

Implementing the '**Barcelos Rooster**' Tourist Route for **Sustainable Tourism Development** in Barcelos, a UNESCO Creative City

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Abstract | This study seeks to comprehend the significance of Barcelos Rooster and evaluate how the establishment of a tourist route, named 'Barcelos Rooster' (integrating the Figurative route and Camino de Santiago route), can contribute to the sustainable development of Barcelos as a tourist destination. In this sense, a literature review was conducted on the topics under study, and primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with residents and foreign visitors. Barcelos Rooster represents the fusion of two ancient customs in this region: the art of artisanry and the Jacobean legend on the miracle of the roasted rooster, which have become intertwined traditions over time, thanks to tourism in Barcelos. The cultural heritage of this area is enriched by handicrafts, Camino de Santiago, gastronomy, local wine (vinho verde), and its traditional weekly market, all of which serve as key attractions for tourists visiting this destination. Therefore, the establishment of this cultural route would feature various tourism itineraries encompassing different forms of creative tourism such as exploring local handicrafts, savouring traditional gastronomy, and experiencing rural tourism by visiting farms engaged in rooster production. Barcelos Rooster cultural route could assume a central role in promoting the sustainable growth of Barcelos as a creative tourist destination.

Keywords | Barcelos Rooster, routes, sustainable, development, destination

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Resumo | Este estudo procura compreender o significado do Galo de Barcelos e avaliar como a criação de uma rota turística, denominada 'Rota do Galo de Barcelos' (integrando a Rota do Figurado e a do Caminho de Santiago), pode contribuir para o desenvolvimento sustentável de Barcelos como destino turístico. Nesse sentido, foi realizada uma revisão da literatura sobre os tópicos em estudo e recolhidos dados primários através de entrevistas semiestruturadas com residentes e visitantes estrangeiros. O Galo de Barcelos representa a fusão de dois costumes antigos desta região: o artesanato e a lenda jacobea do milagre do galo assado, que se tornaram tradições interligadas ao longo do tempo, graças ao turismo em Barcelos. O património cultural desta região é enriquecido pelo artesanato, o Caminho de Santiago, a gastronomia, o vinho (vinho verde) e a feira semanal tradicional, que são as suas principais atrações turísticas. Portanto, a criação desta rota cultural incluiria vários itinerários turísticos abrangendo diferentes formas de turismo criativo, como o artesanato local, a gastronomia tradicional e vivenciar o turismo rural visitando quintas envolvidas na produção de galos. A Rota Cultural do Galo de Barcelos poderia desempenhar um papel central na promoção do crescimento sustentável de Barcelos como destino turístico criativo.

Palavras-chave | 'Galo de Barcelos,' Rotas, Desenvolvimento, Sustentável, Destino

1. Introduction

Barcelos, a city with a rich historical backdrop and a vibrant cultural milieu, has seen the emergence of various tourism attractions rooted in its traditions. These include crafts, the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route, the delectable gastronomy featuring the legendary roast rooster, the esteemed wine 'Vinho Verde,' and the bustling traditional market. These elements collectively contribute to the allure of Barcelos, positioning it as a hub for creative tourism, a niche that thrives on immaterial cultural heritage and living traditions (Gonçalves & Costa, 2016).

This study seeks to comprehend the significance of the Rooster of Barcelos (Galo de Barcelos) and evaluate how the establishment of a tourist route, named 'Rooster of Barcelos' (integrating the 'Figurado route' and 'Camino de Santiago' route), can contribute to the sustainable development of Barcelos, a UNESCO Creative City, as a tourist destination. The research question is: *How might the creation of a tourist route, integrating the 'Figurative route' and 'Camino de Santiago route,' focused on the 'Barcelos Rooster', contribute to the sustainable*

development of Barcelos, a UNESCO Creative City, as a tourist destination? In essence, this study seeks to unravel the intrinsic significance of the Rooster of Barcelos within the broader context of Barcelos' cultural heritage. By exploring the potential impact of establishing a cultural route focused on this emblematic symbol, the research aims to shed light on pathways that could leverage Barcelos' traditions for sustainable tourism development, thereby cementing its status as a beacon of creative tourism within the global landscape.

2. Theoretical contextualization

2.1 Barcelos Rooster

This section aims to clarify the significance of the Barcelos Rooster (Galo de Barcelos) and how this piece of handicraft has evolved into a prominent symbol of Portugal's tourism on a global scale. Additionally, it delves into the association of another local custom, the Jacobean legend of the miracle of Saint James' rooster (Camino de Santiago), with this tradition. The convergence of these two ancient customs, the handcrafting of roosters and the Jacobean legend of the miracle of Saint James' rooster, was facilitated by tourism in 1960. António Ferro, the architect of Salazar's alt-right regime's cultural and tourist policy, played a pivotal role in elevating the Barcelos Rooster to the status of a prominent symbol in Portugal's global tourism landscape. Salazar's alt-right regime sought legitimacy among the populace and on the global stage. To achieve this, António Ferro orchestrated the 'Portuguese World Exhibition in 1940', second only to 'Expo 98'. The exhibition aimed to showcase authentic Portuguese Folk Art from every corner of the country, encompassing villages, towns, and cities. The primary objective was to legitimize of Salazar's alt-right regime (known as *Estado Novo*) (Gonçalves, 2018).

Barcelos actively participated in the 'Portuguese World Exhibition in 1940', by sending various glazed and painted pieces representing the town's handicrafts, prominently displayed in the House of Portuguese Villages. Among these, the 'Barcelos Rooster' emerged as the standout, garnering widespread admiration, and becoming a bestseller. However, prior to 1940, the oldest known rooster, a kind of 'protogalo', had a height of approximately 15 cm and distinct features. Limitations in techniques restricted rooster sizes to around 15 cm, mainly as whistle toys. Fortunately, the 'Barcelos Rooster' underwent morphological evolution due to innovations in pottery production techniques, showcased at the exhibition, marking a pivotal moment that demonstrated advancements allowing for the creation of larger roosters. The current 'Barcelos Rooster,' with its distinctive black background, originated in the mid-1950s. The introduction

of the black colour was a result of the scarcity of chemical pigments during World War II, leading to the use of fish glue and chimney soot. The emergence of larger, decorative red roosters signifies a transformative period in both morphological evolution and production techniques, notably with the advent of the pottery wheel and plaster casts enabling a globular shape characteristic of the contemporary 'Barcelos Rooster' (Mimoso, 2010). Furthermore, the local painter Gonçalves Torres played a pivotal role as one of the true creators of the contemporary Barcelos Rooster. His contribution came to light when he painted a rooster for the 'Barcelos Cross Festival poster,' introducing the first touches of elegance and incorporating red hearts, which symbolize the Minho region (Macedo, 1965).

Ethnographer Rocha Peixoto (1966) traces the tradition of crafting domestic animals, including roosters, back to ancient times. The success of the Barcelos Rooster is attributed to its association with mythological virtues, notably its role in heralding Jesus Christ's birth and confirming miracles on the Camino de Santiago routes. Rocha Peixoto emphasizes the rooster's prevalence, variety, and esteemed treatment in Barcelos, symbolizing nobility, and detailed refinement. The rooster's significance extends across mythological, religious, and popular realms, playing roles in tales, superstitions, and ceremonies. Its importance is deeply rooted, even resonating in Greek symbolism. In contemporary times, the rooster continues to symbolize honesty, grit, and luck in Macau (Amaro, 2024).

The history of the 'Barcelos Rooster' closely paralleled the timeline of Salazar's alt-right regime, also known as *Estado Novo*. The rooster gained prominence during the 'Portuguese World Exhibition in 1940,' emerging as a significant winner and receiving widespread acclaim as a piece of Folk art. Following this success, Antonio Ferro's political initiatives propelled the Barcelos Rooster, originally a handicraft, to national and international recognition. It subsequently transformed into one of the primary symbols of Portuguese tourism, playing a pivotal role in the local economy. Additionally, the Salazar's alt-right regime regarded handicrafts as the quintessential achievement of Portuguese Folk culture (Melo, 2001).

The history of 'Barcelos Rooster,' influenced by tourism, unfolds a prolonged controversy over its authorship since the 1960s. Focused on patent registration for the 'Galo de Barcelos,' this dispute persisted, driven by financial interests. Conflicting claims endure, with evidence suggesting that Júlia Côta's grandfather may have crafted roosters exhibited in the 1940 Exhibition. A 1960 article in the 'Jornal de Barcelos' outlines the contested patent registration. Barcelos Mayor Luís Fernandes de Figueiredo contested the attempt, asserting that the Barcelos Rooster's cultural significance is part of the local community's heritage. This pivotal moment

associated the handcrafted rooster with the Jacobean legend for the first time. The Civil Governor supported the mayor's defense, documented on August 4, 1960, signifying the official recognition and emergence of the 'Barcelos Rooster tradition'. The Barcelos Rooster, a handcrafted creation, is intricately linked to the legend of the roast rooster miracle attributed to Saint James along the Camino de Santiago. Tourism in Barcelos played a pivotal role in connecting the Jacobean legend's rooster with handmade rooster crafts. This legend tells of a rooster miracle attributed to St. James during the Middle Ages, portrayed on a debated-dated granite cross in the Archaeological Museum of Barcelos. The cross depicts various figures, including a rooster, Jesus Christ, and a pilgrim hanging from a rope, with St. James below holding his feet. The oldest documents related to this legend date back to the nineteenth century, including an 1867 article by Amaral Ribeiro and a book by Domingos Joaquim Pereira, the 'Abbot of Louro,' published in the same year. Pereira's book, Chapter XI, recounts the story of the gallows of Barcelos and the cross alluding to the rooster miracle legend (Gonçalves, 2018). Additionally, Pires de Lima (1965), an ethnographer representative of the nationalist paradigm of Salazar's alt-right regime, published a book about the legend of the miracle of Barcelos Rooster. Melo (2001) argues that Salazar's alt-right regime used ethnography to legitimize his regime's nationalist ideology. Salazar's alt-right regime, through Antonio Ferro's political action, made 'Barcelos Rooster' become a symbol of Portugal, reaching a national and international dimension but never dissociating itself from its identity mark 'Galo de Barcelos.'

Tourism has turned two Barcelos customs into a tradition, elevating it to a significant symbol of Portuguese tourism. The Barcelos Rooster, deeply rooted in Portuguese folklore, has transitioned from a local curiosity to a national icon and, notably, a symbol of Macau's transfer to China in 1999. The evolution of Macau from a Portuguese colony to a Special Administrative Region of China brought about substantial changes in its cultural symbols. The surge in tourism, from 7.44 million visitors in 1999 to 39.4 million in 2019, led to the creation of new tourist products, including culturally aligned souvenirs. Macau has reinterpreted the Barcelos Rooster, aligning it with esteemed Chinese qualities such as honesty, grit, and prosperity, enhancing its appeal as a souvenir and solidifying its place in Macau's cultural identity (Amaro, 2024). While this process may appear to pose a threat to the authenticity of Barcelos' intangible cultural heritage, it presents an opportunity to achieve the primary objective of this study.

The tradition of the Barcelos Rooster, alongside handicrafts, Camino de Santiago, gastronomy, wine tourism, and the traditional market, currently stands as the primary tourism attractions in Barcelos. This tradition holds the potential to contribute to the sustainable development of

creative tourism, relying on traditions and living heritage for the establishment of a creative tourist destination (Gonçalves & Costa, 2016). Furthermore, the 'Barcelos Rooster' emerges as a tourism product 'honey pot' capable of leveraging the sustainable development of this territory as a creative tourist destination, especially in the face of unprecedented challenges, such as the increased pressure for more sustainable tourism typologies during the COVID pandemic (Gonçalves & Costa, 2022).

2.2 Routes and itineraries

The International Charter for Cultural Tourism highlights cultural and natural heritage, diversities, and living cultures as major tourist attractions in the future (ICOMOS, 1999). The importance of this natural and cultural heritage, encompassing both material and intangible aspects, becomes apparent to visitors through the interpretation provided at tourist destinations. Interpretation serves as the 'voice' of the territories' resources (Gonçalves & Costa, 2019).

Sustainable tourism development should always rely on the endogenous resources of territories (Fazenda, 2014). Tourism is inherently intertwined with territories, serving as their primary resource and a foundational element for development. In this context, tourism organizations are profoundly influenced by geographical location, as tourist destinations possess unique, immovable products and resources. It is crucial for tourism agents to recognize that adopting a philosophy of community and knowledge exchange provides significant competitive advantages, attracting new businesses and fostering the innovation process. Simultaneously, tourism innovation networks should establish connections with agents beyond the region, whether national or international, and other sectors of activity to introduce fresh knowledge and facilitate the development of innovative tourism services and products (Brandão & Costa, 2014). Territory can be defined as a space owned by a community, reflecting a fusion of its physical foundation and the alterations brought about by human occupation. This definition encompasses its visual dimension, represented by the landscape with its natural and constructed elements, interactions, and the intangible dimension enriched by culture (Umbelino, 2014).

Route planning stands as a crucial and structured process essential for enhancing the value of territories by captivating tourists with both traditional and contemporary heritage. This process entails characterizing resources, transforming them into attractions, and presenting them for cultural trips. Within the tourism system, territory route planning establishes digital itineraries, ensuring an inventory of tourism potential and instigating the creation of attractions crafted to

define unique tourist products. The subsequent development of products, including Routes, Itineraries, and Circuits, relies on support from this repository. It plays a vital role in the development of tourist destinations, acting as an instrument to invigorate territorial bases. The historical dependence of tourist routes on various variables prompts activities at different points, generating wealth through the conversion of endogenous resources into tourist attractions. The cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders, encompassing residents, visitors, and tourists, are indispensable for legitimately deriving dividends from investments in tourism development (Figueira, 2013b).

In essence, routes and their components serve as products and promotional vehicles for territories, fostering the creation of geographical networks, particularly among "creative cities". As the most visited places demonstrate this reality, tourist destinations strategically employ route planning as a promotional tool to consume existing goods and services while generating novel offerings. Routes, in various scales and themes, are crucial elements in differentiating within the realm of tourism products. They contribute significantly to territorial circulation, mobilize new factors and means of production, foster networks of cooperation and competition, and serve as the backbone of travel and the tourist experience. The creation of routes is fundamental for the sustainable development of tourism, playing a pivotal role in enhancing territorial productivity and promoting the unique attributes of destinations (Figueira, 2013a). Furthermore, examples such as the Camino de Santiago highlight how routes, initially rooted in religious motivations during the 11th and 12th centuries, have regained prominence. The Camino de Santiago was declared the "First European Cultural Itinerary" in 1987 and earned UNESCO World Heritage status in Spain in 1993 and in France in 1998. These instances underscore the enduring significance and recognition of paths, demonstrating their capacity to evolve into esteemed cultural and heritage assets (Cravidão, 2014).

3. Methodology

Methodology is defined as a systematic form of research, which contributes to the production of knowledge, and the understanding of phenomena that individuals and organizations encounter in their daily activities (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). Furthermore, as stated by Galego and Gomes (2005), the methodology, theoretical framework, and the researcher's skills collectively form the triptych that underpins scientific research. Collis and Hussey (2005) argue that a method is not inherently qualitative or quantitative based on classification but rather on

its application. Consequently, if the data collected based on the frequency of a phenomenon or variable occurrence are considered quantitative (numerical). Conversely, if the primary focus is to understand the meaning of the studied phenomenon, the data are regarded as qualitative (nominal). In qualitative research, it is essential to start with a well-formulated research question and inquire about the literature's insights into the phenomenon under study (Resende, 2016).

This study aims to comprehend the significance of the Barcelos Rooster (Galo de Barcelos) and evaluate how the establishment of a tourist route, named 'Barcelos Rooster' (integrating the 'Figurado route' and 'Camino de Santiago' route), can contribute to the sustainable development of Barcelos, a UNESCO Creative City, as a tourist destination. Therefore, the central research question for this study is: *how might the creation of a tourist route, integrating the 'Figurative route' and 'Camino de Santiago route,' focused on the 'Barcelos Rooster' contribute to the sustainable development of Barcelos, a UNESCO Creative City, as a tourist destination?* To address this, several semi-structured interviews were conducted to achieve specific study objectives, namely: i) Explore and understand personal perceptions and significance of the Barcelos Rooster as a symbol in Portuguese tourism; ii) Examine the perceived impact and implications of the UNESCO Creative City designation on the cultural and tourism landscape in Barcelos; iii) Identify and analyse the aspects of the Barcelos Rooster that individuals find appealing or significant within the broader context of Barcelos' culture and heritage; iv) Evaluate the anticipated effects of establishing the 'Rooster of Barcelos' tourist route on the local tourism industry and visitor experiences; v) Examine perceptions of how the global recognition of the Rooster of Barcelos contributes to the sustainable development of tourism in Barcelos; vi) Identify and analyse potential advantages and disadvantages perceived in consolidating various tourism attractions under the 'Galo de Barcelos route' brand.

In the realm of qualitative data collection for tourism-related studies, a significant portion of primary data emanates from diverse sources: interview transcripts, focus group sessions, open-ended online surveys designed to interpret the studied phenomenon, recorded observations, and analyses of documents, websites, social media platforms, photographs, and multimedia materials. In the context of this study, primary data were acquired through semi-structured interviews involving eight residents and eight international visitors. These interviews were conducted face-to-face with respondents in Barcelos throughout the months of December 2023 and January 2024. Concerning the selection process for interview subjects within qualitative research, sampling techniques were employed, often falling under the category of purposeful

sampling. This method entails the deliberate selection of participants and cases that align with the emerging theory's requirements, facilitating the collection of the most pertinent data to address the research question (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). The sample consisted of sixteen interviewees, ranging in age from 23 to 70, all directly connected to the subject under investigation. More specifically, there were eight residents in Portugal and eight international visitors from various countries, including the USA (1), Spain (1), the UK (3), Angola (1), Argentina (1), and New Zealand (1).

For this study, qualitative data analysis was approached through content analysis, a prominent technique in contemporary empirical research across various fields of Human and Social Sciences

(Vala, 1986). According to Jennings (2005), a content analysis involves reading, annotating, and coding texts to derive meaningful insights from non-quantifiable qualitative data. The process might include evaluating the relevance of emerging categories within the study's context, ensuring alignment with the real-world scenario. The goal is to transform raw data into a coherent representation that aids in answering the research question. In fact, a clear understanding of the content analysis process and appropriate category selection is crucial for this transformation (Hall & Valentin, 2005). Furthermore, Bardin (1977) presents content analysis techniques, emphasizing category analysis as the oldest and widely used method. It involves breaking down text into units, organizing them based on similarities, and presenting diverse categorization options. Thematic analysis, known for its speed, suits straightforward discourses. The process converts raw data into a textual format, initially forming categories through a labelling process. In the second stage, interviews are reviewed, and units of significance (codes) are assigned. Restructuring may occur. In the third stage, texts are revisited, organized by category, and recategorization happens based on interpretation. Before data interpretation, category validation is essential (Resende, 2016).

According to Creswell (2007), qualitative data analysis is a meticulous methodological process involving careful data collection, analysis, and report writing. The report below encapsulates themes, key ideas, and selected quotations derived from interview transcriptions, aligning with the research question, study objectives, and overarching goals. The encoding process facilitated the emergence of themes outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Themes and key ideas resulting from qualitative data analysis:

Theme 1: Symbolism of Barcelos Rooster
Residents' key ideas:
Barcelos Rooster as a cultural icon, representing freedom, justice, and luck. Recognized internationally, the Rooster holds sentimental value, reminding people of Barcelos' creativity. It is perceived as a symbol of identity, promoting tourism and city recognition.
Visitors' key ideas:
Rooster as a symbol of Portugal but learn its specific Barcelos connection. The Rooster evokes feelings of home and represents Barcelos, known internationally.
Theme 2: Barcelos, UNESCO Creative City
Residents' key ideas:
The UNESCO designation enhances economic growth and preserves artistic traditions. Creativity distinguishes Barcelos, making it unique and appealing.
Visitors' key ideas:
Visitors are unaware of Barcelos' UNESCO status but find it important for city attraction. The designation is positive, encouraging visits and generating curiosity.
Theme 3: Barcelos Rooster in Culture and Heritage
Residents' key ideas:
Residents find joy in the Rooster's colours, textures, and smells, connecting to festive memories. The Rooster is an authentic symbol, deeply tied to Barcelos' identity.
Visitors' key ideas:
Visitors appreciate the Rooster's aesthetic and cultural significance in Barcelos. It is seen as an attractive embodiment of Barcelos' heritage.
Theme 4: 'Galo de Barcelos' Tourist Route
Residents' key ideas:
Residents support the Rooster route for economic and cultural benefits, explaining its true meaning.

They emphasize its role in preserving traditions and cultivating cultural roots.
Visitors' key ideas:
Tourists see the route as an opportunity to understand the Rooster's history and culture.
The route enhances the tourist experience with interesting attractions.
Theme 5: Sustainability in Barcelos Tourism
Residents' key ideas:
Residents highlight the positive impact of the 'route Barcelos Rooster' on tourism, employment, and city recognition.
They stress the need for careful management due to increased visitors.
Visitors' key ideas:
Visitors expressed doubts about the Rooster's story attracting significant tourists but acknowledge potential for sustainable development.
Theme 6: Attractions under the 'Route Barcelos Rooster' Brand
Residents' key ideas:
Residents believe cooperation is crucial for the route's success, emphasizing the need for awareness.
Residents see economic benefits but question if existing products may feel threatened.
Visitors' key ideas:
Visitors view the complete route as a motivation to choose Barcelos as a destination, foreseeing positive impacts on tourism.
While anticipating interesting attractions, some express uncertainties about potential drawbacks.

Source: own elaboration based on data qualitative analysis of this research.

4. Findings

To address the research question, relevant literature was reviewed, and primary data were collected through 16 semi-structured interviews with both residents and foreign visitors. Qualitative thematic analysis of the interview data revealed six themes, as presented in Table 1. In the picturesque town of Barcelos, Portugal, respondents' narratives highlighted a genuine and collective interest in tapping into the tourism potential embodied by the Rooster of

Barcelos. Esteemed for its cultural, symbolic, and economic significance, this iconic figure has spurred discussions about creating a tourist route. This initiative is not viewed merely as a journey but as a golden opportunity to boost tourism, preserve local traditions, and promote the sustainable development of this destination.

Commencing with Theme 1, the Symbolism of the Rooster of Barcelos, residents collectively stress the Rooster's iconic status in Portuguese tradition, embodying values like freedom, justice, truth, and luck (Respondent 3). Conversely, visitors present diverse perceptions, with one expressing a preconceived notion that, before visiting Portugal, the Rooster symbolized the entire nation (Respondent 10).

Transitioning to Theme 2, the designation of Barcelos as a UNESCO Creative City, residents highlight economic growth, and the preservation of artistic traditions tied to this esteemed recognition (Respondent 2). Conversely, visitors, with varying awareness levels, express different degrees of familiarity with Barcelos' inclusion in the UNESCO Creative Cities network (Respondent 16).

Within Theme 3, 'Barcelos Rooster' in Culture and Heritage, unanimous agreement arises from both residents and visitors, underscoring the Rooster as an authentic and representative symbol. Residents derive joy from the Rooster's sensory attributes, associating them with festive memories and a profound sense of belonging (Respondent 9). Meanwhile, visitors, captivated by the Rooster's aesthetic appeal, recognize its cultural significance within Barcelos' broader heritage (Respondent 13).

The discourse then shifts to Theme 4, the 'Rooster of Barcelos' Tourist Route, where residents and visitors align in their optimism, perceiving the route as a promising economic and cultural asset (Respondent 9). Residents view the route as an invaluable tourism asset, providing a platform to elucidate the true meaning of the city's symbol. Simultaneously, visitors see it as a significant advantage and a captivating tourist attraction (Respondent 10).

Sustainability in Tourism takes the spotlight in Theme 5, with residents emphasizing the positive impact of the 'Route Barcelos Rooster' on tourism, employment, and city recognition (Respondent 9). However, an undercurrent of caution emerges, emphasizing the need for meticulous management due to the expected surge in visitors. Visitors, while expressing reservations about the Rooster's narrative attracting a substantial tourist influx, acknowledge its potential in fostering sustainable development (Respondent 10).

Lastly, Theme 6, Attractions under the 'Rooster of Barcelos' Brand, elucidates the collective understanding of both residents and visitors regarding the critical role of cooperation among stakeholders (Respondent 1). Residents anticipate economic benefits, including job creation and increased demand, tempered by reservations about potential threats to existing products. Meanwhile, visitors perceive the complete route as an impetus to choose Barcelos as a destination, foreseeing positive impacts on tourism but concurrently harbouring uncertainties about potential drawbacks (Respondent 2).

In sum, the tapestry woven from these diverse perspectives, encapsulated through direct quotes and key ideas, sheds light on the depth and vibrancy of the narratives surrounding the Rooster of Barcelos and the envisioned tourist route. Anchored by citations, the collective voices of residents and visitors contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the cultural, economic, and sustainable facets of this symbolic journey, enhancing the authenticity and richness of Barcelos' communal narrative.

Linking back to the literature review and the content analysis of documents, the Barcelos Rooster (Galo de Barcelos) symbolizes the fusion of two ancient traditions in the region: the art of craftsmanship and the Jacobean legend surrounding the miracle of the rooster. Over time, these enduring customs have become intertwined, influenced by the impact of tourism in Barcelos. The establishment of cultural routes is deemed fundamental for the sustainable development of tourism, serving as territorial productivity factors that differentiate tourism products, enhance territorial circulation, mobilize new factors, and means of production, create networks of cooperation and competition, and ultimately promote territories as the backbone of travel and tourist experience (Figueira, 2013a).

Furthermore, the Barcelos Rooster, deeply rooted in Portuguese folklore, has undergone a significant transformation from a local curiosity to a symbol of national pride and, notably, a representation of Macau's post-sovereignty transfer to China in 1999. Macau's cultural evolution, transitioning from a Portuguese colony to a Special Administrative Region of China, brought about notable changes in its cultural symbols. The surge in tourism, from 7.44 million visitors in 1999 to 39.4 million in 2019, prompted the creation of new tourist-oriented products, including appealing souvenirs. In response, Macau reinterpreted the Barcelos Rooster, aligning it with qualities esteemed in Chinese culture, honesty, grit, and prosperity, enhancing its appeal as a souvenir and securing its place within Macau's cultural identity (Amaro, 2024). Despite concerns about the acculturation of Barcelos' intangible cultural heritage by Macau tourism, this phenomenon presents an opportunity to achieve the primary objective of this study.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the cultural landscape of Barcelos has evolved into a multifaceted tourism destination, woven from its rich historical tapestry and vibrant traditions. From intricate handicrafts to the renowned Camino de Santiago pilgrimage, delectable gastronomy featuring the legendary roast rooster, esteemed Vinho Verde, to a bustling traditional market, Barcelos stands as a hub for creative tourism, thriving on intangible cultural heritage and living traditions.

This study delved into the pivotal role of the 'Barcelos Rooster' exploring how the establishment of a dedicated tourist route centered around this iconic symbol could propel Barcelos toward sustainable development. The overarching research question aimed at unravelling the potential of the 'Barcelos Rooster' tourist route to contribute to the sustainable development of Barcelos as a UNESCO Creative City, attracting tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences.

A literature review provided a comprehensive understanding of the cultural significance of the Rooster of Barcelos, while primary data from 16 semi-structured interviews with residents and foreign visitors enriched the narrative. The qualitative theme analysis distilled these insights into six key themes, each revealing unique perspectives on the Rooster and its cultural route.

Residents and visitors alike expressed genuine interest in the Rooster of Barcelos as a cultural, symbolic, and economic asset. The tourist route was perceived not only to boost tourism but also to preserve traditions and contribute to the sustainable development of the region. The symbolism of the Rooster resonated deeply with residents, representing freedom, justice, truth, and luck, while visitors discovered a specific Barcelos connection to this national symbol.

Barcelos' UNESCO Creative City designation emerged as a source of pride for residents, highlighting its role in economic growth and artistic tradition preservation. Residents emphasized the joy derived from the Rooster's sensory attributes, while visitors appreciated its aesthetic and cultural significance within Barcelos' heritage.

The envisioned 'Barcelos Rooster Tourist Route' garnered unanimous support as an economic and cultural asset from both residents and visitors. Sustainability in tourism emerged as a critical consideration, with residents foreseeing positive impacts on tourism, employment, and city recognition, while visitors acknowledged its potential in fostering sustainable development.

Lastly, the theme of Attractions under the 'Rooster of Barcelos' Brand underscored the importance of cooperation among stakeholders. Residents envisioned economic benefits but questioned potential threats to existing products, while visitors saw the complete route as motivation to choose Barcelos as a destination, albeit with some uncertainties.

In summary, the amalgamation of these diverse perspectives, substantiated by direct quotes and encapsulated key ideas, forms a comprehensive narrative. The 'Barcelos Rooster' in its journey from cultural symbol to tourist attraction, not only reflects the town's rich heritage but also presents an opportunity for sustainable growth. With Barcelos poised as a UNESCO Creative City, the proposed cultural route holds the potential to further elevate its status as a global beacon of creative tourism. Despite challenges, the Rooster's evolution, even when acculturated in Macau, signifies not only a threat but an opportunity to preserve Barcelos' intangible cultural heritage. This study encapsulates the voices of residents and visitors, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the cultural, economic, and sustainable dimensions of this symbolic journey.

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