

## TIME OF THE COMMUNITY AND TIME OF TOURISM: NOTES ABOUT TWO FESTIVITIES

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores some of the principal implications and challenges that the rising touristification process of religious and popular festivals may have for local communities, at a time when they are becoming potential tourist attractions, with rising exposure in a broad range of media. In Portugal, many popular festivities are annually celebrated that have a religious character and also reflect the intersection of various elements, linked to both the religious calendar, and to natural and agricultural time and to secular time. As with other types of popular and religious events, such festivities are increasingly seen as potential tourism “products” that can reveal the uniqueness of the host communities and attract visitors. In this text, we intend to discuss the theoretical and methodological difficulty of thinking about the festivity separately from the local population that organises and participates in it, and which feels it a core element of local identity. This exercise is based on analysis of information gathered from previous and ongoing research work into two festivities that are each experiencing such processes today, in their own different ways: the festivity of *Bugiada e Mouriscada*, or S. João de Sobrado, and the *Semana Santa* (Holy Week) of Braga.

### KEYWORDS

festivity; *Bugiada e Mouriscada* of Sobrado; *Semana Santa* of Braga; time, sustainability; community

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## O TEMPO DA COMUNIDADE E O TEMPO DO TURISMO: NOTAS SOBRE DUAS FESTAS

### RESUMO

Este artigo explora algumas das principais implicações e desafios que o processo crescente de turistificação das festas de carácter religioso e popular pode representar para as comunidades locais, num momento em que se tornam ofertas turísticas potenciais, com exposição crescente nos mais diversos tipos de média. Em Portugal, celebram-se anualmente muitas festas populares que, sendo de carácter religioso, são expressão do entrecruzamento de elementos diversos, ligados tanto ao tempo sagrado, como ao tempo natural e agrícola e ao tempo profano. Tal como acontece com outros tipos de eventos de carácter popular e religioso, as festas são cada vez mais perspectivadas como potenciais “produtos” turísticos que servem para expor a singularidade das comunidades detentoras e atrair a atenção de visitantes. Neste texto, pretende-se discutir a dificuldade teórica e metodológica de pensar separadamente o tempo da comunidade, do tempo do turismo, atendendo ao carácter identitário que a festa adquire. Este exercício é baseado

numa exploração de informação recolhida em trabalhos realizados e em curso acerca de duas festividades que passam, cada uma a seu modo, por estes processos na atualidade: a Bugiada e Mouriscada ou S. João de Sobrado e a Semana Santa em Braga.

#### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

festa; Bugiada e Mouriscada de Sobrado; Semana Santa de Braga; tempo; sustentabilidade; comunidade

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#### INTRODUCTION

You need to feel you dance well. It takes passion above all. It's the most beautiful dance that exists. You have to look at the dance with a sense of class because you are a *mourisqueiro*! A Moor! You're a pretty impressive guy! You wear an uniform, you have gold and a sword, you don't wear a mask. You wear boots and must dance well. You have to take pride in what you do. And if you're proud the dance also ought to be proud. Another essential thing, as a senior gentleman once said to me: always listen to the drum! It's the drum that controls everything. You only have one order to give, or two to be precise: to march faster, or slower, and you only have to give the order to "stop" and when it's time to stop, the rhythm changes. (Resident in Sobrado, participant of the festivity of *Bugiada e Mouriscada*)

The theoretical conceptions about mobilities in tourism, together with the study of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism, have been having increasing resonance in the researchers studies that analyse how local communities are being hit by tourism and seek to identify how tourists are building connections with the places (Domínguez, 2019).

Other analyses have focused on the tensions and implications of cultural tourism (and of cultural objects and rituals) supported by the media and sometimes encouraged by the local populations, configuring and giving meaning to cultural elements within local communities (Pinto-Coelho & Pinto, 2018). We are talking, in particular, about the ability of tourism to favour certain possibilities of disrupting the historical time of the local populations, urging them to adapt to other types time masterings, which are much more in line with the needs and the timings of the tourism offer. In any case, we are referring to a dynamics that is bringing about new forms of adjustment, adaptation and resistance that need further elaboration.

From this perspective, this article questions and describes how and under what circumstances, tourism time intersects with the time and timings of the local community of (its) festivity.

The text is based on empirical analysis of two specific festivities: the festivity of S. João, in Sobrado and *Semana Santa* (Holy Week) in Braga. The festivity of S. João, in Sobrado, which is also known as the festivity of *Bugiada e Mouriscada*, has a recognised

cultural and heritage value. It is one of the characteristic events of the municipality of Valongo, in the district of Porto, in the North of Portugal. The *Semana Santa* (Holy Week) in Braga has also gained international recognition.

The empirical study used herein involved direct observation and interviews with residents and visitors at both festivities, complemented by research that took place during and outside the festivities during the year of preparation for the event.

## CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL EXPLORATIONS

Contemporary societies have available instruments and devices that concur to the intensify the sense of instantaneity and to make the possibility of change space and time become true (Bauman, 1999). Several authors have critically analysed how the existence of such devices, which come together with the valorisation of mobility and lifestyles, brings about the need to manage constant challenges caused by disruptions of the natural, historical-social or cultural time of places, communities and groups (Berre & Bretesché, 2018; Bravo, 2010; Némoz, 2018; Jiménez, 2009; Tutiaux-Guillon, 2013).

Although being socially unequal, the permanent mobility and displacement mark contemporary life styles, now characterized by the capacity for nomadic wandering and constant discovery. Alongside this trend there is a rising possibility of using several technologies, that allows that any object, event or phenomenon to be potentially made public at any moment and from any distance, as well as consumed immediately and at any time. Consumption feeds consumption and much of tourism activity has to do with the ability to produce artefacts, as well as practices and memories, that are not only immediately consumable, but can be consumed on a large scale and on a mass market basis. It is perfectly understandable to assume that any element subjected to tourist exploitation is under pressure to be constantly changed and reconfigured. This means to assume the relative fleeting nature of original or “authentic” elements. However, from the point of view of the structural time, any of the aforementioned objects can also become potentially mass-market tourist attractions as they become targets of specific mode of dissemination and exposure. This process is especially noticeable as regards religious or cultural tourism. This type of tourism takes into account core identitarian elements, which are not only local, but also global (this is the case of the natural places which are “discovered” and open up for global touristic enjoyment).

Such “identities” commonly serve to “freeze” communities’ times. This happens for many and different reasons that may be almost diametrically opposed – attempted ownership, local community spirit, regionalism, nationalism, or an attempt to foster a sense of openness, interaction, change, and sociocultural aspiration. There may be an intention to preserve communities as regards their characteristics and natural “habitats”, thereby positioning them in a circular time. But the goal may also be to offer them after being transformed in result of their exposure to tourism. It is clear that any process which aims to increase the social visibility of a cultural object, and in particular of festivities, events and performances, is vulnerable to this tension: between receiving an external

perspective, that may deliver possible material and symbolic rewards; and managing the effects of that process, that may imply responding to different rhythms. This is a tension that studies of development have been addressing. Arjun Appadurai's (2013) approach to the relationship between culture and economy should be highlighted, while asserting the need for more involvement of the local population in defining their future, avoiding their depletion. Festivities and performances, when they become the object of exposure and dissemination, raise the same tension between permanence and change; and between openness and resistance. As the valorisation of the "intangible products" become more evident, religious and cultural tourism offer increasingly more artefacts from the past. Therefore, time and temporality become also objects of exchange: the chance of manipulating time becomes a commercial object. This also happens "with the fairs and the representative and celebratory recreations/performances of certain narrative events, which leads to the process of transformation that involves the fabrication of an experience to make it more attractive to the tourist" (McKercher, Ho & Cros, 2004, p. 395).

David Harvey (2016)<sup>1</sup>, explaining the capitalist contours of current tourism projects, describes the processes of reconfiguration and exploitation of cities and urban spaces. He interprets tourism as one of the central axes of hypermodern capitalism, in which the experience of instantaneity is the central element of exchange. Harvey's thesis demonstrates that, when culture and heritage are offered for tourism consumption, they are likely to be increasingly subject to rapid and ephemeral experiences. This is because tourists are willing, above all, to "see" and to experiment, rather than to experience on a continuous or repeated basis. Tourists become "flâneurs" (Santos & Azevedo, 2019) who are active in the enjoyment of objects, processes and/or events and performances that tend to be renovated, in response to the tastes and requests of the general public. The same experience of temporal and "spatial flaneurie" can be incorporated in, and reproduced by, the festivity itself and translated into an alteration or reduction of performances/scenes, displacement of narratives and/or delay and time dilation. The literature identifies several implications suggested by the pressure to use festivals and festivities as tourism products and offerings. These relate to specific aspects, such as the existing physical space, risks and safety, number visitors and infrastructures, in general. But the question of the eventual dissonance of times is far less debated despite their importance for understanding (un)sustainability. That is, the dilemmas between the time of the festivities and the time of the performances (which mixes and blends with the time of the community where the festivity is celebrated – endurance time); and the time of touristic activity and of its mediatic and economic exploitation (abstract and accelerated time). This last time normally introduces either acceleration of delay in the festivity or in the community.

In the opinion of Bernadette Quin (2009), while the socio-anthropological study of festivities has garnered a great deal of attention over time, enabling us to discover

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<sup>1</sup> Lecture by David Harvey (2016), entitled "Culture and cities: the challenge of tourism". Retrieved from <http://www.cccb.org/en/multimedia/videos/culture-and-cities-the-challenge-of-tourism/225261#>

and analyse an increasingly wide range of celebrations, there has been less interest in analysing the relationships of the impacts of tourism on festivities. In other words, there has been less analysis on the question of conflicts of time potentially originated by the “transformation” of the festivity (which may correspond to tidying, arranging or cleaning the most ugly or unpleasent features of it) on the basis justifications advanced by those actors who intend to “valorise” the festivity through fostering their exposure as well as its ability to attract tourists.

Quin (2009, p. 16) analyses the ideas of authors such as Formica and Murrmann (1998) and Derret (2003), to suggest that residents play a central role in how festivals and events are associated with the local community’s well-being, social cohesion and sense of identity. This idea gives substance to the thesis we have been outlining herein, concerning the interest in considering within analysis of the sustainability of the festival’s tourism processes, the fusion of festivity time with community time, across various modalities – past, present and future.

And what does this means? Daniel Catala-Perez (2013, p. 165) notes that festivals are “cultural facts” that recall “non-religious things or events through ceremonies, rituals, celebrations and commemorations”. In the author’s understanding, these events are “transmitted by tradition”. This means that the “identity” of the community and of individuals is intrinsically constructed in relation to these events. These “are” the community of belonging in itself, as if such festivities existed before the community. This is a complex challenge, from every perspective, both for those within the community and outside, and whatever their role or function.

One of the strongest criticisms of this way of perceiving the use of territories, places, festivities and/or rituals is the risk of their “decharacterisation”, alienation and loss of ties that link each of these objects and/or phenomena to the community with which they merge, in the constitution of a unique and proper identity. As Muchazondida Mkono (2012) argues, the question of authenticity, in particular in the case of events and festivities, continues to pose a number of questions. On the one hand, because it facilitates the promotion of the festivity and its “popular” character, especially by a certain elite that may take material or symbolic advantage of the festivity material and symbolic use of the festivity. On the other hand, because “authenticity” is one of the most highly debatable qualities of any good/event (Rickly-Boyd, 2012).

From the perspective of Eva Parga and Pablo Alonso González (2019), sustainable tourism practices imply considering the social and symbolic value of places – which means taking into account their aesthetic and economic dimensions, as well the collateral risks. Culture is vulnerable to power games and political struggles. In fact, the discussions associated to the touristification of festivities and popular performances are recent and inevitably refer to the latent tensions brought about by the exposure of the festivity. In addition to this gap, they may be linked to strategies that expose “people” and their performances, making this people to be simultaneously consumer and objet of consumption (Catenacci, 2001).

Throughout history, religious festivities have played a fundamental role in organising community life. They play a vital role in dynamising the uses of time of the various groups in the local communities. As is highlighted by Durkheim (1979/1912), festivity time is an integral part of social time. Festivities therefore create times of rupture and of effervescence. Because they are integrated within communities' social rhythms, and are articulated with various other times, including agricultural rhythms. The latter, in turn, are associated with natural and religious rhythms that “mark” time, by institutionalising the moments of gratitude from the community to supernatural beings, in whom the community confides trust for protection over all fields of life. Festivities therefore play a decisive role in the development of economic activities (Amirou, 2007; Secall, 2009). In this context, we must analyse religious tourism as something that is profoundly linked to the religious calendar of a specific place (Tendeiro, 2010) and can be defined as “that type of tourism that is motivated by visiting holy places (shrines, convents, monasteries, churches, chapels, cathedrals) or participating religious celebrations (Holy Week in Seville, for example...)” (Parellada, 2009, p. 22).

Admittedly, modern-day religious tourism doesn't just concern religiously-motivated travel. Additional reasons for tourist mobility include the desire to learn about places, the search for isolation, individual reflexivity. There is therefore a difference between the religious tourist and the pilgrim who focuses on the “divine dimension of a sacred place” (Wiśniewski, 2019, pp. 206-207). Regardless of the definition that may be used, it should be noted that travel driven by tourist motivations associated with religious festivities and festive events has been gaining great prominence in the tourism market. This expansion inevitably raises several questions.

In the second part of this article, while maintaining the focus on enjoying the festivity as a tourism product that has the potential to attract outsiders to the festivity, we will explore several ideas about the festivity of S. João de Sobrado (*Bugiada e Mouriscada*) and the *Semana Santa* (Holy Week) in Braga.

### S. JOÃO DE SOBRADO (*BUGIADA E MOURISCADA*)



Figure 1: Detail of the dance of the Bugios (S. João de Sobrado – *Bugiada e Mouriscada*)  
Credits: Luís António Santos

The festivity of *Bugiada e Mouriscada* takes place on June 24, the day of the feast of São João (Feast of St. John the Baptist), in the village of Sobrado, municipality of Valongo (Pinto et al., 2016). The festivity takes place from dawn to dusk, it includes festive celebrations on the previous nights. Its structure is substantially the same as has been documented in previous works (Gallop, 1961/1936), although it has undergone several transformations in terms of content, including scenes and performances. The festivity focuses on the depiction or recreation of a legend about a dispute between Moors and Christians concerning the possession of the statue of São João. During the day, the non-religious scenes, characterised by performances involving the *bugios* and *mourisqueiros*, especially dances and unscripted staged performances, take place in various places of Sobrado, having as the main protagonists are the local residents. The religious ceremonies occur almost simultaneously and primarily take place in the church, including mass and a procession in which it is the *mourisqueiros* who carry the adorned litters with statues of the saints (Pinto et al., 2016).

One of the main features of this festivity is the connection with the local community and the ability to reproduce itself in time. When community participants are asked why they like this festivity, they invariably give the same reply: “it’s our passion. It’s in our blood, it’s a must (...) Yes, it’s a must”. Interviews with people in the community show that there is no one who doesn’t take part in the festivity in any way and at some point in their life: “if S. João disappeared I think this parish would be disoriented. Seriously! It’s our point of reference, for good and bad”. The sense of belonging and “ownership” of the festivity underpins and configures the community’s collective identity. “Because it’s a tradition. It is many years old. I can’t explain. We like it so much, we can’t even explain it. We work the entire year for this, for a day that goes by so fast” (resident in Sobrado, participant of the festivity *Bugiada e Mouriscada*).

The following excerpt highlights this complex feeling of identification with the festivity, not only for what it is at present, but mainly for what it represents throughout the local peoples’ lives and, therefore, for what it has brought them in terms of construction of day-to-day life:

the passion is the hardest thing to explain. For me passion is what we feel and we live in our extreme fantasy in which we (...) passion, passion is that situation when you know that you just arrived to that day and you know that you will participate in what you love, and that means a lot to you. (resident in Sobrado, participant of the festivity of *Bugiada e Mouriscada*)

To feel “passion” for the festivity is something which is cultivated since an early age, when the involvement with the various activities and imaginaries begins to take shape. This “passion” for the festivity corresponds to the structural collective conscience which acts in favour of the community cohesion and integration. That is why people say that the festivity is something that “is in our blood”, undisputed, “innate”, a visceral part of the body and soul of the local residents. There is an intrinsic fusion of individuals with the community in the festivity, and through the festivity.

It's the pleasure of the festivity. I remember this since I was 7 or 8 years old. We enjoy taking part. It's in the blood. When I was young, in my twenties, early twenties, and I got back home at 5 am, I would lie down in bed, having drunk a bit and would say "I'm not going!" But when you hear the first *bugios* walking past, making the rattling noise, "tlim tlim tlim", I'd join in, still drunk from the night before! They passed by with their rattles, "Tlim, Tlim, Tlim!" and I would put on my costume and off I'd go! (resident of Sobrado, participant of the festivity of the *Bugiada e Mouriscada*)

For me, the Prison of the Old Man is an amazing moment, but for me if I don't see the Entrance Dance of the Bugios I miss everything. It's the height of the festivity for me, because there everything belongs to you. It is when you show to your people who you are and why did you wait and battled and sacrificed over so many years. The avenue is your's. Everyone is looking at you and you feel a great sense of responsibility. Do I miss it? Yes, a lot. (resident of Sobrado, participant of the festivity of the *Bugiada e Mouriscada*)

The figure below presents a short result of a content analysis made to the answers given to a survey with open questions and to which 63 people answered on the day of the festivity, in 2016. The analysis shows that the festival of S. João de Sobrado is understood as one of the main elements of Sobrado identity. It's a "genetic" feature because it represents "tradition" and corresponds to "passion", it is in "blood" and in the "heart", it gives people the "shivers" and is "different".



Figure 2: Classifications of the festivity of S. João de Sobrado, *Bugiada e Mouriscada*, by residents and participants

Source: Questionnaire survey given to visitors to the festivity (2016, N=63)

"Openness" and "expansion" to tourism therefore raise tensions. There is also the tensions linked to the fear of loosing the festivity. It is well known that the festivity can be moved in time or space, in order to correspond to tourism programmes. For this reason, local residents are vigilant about how the festivity can become the object of more



mass-market tourism consumption. The openness to tourism can also coincide with an alteration in its date. In other words, the festivity can be the object of reproduction and simulation, in order to be seen, lived and interpreted or publicly experienced – by other people. For the community, this is a difficult challenge to accept due to the fear that such exposure or dissemination will reduce the festivity’s dramatic breadth and effervescence (in terms of “colour” and “dust”) and become a mere caricature of itself.

It has already been taken to Porto. I think that it was a misinterpretation of the festivity, by one person who wanted to take it there, not of the people who took part. But I think it should not be taken there. They took the masks from here, the hats, the clothes, to bring some colour, but the essence of the festivity and the sense of curiosity that should be cultivated in people to see what the festivity truly is – is all about the smell, the taste, the dust, its only in June 24, in Sobrado. I think the festivity should be publicised as much as possible, regardless of whether or not there’s room for us all. If there isn’t enough room, some people leave, so the other can stay. Just like in other festivities. (Resident of Sobrado, participant of the festivity of the *Bugiada e Mouriscada*)

This vigilant posture is not however shared by everyone, in the same way. On the one hand, there is interest in broadening dissemination of the festivity at home and abroad. Therefore, they talk of the need to expand dissemination of the festivity through the national television channels. On the other hand, there are several limits to such exposure, in particular associated with infrastructures, resources and limits regarding “ownership” of the festivity and its eventual “decentralisation”. The excerpt below reveals these tensions. The interviewee begins by emphatically underlining the need for the festivity to remain the same: “it’s like this [the festivity, as it is now]: you either like it or you don’t”. Even though interviewee explains why it is important to disseminate the festivity, it is not presented as an object of tourism attraction that can be transformed:

it’s like this [the festivity, as it is now]: you either like it or you don’t. They [the politicians] already disseminate it. They already wanted to classify it as who knows what kind of heritage. Well there have been some things (...) but on the day of *S. João* you see exactly the same people. You may see a journalist, a photographer, a television channel, like Porto Canal or so on, but you don’t see anyone from Spain, France, the Algarve, or Lisbon (...) It’s like this: to like it, we also don’t have many resources to welcome these people here. It’s like [referring to the festivity x], our festivity is much better than [this festivity], but that is always on television. Sometimes they interview people who come from far away to see the festivity. Round here even if people travel to get here, it’s from the local area. You might see someone, I don’t know, for example, Mr. X’s brother who has already brought so many

people here, but they're all from this area, Campo, Valongo (...). People hear about it, but they never come here to see it (resident of Sobrado, participant of the festivity of the *Bugiada e Mouriscada*).

Now, if this really expands beyond the district of Porto, instead of dancing for 40 minutes we'll have to dance for two and a half hours so that everyone can see. That's the difference, and that's what scares me a lot. We won't be able to cater to so many spectators. That's my main fear. Besides, I think everyone should watch and specifically know about the story of S. João de Sobrado. Now that scares me a lot. Imagine if there were 10,000 people here! And now imagine 100,000! When you watch S. João you'll see the spectacle, which is a huge crowd of people watching. If this became known worldwide, where are we going to put so many people? What will happen to the parish of Sobrado? You understand? That scares me. Now the festivity will always be the same. Always with the same die-hard fans and always with my same bugios, trying to maintain the tradition. (resident of Sobrado, participant of the festivity of the *Bugiada e Mouriscada*)

The festivities just happen. They have a specific moment in time to reveal themselves. They imply a performance and this takes place on a specific moment: the day of the festivity. People are not willing to change and this prospect is experienced with anxiety. In this festivity, there are variations in the number of participants in each performance, whose duration also alters. The costumes used have also evolved over the years. But all these variations pass through critical analysis, as it can be noticed from the following excerpt.

I was raised here, the *Bugiada* means a lot to me (...) you have to take part and be critical, in a dual sense: we are critical before, during and after the festivity. Because being critical is also part of the involvement and testimony. We're critical, because we like it. If we sometimes criticise something, it's constructive criticism. If you ask me a question now: "if you were [this character] again would you do exactly what you did?" and I'll reply: "I will try to do exactly what I did and something more!". And something different! There is one thing that I should have done, I did it, but I did it badly, I should have done it better. (Resident of Sobrado, participant of the festivity of the *Bugiada e Mouriscada*)

The next excerpt demonstrates the intrinsic need to preserve the festivity that participants view as being "ours," even though, as we said before, they see it as "publicised" and made known to those who aren't required to know all the intricate details of it, but only its manifestations.

It's beautiful to show this to other people in the country, to show them that we have a beautiful festivity here, beautiful in our eyes because it's ours. I know that friends who came here enjoyed it, and were delighted with the festivity's beauty, and many of them aren't even aware of what is going on, but people are astounded by the dances, the gestures. I think the media should disseminate more, but to achieve this the people here also have to work more, it's not up to outsiders to work, the locals have to show what they want. Whether they want it to be disseminated or not (...). But it's good that they spread the word, and that many people visit. If it's positive for other people, why shouldn't it be for us? (Resident of Sobrado, participant of the festivity of the *Bugiada e Mouriscada*)

In the specific case of this festivity, considerations about the various times that clash, or may enter into conflict, are more evident when the festival becomes a potential tourism attraction. These should be considered in relation to analysing the sustainability of this process: i) the structural and historical time of the community, in which the celebration is assumed as a kind of foundational myth, in this case, of the parish, whose identity is renewed and celebrated each time that the festivity is annually actualised; ii) the time of the festivity, which is organised in direct correspondence with this structural time and sense of identity (which is linked to various other annual rhythms and times and during the day of the festivity itself); iii) and the actual and chronological time in which the festivity takes place and is organised (the time that includes how the community is, how it is perceived in a specific year).

### **SEMANA SANTA (HOLY WEEK) OF BRAGA**

Religious tourism, black tourism and cultural tourism are strongly linked to religious heritage, imprinted in objects of material heritage and, above all, in religious and holy festivities, celebrations and events.

Travel to religious places is an important subsector of Europe's tourism market, and it is associated to the progress of globalisation (Ritzer & Liska, 1997). Every year more than 300 million people visit the world's most important holy shrines (UNWTO, 2016). Religious tourism is particularly difficult to define, since it is a phenomenon that combines various different motivations and practices. Visiting a religious site is not only a personal pilgrimage, associated with religious devotion, it may also be combined, alternatively or concomitantly, with cultural and entertainment motivations. A trip of religious pilgrimage almost always means that pilgrims are religious tourists, since they adapt their trip to the characteristics of the tourist process, i.e. assuming a tourist consumption behaviour (Santos, 2006).

Participation in religious events has been transformed into an expression – for local residents – and an experience – for visitors – of local traditions, linked to the cultural identity of the respective places and their residents. This means that religious pilgrimage is not an end in its own right, but part of a multiple and hybrid practice that cumulatively

involves a religious experience (individual and collective), the chance to visit local cultural heritage sites (churches, monasteries, museums, etc.), to visit nearby towns, enjoyment of local culture (gastronomy, crafts, etc.). We can therefore affirm that not all the tourists who visit religious places today have religious motivations, since they may also have cultural, historical, architectural or other interests (Neves, 2010; Fernandes, Pimenta, Gonçalves & Rachão, 2012).

It is therefore difficult to draw a line between non-religious travel and pilgrimage, because having religious motivations is not mutually exclusive of also having non-religious motivations. From the point of view of Tourism Studies, the distinction between non-religious tourist practices and religious-oriented practises becomes irrelevant; what we find is a combination of religion, culture and tourism. As (Amirou, 2007, p. 138) stated “modern religious practices are part of the broader category of leisure activities”.

Braga is renowned for its religious festivities, in particular its Catholic ones. Known as the “city of the Archbishops”, it has numerous religious references, including churches, chapels, monasteries, seminaries, museums and statues that are linked to the Catholic church. *Semana Santa* (Holy Week) in Braga is a major celebration that involves thousands of participants, visitors and the local population. Over the years this event has become an icon of the city, both due to the grandeur and complexity of the religious celebrations, and the cultural events included within the programme of the *Semana Santa*.

A commission is responsible for organising the *Semana Santa*, consisting of members of the Church – including the Cabido (priests corporation) of Braga Cathedral, the Irmandade da Misericórdia (confraternity), the Irmandade de Santa Cruz (confraternity) – as well as non-religious institutions such as Braga City Council, the Turismo do Porto e Norte de Portugal (tourism board) and the Associação Comercial de Braga [Braga Commercial Association]. But this wasn’t always the case. These entities have become involved in the initiative over the years, as a result of the *Semana Santa*’s major impact on the city.

In 1948, the poster for *Semana Santa* already invited people to visit the city. Emphasis should be placed on the slogan that refers to the “impressive religious ceremonies”, and which highlights the importance and valorisation of the religious feature.



Figure 3: Poster for *Semana Santa* (1948)  
Source: <https://semanasantabraga.com/arquivo/cartazes/>

On April 17, 1965, the headline of the *Diário do Minho* newspaper was: “alongside the thousands of people already in Braga, many other thousands joined them yesterday for the Good Friday celebrations”. Already in this period many people visited the city to take part in the religious festivities. In 1986, there was a reference to tourism in the posters for the Semana Santa. Over the years there has been an increased support for the event, in particular from Braga City Council and Braga Commercial Association.



Figure 4: Poster for Semana Santa (1997)  
Source: <https://semanasantabraga.com/arquivo/cartazes/>

In 2002, there began to be interest in increasing the level of religious tourism, due to the high number of tourists who visited the city during the religious celebrations. In this context, Braga Commercial Association presented the project “Religious Tourism – promotion and stimulation of religious tourism as a driver of regional development” (2003), whose main objective was to attract more visitors to the city. In 2013, the need to “secure tourists” was a major goal of the Semana Santa’s organisational committee. To this effect, several exhibitions were inaugurated and the procession of guides was organised to introduce the people of Braga and tourists to the heritage sites that lie behind Braga’s “Processions of the Steps” (the steps of the Stations of the Cross). The “guides” are typical flags, with a high emotional and symbolic value, used in the “Processions of the Steps” in the parishes.

From 2003 onwards, according to data from the Braga Tourism Office, there has been a significant growth in the number of visitors to the city of Braga, accompanied by significant changes to the programme of Semana Santa, which now includes concerts, exhibitions and conferences. The processions include theatrical performative scenes, as well as processions and religious celebrations in the Sé Cathedral. According to a study conducted in 2011 by Turismo Porto e Norte de Portugal (tourism board), tourists visit the city of Braga during Semana Santa mainly for leisure reasons. The study reveals that tourists appreciate, first and foremost, the beauty of the squares/streets and secondly

the diversity of processions/events. This demonstrates that tourists pursue more cultural than religious activities during their visit to the city of Braga, during the Semana Santa celebrations.

As the city increases its national and international recognition, due to its religious and cultural attractions, there has been fast-growing interest of secular entities, which are intrinsically or historically linked to Semana Santa. This promises to increase the dissemination of the festivity and “transform” it, to establish a major tourism attraction for visitors from other parts of Portugal and abroad. The Semana Santa’s programme involves an increasingly broader range of *stakeholders*, and shopowners are encouraged to create shop displays that allude to the festivities. Residents can also take part in various initiatives integrated within the programme, such as photo competitions, which aim to foster dissemination and public involvement.

In this case, the most evident tensions aren’t related to the intrinsically identity-based identification between the festivities and the local population, as was mentioned in relation to the festivities of S. João de Sobrado. Instead the main tension lies between religious tourism and mass-market tourism, of ephemeral consumption, which is valued primarily as a form of cultural heritage than an example of religious devotion and experience. The Archbishop-Primate of Braga stated to the *Diário do Minho* (March 29, 2015, p. 7) that Semana Santa “cannot be an organisation of cultural events” that stimulate tourist activity. In his opinion, “Braga should be able to maintain the most important dimension of Semana Santa. The most important thing is contemplation of Christ’s cross”. He added that “Semana Santa shouldn’t just be a well-organised tourism programme, it must say what has to be said, and must talk to people’s hearts”.

But it is clear that, over time, the non-religious entities have intensively fostered the event as a tourist attraction through the media, promoting partnerships with local businesses. In an interview, Braga City Council’s Councillor for Culture and Education<sup>2</sup> stated that:

we have to be good hosts, so that the word of mouth is positive. The fact that the television stations visit us to produce news bulletins makes all the difference. The power of television is very considerable, but we still suffer from our remote location. It’s a religious event that amazes people, even non-believers.

During the same interview, the councilwoman, Lídia Dias, stated that “the Semana Santa committee also has to make a leap, because it is very closed and very difficult; to face the ever-increasing challenges of tourism promotion, one has to adopt a different perspective”.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview conducted by Márcia Silva, Braga (2015).



Figure 5: Poster for Semana Santa  
Source: <https://semanasantabraga.com/arquivo/cartazes/>

In 2012, several Semana Santa gadgets were produced as a way of promoting the image of the city's celebrations and souvenirs. The main figure is the “Farricoco” (the masked penitents of the Ecce Homo procession). However, there are other, such as postcards, photographs, and school stationery. In parallel to the religious festivities, the “Braga Easter Market” was created. This provides entertainment activities in the historic centre and introduces visitors to the products of the region, such as handicrafts and sweets. According to information collected in a survey (n=45), the resident population recognises the interest in expanding Semana Santa events (Silva & Ribeiro, 2018). Residents say that economic benefits is one of the positive aspects of the festivities. They also highlight that the festivities foster a greater sense of pride in their city. They consider that Braga is prepared to welcome tourists, because it holds a very good network of hotel offers. In addition, they say that Braga offers good conditions to visitors and has abundant and well-structured information available online. Increased pollution and parking problems are some of the aspects that cause dissatisfaction. However, residents are strongly resistant to alter the festivity and to handle with the effects brought about by the increased number of visitors, as well as by the transformation verified in the sequence of the performances which make part of the festivity.

## CONCLUSION

The two festivities discussed in this article are both religious, but they are quite distinct in how they have developed over time and as regard the community's connection with them. They also differ with respect to the incorporation of non-religious elements and their importance in defining the identity of the festivity.

The *Bugiada e Mouriscada* of Sobrado, largely consists of those elements, which construct various choreographic and theatrical performances and scenes that include, within the festive moments, rituals of reversal of roles and criticism of the community's day-to-day life, especially of the local powers. Touristification of the festivities raises

several questions from a theoretical and practical-political perspective. Not only because the festivities are cyclic manifestations rooted in the identity of the local communities, that become the object of observation and exposure to different audiences, but also because they are fluid, transitory, and dynamic realities that are traversed by various processes of transformation and reconfiguration.

The empirical cases we have studied, and more specifically in the case of the festivities in Sobrado, reveal constant concern about the eventual loss of the festivity because of its dissemination as well as of the possible attempts to tone down its most subversive features. Considering concepts such as authenticity, popular culture and the time horizon, it is important to establish ways to live and forge a dialogue between the past of the local communities and its future. This means that the festivity cannot be viewed by the community as a closed time, with a frozen date, from which fixed relationships can be established over time with visitors. Nor can it be understood by stakeholders as a repository of past time, that is sometimes nostalgically revisited. It is necessary to preserve it as an element of popular culture.

In both of the festivities analysed herein, the discourses of the local residents and participants are ambivalent. Firstly, in relation to the benefits of media exposure of the festivities, which they consider to be important and necessary, in order to make the festivities known to the rest of Portugal and the world. Secondly, concerning the challenges that such exposures pose from a spatial and logistical perspective and in the times of, and for, the festivity. It is also evident that local residents and participants in both festivities, especially in the festivities of *Bugiada e Mouriscada* experience more or less consciously the dilemma between opening the festivity to other communities, claiming that festivity must be known as an old century tradition, and preserving it in a way that it can persist as “authentic”.

Therefore, the discussion that we may put forward about the implications and challenges brought about by the use of intangible goods implies to mobilize several concepts and consider the need to promote knowledge about all the processes that may contribute to the dissemination or conception of new touristic offers. This participative dimension is fundamental considering two reasons. On one hand, there is a strong emotional and identitarian connection between the population in relation to those aspects that they consider as being their essence. But in other hand, there are new forms of living, looking, experiencing and consuming the festivity, including those enunciated by experts, politicians and academics.

Translation: Formigueiro, Conteúdos Digitais, Lda.

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