Contending **heritage**: **paleolithic engravings**, tourism, and the ghosts of the Côa Valley dam (Portugal)

Património de discórdia: **gravuras paleolíticas**, **turismo** e os fantasmas da barragem do Côa (Portugal)

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Abstract | Heritage processes and the consequent tourism development of territories are often subject to discordant ambitions and interests, which result in intense social disputes. In this article we propose to analyze these contentions in the Côa Valley, Portugal. The valorization of the Paleolithic heritage (and tourism) in detriment to the construction of the hydroelectric dam has been the main subject of local disputes in recent decades over which is the best development path to follow. We begin from a stated emic perspective, trying to understand the tense diversity of opinions, experiences, and narratives of the natives in relation to the preservation and tourist exploitation of archaeological heritage. The empirical data that informs the analysis derives predominantly from ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Côa Valley and 15 semi-directed interviews with local inhabitants.

Keywords | Paleolithic heritage, tourism development, dam, Côa Valley

Resumo | Os processos de patrimonialização e consequente desenvolvimento turístico dos territórios estão sujeitos, amiúde, a aspirações e interesses incompatíveis, de que resultam intensas disputas sociais. Neste artigo propomo-nos a analisar estas dissensões no Vale do Côa, tendo em conta que, neste contexto, a valorização do património paleolítico (e do turismo) em detrimento da construção da barragem hidroelétrica tem sido nas últimas décadas o grande dínamo das disputas locais quanto aos caminhos de desenvolvimento a seguir. Para tal, partimos de uma perspetiva declaradamente *emic*, procurando compreender a diversidade tensional de entendimentos, experiências e narrativas dos autóctones no âmbito da preservação e da exploração turística do património arqueológico. Os elementos empíricos que sustentam a análise resultam, predominantemente, do trabalho de campo etnográfico realizado no Vale do Côa e de 15 entrevistas semidirigidas a habitantes locais.

Palavras-chave | Património paleolítico, desenvolvimento turístico, barragem, Vale do Côa

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1. Introduction

Heritage processes and the (possible) appropriation of heritage as a tourism product are almost always subject to multiple and dissonant expectations, interests, and projects, which can result in profound social fractures (Sánchez-Carretero, 2012). In this context, distinct protagonists stand out (technicians, policymakers, NGOs, academics, and some economic agents) who, in many cases, are in a position of relative socio-territorial exteriority concerning the context that is the object of their dispute. Studies of tensions and disputes around heritage tend to focus on these social actors with greater visibility, especially in the media, and due attention is not always given to ordinary people who live close by or in the very locations that are the target of heritage and tourism processes.

The analysis developed here considers the case of palaeolithic engravings in the Côa Valley (Portugal) from a declaredly emic perspective, seeking to understand the participation, opinions and experiences of the locals in archaeological site heritage preservation and exploitation processes. At the same time, we seek to understand the disputes and contentions present in these processes and the rationales that many people still use today to express their disappointment at the preservation of archaeological heritage at the expense of the dam construction originally planned for the Côa Valley.

The data that informs the analysis derives predominantly from the ethnographic fieldwork and 15 semi-directed interviews that we conducted with Foz Côa municipality inhabitants, with different socioeconomic profiles and linked to different spheres of activity, namely: commerce, local politics, heritage, education, agriculture, and small wine production. It was possible to ascertain the diversity of narratives associated with the heritage process of the palaeolithic engravings and to understand the ideas and disputes that are produced there in relation to past collective options and

other paths that have been followed since then.

2. Heritage, tourism, and dams: a difficult coexistence of multiple pursuits

Cultural heritage is generally understood as a significant element in the transmission of values and norms from one generation to another or even from one group to another. In the same context, it functions as a depositary of historical memories and identities in which the subjectivity and the actions of individuals are inscribed (Settis, 2012). Patrimonialization is a process that ascribes the status of heritage (material or immaterial) to a given cultural asset, and by doing so, it conditions it since, in order not to lose that status, it must be preserved or maintained according to the criteria defined by public institutions. In general, patrimonialization is socially desirable when the heritage is scarce, obsolete, or the values associated with this practice must be representative of characteristics relevant to the idea(s) of national culture and, therefore, relevant to its history and identity. This process is also followed by five moments: interest recognized by the object; production of knowledge about it; declaration of heritage status; creation of measures to publicly access it; and ensuring the transmission of knowledge via formal infrastructures (Davallon, 2018). In other words, patrimonialization requires the choice of an object or cultural manifestation that is defined as interesting or politically relevant, which, in turn, is the target of scientific investigation that proves its authenticity. Once the political status or certification is formally given, official ways of access to this heritage are defined and created, whether physical, pedagogical-educational, or with financial support.

Heritage elements and tourism development can cooperate in preserving spaces and knowledge (democratizing their consumption) and in conser-

ving cultural heritage through elitist or minority practices (Santana-Talavera, 2003). Tourism can also use this type of heritage as an identity showcase to attract consumers, especially those looking for cultural tourism (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Tourist activity can commercialize places, ideas, spaces, and subjects, bringing social dividends by contributing to education, social cohesion (involving communities) and identity (differentiating values and practices). It can also generate negative effects from the start through the commoditization and consumerist appropriation of local culture (Santana-Talavera, 2010). At the same time, it gives rise to a formal patrimonial discourse (Smith, 2006), promoting fabricated nationalism, sanctioning the displays and arguments of people about each other. Such fabrication is ensured by experts, who strengthen their fields internally and establish a legitimate relationship that is reciprocal, and that is reproduced globally, following the example and contribution of international institutions such as UNESCO, that end up suppressing the development of alternative discourses (Hollinshead, 1997).

Patrimonialization is a sacralizing process, technically and scientifically sustained, which requires the involvement of a determined, or self-determined community, and creates the need to reintegrate the sacralized object into public space (Davallon, 2018). For example, UNESCO's "Operational Guidelines" set out rules and principles on how states should act so that their assets can be certified by the organization, as well as defining how they can lose that same certification. Such rules motivate states to protect their assets since the financial support of this organization depends on the fulfillment of those very same rules.

On the other hand, it can also make it difficult or even impossible to continue the dynamics of adaptation and transformation that characterize a given culture. Cultural fluidity may be replaced by norms and idealizations that emerge to boycott innovation and the interpretation of objects, forcing communities to take a passive stance in their

creation and symbolism. Heritage management of a destination depends on clear communication and the involvement of the local population, including a continuous socialization between locals and the planned heritage cultural contents (Carbone et al., 2014). This requires a political strategy that allows for the implementation of such principles. In this case, the institution *Turismo Porto e Norte de Portugal* is responsible for implementing the national strategy defined by *Turismo de Portugal*. It has a key role in developing a plan to achieve the goals of the national Tourism Strategy 2027 document. One of which is adding value to the territory, specifically by preserving and using historic-cultural heritage (Turismo de Portugal, 2017). Amongst the possible strategies are the creation of parks, museums and events.

The creation of an archaeological park creates tensions between the local community and the new institution, given the imposition of a single idea of what is archaeological which ignores communities and alternative discourses (Franco, 2019). This vision is characterized by a representation of heritage based on archaeology and in alignment with a political narrative. In his case study, Franco (2019) gives the example of the archaeological park of San Andrés de Pisimbalá where the state used the economic precariousness of local communities and their lack of political capital to take advantage of them. Heritage and tourism are geopolitical issues as they are dependent on disputes over space appropriation. These disputes become international with awards such as those of UNESCO's world heritage, and there are 3 main axes of dispute: protection or conservation, local development, and economic dividends (usually related to tourism).

In their article, Bondaz and colleagues (2012) compiled several contributions that discussed the uses of heritage and resistance. They highlight, on the one hand, the increasingly determining and influential role of organizations such as UNESCO, and on the other, the recognition of heritage as a new social space for negotiation, conflict, ac-

commodation and collective expression in a global context of media coverage. In the specific case of UNESCO Global Geoparks, Girault (2019) recalls that, despite the intentions to promote transparent management and implementation of these parks from the bottom-up, using tools and governance policies, several case studies went in the opposite direction. Girault highlights the weak involvement of local communities in the creation and management of geoparks that are recognized as world heritage, which are invariably led, proposed, and implemented by external experts. This lack of local involvement tends to be related to the fact that there is a dominant patrimonial discourse that imposes a unique idea of heritage, contributing to the exclusion of alternative interpretations from other groups in the processes of discussion and implementation of heritage (Smith, 2006).

The social tension surrounding heritage and its tourism potential gains even greater dimension and intensity whenever the development of large infrastructures are considered, which collide directly or indirectly with the cultural elements existing in the territory, jeopardizing its heritage process and respective mobilization of resources to attract tourists. We cannot forget that the construction of large structural enterprises always implies a set of negative impacts, such as the deterritorialization processes of native communities (Sieben, 2012). Sometimes these are promoted politically by strong economic interests and do not always consider the development needs of beneficiary populations – such as in the case of the Alqueva dam (Veiga, Duarte & Vasconcelos, 2008). Additionally, there is a set of symbolic or immaterial impacts (Sigaud, 1988), since the construction of a dam can completely change traditional forms of relationship between communities and nature, as well as jeopardize their cultural practices and their emotional and affective relationship with the territory.

These construction projects tend to be imposed by power centres which neglect communities and territories, precipitating the emergence of resistance movements for the preservation of nature and heritage, of community rights, and cultural diversity. According to Leff (2004), this translates into disputes over access and control of resources attempts at reappropriation permitted by democratization processes and the ideological principles that support them. For instance, the construction of dams always implies some kind of resistance, whether motivated by ecological, socioeconomic, technical, or symbolic reasons (Wateau, 2003). Wateau (2010) reminds us of the case of the Alqueva dam, considered a success despite local resistance. It did not have the same media coverage as other cases, such as the Côa dam, partly due to the way it involved different stakeholders and most importantly, the local community.

This struggle does not appear to focus on the use or recognition of the importance of technology and the use of energy, but rather, on the decision, planning, and vertical execution processes that the state development projects tend to adopt. The struggle repeatedly opposes associations or civil movements to governments, their institutions, and private companies that exploit dams under construction, and force communities and their territories to adapt to the inevitable transformation that arises (Santos, 2000). These resistance movements are characterized by a struggle established by unequal power relations that sometimes form a discourse and practice incited by a new collective identity of resistance (Castells, 2000). In this struggle between rights over heritage, be it material or immaterial, there is a set of underpinned assumptions. Right from the start, the legitimacy of the public utility argument is attributed to heritage or a cultural manifestation that overrides the interests and needs of private individuals, or those of other equally relevant public needs. The opposite may also occur. For example, to what extent does the public utility attributed to a great public work or private intervention prevail over the affected environmental heritage or ecosystem? The concept

of public utility is vague (Murphy & Fox-Rogers, 2015), thus it is vulnerable to manipulation, and media, political and economic opportunism.

3. A tense context: from a dam to an archaeological park

The municipality of Foz Côa is in the north of Portugal (NUTS II) and is an integral part of the Douro sub-region (NUTS III), in the district of Guarda. Its administrative centre is the city of Vila Nova de Foz Côa. The population of the municipality is around 6.500 inhabitants (INE, 2019) and the local economy is based on agricultural production (e.g., vineyard, olives, figs, almonds, oranges), and shale extraction also constitutes a relevant industry. In the service sector, tourism activity is still discreet, with a total of 4.473 guests and 5.985 overnight stays in its modest 4 establishments in 2018 (INE, 2019) (1 hotel, 1 local accommodation and 2 residential tourism units). Even so, its visitor rate per museum (31,385) is only surpassed in the Douro by Peso da Régua (53.756) and Lamego (38.467), exceeding the regional capital Vila Real (23.688) (INE, 2019). Despite the small number of tourist arrivals, this illustrates the significance of the Côa museum.

In 1944 the Estado Novo initiated a national policy with the Law n. 2: 002 (`https://files.dre.pt/1s/1944/12/28500/13111314.pdf`). It affected the municipality and almost the entire region of northeastern Portugal, which underwent a transformation, based on a productive revolution that involved the production of hydroelectric energy, reducing international dependency. For this purpose, several companies were created, including Hidro-Elétrica do Douro (HED) responsible for Douro's river water project and its tributaries – Côa and Sabor – considered the largest potential hydrographic reserve in the country (Figueira, 2012). The HED was founded on July 7,

1953, and in 1959 it was announced on television as an "event of extraordinary importance for the country's economic life". The announcement was referring to the construction of a set of 20 dams along the international Douro.

The first of these dams was inaugurated in the same year in Picote and the economic importance for these regions was significant. As a reference, "Electricity, the new wealth of the Douro" (1959) tells us how, in the case of Miranda do Douro, the dam construction saw the arrival of 6.000 workers, to which we can add families and necessary service providers (health, education, trade, etc.). In the case of the Côa dam, the expectation was even higher, as the structure was significantly larger and more imposing, which would represent the need for more workers. Although we have not found references that show consensus on the dam construction, the absence of opposing evidence seems to indicate at least some indifference towards its construction, at least political or in the media.

On November 22, 1992, the archaeologist who followed the dam construction, Nélson Rebanda, discovered in Canada do Inferno just 400 meters from the building site, the first rock art engraving when scouting the dam's reservoir area for the Architectural and Archaeological Heritage Institute (HIAA). It is important to highlight that, before this "official discovery", the local population had always lived with rock art engravings. However, they lacked the technical and scientific knowledge to understand its extraordinary antiquity and its priceless heritage value: "We went there to wash our clothes in the summer and we already saw the rock art, but nobody cared about it. Even the millers (there was a mill there) did not care about it" (Women, retired, 76 years old). Some of the engravings at Canada do Inferno had already been mentioned by Francisco Sande Lemos in a study for the University of Minho in 1918 (Ferreira, 2013), but this new and exhaustive survey would reveal the size and importance of the existing cultural heritage at play.

The dam's environmental impact assessment report from 1992 already recognized the dam's negative impacts on historical and archaeological heritage and, as such, suggested corrective measures, specifically the transfer of engraved stones, something that would prove to be impractical. In February 1993, the then Prime Minister Cavaco Silva, in an RTP interview, stated that the cost of the largest national dam would be 45 billion escudos, something like 431 million euros today and that the construction was moving forward. However, on November 8 of that year, the archaeologist Emília Simões de Abreu called the media, alerting both the scientific and political communities of the existence of the engravings, thus precipitating a public and political dispute creating social tension and forcing a response from both the government and EDP.

Still, in December 1994, EDP and the government denied having been aware of the existence of the engravings and established an agreement to safeguard them that would be executed while the dam continue under construction. At this time, national projects based on the construction of infrastructure were central to the policies of Cavaco Silva's government since they supported the premise of job creation and modernization of the country. In opposition, António Guterres' PS tried to differentiate itself by introducing a discourse of valuing culture that was defended above national economic interests. This constituted a rupture that would set the stage for the 1995 legislative elections. However, in that same month, the dam construction and the next construction adjudications were suspended by the government, while an international commission recommended by UNESCO accompanied the research on the Côa valley's engravings.

The commission reinforced the importance of the findings and recommended their urgent protection and study, given their scientific relevance. The fear that the engravings would be submerged and lost was reinforced by the experience of what had happened with others found in the Pocinho dam construction in 1983. Some local inhabitants even informed these scientists where they could find some of these rock art drawings that have long been known by some locals. At the same time, some archaeologists and some locals organized to protect the engravings and prevent the dam construction, associating themselves with students from the municipality in public rallies and protests.

The protection of the rock art for the locals was by no means consensual, and there were moments of tension reported in the media. This, as mentioned by Wateau (2010), is expected in processes of this nature. Part of this tension was because several locals and their businesses were already investing to take advantage of the thousands of workers that would arrive, namely local businessmen. Likewise, some local owners hoped to receive government compensation for the state's land appropriation: a capitalization that promised to be a crucial economic addition in an economically limited territory, mainly dependent on agricultural production:

> At the time of expropriation, some neighbours received [compensations], and others did not, and this created animosity between neighbours. One of these cases was a man who had many rocks and received nothing from EDP because the dam was not built. This man would not even look at the archaeologists (Female, 35 years old).

> Here [Muxagata], there was a father who beat his daughter because she went to the students' demonstration "in favour of the engravings". At noon, he saw his daughter on television demonstrating. When she got home, her father turned off the light, and told her "go to the engravings they will illuminate you" and gave her a "beating". And for more than two months he did not let her leave the house.

He wanted the dam. There were a lot of lands down there, in Ribeira dos Piscos, and everything was more or less sold. (...) In Muxagata, no one was compensated. They were still under negotiation when the dam was suspended (Male, retired, 75 years old).

In favour of protecting the engravings were also the local "cultural elite" – for whom the economic benefits of building the dam seemed to be indifferent – as well as a small external scientific community involved in the process, and finally, the local student community encouraged by their teachers: a situation that in many cases divided families.

At the time, when the construction started (there were still about 2 years to go), about 1.000 people came to work here. It was round the clock. EDP was accelerating. And then there was even some investment in houses for renting and restaurants, and suddenly it all stopped. And many of these people had to migrate. Archaeologists were threatened. At the time, only high school students were in favour of [this at the local level]. "The engraving can't swim", at the time, they were even parents against children. And many promises were made around the supposed tourism development. The village became a town in 1997, with the promise that everything here would develop quickly (Woman, 35 years old).

Bellmunt (2014) recalls that, in 1995, there were several marches of students and some locals in favour of protecting the rock art; moments immortalized by the media and showcased internationally as local resistance to the dam construction under the slogan "as gravuras não sabem nadar" [the engravings can't swim]. In that same year, these protesters were backed by the public support and view of the President of the Republic Mário

Soares.

Cavaco Silva's government, already ending its term, was confronted with this social movement which was inherited by the next government of António Guterres, who took office in October 1995. In the following year, the new government announced the suspension of the dam construction justified by the recognized importance of the archaeological heritage. It also created the Archaeological Park of Vale do Côa institution, since then considered the world largest group of exterior palaeolithic art, and that foresaw the construction of the museum built between 2007-2009. It was the Ministers' Council Resolution nº. 42/96, of 22 March, that proposed the creation of the park "as a way of generating investment and wealth" and the drawing of a special spatial planning document that would also define the economic rules and urban planning that would regulate cultural tourism in the park.

The protection of engravings was not only a field of political dispute in an election year but also a dispute over different development models: one centred on the construction of large infrastructure and public works; and the other centred on regional development via cultural and archaeological conservation. This tension ignited a struggle for control over the engravings – a resource (Leff, 2004) disputed politically between opposing forces (Bailoni, 2016) fighting for governance in their opposing ideological development proposals. One of them valued structuring public works above cultural interests, and the other prioritized cultural interests over economic need. This dispute was ultimately centred on public utility, a concept that includes a normative legal framework but, at the same time, is open to debate and social practices that generate some ambiguity and uncertainty (Murphy & Fox-Rogers, 2015).

It is also important to note that the political experience that followed from this case, as well as from later ones (ie., the Alqueva, Ferreira, 2013), resulted in new political strategies, by different go-

vernments, to circumvent or control information about new archaeological discoveries in future major public works (Bednarik, 2004). Santos (2001) suggests that Foz Côa was an example of how different models clash: industrialist and culturalist. It highlighted the "mobilizing function of the media" and, at the same time, the importance of "basing political decisions on scientific certainties" (p. 171). As Gonçalves (2019, p. 2) claims, "The case evidenced the inadequacy of formal decision-making procedures tending to be closed and based on a technical evaluation to give due account of the social values at stake when these are immaterial in nature, as is the case with cultural values and environments".

Mediation and the subsequent public debate eventually subverted the procedures for assessing environmental impacts and marked a moment of change, even for the Portuguese archaeological community itself whose public and political value and recognition became more prevalent (Gonçalves, 2019). Ultimately, the case seems to demonstrate the importance of technical but also political rationality, where stakeholders, including communities, would have a voice and a role to play in decision-making processes (Ferreiro, Gonçalves & Costa, 2013).

Two passionately held perspectives were at stake on how the region's future should be thought about and executed. One was inspired in the industrialist strategy, based on capitalist principles such as productivity, efficiency, economic opportunity, and characterized by the construction of a steel and concrete superstructure which imposed itself over the landscape, with immediate benefit to the communities; The other was culturalist, based on principles such as heritage, culture and environment, characterized by a discreet and static presence in the landscape with long-term economic benefits.

Ferreira (2013) considers that the Côa dam case represented a turning point in the way in which heritage was valued in Portuguese society,

causing changes in the ways in which surveys of the impacts of major public and private works in the country were conducted. Lessons emerged that would prove valuable in other cases, such as that of the Alqueva dam, where governments and stakeholders quickly adapted to the new requirements and managed to circumvent these obstacles to their developmental strategies, which suggests there is a role for independent monitoring agencies (Arcà, Bednarik, Jaffe, & Abreu, 2001).

In December 1998, UNESCO added the Côa Valley to the list of world heritage sites. In the same year, Zilhão (1998) argued that the Côa Archaeological Park was already a success, with some economic benefits already evident and even more was expected in the future. The success the author refers to is due to the increment of tourism, which increases the number of visitors and jobs created. Additionally, Zilhão highlighted the involvement and participation, particularly of high school students, in the park's promotion and protection activities. In 2011 the Côa Parque Foundation was established to manage both the original archaeological park and the museum, opened since 2010. Likewise, Xavier (2000) argued that the creation of the Côa archaeological park is an example of the construction of a natural landscape in a humanized landscape, using the rhetoric of cultural valorization that justifies and imposes itself before the natural landscape. This rhetoric shifted from the need to protect the engravings to the need to protect the valley, something that should be understood as "a strategy aimed at controlling the territory where archaeological findings are inserted"(p. 115).

At the beginning of the creation and management of the archaeological park, the Council of Ministers sought a Management and Conservation of Heritage that would meet the most recent strategies that pointed to the importance of the involvement of stakeholders, in particular the communities. These strategies were based on the ideas of sustainability and local development where pe-

ople and their needs would be at the centre, in a logic of empowerment and participation of all the actors involved (Friedman, 1996). This participation involved, above all, the re-education of the communities about the importance of the engravings and their conservation (Coimbra, 2008), as well as the influence of and on local leaders to reinforce this protectionist narrative, whilst simultaneously, avoiding tensions (Franco, 2019). This process was particularly relevant given that the non-construction of the dam was seen by the community as something negative imposed by the urban elites and made direct economic dividends unfeasible for the local populations (Gonçalves, 2001). As an aggravating factor, the delays in public investments in infrastructure and the limitations created to visit the engravings sustained the animosity from communities towards the government(s).

Amid the described political-ideological disputes, many locals feel they have been twice defrauded. At first, the dam construction promised benefits, in addition to the potential contribution to local agricultural production, but this would never be finished. Secondly, they feel defrauded by the promise of an economic injection based on cultural tourism that would bring thousands of tourists to the municipality. For Fernandes and Pinto (2003) what has brought about change in the attitude of these communities towards conservation is the valorization of the Vale do Côa brand and the use of it by the locals in promoting their products (wine, olive oil, honey, souvenirs, etc.). However, for the locals, the tourism flow is below what was promised, and those who arrive say they do not go beyond the Côa Museum, benefiting only a few local businessmen; a perception that we address in the next section. It should also be noted that ever since the park was created even the locals cannot move freely in the park and, in some cases, this limiting of their rights heightens the negative perception of the heritage process.

4. Rock art: between hope and the dam's ghost

In addition to the different views on how to develop the territory, an expectation was created by the non-construction of the dam: that the protection of the engravings could attract a new flow of tourism. This expectation was further reinforced by the promise of investment, such as the construction of the museum, enhanced access, and new services, public and private, and almost simultaneously, by the UNESCO Award of Distinction for the Alto Douro Wine Region. The future seemed inseparable from tourism, viewed as the new strategy for territorial development. Twenty-five years after the Côa Archaeological Park creation, several testimonies recognize its contribution to the local economy, particularly those that benefit from the park, be it directly or indirectly:

> Now they already accept the tourists, but at first, it was complicated. They see movement, there has never been vandalism and they accept it. But, in the beginning, they said "Oh, now tourists are coming..."and that caused fear. (...) Tourism gave hope. There is a restaurant and cafes here and that generates some movement. And it is all for the tourists. Today, there is a group from Douro Azul that left Pocinho. In the morning they go to the museum and in the afternoon, they bring them here to Penascosa (Woman, employed, 50 years old).

> The wine is also often made based on heritage. The winemakers, before selling, provide buyers with a visit to the engravings and these people end up buying them wine and oil. The heritage of the engravings ends up adding value. With the association with wines, cultural heritage is also offered to tourists (Male, employed, 60 years old).

There is then a recognition that although the tourist flow is lower than expected, it is sufficiently impactful to contribute to, or complement, local economic activities. This reveals underlying economic and social impacts which are common in tourism studies such as job creation (Gu & Ryan, 2008) or infrastructure development (Sharpley, 1994), promotion of local products – in particular in the region's agricultural production and souvenirs – (DeKadt, 1979; Liu and Var, 1986), or even, an increase in local pride (Ap & Crompton, 1998), especially in the town:

> Everyone likes to host tourists. As long as they don't hurt us, everything is fine. You always see a car passing by and some movement. We feel more accompanied (Woman, retired, 76 years old).

> With the engravings, some tourists came, and we became known. We appeared in the New York Times a few years ago. We weren't even on the map before! (...) The engravings are still giving and it's not just for us. I really like having the rock art here. There are plenty of dams!!! (Woman, employed, 63 years old).

Some recognize that tourism activity alone is not the only way for local territorial and economic development; nor can one just depend on it, but still, they argue that the non-construction of the dam was the best option.

> Those who spoke out most were living and depending on the workers during the initial construction phase. Now, the museum alone has more permanent workers than the dam would have. In water terms, the dam would also be important. Now, in terms of economic dynamism, the museum is preferable! (Male, employed, 32 years old).

In addition to these positive perspectives regarding the tourism activity based on the heritage of the archaeological park strategy, some criticize tourism activity in the communities, or rather, the fact that it does not meet their expectations, and reaffirm the dam strategy – the "dam's ghost" – even among those that in the past defended the rock art protection:

> The dam had benefits. It would bring irrigation and everything. Now, tourists don't bring anything to us. They come and go straight to the engravings. They don't even come here, or to the cafe below. And in all this, they even "pulled" more tourists to Castelo Melhor than to here [Muxagata]. They "pulled" more over there than over here on the river (Woman, employed, 44 years old).

> I was at school when the engravings were discovered and, at that time, I took part in demonstrations against the dam. But, if it were today, knowing what I know and that tourism has brought nothing, I would be in favour of the dam (Woman, employed, 44 years old).

In recent research, Pereira (2018) concluded that Pinhel residents' perception of the importance of the UNESCO distinction is more positive than in Vila Nova de Foz Côa. This seems to line up with some discontent discourses with the tourism activity, partly because tourists visit mainly the museum that is located away from the village, reducing their footprint in the communities and the city itself:

> Tourists... we don't even see them. They come here (to Foz Côa), they go to the museum, they go to see the engravings and they leave. It is very rare to see them here. And the case of the tourists who come by boat, for me, it's even worse. We don't even see them! They pass down there, in Pocinho, but they

don't get off the boat (Male, employed, 60 years old).

Tourists can't get here. There will be one or two... more in the summer. When everything is centralized in the museum, people go there, see the engravings and end up not coming here to the centre. In the past, everything came here to the reception centre, but now it's all in the museum; everything is concentrated there (Male, employed, 65 years old).

This pessimistic stance results from the perception that concentrating visitor reception strategies around the museum has siphoned off an important source of income for the local population to the public institution that manages the park. Bestard and Nadal (2007) explain that the greater the proximity of the locals to the tourism activity, the better their attitude towards it tends to be.

For example, in Muxagata the tourism reception centres used to be in the parish council headquarters, close to local businesses. Some members of the community even graduated as tourist guides with the expectation of working in tourism in their community. But the concentration of visitor reception strategies around the museum, including the construction of new access infrastructures, as well as the lack of investments in other opportunities in Muxagata, reinforced the discouragement of the locals. Even the fact that the Côa engravings brought visibility and notoriety to the territory is questioned by some: "We knew that there was something culturally important there, but we knew it was not going to bring benefits to the village. (...) The engravings only came to put Muxagata and Foz Côa on the map, that's all!" (Male, retired, 75 years old). Interestingly, Braz (2019) concluded in a survey with students of different levels of education on the Côa engravings, that almost two-thirds of the respondents had never heard of the rock art engravings of the Valley. The place of he-

ritage in question revealed a discrepancy between the investments made and the performative tourism which had justified such financing (pp. 921). These conclusions seem to contradict the general perception that engravings are heritage elements commonly recognized on a national level in Portugal.

Regarding the job creation and new companies associated with the tourism activity, opinions are equally critical regarding the current situation in relation to the expectations that were created: "The engravings brought life to the village [Muxagata] only for the first four or five years. Not after. In the beginning, we used to have 40/50 tourists here. There were nine jeeps, and they were almost always on the road. (...) Then, the State stopped giving money. And then the crisis came" (Male, retired farmer, 75 years old). For some of the locals, the main beneficiaries of the park and the tourism activity were some local elites and others coming from outside the communities:

There is another problem: most people connected to rock art [commercial use] are not from here. And the senior staff, the archaeologists, are all from outside. This also contributed to the local feeling that the rock art had nothing to do with the residents (Woman, business owner, 35 years old).

The engravings are worthless! They are good for the rich of Erva Moira and Vale Meão. We have two world heritage sites in the municipality, but that is only for half a dozen companies that have set up shop there (Male, farmer, 46 years old).

This view is aggravated by the fact that several members from the communities considered that they did not receive the desired support to create and develop services related to tourism activity:

We were deceived! Procôa (project financing entity), for example, approved pro-

jects without having funds to assist in their implementation. A lot of people did projects. They were accepted, approved, but ended up not being financed! Many of these projects were in tourism. This started in 1997, more or less, until 2001. They fooled everyone. We even promoted meetings of City Councils [Association of Municipalities of Vale do Côa] to create comprehensive tourism circuits and to scale the offer and host tourists for a few days (Male, teacher, 60 years old).

Among promises and unfulfilled expectations, it is common for discourses to continue to emerge. This reveals a longing for the construction of the dam and dream of a possible compromise:

I think we lost a little bit due to bad organization. In the beginning, expectations were high. EDP proposed to create a museum, remove the engravings, and build the dam. That would have been better. If you had the dam and the engravings, the dam would also bring benefits (Woman, souvenir shop owner, 63 years old).

The locals wanted the dam so they would have water, but others wanted the engravings for tourism. At the time, they could have done things differently and put the two together. But, as it was not possible, only the engravings remained. The older people, more attached to the land, also wanted the dam. (...) There is a bad relationship here between the rock art, the park and the local community (Woman, business owner, 35 years old).

The unfulfilled promises of a compensatory tourism flow seem to feed ideas of an alternative present where hydroelectric energy is seen as an escape from the social and economic precariousness of the territory. They inevitably promote discourses of social devaluation of rock art and tourism.

Given that the impacts of the construction of the dam will never manifest themselves, this ghost will always be impervious to its negative or unforeseen consequences.

Taking into account the dam versus heritage dichotomy, it was possible to ascertain the diversity of narratives associated with the process of patrimonialization of Paleolithic engravings, and have a deeper understanding of the ideas and disputes in relation to collective past options, to further comprehend the paths which have been followed since then.

5. Conclusion

Territories and their resources are the subject of multiple understandings. They are associated with incompatible aspirations and interests, which often result in intense social disputes that the democratic mechanisms of participation, dialogue and negotiation are not always able to resolve. The case of Côa Valley park exemplifies in a particularly acute way the tensions and dissensions that accompany the political processes of management and configuration of territories. In this specific case, the appreciation of the Paleolithic heritage, to the detriment of the construction of the hydroelectric dam, has been the great dynamo of local disputes over the development paths to follow in the last decades.

The rock art patrimonialization and the subsequent international recognition of the Côa Valley as a world heritage site continue to be a factor of incomparable relevance in the qualification of the territory for many, especially municipal policymakers, traders and members of the educational community. Its attractiveness and distinctive affirmation of an identity is valued both nationally and internationally. Although the local population recognizes the intrinsic value of the Paleolithic heritage and its preservation, residents still express

a certain disappointment concerning initial expectations and the political promises made. Rock art heritage promotion was assumed to be the key element for tourism success and local development.

One of the most recurrent expressions of this disappointment, manifested in particular by the small traders in the city of Foz Côa, concerns the fact that the tourism exploitation of the Paleolithic heritage occurs predominantly in "closed-circuit". It provides fewer economic benefits than expected: the majority of tourists travel on the tour operators' buses, visit the Côa Museum and, eventually, the rock art sites. The visitors stay only a couple of hours in the territory and don't visit the town.

The discontent regarding tourism development among those who recognize the many virtues of preserving the Paleolithic heritage does not, however, compare with the marked disregard for the engravings and the social resentment still expressed by some people, especially those working in agriculture in the villages closest to the archaeological sites. Among these, the developmentalist understanding tends to persist that building the hydroelectric dam would have been more advantageous for the territory. They consider the heritage process as a course of action of elites for the elites that did not bring explicit benefits, nor generate a relevant tourism flow or stop the demographic desertification with which their communities continue to struggle. Since they do not perceive any significant effects in their daily lives resulting from the preservation of rock art, the dam continues to figure nostalgically in their discourse as the option that should have been taken. After two decades, the underlying tensions of the patrimonialization of Palaeolithic engravings in Foz Côa have not yet been completely resolved.

More than the preservation of the engravings to the detriment of the dam construction, what really generated (and generates) discontent among many of the region's inhabitants has been the marked inoperability of public policies and pseudo-development plans for the Côa Valley. Preserving

heritage without a truly broader and more integrated strategy of socio-economic sustenance of the territory inevitably generates imbalances that end up compromising territorial development and the very same strategies of heritage promotion.

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