most mobilized for such purposes. In terms of methodology, the research makes a comparative analysis of the “heritage projects” operated by the city councils of Mértola and Óbidos, using data provided by them directly and/or made available on their digital sites. This analysis shows the initial phase of an individual research project that is intended to eventually cover several Portuguese city councils.
So far, only exploratory work has been conducted in some city councils, so the elements shown and discussed correspond to the first preliminary interpretations achieved.

MÉRTOLA AND ÓBIDOS: TWO PARADIGMATIC ILLUSTRATIONS

The "Project Mértola Town Museum" (Projecto Mértola Vila Museu), as a project of integrated development, and the peak of its achievement with its own self-designation as Mértola Town Museum, clearly show how and when the idea of heritage as a bottom-up development resource emerged in Portugal.

The municipality of Mértola lies within southern Portugal, in an area of about 1,300 sq.km and has a population of about 8,500 inhabitants. It is classified as a rural space. The town of Mértola, located on the bank of the Guadiana River, is the administrative centre of the municipality, has 1,500 inhabitants and is classified as moderately urban. The city council as a whole is a blatant case of depopulation and the town is typically a small one, poor in economic resources and employment. There was a complete lack of expectations and an impoverishment in the 70s, when democracy became the rule. In 1978, the then elected mayor of the city council became the motivated facilitator of a strategic project that had as its main development engine the promotion of heritage, capable of attracting outside visitors by promoting cultural tourism and contributing to the sustained support of the local population (Rafael, 2010). The enthusiasm of the political-ideological era has facilitated the emergence of a collective membership movement that believed that it was possible to invent new linkages within the community, creating a new sense of belonging, self-esteem and renewed identity. The main resource of the project was the heritage – archaeological, architectural, anthropological and landscape – and the correlative formation of a Municipal Museum with several in situ museum units, distributed mainly across the historical centre of the town and in some neighbouring towns. With the recovery of the Historical Centre and of several other buildings, the Museum now includes ten units that were constructed between 1980 and 2009: Sacred Art; Weaving Workshop-School; Roman House; Early Christian Basilica; Chapel and Necropolis of S. Sebastião; Castle; Islamic Quarter; Islamic Art; Blacksmith's Forge; Miner's House in S. Domingues Mine. (Arte Sacra; Escola-Oficina de Tecelagem; Casa Romana; Basílica Paleocristã; Ermida e Necrópole de S. Sebastião; Castelo; Alcâcova; Arte Islâmica; Forja de Ferreiro; Casa do Mineiro.)

The city council assumed the leading role in the project from the very beginning, but the technical and scientific support counted on the help of two private associations of public interest which until 1987 were funded exclusively by the city council: the Association of Heritage Protection of Mértola (ADPM) and the Archaeological Site of Mértola (CAM). The first one was formed in 1980, setting as its objective the preservation, enhancement and dissemination of the cultural and natural heritage of Mértola, and it included an archaeological section which concentrated all activities inherent to archaeological and historical research conducted in the municipality. The second one was formed in 1986 as a result of the empowerment of the previous archaeological section. Together, the two institutions are responsible for the survey work and collection of heritage around the municipality, among which the study of traditional architecture, the formation of collections of ethnographic and religious heritage and the numerous archaeological interventions carried out. In its headquarters, as well as in some of the museums, the associations formed and equipped their laboratories for conservation and restoration, also conducted several training activities related to techniques of cleaning, conservation and restoration of various materials. From the 80s on, they have been responsible for producing several travelling exhibitions in the municipality and in several cities in the country and abroad. The CAM has a significant editorial capacity, producing the catalogues for the museum units, the temporary and travelling exhibitions, several monographs and theses, as well as the publication of an annual magazine – Medieval Archaeology. In 2007, it formed the Centre for Islamic and Mediterranean Studies (Centro de Estudos Islâmicos e do Mediterrâneo) which, as a supporting structure for research, maintains collaborative relationships with several universities and, among other services, is provided with a specialized library. The CAM also has a publishing service for miscellaneous products, among which a collection of postcards on the heritage of Mértola and the museum collections. The ADPM, in addition to studies carried out in particular in the field of oral history, must also be mentioned as being the main promoter of the establishment in 1995
of the Natural Park of Vale do Guadiana (Parque Natural do Vale do Guadiana), the objectives of which are to preserve nature and maintain coordinated relationships with the territory.

Bearing in mind the philosophy of the project and its clear identification with the idea of local development as a process of improving the quality of community life in social, economic and cultural terms, there are several positive results that can be pinpointed. Initially, the project was directly linked to the university sphere of Lisbon through two of its teachers, who were previously responsible for the archaeological interventions, carried out during the summer holidays and weekends with the help of their students. These excavations, however, soon gathered a number of outsiders and local people and eventually led to a permanent research team based in Mértola. Following this, and the consolidation of the already mentioned associations, not only the young researchers settled in Mértola but also the local youth began to feel particularly attracted to the areas of History and Archaeology, linking them to their professional and personal future. The basic training courses offered by ADPM for the training of the team members cover areas such as archaeology, oral history, conservation and restoration, and photography. In 1989, the Professional School Bento de Jesus Caraça was formed, which, despite having its headquarters in the district capital, started its activity primarily with students from Mértola, where it had a delegation. Professional courses in archaeology, museology, restoration of heritage and environmental and rural tourism were taught there.

For people in other age groups, reference must be made to the first weaving courses taught in 1984/5 and the establishment of the Workshop-School which, in 1986, became the Weaving Workshop-Cooperative of Mértola (Cooperativa Oficina de Tecelagem de Mértola). This body ensures that the craftsmen involved with the finished traditional weaving product work in an informal network. At the same time, it provides employment to two female weavers and has an exhibition and sales facility for the various types of crafts and other local products like honey. The opportunities offered by the streams of visitors were also taken advantage of by creating an offer in terms of accommodation and catering units in the municipality and town. Moreover, the recovery of the Historical Centre was not only architectural but also social, so generally speaking the housing conditions were improved. In some specific cases, the owners of some buildings of heritage interest benefitted from the project by leasing them to the museum, for instance the case of the Blacksmith's Forge, which was recovered and leased by the former blacksmith in 1980. In a comprehensive way, particularly for the population of the town, one can speak of a general increase of cultural facilities that include the museum and its units, diverse exhibition spaces, libraries and, for example, the disused church that houses the Sacred Art Museum, which is used on a regular basis for classical music concerts.

Despite the impacts described above, which must necessarily be regarded as positive, now the project has come to a standstill, leaving the population in dismay and disbelief. In the addition to the precarious economic situation in the country that marks the moment, the resolution of the issue forces us to go back as far as 2001, when local political powers changed hands, disturbing the existing close relationship between the local government and the two local associations. It is possible that their logistic structure may have become too heavy, and somehow detached from the local issues that had initially motivated them. These associations are recognized in the country for their scientific merit, therefore their research projects are funded by state bodies; however, the downside of this is an excessive specialization in terms of research interests. This is what apparently comes out of the fact that in 2002, when the new local government wished to be part of the Portuguese Museum Network (Rede Portuguesa de Museus, RPM), the Report produced for the membership application identified a series of relevant problems that needed to be solved: the reserves did not have the right conditions, the systematic and computerized inventories were nonexistent, the conservation laboratories showed substantial weaknesses, there were no educational services operating in a structured and regular manner. Due to the resolution of these problems, only in 2006 were they able to access the network.

Whatever the reasons, in recent times there seemed to prevail a certain attitude of dislike and dissatisfaction among the population concerning the topics of archaeology, heritage and museums. It is not odd that the town and its tourism potential are not able to maintain regular flows of visitors. This issue is central because the existence of flow peaks followed by massive turnout breaks make it more difficult to manage the offer, increasing financial burdens and making them unbearable even for the museum. From the city council's point of view, the new strategy to overcome the problem was to focus on integrating Mértola in projects, events and initiatives that
go beyond the strictly local context, leading to the internationalization of the local development project.

While electing “culture” as a development factor, in recent years the city council of Mértola has renovated its integrated development Project. This renewal involved replacing the local population with various international networks as the main recipients of the cultural and heritage specificities of the region. All studies and heritage awareness raising campaigns developed over the years have made the local people more aware of its history and its particular cultural identity. But those actions trigger some annoyance when they fail to translate into an effective promotion of heritage and tourism potential of the region abroad. Quite noticeably, the new strategy of the city council is directed towards the integration of Mértola in tourist circuits, according to a logic of festivals (Fabiani, 2002) which invests in both regular and periodical events and in the care taken in the dissemination of these events near the local and national mass media.

The efforts implemented to boost the image of Mértola as a region of cultural tourism, and its recognition at national and international level are very diverse. We can pinpoint the strict decisions to relocate the Weaving Cooperative in 2007, moving it to a building more close to and near the Tourism Bureau in the town, so as to maximise the increase of its visitors; or the specific decisions to appoint a municipal official in the Church/Old Mosque – where the parish has no means to do so – to allow this site to be visited during the same visiting hours as the museum units. But there are also remarkable programmes as comprehensive as the set of urban interventions carried out over several years in the Historical Centre and in the surrounding areas of the river, and the completion of the circuit visits of the Islamic quarter (Circuito de Visitas da Alcâçova), opened in 2009, which led to the recovery of large mosaic panels and the construction of a bridge over which visitors can see the group of 30 houses of the old Islamic quarter. However, the flagship initiative is the Islamic Festival taking place in alternate years since 2001, usually in May and lasting four days. The event is organised by the city council but it counts on the support of representatives from countries like Morocco, Tunis and Egypt, of bodies like the Islamic Community of Spain and various associations of producers and traders, local and foreign.

The Islamic Festival is a significant and very effective means of promoting Mértola abroad, enhancing its integration in cultural tourism circuits. The atmosphere of colours and sounds surrounding the event takes the visitor back to a traditional Islamic market (souk) where, therefore, one can buy many products, but where many cultural activities are also promoted: exhibitions, theatre, dancing, concerts, gastronomy shows, conferences and seminars, book launches, etc., etc. As to the products marketed – local or foreign – what unites them is the fact that their production is made according to “traditional” and/or “ecological” ways. In relation to artisans/local producers, one can see a renewal of their offer, which is no longer confined to the usual shepherd’s handicraft and weaving products – of which the market is already saturated – and is very diversified, including cheese, honey, bread, sausages, and local aromatic herbs. But the Islamic Festival is also emblematic for the strategic role it played in the integration of the Mértola City Council into various international networks. It is a source of renewal, on the one hand, because it is through it that the “Mediterranean” identity of the municipality is reinvented, and, on that basis, Mértola is participating in international projects such as the “Discover Islamic Art”. This project brings together 14 Mediterranean countries, united to facilitate online access to exhibitions, museums and monuments scattered throughout the Mediterranean world and landmarks of Islamic culture. The aim is to spread this cultural reality, believing that in this way they can actually encourage visits to such cultural structures.

Moreover, the renewal potential of the Festival is also reflected in the new appeal of the municipality to establish partnerships with various supranational entities. The integration of Mértola in the cultural tourism circuits lies in its internationalisation, through both the establishment of a schedule of contacts and collaborations with communities already located across the border (in Spain), but with which it emphasizes present and past cultural links, and through the co-participation in many projects, particularly those promoted by the European Union and oriented to the cultural and environmental protection and the promotion of intercultural dialogue. As an example of this last possibility, one should bear in mind that Mértola is part of the AVEC Network – Alliance des Villes Européens de Culture (Alliance of European Cultural Cities) – a body funded by the EU that brings together several cities and towns from ten European coun-
tries, and whose activities aim to ensure the preservation of heritage and environmental quality, and ensuring it even in relation to its adherent members.

Regarding the second municipality in question here, Óbidos, the situation is different in many respects. However, there is a great similarity in terms of using the same logic of hosting a festival, by the local government authorities, focusing on internationalization as a means of tourism promotion.

The municipality of Óbidos is located in the central coastal area of the country, very close to the sea; it has an area of 142 sq.km and a population of just over 10 thousand inhabitants. The town of Óbidos is the administrative centre of the municipality, with a population of 3,100 inhabitants, 250 of which live within the fortified medieval citadel, which along with the castle are the hallmarks of the town and the rationale of its name. The town of Óbidos, namely its historical centre located within the walled city, has a number of properties and cultural infrastructures of some importance. The castle is classified as a National Monument since 1911, the citadel has the same classification since 1951 and holds within its walls seven other classified monuments, as well as several other elements of varied heritage interest: preserved parts of an aqueduct within and outside the walls, a pillory, several churches, noble and bourgeois houses, and also vernacular popular architecture. The set of existing Arab, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque references reflect the military, religious and administrative importance that the municipality had over the years. The consistency of the historical centre as a spatial and social unit, and the current concern with its current value is the reason why Óbidos has requested to be classified as World Heritage, under preparation by the municipality. This application will emphasise the fact that it is a fortified historical centre with a population that actually lives within it.

Moreover, the town of Óbidos has a Municipal Museum opened in 1970 with the technical and financial support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. This cultural facility has been extensively refurbished – and relocated to another building, but still inside the fortress – in 2005, currently hosting a permanent exhibition of a collection of paintings from the 16th and 17th centuries. Its collection contains numerous examples of the so-called School of Painting of Óbidos – an historical centre with great relevance in the 17th century – among which the works by Josefa de Ayala (better known as Josefa de Óbidos). This Municipal Museum is part of the Museum Route of the West (of Portugal) and is the headquarters of the Network of Museums and Galleries of Óbidos (Rede de Museus e Galerias de Óbidos, RMGO). This network includes the Municipal Museum, the Parish Museum of Saint John the Baptist, the Abílio de Mattos e Silva Museum, the Casa do Arco, the NovaOgiva Gallery, the Pelourinho Gallery and the Interior Design Centre, all of which are exhibition facilities owned or supported by the municipality, which also owns the old church of St. James, nowadays a non-scarred place used only for cultural initiatives. While the museums have programmes and schedules of activities more defined in terms of their collections and themes, which are still diverse, the Galleries – opened or reopened especially since the beginning of this century – are spaces mostly associated to exhibitions and other expressions of contemporary art, hosting exhibitions on a regular basis and renewing their programmes periodically. In terms of cultural facilities owned by the municipality, one can also refer to the Library and the Archive, as well as the Casa da Música which encompasses the training component and whose auditorium is a comfortable and well equipped at a technical level show-hall.

The Heritage Protection Association of the Municipality of Óbidos (Associação de Defesa do Património do Concelho de Óbidos, ADPCO) was founded in 1985 through a process spurred on by the city council itself, who initiated the contact with some local personalities with a view to increasing their awareness in relation to heritage issues. Since its establishment, the Association has benefited from a partnership with the city council in terms of what the council will ensure, among other things, their physical facilities located within the citadel. Setting as their main objectives the safeguarding and promotion of cultural and natural heritage, and the creation of resources for heritage education, the Association has a programme of activities that includes conferences and lectures on its areas of interest and the promotion of thematic visits in the municipality entitled “Discovering Óbidos”. The Association also has an editorial service of pocket-size publications used to ensure the publication of various materials.

The elements described above provide an image - impressive but still consistent – of some of the most relevant historical and heritage traces in Óbidos, and of the activities of the city council in support of its protection, enhancement and promotion. The context allows one to properly use
the label “proactive” when characterising the attitude of the municipality regarding its heritage and cultural initiatives. However, the main focus of the municipality for the promotion of tourism in Óbidos is a series of events, organised according to a logistics of festival, i.e., on an annual basis and lasting for a few days or weeks, held in public spaces, many of them outdoors, and covering a diverse programme of activities and forms of animation. To this end, the citadel and many of its spaces, squares and streets are organised as stages and live scenarios, where the local and foreign crowds can gather. The systematic use of this scenic urban space has an impact on the process of identity construction of the local populations. And all the more so of the regional, national and international projection of Óbidos and its citadel, materialised through its festivals. At the same time, these festivals are occasions of actual reuse of the local heritage, both of built heritage and of a series of cultural dimensions and expressions that are reactivated, reformulated and reinvented according to the thematic script assigned to each festival. As within each animation programme the actual logic of a festival involves the careful use of global networks of intercommunication and interpenetration of local and global cultural manifestations, the appropriations and identity reconfigurations carried out are the consequence of and result in a mixture of local and global influences.

The clarification of this process can be done through the International Chocolate Festival of Óbidos, its oldest and most well known festival. The first edition of the event was held in 2003, followed by annual events in all festivals in Óbidos. Typically, it takes place on the months of March and April, lasting, in 2011, three weeks and involving activities and animation, from Thursday to Sunday. The specific grounds of the Festival are the Castle Walls (Cerca do Castelo), a large yard near the castle, where several tents and decorations are set up according to the event, with an outdoor auditorium. Here, several traditional games take place, and other forms of animation such as the performances of human statues take place throughout the area of the citadel. Within the Castle Walls, an large tent houses the display of large chocolate sculptures, produced by national confectionary professionals and chocolatiers, subordinated to the theme set for each year. In 2011: the Historical Heritage of Óbidos; in 2010: the Wonders of the World. In another large tent, a kitchen is set up for the final stages of four contests, where competitors have to go through a previous selection process, and the finalists will produce their recipes in front of a live audience during the Festival, keeping them on display during the same period. The International Chocolate Recipe Contest is intended for non-professionals from any country. The Portuguese Chocolatier of the Year Contest, as the name indicates, is aimed at professionals of confectionary and the restaurant business working in Portugal, split into different categories in accordance with regulations. The Chocolate Window-dressing Contest is open to national confectionaries who must decorate a shop-window with chocolate products. Finally, the Chocolate Goldsmith Contest – a novelty introduced in 2010 – assesses the painstaking work needed to make a necklace, bracelet and ring in chocolate and other complementary materials like sugar. In terms of culinary activities for the public in general, without having to register or be selected in advance, and which is only limited to the influx of interested participants, Chocolatier Courses are offered lasting one hour and with different levels of difficulty. For children, the Chocolate House located in another area of the Castle Walls offers various training activities enabling tasks such as decorating cookies.

Access to the premises of the Castle Walls, Courses and the Chocolate House implies the payment of admission tickets, the amounts of which revert to the Óbidos Patrimonium, the municipal company that manages this and other events. Exempt from this payment are all holders of the “Green Path to Culture” ticket (“Via Verde para a Cultura”), a ticket that gives access to all the cultural programmes of the municipality, as well as all residents in the municipality, except on the week-ends. In the meantime, throughout the citadel there are more and less formal spaces where a great number of visitors will find the means to satisfy their craving for chocolate, and other products, of course, for a fee.

The Festival also includes a line-up consisting of some shows and animation activities which do not entail any further payment, and where, on the contrary, visitors can receive some merchandising – made of chocolate or derivatives thereof – supplied by the brands that sponsor the event. In 2010 and 2011, the main sponsor of the Chocolate Festival of Óbidos was Valrhôna, an important French company established in 1922 and currently one of the world’s leading producers of chocolate. In 2010, Slovakia was the guest of the event due to its renowned tradition in the production of handmade chocolate, represented by its industry. That same year, it was
also possible to experience services such as massages with chocolate, promoted by a clinic based in a neighbouring municipality. Also new for 2010, and repeated in 2011 due to its success, was the initiative held in the Gourmet Area, which included a display of creative gastronomy exercises. A total of twelve chefs, one per day, showed the public how to prepare meat and fish dishes with chocolate. In this case, the magazine Revista Telecultura sponsored the event. Although without a similar impact, the Hotel School of Óbidos and its students are also responsible for showing off their knowledge and for street animation, distributing the product of their work in the streets. Another appealing initiative is the Chocolate Fashion Show held every year on the last Saturday evening of the Festival. In 2011, the challenge was placed in the hands of the Story Tailors Atelier, fashion designers with an open show in downtown Lisbon. In this case, the show does not take place within the Castle Walls but rather in a central Square of the citadel. That same night, contest prizes are also handed out and around midnight, in the auditorium of the Castle Walls the last Choco Night Fest of the year takes place, an outdoor party with music entertainment, which lasts until very late.

The International Chocolate Festival of Óbidos impacts on the promotion of tourism of the municipality, reflected in the television coverage given to it. It is a fairly blatant way of creating tourism supply and demand mostly by animating a region with special scenic possibilities. In the case of Óbidos and of this Festival in particular, it is quite clear that a carefully prepared animation and the empathy that it is able to generate for the place can have effects as significant as those resulting from strategies that are based on historical and cultural heritage. Moreover, while it is observable that the same scheme is repeated at other times of the year in other structurally identical festivals, one can see that the "festival formula", at other times, is enriched through the use of greater heritage components with an identity meaning and/or with an additional cultural programme. Illustrating the first case, we have the Óbidos Christmas Town (Óbidos Vila Natal), held in December, with a programme readjusted to the new theme. The structure of the Óbidos Medieval Market (Óbidos Mercado Medieval), lasting three weeks in July, is more complex and is based on the full use of the scenic space of the citadel and recreates various medieval settings and situations. Among the "actors" of the stage production one can find local and foreign artisans and producers, who lease their point of sale and have to decorate it according to strict rules, for example, no plastic items are allowed nor products such as peanuts, which were not known at the time in Europe. All this is specified in special regulations which also prohibit the use of personal objects such as mobile phones, wrist watches and sunglass and requires non-modern costumes. Visitors can become the other "actors", they can rent "medieval outfits" and are exempt from paying the admission ticket if they "dress up" accordingly. As cars are not allowed within the walls, one can say that at least the entire population of the citadel participates in the event. Another element that makes this Festival more complex is the addition of a programme that includes theatre and dancing performances and the presence of local, national and foreign musical groups.

Increasingly cut off from the Chocolate Festival "formula" and just continuing to replicate this model by maintaining a structured scenic spatial experience, are the June Arts Festival and the Opera Festival. In the first case, the event promotes contemporary art, with an exhibition, the dissemination of its Catalogue and sales of art works done by more or less known artists, which in 2011 included areas dedicated to sculpture, design performance, sound design performance, design, photography, wall painting and architecture, in a total of 18 works. The first edition took place in 2008, and for each year there is a specific theme (2010: Between Walls; 2011: Frontier) and a jury selects the works on show. These works can be of less conventional sizes and features, and will be exhibited in the galleries within the citadel and in its various Squares, Streets and Gardens. The Opera Festival is held in August, with a programme generally consisting of two Operas and some Lyric Singing Shows and Orchestra Concerts performed by various companies. The whole show associated with opera in Óbidos is also enhanced by its representation in open-air auditoriums, in the Castle Walls or on the banks of the Óbidos Lagoon, located a few kilometres from the citadel.

Given the scenario described above, and even without taking into consideration other initiatives such as the Harpsichord Season or the Celebration of the Holy Week (which are also part of the cultural programme of Óbidos), there should be no doubt about the potential of the "festival formula" as an effective means of promoting a lasting animation, renewed periodically.
2 CONCLUSION

The interpretations made throughout this paper are based on a rather fledgling exploratory work which must necessarily be developed. Despite this limitation, a first clear trend is emerging: a new paradigm of local development is under construction, in which the use of time and spaces that have some meaning to the community is a decisive factor in strengthening identity. At the same time, however, in the post-modern context in which we live, this enhanced identity does not imply nor involve closing the space in an archaic vision of regionalism. On the contrary, one of the recurring strategies seems to be the organisation of festivals in which identity is reinvented not only by updating the local symbolic capital, but also thanks to the promotion of the image of the community or region abroad, and as a result of this, the local place participates in the globalised cultural and communication flows. It is between the local and the global, and between the traditional and the cosmopolitan that new affiliations are forged. Inside the “festival formula”, the recurrent use of public spaces, including outdoors, as a place for continued implementation of social contacts among people must necessarily merit our attention.

ENDNOTES

1 - According to the data provided by the Department of Regional Planning and Urbanism of the city council of Mértola, dated 1978 to 2009, 23 restaurants were opened in the municipality, 13 of which in the town. According to the same source, for the same period, 25 accommodation units were opened in the municipality, of various typologies, most with a limited number of rooms (Rafael, 2010)

2 - An equivalent body to the English Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA).

3 - The logic of festival identified is reflected in the organisation of other festivals held throughout the year: Meritolog, held in Spring and dedicated to the dissemination of plastic arts, as well as of local artists; the River Fish Festival, in March and dedicated to the dissemination of the local fish species and the preparation of gastronomic dishes; the Hunting Festival in October, involving hunting competitions. In any of these cases, complementary animation activities are always provided.

4 - It is important to acknowledge that for this municipality, and for that of Mértola, at the moment I still lack systematic and long-term contacts with the local populations, which will allow me to truly evaluate the impact that the festivals have on these populations. This will be the coming task stemming from the research.

5 - The adoption of this new type of programme concentrated in four days was introduced in 2011 aiming to capitalize on the investment, as the flow of visitors tends to decrease during the remaining days of the week.

6 - Lack of space does not allow me to provide more details here.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


