Tourism, the valorisation of historical heritage and the economy of culture: The "Templar Days" event in Portugal

Turismo, valorização do Património histórico e Economia da Cultura: O evento "Dias Templários" em Portugal

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Abstract | Portugal has a vast heritage legacy related to the Order of the Temple. Historical-military re-enactment tourism events have been described as a lever for territorial development. This case study aims to illustrate the state of the art on the reality of Military Tourism under the templar subject, and its potential for innovation in territories that integrate thematic, historical, and cultural dimensions to diversify, differentiate and promote tourist destinations. The focus of this study is on the Templar Days (TD) events, currently promoted by non-profit civic associations related to the historical theme of "Knights Templar." A documentary analysis of

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the content of the online pages and a systematic literature review were conducted to investigate this model of historical re-enactment event. This study discloses the importance of cultural diversification and resulted in research which historically positions the importance of "Templar Days" (TD) as an initiative that revives the Templar memorial and, at the same time, socially and economically benefits community-based territorial development. The European Union supports initiatives with this type of framework.

Keywords | heritage tourism, military re-enactment events, identity, network, regional innovation systems

Resumo | Portugal possui um vasto legado patrimonial relacionado com a Ordem do Templo. Os eventos turísticos de recreação histórico-militar têm sido descritos como uma alavanca para o desenvolvimento territorial. Este estudo de caso tem como objetivo ilustrar o estado da arte sobre a realidade do Turismo Militar sob a temática templária, bem como o seu potencial de inovação para os territórios que abraçam dimensões temáticas, históricas e culturais para diversificar, diferenciar e promover destinos turísticos. O foco deste estudo são os eventos "Dias Templários", atualmente promovidos por associações civis sem fins lucrativos relacionados com a temática histórica dos "Cavaleiros Templários". Para investigar este modelo de evento de reconstituição histórica, procedeu-se à análise documental de conteúdos dos sítios oficiais e de outras páginas online, bem como a uma revisão sistemática da literatura. Este estudo contribui para revelar a importância da diversificação cultural e resultou numa investigação que posiciona historicamente a importância de "Dias Templários" (TD) como iniciativa que resgata o memorial templário e, simultaneamente, beneficia social e economicamente o desenvolvimento territorial de base comunitária. A União Europeia apoia iniciativas com este tipo de enquadramento.

Palavras-chave | turismo patrimonial, eventos de recriação militar, identidade, redes colaborativas, sistemas de inovação regional

1. Introduction

The country achieved its sovereignty with the help of the Knights Templar: since the regency of the Portucalense County by Teresa, and then with her son, 1st king Afonso Henriques *The* Conqueror, until the definition of the Portuguese border (1297, the oldest frontier in Europe), the national historical matrix relies on the Templar legacy. This is a reality that legitimises the Neo-Templarism (Vanceslai, 2017).

Portugal has a significant density of sites associated with the religious-military Order of the Temple. The tangible Templar heritage and memory which dates to the origins of the Nation's identity are present mainly in the Centre and North of Portugal. The Order of the Temple founded the nation Portugal and after being transformed into the Order of Christ, the Discoveries began and an empire was established (Costa, 2019; Lencart, 2022).

There are several Templar groups in Portugal. However, only one entity seems to focus on tangible and intangible Templar legacy, tourism, and culture, seeking to contribute to strengthening collaborative networks, knowledge transfer and benefit for stakeholders and the community. This research uses a descriptive case study approach to explore the new concept Templar Days (TD) initiatives. The product is devoted to legacies, tourism, academy, governance, and community within cultural, economic, social, and environmental dimensions. This study aims to evaluate and debate the potential use of historical, thematic, and symbolic components to tourist destinations, in the current world tourism reality. The valorisation of endogenous local resources and the balanced search for exogenous resources that are indispensable for each type of project, by the promoters of responsible tourism, is also part of sustainability, the focus of today's society. Otherwise, adverse conditions such as scarcity of goods, costs of services, environmental and economic ecosystems, etc., will worsen. An attempt is also made to describe the relevance of re-enactment events to territories as pull factors, its importance to heritage and identity, the potential innovation of this type of events as drivers of development, authenticity, differentiation, and attractiveness of tourist destinations.

2. Theoretical framework

Developing a territory implies looking at it in its historical depth. The foundation of the nation took place with the support of the Knights Templar, and this article links historical tradition with heritage and contemporary times. For the authors, the "Templar Days" event represents a general historical reconstitution, using current models and guidelines for territorial development.

2.1. Innovation and regional development

It has been pointed and described how the knowledge networks and communication are extremely relevant to innovation and modern policymaking. This brings us to the Regional Innovation Systems (RIS) model, an approach focused on innovation in tourist destinations (Brandão, Costa, & Buhalis, 2018; Hjalager & Gesseneck, 2020). Basically, the region is seen as a system of learning by interacting and steering regulation. RIS involves three influences: systems planning, regional innovation policy, and network regions development analysis (Cooke, 2008), in a bottom-up strategy to reinforce top-down policies and programs 2003). Therefore, collaboration stimulates innovation practices (Etzkowitz, competitiveness. Furthermore, the triple helix concept inherent in the concept of innovation states that basic university research must be converted into applied research and transformed into experimental development for commercial application. To this academia - private sector public sector model has been added the civil society component that represent the concept of the quadruple helix (e.g. Lohmann et al., 2021).

Regarding differentiation and cultural heritage, Bidarte and Pinto (2022) Directly refer Porter's concept. Authors describe differentiation as "a competitive strategy that concerns the relative position of the company in the sector in which it operates, because to the extent that the company differentiates itself from others, it seeks to become unique in its sector" (p. 467). The concept also applies to tourist destinations and relates to cultural dimension. Furthermore, the endogenous resources that have become part of (authentic) experiences demonstrate the potential for segmentation, which enhances cultural identity. This innovation will contribute to the conservation and revitalization of natural resources and cultural heritage, education, and integration of visitors in local/regional culture and history, benefiting communities. While visitors are attracted by new and unique experiences it is precisely the differentiation, attractiveness, and adaptation to demand that leads to long-term sustainability and economic viability. Therefore, responsible management of cultural heritage and governance are crucial for the diversification and differentiation of tourist sites and the consequent creation of a competitive tourism product, which requires an elevated level of collaboration (e.g. Adamo, Ferrari, & Gilli, 2019; Leão & Brandão, 2022).

2.2. Military heritage tourism

Cultural heritage has been widely identified as a driver of land-based development, generally involving co-operation, benefiting communities, and encouraging practices and the protection of heritage and culture for future generations (ICOMOS, 1999, p. 5). Coelho, Figueira, and Costa (2014) see military tourism as a segment of cultural tourism, as a cultural activity based on the tourist activation of the historical-military tangible and intangible heritage. Authors state that (pp. 117-118):

It is through the vast and monumental material heritage associated with military history, and the intangible heritage articulated with the historical journey and its respective social and cultural domains, that military tourism assumes memory as an integral part of its process of action and integration into tourism activity.

The National Military Tourism Charter (2015) aimed to implement Military Tourism in Portugal by generally presenting strategic guidelines, encouraging the creation of collaborative networks and community participation, encouraging knowledge transfer, raising awareness of the strategic importance of developing sustainable products, projects, and actions in this background. Regarding its structure based on cultural, historical and military resources, Coelho (2011, p. 47) stated that Military Tourism "integrates and fits into the most varied political, territorial and institutional contexts", while collections attract audiences and generate revenue. This area of the cultural heritage is nowadays a strong focus of the Portuguese authority Tourism of Portugal. Although it is a niche, counterpointing what is commonly referred to as "mass tourism", it is considered a strategy with remarkable potential for requalifying, preserving, and enhancing history and heritage, while at the same time structuring products and itineraries, diversifying and differentiating territories. All of this is reflected in the attractiveness and internationalization of military tourism subjects, acting as an engine for the socio-economic and cultural development of a region, based on the principles of innovation, sustainability, and emotion (e.g. Alves, Barbosa, & Pinto, 2016; Turismo de Portugal Business, 2023).

It is in this context of historical and military tangible and intangible heritage that the TD product fits in. The identity associated with the history of the medieval Order may leverage tourism through the presentation-interpretation of this heritage, and innovation, thus boosting the attractiveness of destinations. TD events may be considered one way of operationalizing the concept, insofar as they enhance and qualify tourist and cultural visits to the territories of Templar history, in the economic, social, scientific, cultural, and sustainable dimensions (Nascimento & Figueira, 2022).

2.3. Military re-enactment events

Re-enacting is more than a "play or an attempt to recreate historical situations" (Hall, 2016, p. 416), it is a simulation of an event rooted in history but not necessarily a mirrored and credible replication of the past. Authenticity can be described as producing an understanding of what the circumstances would have been like during that period. In this context, reenactors consider that artifacts and clothing similar to original are crucial to develop authenticity. In this process, the audience's expectations of the experience are important, since people seek entertainment and social interaction in the present rather than education, even though accuracy can become a satisfaction for some people (Hall, 2016; Reis, 2018). However, in the case of military reenactments, there are limits to the negative emotions they may cause (Magee & Gilmore, 2015). Rules have not been stablished yet.

Regarding the mega-event Medieval Journey of Santa Maria da Feira, Carneiro, Eusébio and Santos (2016, p. 206) have disclosed three clusters of visitors of re-enactment events based on emotions: 'apathetic', 'drivers and influencers', and 'satisfied and enthusiastic'. Concerning small-scale cultural festivals, four motivational factors were identified by Giaccone and Galvagno (2021): novelty, local culture experience, festival attractiveness and socialization. Engagement and joyful emotions behind festivals have a significant effect on loyalty, cultural connection, and community involvement, emphasizing the need for organizers to boost engagement rather than solely focusing on attendance (Koenig-Lewis, Palmer, & Asaad, 2021).

It should be noted that the enhancement of experiences such as itinerant themed events or periodic festivals coordinated by structured governance contributes to individual and collective identity, which benefits the territory's value chain. All these factors are components of innovation and competitiveness and, as such, of economic incentive and growth. It is the various actions that promote memory, making them last over generations, while the competitiveness generated by tourist exploitation is based precisely on these local attractions. However, standardization and replication can become a threat, so innovation is a determining factor in the sustainability of initiatives (Figueira, 2019; Leão, 2022). In fact, innovation, experience, value, and authenticity are pointed as critical elements (e.g. Zhang & Deng, 2022) to respond effectively to motivations (Cunha & Abrantes, 2013).

3. Methods

In the explanatory research presented, the Templar Days (TD) event concept was analysed supported by:

- (i) A documentary analysis through official websites, and social media contents of the TD partners;
- (ii) Books authored by notable researchers specialized in the Templar Order subject;
- (iii) SCOPUS database, followed by a protocol based on the PRISMA method for selecting relevant records to assist and scrutinize TD events. Additional records found in the reference sections of the selected publications were identified and analysed. To obtain those documents and when the full documents were not available, other databases were used to obtain them, such as Google Scholar and Research Gate. Some fields of study were investigated to complement the comprehensive analysis, which were mainly related to the importance of heritage, effects of re-enactment events on local and regional development, identity, authenticity, differentiation, the involvement of the community, governance, regional innovation systems model (RIS), and collaborative network in tourist destinations.

Data collection was performed between April and December 2023.

4. Results

The TD event model is a set of local outdoor events and is the result of an associative initiative. The product is described as a registered trademark and results from the partnership between the Order of the Knights Templar of Jerusalem Association (OPCTJ), Thomar Honoris Association (ATH) and the Portuguese Military Tourism Association (ATMPT). OPCTJ is a non-profit association that has social, cultural, and training objectives. This association has been involved in the tourism axis of Festivals and Fairs (OPCTJ, 2023). Other partner is the ATH, a non-profit association dedicated to preservation and promotion of the Templar legacy. The historical reenactments, medieval dances, historical bow and crossbow, swordplay, dramatic plays, and recreation military camps in evocation of medieval times became the materialization of the scientific research that the entity has been driven (ATH, 2022). The ATMPT is an association of local authorities, academy, and other associations. Mainly, its mission is to develop and promote the military tourism in Portugal, to hold initiatives within that scope and to contribute to a national network on the military history, and also integrating and structuring the tourist offer of the national military heritage at national and international levels (ATMPT, 2023). Finally, the Next Solution, which does not take part of the registered trademark, but collaborates in promoting the product and heritage through the creation of promotional media, photography, and video (OPCTJ, 2023).

TD has its own Facebook page. However, detailed descriptions of TD events can be found on the OPCTJ website. Each event lasts one or two days, includes historical re-enactment and round tables in a Templar military camp. The various actions are carried out by the Templar territories covered by the OPCTJ network (most are low-density areas), supported by municipalities that host the event. It involves other entities and the academia as well, especially as speakers. The actions have the Templar heritage as a scenario. It has been reproduced throughout the sunny seasons in various locations where history and heritage intersect with the Order of the Temple and the Order of Christ. Thus, it intends to contribute to the consolidation of the Templar brand and to the development of the military tourism in Portugal.

Analysing flyers and videos, contents indicate that each event follows a pre-defined model. Templar Days begin with the symbolic moment of raising the flag and ends with its lowering. During the day, visitors can experience re-enactment moments. The talks always involve speakers from the academy (related to tourism, heritage, history, museology, marketing, communication, etc.) and local or regional governance (municipalities, tourism offices, stakeholders), which suggests the occurrence of knowledge transfer between the actors and governance, incentives for the creation and development of collaborative networks, and interaction with the community. The topics covered in each panel vary from event to event. Occasionally, books on the heritage and culture of the highlighted territories are also launched. Additionally, promotional videos highlight the identity of places or regions, by publicising the legacy and exhibiting endogenous products. This publicity attracts visitors to the place where the event is taking place and makes the territories known (TD, 2023).

Following the definition of "tourism events" and its types published by Getz (2008), these initiatives also seek cultural development to promote national identity. Even though TD seem to highlight cultural authenticity and identity, the focus is on the territories and their pull factors. Therefore, every event is single and helps to preserve local and regional traditions and products. In several initiatives, moments were included in the final program, such as markets or musical performances. These planned events are nothing like festivals, where individual and community initiatives have become the domain of professionals and entrepreneurs, satisfying numerous strategic objectives. Moreover, TD are open to the public at no cost as well. TD are held during the summer and off-peak seasons. Planning and management are the responsibility of the partners, but clearly involve the municipalities, particularly in logistics and space availability and integration of other cultural moments specific to the territories where the event takes place. Therefore, the thematic constructs and experiences demonstrate the importance of local networks in developing the originality of each of these actions, and in stimulating visitor-visited exchanges.

5. Conclusion

The TD brand is a set of itinerant events that expands collaborative networks, mainly between the academy; experts linked to various professional areas, which lead to the sharing of problems and solutions, thus generating integrated communication between actors in various contexts of the territories, promoting them at the same time; and public, private and associative entities involved in various networks in the Portuguese tourism sector. TD contributes to business, by promoting endogenous products; public policies for innovation, by sharing information and good practices between destinations; education, by bringing the research knowledge generated at the university closer to the community; and encouraging the inclusion of the resident in the development of tourism in the destinations. With a wide geographic distribution, emphasis is on memory and heritage of each territory with a history of the Knights Templar or the Order of Christ, from a cultural perspective that defines their uniqueness.

These initiatives seem to follow the presentation-interpretation of the templar legacy, within collaborative networks (Nascimento & Figueira, 2022) that allow the sharing of knowledge and different realities and promotes the Military Tourism brand. As a result, identity and authenticity have materialized through its symbols and the representation of behaviours and traditions at the time, in which the concept of storytelling assumes a significant importance. From that point of view, its multidisciplinary nature becomes a tool that stimulate a networkbased dynamic, which is crucial to achieve consistent goals. TD contribute to the local economy, involves residents and partners as visitors/tourists, and encourages tourism through promotional videos. Therefore, these themed re-enactments of cultural and military heritage contribute to the attractiveness of tourist destinations as an unusual example of how the tourism sector works, demonstrating that associations can actively contribute to the development,

diversification, and promotion of territories. In this context, this evaluation of the product/brand and the consequent innovation of the territories is in line with what has been described in the literature (e.g. Brandão et al., 2018).

This case study shows that cultural and creative events use new ways of enhancing local products and traditions through themed use of spaces. TD play a role in the differentiation and projection of territories as tourist destinations, enhancing its image as a distinctive brand, and can contribute to innovation where they take place, in the same way as previously claimed (Martins et al., 2023; Santos, Carvalho, & Figueira, 2012). The Templar historic, symbolic, and legendary spheres strongly stimulate the imagination of several generations and are already an important segment in some destinations, such as Tomar "The Templar City." TD is a pull factor from the point of view of reducing seasonality and creating value, contributing to the preservation of heritage, traditions, and authenticity, being accessible and inclusive, creating a sense of identity, stimulating social cohesion, as it is expected to be innovative and capture different target audiences. After all it reinforces the tourist-cultural visitation to these territories (Figueira, 2013). In their study on events, Santos et al. (2012) concluded that they are essential for: the projection of a tourist destination, differentiation, image, diversifying the offer, and combined with a strong brand they can contribute significantly to the economic and social development of the region in which they are located. In particular, the associative component of a RIS network improves the integration of structured tourism products and contributes to the diversification and differentiation of the templar areas as a destination. TD is associated with a better distribution of the response to the demand for tourism under the Templar theme, and with the problem of the monoproduct vs diversification of tourist goods and services, which seem to stimulate the tourism economy in each place where the event takes place. Summarizing, the use of cultural and creative events that value traditions, knowledge transfer and contribute to heritage preservation, may become a strategy for the development of territories and create differentiated images of the destinations. The cultural dimension of the material and immaterial heritage defines territories' uniqueness, and a network-based dynamic improves tourism destinations' attractiveness. Moreover, cooperation between stakeholders has been described as essential for valuing endogenous resources and the creation of a structured product ('honeypots') that attracts visitors, while the presentation-interpretation of heritage becomes a differentiating element and an engine for development of tourist destinations (Brandão & Costa, 2012, p. 654; Leão, 2022, p. 302). Territory planning, and economics and management of the tourism sector must be seen in association with each other, rather than being approached in isolation, for the evolution of the sector and the success of the destination (Costa, 2020). Within this context, TD may be seen as a tool. Additionally, funds are available to encourage projects that may involve these events (Recuperar Portugal, n.d.; Turismo de Portugal Business, n.d.).

The consortium pursues the RIS model, creating or stimulating existing synergies in the territories, always within the scope on the Templar product. Regarding the current trends in the tourism sector and the relevant research and innovation lines of the Tourism Research Agenda (FCT, 2019), the partners seem to follow the current challenges, particularly in terms of the emergence of new tourist territories (namely areas with low population density), strengthening the attractiveness of territories and refocusing traditional destinations. Regarding the Tourism Strategy 2027 (Turismo de Portugal, I.P., 2017), these thematic events appear to correspond to the challenges related to cohesion between territories and the encouragement to value creation. However, in this case, distribution channels (tour operators, tour guides, tourist offices, museums or other places of passage or visitation) are not properly utilized or even provided with information to include in their agendas. That could value less visited sites or geographically less accessible and, thus, less visited. The product also seems to pursue the European Agenda for Tourism 2030 (European Union, 2022), since it has been linking academia and governance by promoting meetings between experts from various fields of knowledge and offering experiences to residents and visitors.

TD is based on associative initiatives in thematic/military tourism, working in a bottom-up and top-down manner, balancing missions (within practical valorisation of tangible and intangible heritage and the creation and dissemination of theoretical knowledge), in which the 2030 Agenda opens ample possibilities for achieving its objectives. Regarding TD's effects, its consolidation as an item on the academic agenda has scientific potential, establishing links between all the territorial players and qualifying thematic tourism. Overall, this kind of events, if well directed, strengthens the identity, sense of belonging and pride of local communities and can contribute positively for the common benefit.

Some limitations of this study can be highlighted. For the consistency of this research, empirical methods should be considered to satisfy the need to obtain more comprehensive information. Another limitation was the fact that TD are unusual events, which does not allow conclusions to be extrapolated from concrete to a general level or comparisons with other cases.

In the future, qualitative and quantitative analyses, such as in-depth interviews with partners and other entities involved in these actions, and questionnaires with visitors and residents (including those emotionally tied and personally attached) may be applied to complement this exploratory analysis. These methods must satisfy the need for greater interpretation and explanation of TD existence, in terms of the historical, social/demographic, political, economic contexts, motivations and satisfaction of the public and agents involved with the knowledge transfer, the impact on cultural tourism, place marketing, and outcomes of these events as a measure of their value for the destinations.

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