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**CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT  
POLICIES – THE CASE OF A PORTUGUESE U.N.E.S.C.O.  
WORLD HERITAGE CITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Tourism profits from the endogenous resources of territories and has become a major instrument of development for many towns and regions all over the world. Tourism is also a way to preserve the cultural heritage of a region. The city of Guimarães in northern Portugal has become a place of strong symbolic significance and now constitutes an example of urban Portuguese patrimony preservation.

The city has tried to justify the world heritage certification attributed by U.N.E.S.C.O. in the year 2001 by increasing the number of infrastructures and implementing a tourism animation programme with a growing level of diversification. This paper aims to produce a short analysis of the tourism strategy followed by the Guimarães tourism authorities, addressing the issues of the city's tourism image, visitors' profile and cultural dynamics.

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism has taken on a growing importance in towns and regions all over the world, representing as it does one of the more promising ways of attaining benefits from territory resources. It is already one of the largest industries in the world and the trend indicates that it will continue to grow, both in well established tourist destinations and in those yet to be exploited.

As an activity which uses endogenous resources, tourism depends on the specific attributes of each region. For tourism development to be viable, the available resources in the region have to show a tourism vocation. These resources can derive from a variety of territory attributes, namely natural, human, historical and cultural. Meanwhile, the economic use of these resources supposes that basic conditions are provided in terms of economic and socio-cultural infrastructures.

In order to transform tourism into an instrument of economic development, besides the before-mentioned provision of infrastructures, it is essential that major efforts are made to create innovative and diversified tourism products and services, that some level of coordination between tourism actors is guaranteed and that an adequate level of investment in the environmental equilibrium and in cultural patrimony valorisation is assured.

These ideas are supported by the emergence, in recent decades, of a new generation of tourists which has been showing a growing preference for diversified tourism and cultural products. Increasingly, people travel to visit historic and archaeological sites, museums and other tangible goods, as well to experience the atmosphere of places (Riganti 2009). Besides experiencing a clearly visible expansion, cultural tourism has also become more complex (Hu et al. 2009; Pulido Fernández & Sánchez Rivero 2009).

This being so, it should be underlined that the only way for the territory to take real profit from tourism activity is to succeed in integrating it into its economy as a whole, that is, it "cannot be considered in isolation from key drivers that will shape the world of the future" (Dwyer et al. 2009: 63). In other words, tourism activity can mark a path to regional and local development only when it succeeds in being part of the available general productive system and not when it is taken as an autonomous industry (Tao & Wall 2009). Tourism, cultural tourism included, can have an important multiplier effect on the economy whenever it is appropriately managed. Seen in another way, tourism can be quite disruptive of the economic, social and cultural equilibrium and, probably, a danger to the environment. In this sense, it is worth emphasizing that "tourism, using a sustainable approach, is a model that makes a strong

appeal to authenticity, as it integrates multiple human senses and varied agents” (Peres 2008: 146).

The diversity of segments and the complexity of the tourism market necessitate well conceived and properly implemented promotion and managing strategies, supported by close partnerships with the tourism regions and its actors (Pulido Fernández & Sánchez Rivero 2009). The multiplicity of actors involved, itself, supposes a minimum level of institutional coordination and the active search for basic consensus about aims and common advantages (Henriques 2007; Dwyer et al. 2009; Riganti 2009). Some authors go even further and claim the need to develop a network approach to its planning and management (Simeon, Buonincontri & Trapani 2009). Coordination and the search for consensus are even more necessary when we are dealing with cultural tourism policies as the previously mentioned atmosphere of places, essentially the preservation of the identity and attractiveness of a place, goes beyond its mere physical appearance (Riganti 2009).

It is our conclusion that this is indeed the path being followed in Portugal. In order to achieve successful results, however, we would have to ensure that: i) there was no mismatch between administrative borders, statistical units and tourism destinations; ii) the territories tourism potential was approached from the point of view of their resources and not their ability to lobby the central public authorities and iii) a cultural tourism policy should be thought of as not as an end, but, instead, as a way to reach a more diversified cultural ambiance, able to renew itself from the flow of its original natural spring, from where it could obtain and preserve its singularity in regard to competing territories. Meanwhile, as this paper will make clear, we are far from the desirable reality and indeed these authors fear that a large part of the Portuguese cultural patrimony, built and symbolic, like that in the Minho region (Northwest of Portugal), will continue to be neglected. In this way, we risk squandering opportunities to create employment and wealth and finally even risk losing this same cultural heritage because people will not realize its economic potential.

Until now, there have been no major studies conducted in Portugal on the reality of cultural tourism, either from a macro point of view or regarding the special cases of cities or places classified by U.N.E.S.C.O. as world heritage sites. Besides shedding some light on this reality, it is the aim of this paper to underline the need of such territories to develop a more sustained and diversified supply of cultural events and general tourism products to be able to transform themselves into important cultural tourism destinations.

Using the concerns and goals outlined above as guide lines, this paper will analyse and discuss some features of the tourism promotion and management of a small European town, Guimarães, located in northwest Portugal. Due to the town's specific features, the analysis will focus on the role cultural tourism is playing in its development and the city's possibilities for taking more advantage of this tourism segment. The first section of the paper provides a review of the literature on tourists' motivations and the role that cultural tourism occupies in their preferences. In Section 2, we offer some methodological notes regarding the empirical approach followed; this is followed by a presentation of some general data regarding Guimarães and a description of its features, in which the singularity of the city is underlined. In Section 3, we outline the tourism development strategy that has been followed and the profile of the city's visitors; and in Section 4 we present some of the policies that have been implemented to date. The final sections of the paper offer the concluding remarks with some suggestions for possible strategic policies to be followed in the future.

## **8.2 TOURISTS' MOTIVATIONS AND ECONOMIC USE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE**

### **8.2.1 Main tourists' motivations**

Krapf (Vogeler Ruiz & Hernández Armand 1997) proposes the following typology of motivations for tourists to choose a certain destination:

- cultural, educational and professional reasons (e.g., the wish to be in contact with a different societal environment, to follow special events, to learn languages);
- ethnical reasons (e.g., return to their origins; feelings motivations);
- sports reasons (e.g., to follow a special sport event or practise a sport);
- physical reasons (e.g., to rest, health motivations);
- sociological reasons (e.g., to know the world, to spend a honeymoon);
- religious reasons (e.g., pilgrimage, to visit religious sites).

Cunha (1997) presents a similar typology of the reasons behind tourists' decisions, organizing them according to affinities. For this author, cultural and educational motives are wrapped up with the wishes of the visitor to see the way people from other countries and places live (that is, the wish to interact with other people and visit new places, as mentioned by White & White 2009); to observe unusual or new things; to better understand the reality of today; to

see monuments, museums, archaeological sites and to establish contact with other civilizations; to study, to get a degree.

The typology proposed by McIntosh et al. (1995) suggested that travel motivation could be broken down into four main categories: physical, cultural, interpersonal, and status and prestige. In this case, the cultural motivations are defined as the wish to know a new destination, its music, art, folklore, dances and religion. The interpersonal motivations, by turn, are associated with the wish to make contact with new people, to visit family and friends, to escape from the routine or from the family, to make new friends.

By its side, the proposal of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) (Cunha 1997) refers to two kinds of visitor motivation, resulting from the images people have of a certain destination: the rational reasons (which have to do with trust, safety, saving, personal compliance and modernity) and the affective ones (associated with curiosity, novelty, sympathy, affectionateness, the wish to make contact with something thought to be wonderful, the willingness to experience a sense of freedom or friendship).

Referring specifically to cultural tourism, Varico Pereira, cited by M<sup>a</sup> José Cunha (2008: 168), says that this form of tourism has its origins in “the demand for knowledge, for information, the willingness to establish contact with other people, other societal environments and other sites, cultural curiosity regarding others’ behaviours, traditions and cultural identities (...). This form of tourism activity has strong roots in the connections between past, present and future; it is founded on contact and intimacy with the cultural heritage, with traditions which have been influenced by the dynamics of time but that are still able to reveal what a certain community used to be and used to do.”

In the same way, Riganti (2009: 5) speaks of the substantial increase in activity experienced by this kind of tourism which is based on the wish “to experience another culture, in various forms”.

The WTO, in its turn (Henriques 2007), says that, in its large sense, cultural tourism can be defined as every travelling of people – “as it answers to the human need for diversity, with the purpose of increasing the cultural level of individuals and allowing people to have access to new knowledge, experiences and contacts” (Henriques 2007: 8).

In a more restricted sense, cultural tourism will refer to travelling (visits) just for cultural and educational reasons (Henriques 2007). Following the thoughts of Pine II & Gilmore on the issue, the same author (Henriques 2007: 8/9) adds that “tourism as a unique cultural experience [...] should constitute an ‘authentic’ and ‘emotional’ experience and be ‘memorable’”. A similar idea is kept by Ritchie & Hudson (2009).

Based on all of the above, it seems clear enough that an analysis of the market and a follow up of tourists demands and their motivations are crucial to being able to permanently adjust the tourism development strategy of any destination, as well to anticipate its future (Hu et al. 2009; Ritchie & Hudson 2009). As an economic activity, tourism is, indeed, one that is more exposed to social dynamics and one which better reflects those changes.

As underlined before, tourist preferences and behaviours have been changing. As stated by Hu et al. (2009) and Pulido Fernández & Sánchez Rivero (2009: 3), “today’s tourists are ever more sophisticated and demanding”. The growing valorisation of less crowded destinations, of services quality, of active and more personalized holidays, of a closer contact with nature, of the discovery of the unknown and of products differentiation comes from those changes in the tourists’ motivations ranking. In that context, culture, traditions and ways of life constitute tourism attraction factors that assume a growing relevance (Cunha 2008; Riganti 2009; Pulido Fernández & Sánchez Rivero 2009). Referring to the kind of tourist consumer we can find nowadays, Bloom & Nilsson (2002), add that the tourist does not always seek attractions as such but also the feeling and the identity the place creates for him/her, that is, the total experience that can be attained. Addressing the same issue, Riganti (2009) uses the term atmosphere of a place, to invoke something that is hard to define but, most certainly, a major factor behind the attractiveness of certain cities or territories.

Anyway, that should not lead the tourism authorities and the tourism operators to conclude that it is the new cultural tourism segments that always experience the larger consumer demand. Taking the case of Andalusia, for example, Pulido Fernández & Sánchez Rivero (2009) found that the largest segment still corresponds to the “museum culturophiles”, that is those who highly value the existence of museums in the town.

Following Richards, Henriques (2007) adds that culture, as basic input of the tourism sector, is from the outset responsible for a share of between 35% and 70% of all tourism in Europe. Besides, it is one of the industry segments that experience a greater growing rate. The figures given in 2006 by the World Tourism Organization, as reported by Simeon, Buonincontri and Trapani, (2009), did not differ greatly from this earlier report: in this year, it was estimated that cultural tourism constituted 40% of the total world tourism and was expected to experience an increase of 40% until the year 2010.

For the industry, that is, those tourism destinations (either urban or non-urban) willing to acquire a certain status or reinforce their market position, the consequences of the dynamics previously mentioned are quite clear: products

supplied should be 'authentic' but also more diversified and personalised; quality and product innovation must always be present and selling policy should be essentially based on market segmentation. In this regard, it is useful to recall the so-called Leiper's system of attractions, according to which each of the territory's tourism attractions should be ranked as primary, secondary and tertiary (Bloom & Nilsson 2002). This will mean that some of the available territory attributes have a major influence in the decision of the tourist to choose a particular destination (the primary attractions), while other attributes contribute to the decision but, alone, are not enough to capture the attention of the tourist (the secondary attributes) or, simply, do not influence the visitor's decision (the tertiary attractions) because he or she might be ignorant of their existence previous to the visit.

### **8.2.2 Tourism Impacts**

In social and cultural terms, tourism acts as an incentive to restore and preserve the historical patrimony which would otherwise just vanish. If historical heritage becomes a tourism attraction, local people become aware of the need to keep it safe and respect local architecture, whose value is often under-evaluated by the autochthonous community (Baptista 1990; Bote Gómez 2001; Henriques 2007; Cunha, 2008; Riganti 2009).

The truth is that without economic support the material historical heritage can barely be preserved and, regarding economic support, we acknowledge the role of consumers, that is, tourists, in this case, to grant it. Once historical patrimony has been restored and after succeeding to establish and/or to introduce some dynamics in the supply of cultural industries that will support the tourism strategy to be implemented, wealth can be generated and thus involves local people and attracting new activities and residents. Tourism activity can also act as an important factor of valorisation of local practices and traditions that, otherwise, would risk being lost. The role of tourism is also important in terms of favouring interchange and dialogue between different cultures, that of the 'visitor' and the one that welcomes the visitor, the 'host', which can be quite different in terms of social and ethical values and life styles. In this way, taking the case of cultural tourism, Pereiro Pérez (2003) says that, while the visitors forget their worries, local residents can establish non-standardized communication bridges with those visitors, contributing to a non asymmetric, educational and quite convivial intercultural encounter.

Even considering these positive effects, we have to be aware that negative impacts can also occur, namely the danger of falling into what one can

call "tourism folklore" or a process of "commodification of the destination" (Riganti 2009), which would mean the denial of local singularities or, still, the less visible effect of "cultural fusion". In these cases, the dominant culture, the one of the tourist, is also the one which reaps the greater advantage (Pizam & Mansfield 1999). According to Peres (2008) and, also, to Pino II & Gilmore (Henriques 2007), who hold a similar point of view, on the one hand, there is the need to keep in mind that culture is mostly the way people of a certain territory think, feel and act and, on the other hand, there is the idea that the first source of a tourism industry's sustainability comes from its authenticity, that is, its singularity. Whenever alien values replace the local ones or whenever alien behaviours are adopted, breaking up the local identity, normalization takes place, weakening or erasing the differences that were the origin of the competitive advantage of that territory (Cunha 1997; Riganti 2009; Simeon, Buonincontri & Trapani 2009).

Tourism can also be a factor for the local population's marginalization and a drive to social tensions when it is conceived without incorporating local values and when it is not able to generate economic and financial benefits that can be appropriated by the local community (Cunha 1997; Andrade 2008).

Even if it seems paradoxical, the first and almost sole injured party when mistakes are made is tourism, itself (Boullon 2000). In fact, what will most suffer from the mistakes committed are the natural and cultural resources, the tourists themselves and service companies, as well tourism destinations and connected tourism itineraries. Being so, in order to increase benefits and minimize damages associated with tourism development, it is necessary to define alternative approaches or tourism development strategies which imply a responsible use of the territory, harmonizing tourism interests, natural environment preservation and local community interests (Vera 1997; Bote Gómez 2001; Bloom & Nilsson 2002; Henriques 2007; Peres 2008). Riganti (2009: 5) calls this "sustainable cultural tourism strategies".

As mentioned by Delma Andrade (2008), cultural tourism can be thought of as the way tourists consume the culture of the host community. According to Delma Andrade (2008), this is the understanding of the issue available namely in Greg Richards. Furthermore, again according to Andrade, "to think this way is to uphold a reductionist, utilitarian or functional approach to culture. Tourists do not just consume culture but, also, interact with it in their confrontations with "alterity", in the games of identities they play and, mostly, from an experience mediated by cultural symbols." (Andrade 2008: 55).



### **8.2.3 Some comments regarding the sustainable tourism development model**

As mentioned by Lim & Cooper (2009), sustainable tourism has faced diverse definitions. As a consequence, it was criticized by being ambiguous, vague, sectoral, too conceptual and confused with environmental issues.

Even if a sustainable tourism development model does not exist, as the economic, social and political systems and the natural resources, themselves, are different from place to place, Donaire (1998) identifies seven basic principles which allow one to speak of sustainable tourism development. Those principles are: planning, integration, openness, size, participation, perdurability and viability.

As one can infer from all this, sustainability comes from, namely: a thorough and constant analysis of the market situation and its forecasted evolution; the identity of the host site; the local strategy, within a certain territorial framework; the scale attained by the activity, closely related to the tourism resources and infrastructures; the tourism operators strategy and their ability to establish appropriate economic networks; the capacity to encounter a satisfactory equilibrium between resources use and environment and local identity preservation; and the commitment of the stakeholders and general local community to the tourism activity. As concluded by Simeon, Buonincontri and Trapani (2009), taking the case of Pompeii, Herculaneum and the archaeological system of Vesuvius, in Italy, it is not enough to count on the presence of a highly attractive archaeological site to make a cultural tourism destination successful and viable, as the competitiveness of a place comes much more from the package of resources available and the way they are explored and preserved. It is also wise to be aware that an increasing amount of cultural tourists are searching to enjoy the living experiences available in the destinations more than look at monuments and visit museums. Keeping in mind that cultural tourism is less and less homogeneous and monolithic, it is still wiser to closely follow the market trends, establishing adequate approaches to the relevant target market segments identified (Pulido Fernández & Sánchez Rivero 2009).

Returning to the issue of sustainability but also to that of market complexity, if a destination (established or emergent) wishes to prevent economic, social and environmental problems from growing with the increase of the tourism activity and, thus, wants to preserve its singular positioning in the market, it should develop a planned sustainable approach from the beginning. We can find this idea clearly underlined in De Villiers (cited by Henriques 2007), when he says that the relationship between tourism and culture is mutually beneficial and vital to sustainable development of culture

and tourism. Following this reasoning, he claims that this cohabitation of culture and tourism is crucial to development and, moreover, it is the key to the survival of both. Fundamentally, this underlines the need to keep in mind that the “touristic experience goes far beyond the visitors regard and the sellers strategy” (Peres 2008: 146) when planning the tourism development of any territory. This key concept is relevant to all forms of tourism, be that environmental, seaside, rural or cultural tourism. Perhaps, it is even more valid in this last case, taking into account the nature of the resources, both tangible and intangible, which allow it to exist.

### **8.3 METHODOLOGY**

With the aim of characterizing a few dimensions of Guimarães’ cultural tourism, we made use of secondary information sources, namely: promotional booklets available to tourists in museums and tourism offices; specific analyses of the tourism demand for the town and the Ave Valley, as a whole; and other information, of promotional nature or not, namely that produced by the Guimarães Tourism Area (Zona de Turismo de Guimarães), recently closed an autonomous tourism entity.

The above mentioned entity, Guimarães Tourism Area (GTA), conducted several studies, from time to time, trying to follow the evolution of the tourism demand and looking to capture the visitors’ satisfaction regarding the local services and equipment supplied to those tourists who opted to travel to Guimarães. It is worth mentioning that those analyses do have some methodological limitations and, besides, were mostly carried out during the 1990’s. The studies were mostly focused on the tourist profile and made use of non-standardized methodological approaches. The information used in those analyses was collected through questionnaires filled in by the tourists during their stay in Guimarães hotels (just five hotels were used for that purpose) and surveys applied to tourists during their visits to the town centre. Despite the fact that the information was collected from two different sources, data were treated together. The reports available from 2000 and 2007 (Zona de Turismo de Guimarães 2000, 2007 a), b) and c)) follow that approach.

The Atlante town network, to which the municipality used to belong, was another source of information (Atlante 2005a), b), c) e d)). Up until 2006, this network was comprised of six towns, four from Portugal and two from Spain, all having city centres classified by U.N.E.S.C.O. as world heritage sites. Born in 2003, this organization tried to conceive of the development of these six cities by making use of the concept of integrated planning.

Despite the efforts made, as publicized in the reports produced and in the information available at the site of the network (<http://www.cidadesatlante.org/>, accessed 22/29 August 2008), we have to conclude that the work actually done remained far from what was expected, especially if one considers the network participants potential. Much more could have been done, such as an operational joint programme in the several domains concerned, including that of cultural tourism. Instead, this work was centred on an evaluation of the existing problems.

Information from a few books was also used because since the 1990's several books about the town have been published. Mostly, those publications were the result of the U.N.E.S.C.O. classification of the city as a world heritage site in 2001. Although these books boast attractive graphic presentation, they were not very useful as the majority of them contain very little economic and socio-cultural information (e.g., Cruz & Pregitzer 2002; Paulo 2002).

They are books that envisage attracting tourists' attention, even though only a few of them are written in English or in a language other than Portuguese.

As regards the use of primary sources, we performed a research visit to the city in September 2008. The aim of this was to observe the level of preservation of the buildings and inner streets and the uses made of them, and to interview the head of the ex-Guimarães Tourism Area, Vítor Marques.

In that personal interview, semi-structured, we tried to clarify doubts raised by the reading of the documents mentioned before, tourism analysis reports and promotional books, and from our visits to the town centre and the city website. It was also our aim to attain detailed information regarding several issues connected to the tourism development strategy followed and to the tourism agents involved.

A special emphasis was placed on attaining information regarding the way the municipal authorities used to deal with the tourism industry. It is worth mentioning that the ex-GTA is now managed by the municipal council.

#### 8.4 BRIEF CHARACTERIZATION OF THE CITY OF GUIMARÃES

Previous to the evaluation of the tourism dimension of Guimarães, we believe it is useful to make a brief characterization of the city in order to identify its more relevant tourism resources and their attractiveness.

The city and the municipality of Guimarães have been reinforcing their importance in the regional context as a result of being part of a large urban conurbation which has shown a strong demographic and economic dynamics in the last decades.

This reinforced position is well illustrated through the duplication of the municipality population between 1940 and 2001, as documented by the ten years population census made available by the National Statistical Institute (Instituto Nacional de Estatística 1991, 2001 and 2004).

With the definitive implantation of the University of Minho campus at Azurém, and the opportunities for its enlargement since the end of the 1980's, the town has acquired a new demographic dynamism. Having experienced a low level of population increase during the sixties and eighties of the 20th Century, the nineties showed an increase of 13%, which saw the population living in the town reach 65 thousand people in 2001.

The historical centre was not able to follow that rhythm, with a loss of almost 20% of its population between 1940 and 2001. It was also during the 1960's and 1980's that this part of the town experienced its most severe losses, attaining 16% and 21% (Atlante 2005b).

Despite, or, in fact, because of the recent dynamism in the town, as a result of the rehabilitation process implemented the city centre is in a situation where a considerable amount of the residential buildings remain empty (18%), and the tendency seems to point to the increase of this phenomenon.

The work done since 1985 did not cover all buildings and the recent calculations claim that 35% of the existing buildings still need to undergo restoration work (Atlante 2005b). Meanwhile, one can not devalue the fact that 331 buildings included by the Historical Centre Office (Gabinete do Centro Histórico) in the priority intervention area have been rehabilitated (225 of them in the inner hall zone – 46% of the existing buildings) (Atlante 2005b). Renting is the most common method of lodging, and the business has shown a tendency to diversify and increase to cover both the lower and higher levels of lodging buildings.

In the same way as other towns endowed with historical centres, Guimarães has long since been condemned to become a patrimony which is less and less devoted to residential and commercial use. The sole contradiction in

recent decades has been two public programmes (PROCOM and URBCOM) which were intended to enforce the urban city centre trade.

Nowadays, the Guimarães historical centre does not constitute the dominant services and lodging centre of the town. The deterioration of residential buildings and the excess of noise associated with the existing night clubs were the main reasons for the current situation. Another reason was the progressive conquering by certain kind of services and retail activities of the lower grounds of the residential buildings in a few of the more appealing sites, namely due to the restrictions dictated by the rules regarding the use and the preservation of the historical centre of Guimarães. Some of those rules had to do with the tourism and leisure vocation of the historical city centre.

Guimarães possesses a historical city centre 121 hectares large, which represents just 5.3% of the total area of the town (Atlante 2005b – Table 8. 1).

**Table 8. 1: General data regarding the city of Guimarães.**

	Guimarães
Town/urban area (ha.)	2278
Historical centre (ha.)	121
Classified area (ha.)	19,5
Inhabitants of the town, 2001	65439
Inhabitants of the historical centre, 2001	9317

Source: Adapted from Atlante (2005b), Estudo sobre o despovoamento dos Centros Históricos da Rede Atlante, Câmara Municipal de Évora, Évora, p. 15 and 17.

Within the historical centre, the “traditional” retail activities persist, with all their advantages and inconveniences, even if its inhabitants account for no more than 14.2% of the total population of the town.

As expected, the amount of existing classified buildings or sets of buildings in the historical centre is significant. Amongst them, we can find 10 national monuments, 10 buildings of public relevance, 2 buildings of local relevance and 3 others crossing the classification process, making a total of 25 buildings protected by the law. To these figures we should add 13 protected areas, 5 special protected areas and 4 non aedificandi areas around some of the classified buildings (according to the IPPAR website – <http://www.ippar.pt> – accessed 22 August 2008).

The relationship established between the world heritage city centre and a few buildings and symbolic places is also noticeable, for example the Guimarães castle, the Duques de Bragança palace, the chapel of S. Miguel, the Senhora da Oliveira and Santiago squares and the Alberto Sampaio museum.

Besides playing a symbolic local and regional role, all of them are closely associated with the beginning of Portugal as an independent nation.

The classification by the U.N.E.S.C.O. of the old part of Guimarães as a world heritage site was supported by several criteria, of which we find the close relationship of the city to the birth of Portugal as an independent state in the twelve century and with the emergence of Portuguese as an autonomous language. Another important factor that was taken into consideration was the high level of preservation of the buildings of the old city.

One of those buildings is the medieval Counts' Palace (Palácio dos Duques de Bragança) (<http://www.ippar.pt> – accessed August 2008) (Remoaldo 2006). An important part of the existing built patrimony comes from the XVII century and demonstrates the use of traditional building techniques in its construction. The streets are narrow and sinuous and the allotments are also narrow and lengthy, given the historical centre its typical medieval shape (Domingues 2006; Remoaldo 2006).

## **8.5 GUIMARÃES – AN EXAMPLE OF CULTURAL PATRIMONY?**

### **8.5.1 Tourism potential of the city**

As mentioned before, besides the high value of its built patrimony and its symbolic value, the historical centre of Guimarães is a place that confers a strong feeling of cultural identity upon its inhabitants.

At the same time, in its historical evolution the city is endowed with the basic attributes to make it a useful example and a reference for understanding the urban and planning practices in Portugal. From the information we gathered from secondary sources and from what we observed, it is our belief that the motivations for a visit to Guimarães are, mainly, gaining contact with traditional practices and better knowledge of its cultural identity.

Other strong motivations to visit the city as a tourist seem to be the acquisition of better information regarding the beginnings of the Portuguese nation as well as seeing first hand a part of the world U.N.E.S.C.O. patrimony heritage. Objects coming from old traditions and practices of that community, such as the lovers' handkerchief (lenço dos namorados) and the lovers' small ceramic pot (cantarinha dos namorados) were a common part of daily life until not long ago.

The facilitating and inhibiting factors for tourism development in Guimarães are listed in Table 8.2.

**Table 8.2: Facilitating and inhibiting factors for tourism development in Guimarães.**

<b>Facilitating factors</b>	<b>Inhibiting factors</b>
1-The certification as a world heritage site	1-Weather with cold wet winters and annual high temperature amplitudes, due to its location and continental nature
2-Cultural services supply during summer season, located around Senhora da Oliveira square	2-The circumstances of the North of Portugal and Minho, the territories to which it belongs, being treated as “residual tourism destinations” in the aim of the national tourism strategy

<p>3-The popular festivities (e.g., Gualterianas festivities, which have been celebrated for centuries ago and which have a strong regional impact, lasting four days)</p>	<p>3-The low visibility of the “Guimarães cultural tourism destination”, due to the inexistence of a periodical cultural event capable of attracting the attention of international visitors and tour operators</p>
<p>4-The close proximity of the principal city museums to each other (e.g., Alberto Sampaio museum, Arte Primitiva Moderna museum, Duques de Bragança palace, Martins Sarmiento archaeological museum), allowing tourists to visit all of them on foot</p>	<p>4-The fragile sustainability of the cultural programme available and the deficits in terms of the cultural programme and its promotion</p>
<p>5-The hotel supply available which include two manor house (pousadas) of high architectural value, besides several rural tourism units, a camping park and a youth hostel</p>	<p>5-The fragility of the official office devoted to tourism management and to tourism promotion, namely as regards to technical and human resources (as illustrated by the absence of updating of the tourism website during the whole of summer 2008, due to a break down of the server where the webpages were located)</p>
<p>6-Accessibilities (it is located 50 km from the Oporto International Airport, and it is endowed with direct connections by highways (A3, A7, A11) with other relevant neighbour towns; it is also just 160 km from the Vigo, Galicia, Peinador Airport)</p>	<p>6-The incipient use of foreign languages in the tourism promotion booklets and other promotional supports, including the website <a href="http://www.guimaraes.turismo.com">http://www.guimaraes.turismo.com</a> and placards, and the inconsistency of the cultural programme promotion (taking the example of the availability in the tourism website of the Town Cultural Agenda, only available in Portuguese)</p>
<p>7-The investment made in the information technologies (e.g., audio-guide system “Take the patrimony in your pocket”) and the importance attributed to the use of electronic support in the city promotion (e.g. the site <a href="http://www.guimaraesturismo.com">http://www.guimaraesturismo.com</a>)</p>	<p>7-The absence of or inefficient coordination of the tourism itineraries and tourism promotion with other neighbouring municipalities</p>



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8-The organization of free of charge tourism learning programmes, in a partnership with the Tourism Learning Institute (Instituto de Formação Turística) and the Hotel and Tourism School of Oporto (Escola de Hotelaria e Turismo do Porto)

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9-The attempt to preserve the monastery sweets and the regional gastronomy

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10-The national recognition obtained by a few of the marketing campaigns promoted by the local tourism office and by the quality of the services provided by it (e.g., wining promotional scheme of the National Tourism Prize of the year 2008)

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11-The existing partnership between the local tourism agents and authorities in terms of tourism development strategy

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### **8.5.2 Evolution of the tourism demand and the tourist profile**

The data which allows the characterisation of the city of Guimarães tourism demand were those published, mainly, by the ex-Guimarães Tourism Area.

As already mentioned, those data are of limited value, due to the way they were obtained and treated for “statistical” use. Basically, this analysis is based on the amount of visitors that search out the services available in the two existing tourism offices, eventually supplemented by the data about hotel guests, collected in five city hotels.

The data limitations have also to do with the growing role that the on-line information is taking in the travel decisions made by tourists, namely regarding the choice and booking of accommodation.

This is mainly the case of the tourist looking for cultural products. In the next paragraphs, using those data, together with the ones available in a tourism market report produced by ADRAVE (2004), we present the evolution of the profile of the tourists that visited Guimarães within the period 1987 – 2007.

The number of visitors to Guimarães city centre has been increasing since 1995, attaining an annual growth rate of 15,9% between 1995 and 1999 (Zona de Turismo de Guimarães 2000; ADRAVE 2004).

Meanwhile, a break in this growing tendency was experienced during 2000. According to Vítor Marques, the head of the GTZ, this problem was solved through an intensified promotion effort made by that entity,

materialized in the production of some new booklets and city tourism maps which were made available in the town hotels.

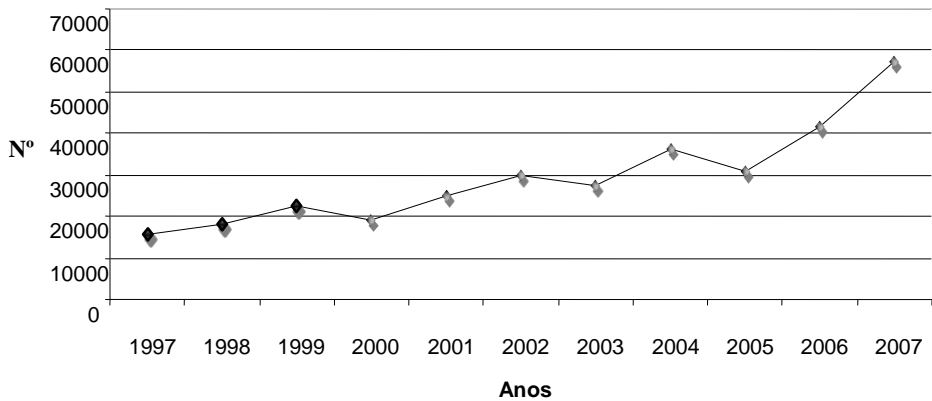
Additionally, “some marketing effort was also directed at the tour operators, travel agencies and ordinary citizens, via participation in several tourism fairs, involving the massive distribution of promotional materials” (Zona de Turismo de Guimarães 2000: 2).

The idea in mind was to make the tourism product of Guimarães more visible and to help an eventual visitor become better informed about its tourism attractions. This marketing campaign seems to have produced positive effects, measured in terms of the increase in visitors and, in some cases, made visits to the tourism offices for getting the usual information unnecessary. In this way, it was no longer an accurate method to count tourist numbers according to the visits made to tourist offices.

The promotional effort of the Guimarães Tourism Area in the neighbouring Spanish Galician province should be emphasized, too. That effort materialised in the form of a marketing campaign, under the slogan “Guimarães in the Expo itinerary”, which took place during the years 1997 and 1998. We should remember that Lisbon hosted the word EXPO'98 exhibition in that last year.

A sustained increase in the number of tourists that visited the city was experienced after the year 2000. The figures stood at 19048 in 2000 and 57501 in 2007. Besides attaining a record figure, the number of tourists in 2007 represented an increase of 37.9% vis-à-vis the year before (Figure 8.1).

This increase is particularly relevant as it surpassed the number of tourists attained in the years 2001 (the year when Guimarães was awarded the U.N.E.S.C.O. world heritage certificate) and 2004 (the year in which Portugal organized the UEFA European Football Championship).



**Figure 8.1: Evolution of the Guimarães city centre tourists during the period 1997-2007.**

Source: Zona de Turismo de Guimarães (2000), Síntese de resultados estatísticos, Guimarães (available at <http://www.guimaraesturismo.com>); Zona de Turismo de Guimarães (2007a), Síntese de resultados estatísticos 2007, Guimarães (available at <http://www.guimaraesturismo.com>).

Other relevant factors for understanding the year 2007's record performance were "an informal meeting of European Union ministers, the election of Guimarães castle as one of the seven wonders of Portugal and the city's nomination to host the European Capital of Culture during 2012" (Zona de Turismo de Guimarães 2007a): 2).

Besides the promotional work orientated towards the tour operators, travel agencies, news-writers and ordinary citizens, the participation of the Guimarães Tourism Area in the tourism promotional plan of the regional tourism office and the information available on the website <http://www.guimaraesturismo.com> (which experienced a daily average of 7900 visitors) seem to be additional explaining factors of the phenomenon (Zona de Turismo de Guimarães 2007a).

Since 1996, Portugal, Spain and France have ranked as 1st, 2nd and 3rd countries of origin of the Guimarães' tourists. The Spanish market has been steadily developing a customer loyalty since the last decade of the XX century, and since 2004 has become the number one market for visitors to the city. Within Spain, it is Galicia that holds first place in the market. During 2007, Galicia alone represented 33.7% of the tourists visiting Guimarães.

This situation is a direct result of the province's proximity to the Portuguese border and road accessibility but, that same year, other major

Spanish provinces emitting tourists, were Madrid (19.4%), Catalonia (10.1%) and Castile and Leon (9.7%).

Seasonality is a big problem for tourism on a global level and Guimarães is no different. Seasonality is a phenomenon that affects all tourism, even that of a cultural facies. In the case of Guimarães, the highs in the summer months (mostly in August) are notorious and the slumps during the winter are fairly pronounced (especially in January and February).

The June, July, August and September months have systematically been the ones to register the highest number of visitors (59% of the total year). That figure increases to 75% if we add the information regarding April and May. However, data from recent years has shown a tendency for the reduction of this seasonality. The figures from April, May, September and October contributed to this reduction.

The five more important hotels of the city represent 60% of the total available beds and their occupation rates reached a few points above 50% in the period 1996 – 2000. This average rate is quite close to the national one.

Recent reports mentioned the hotel occupation rate of the main hotel units without naming them. These reports conclude that, between 2003 and 2005 that rate was a few points below the number just mentioned (48%), with the worst result being that of 2005 (44.1%). In the years following 2005, performance has been better (with a high of 53.6% in 2007). These average rates are difficult to increase as the national tourism international promotion strategy adopted tends to devalue this territory as a tourism destination, as already underlined.

Regarding cultural equipment, like the Duques de Bragança palace and the Alberto Sampaio museum, the figures reveal an increase in the number of visitors during the last five years, with 2007 showing the greatest number of visitors (46400 visitors to the Duques de Bragança palace and 237485 to the Alberto Sampaio museum).

Since 2004, the previously mentioned ex-GTA website, was taken as the first promotional instrument of the city, experiencing a greater demand during Easter time and the summer months. This follows the general market trend: as mentioned by several authors (e.g., Chiam, Soutar & Yeo 2009: 31), “in recent times, the internet has emerged as a new distribution channel that enables potential customers to find information more easily”.

Visitors to the ex-GTA website are mostly Portuguese, Spanish, French and Brazilian (Zona de Turismo 2007b)). Besides making available several documents for downloading, (Informative Newsletter, Gastronomic Guide of Guimarães, gastronomic recipes edited during the Two Weeks Gastronomic

Fairs), it provides pedestrian cultural itineraries, an abstract of the audio-guided visits and a game called “GuimaTrivia”.

For some time now, there have been plans to update the website, to make it more enjoyable and better prepared to serve a broader community of visitors. Having this goal in mind, some of the more relevant parts of the Municipality Cultural Agenda, regularly published by the municipal council, are supposed to be translated into English (eventually, also to Spanish) and made available on the site. In order to prevent further breaks in the service, like the one experienced during the summer of 2008, it was also planned to replace the website server base with that of the municipal council.

In terms of marketing strategy, the presence of the local tourism office in several tourism fairs is noticeable. This presence was assured independently of other tourism offices or by participating in national and regional delegations, namely the ADETURN. This effort was intensified in recent years and was part of the effort to make the Guimarães cultural destination more visible. Those promotional events and fairs ranged from international fairs, in several European countries, to regional tourism fairs, namely in Galicia.

In spite of this promotional effort, the local tourism office and the municipal council are aware of the low visibility of this tourism destination. According to that analysis, they intend to intensify the promotional work in order to better attain the envisaged goal. This is particularly important when we remember that the town will host the 2012 European Capital of Culture. Consequently, besides intensifying the marketing campaign, it is planned to progressively increase the cultural programme. Of course, this can only be done within a certain financial budget and level of specialized human resources.

## **8.6 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is no doubt that both the built patrimony (e.g., architecture) and the immaterial one (e.g., festivities and traditions) are resources that should continue to be a benefit to the touristic dynamics of Guimarães. However, those resources alone are not enough to transform the city and the municipality into a relevant tourism destination. To attain that goal it is necessary to develop a programme of cultural events and to integrate Guimarães city into an itinerary of diversified products and tourism attractions.

Several documents produced in recent years regarding tourist visits to Guimarães have made clear the advantage of following that approach (ADRAVE 2004).

There is a clear need to continue the rehabilitation process begun in the 1980's. This process was a pioneering one in the national context at that time and is important for the enlargement of the classified area and to ensure that the city centre will remain alive.

The action taken by the municipality regarding urban patrimony has been mainly normative and supervising in nature. It has been focused towards the definition of strategies, the finding of partnerships and investors and the giving of support to private economic initiative, without, however, any direct intervention in the rebuilding of the urban patrimony, except as it relates to the public domain (Atlante 2005b).

There needs to be further rehabilitation of some buildings and blocks of houses in order to increase and/or make viable its requalification, and most importantly to develop the tourism potential of the city. This effort should be made with the aim of developing partnerships with the tour operators and of coordinating cultural events. Given that the present goal for success is the town's hosting of the European Capital of Culture, it is, we believe, inevitable that such a strategy will be followed. If this strategy is not followed, it will be difficult to respect the time schedule and cost agreements defined by Brussels.

The town conurbation integrated by the municipalities of Braga, Guimarães, V. N. de Famalicão and Barcelos, with the aim of implementing the public programme, Urban Networks to Competitiveness and Innovation, shows evidence that this path is being followed. This is a sovereign opportunity to implement coordinated actions and achieve economies of the scale necessary to give additional potential to the tourism animation programme of this territory which would be impossible from an isolated approach. In this regard, we must keep in mind the common cultural identity of these towns and municipalities, the physical proximity, and the human and patrimonial potential.

Four working teams were created to implement the strategy of aforementioned town conurbation. The areas of focus of these working teams are: "Digital Urban Conurbation", "Urban Rehabilitation and Cultural Dynamics", "Intra and Inter Municipality Mobility", "Cooperation and Business Qualification" and "Human Potential".

The tourism industry is not in itself an area of cooperation. However, as underlined before, cultural tourism has much to do with urban patrimony preservation and cultural dynamics and so can be an important part of the process of dynamization of the tourism sector of this territory and, of course, of Guimarães city centre.

To accomplish this broad strategy, it is necessary to secure enough public funding to support the forecasted actions and to involve the economic agents and the citizens of the territory in a commitment towards its goals.

## **8.7 CONCLUSIONS**

In the literature on tourism, enjoyment of patrimony and culture are always cited as motivations for tourism travelling today. Culture, traditions and atmosphere of places are indeed attraction factors and are increasing important as explanations for the demand of intellectual stimulation and diversified experiences.

Tourism is, on the one hand, an incentive for the valorisation and preservation of patrimony in its material and immaterial form. Furthermore, tourism activity is perhaps the more solid way of obtaining financial resources to preserve that patrimony. On the other hand, tourism can also be the source of social, economic and environmental problems, which means that planning should be a priority. This planning and management must pay attention to the touristic experience and must go far beyond the visitors regard and the sellers strategy (Peres 2008).

In 2001, Guimarães was classified by U.N.E.S.C.O. as a world heritage site in recognition of the value of its historical built patrimony. The award was also in recognition of the preservation work that had been done by the local authorities since the 1980's. But the results attained thus far are not as expected; Guimarães continues to be a peripheral destination at the international level and tourism has not been sufficient to make it the central factor of the city's development. This has to do with problems of scale, problems with the development of a diversified cultural offer and its sustainability, and with the need to develop a more comprehensive approach to cultural tourism dynamization. Only once these problems have been addressed will it be possible to extend the tourists' period of stay.

Nevertheless, we can not forget that the creation of a tourism image of a territory or of a city takes time and involves serious investment in long term marketing campaigns.

All the studies available point to the conclusion that the city has a long way to go to become an established cultural tourism destination, even if it has been moving in the right direction.

The deficiencies that still exist in the tourism promotional website in terms of its navigation and the use of foreign languages, some of them recently surpassed, are good examples of the inconsistencies that should continue being

solved. Another step which needs to be taken regards the diversification and enlargement of the cultural programme. Additionally, the municipality needs to develop real strategies of partnership with the surrounding territory, mainly with other municipalities, such as those which integrate the public programme, “Urban Networks to the Competitiveness and Innovation”.

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