

**COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM FESTIVALS IN THE MÉDIO TEJO REGION,  
PORTUGAL – A POTENTIAL FOR THE SPECIALIZED CULTURAL  
CONSUMPTION OF CREATIVE TOURISM  
(ID124)**

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**ABSTRACT**

Creative tourism is seen as an alternative to the serial reproduction of culture and the massive consumption of cultural tourism. Cultural and creative events have been highlighted as strong strategies for tourism development in creative tourism literature. Postmodern tourists seek meaningful experiences through a closer contact with local communities and act as co-creators of the overall creative tourism experience. Festivals can offer the opportunity for such phenomena in direct or indirect ways. In creative tourism both intangible and tangible cultural assets can be (re)activated for tourism purposes and creative *add ups* can be included in these events. Three community based tourism festivals are analyzed in reference to creative tourism literature and cultural capital theory. These events are characterized and creative strategies are suggested. By offering specialized cultural activities, this will enhance the cultural capital of participants, planners, local communities and help to differentiate tourism supply in the region. This paper aims at contributing to the research and development of creative tourism in the central region of Portugal, mainly the Médio Tejo region, which embodies thirteen municipalities in the center of the country.

experience

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The study of creative tourism is a recent area of research within tourism (Richards, 2011). Tourism literature mentions creative tourism as a segment, which allows a greater participation of the tourist near local communities, allows the usage of their tangible and intangible assets, in

contrast to traditional cultural tourism, thus constituting a specialized form of cultural consumption (Carvalho, 2014). This contributes to the establishment of a new paradigm. Here active participation, involvement and transforming experiences are key for tourists.

Richards and Wilson, (2006) postulate that both sides of supply and demand need to develop their creative capital in order to make creative tourism successful. This means that education about local culture is needed for those working in the tourism industry (ECTN, 2006). The study of creative tourism has been supported by the concept of Florida's Creative class (2002), the cocreation process (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2003, 2004); (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009) and the potential of memorable experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), as several countries have developed strategies based in the cultural and creative industries (ICC's) as it contributes positively to their GDPs. Because participating and learning are characteristics of this new segment, creative tourism is seen as the next generation of cultural tourism that satisfies the higher level need of self-actualisation with a primary focus of active skill development (Ohridska-Olson and Ivanov, 2010).

The increase of specialized consumption based on the need of lifelong learning, the importance of identity formation and the acquisition of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in a postmodern society, points to the use of creativity as an alternative to conventional cultural tourism (Richards and Wilson, 2006). *“Postmodern tourists start their travel with the exact vision on what form of local community life they want to participate in; they have special interests which determine their choice of destination in advance; once in the destination, they do not expect a passive holiday but active development of their own interests complemented with local diversities, which enrich their existing knowledge”* (Julcencic & Zuvela, 2012, p80).

Travel comes as a reflexive action, representative of the need to possess a consistent life story (Carvalho e Ferreira, 2012). The generative character of creative tourism, the development of personal skills based on the culture of destinations and the role that new technologies play in creative tourism praxis, implies the presence of cultural capital among various stakeholders (Carvalho, 2014).

Creative events constitute one of several creative strategies (Richards, 2011), which allows for the differentiation of tourism destinations. However, a single event cannot change a destination's image on its own (Carvalho, Ferreira e Figueira, 2011). As mentioned by Getz (2008), *“Events are spatial–temporal phenomena, and each is unique because of interactions among the setting, people, and management systems—including design elements and the program. Much of the appeal of events is that they are never the same, and you have to ‘be there’ to enjoy the unique experience fully; if you miss it, it’s a lost opportunity”* (Getz, 2008, p404). According to the same

author, festivals are cultural celebrations (Getz, 2008). Building on Getz, creative activities can be included in festival programs, permitting the differentiation of tourism supply in the region. Either you participate in it or not.

This paper analyses three community based festivals in the Médio Tejo region in the center of Portugal and analyses these cases from the supply side. The Trays Festival in the city of Tomar, Festival Bons Sons in the village of Cem Soldos (Tomar) and Festival Materiais Diversos (Alcanena and Torres Novas), constitute creative strategies that can contribute to the establishment of an alternative image of the Medio Tejo Destination. Buhalis (2000) argues that tourist destinations mainly compete through the destination image, because the image that tourists have of the destinations before the visit is a determining factor in the decision of buying the product destination. Once again, local communities play an important role in the marketing of a destination. The community has to first value its cultural heritage before they can effectively promote it to the visitor (ECTN, 2006) implying cultural awareness of the locals in what concerns to tourism development.

In section two, creative tourism is analysed in relation to cultural capital theory. The authors discuss festivals as cultural and creative events and their importance for tourism destinations mainly from the supply side in section three. Methodology is explained in detail in the fourth section. In the fifth section, the Médio Tejo region is characterized and three cultural festivals are addressed as creative strategies. It is argued that these festivals incorporate tangible and intangible cultural assets, which can be (re)activated, for tourism purposes and this should be a premise for all stakeholders involved in the planning, program and design of such festivals. Creative experiences present at events, can incorporate the effect of surprise and spontaneity, which would allow for differentiation of tourism supply.

The authors conclude (section six) by suggesting creative tourism activities or specific *ad ups* within these festivals. We argue that the Médio Tejo region has the potential to become a creative destination by developing an effective creative tourism network that would help reposition the destination's touristic image. Despite the fact that all events analysed have creative potential in different ways, much more has to be done before we can identify a proper creative supply in the region.

## **2. Creative tourism and cultural capital theory**

Creative tourism is based on concepts such as “creative experience”, the process of “co-creation” and “prosumption”. Richards and Raymond (2000) have defined creative tourism as “tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken”. Arguably, this kind of tourism would help destinations to differentiate themselves from others where the development of the creative potential of tourism providers would be possible through a closer participation of the tourist through cocreation process (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009).

The study of creative tourism is very recent (Richards, 2011) and research has been developed mainly on the supply side and not enough on the demand side (Tan *et al*, 2013). We position this paper mainly on the supply side as the authors used mention creative tourism in this sense. Nonetheless, the present study takes into account the cultural characteristics of the demand in what concerns to this new segment. It is important to acknowledge that cultural capital is held by both supply and demand (Carvalho, 2014).

The main characteristics of the supply side of creative tourism
<p>Resources used for the development of creative tourism are both tangible and intangible implying a broader use of culture;</p> <p>Creative spectacles, creative spaces and creative tourism constitute strategies for the development of this type of tourism in cities;</p> <p>Creativity can be used as an activity (e.g. Workshops) and function as a backdrop (e.g. Processions);</p> <p>Creative tourism offers the possibility for tourists to develop their creative capital instead of just consuming, as both sides of supply and demand need to develop their creative capital;</p> <p>Brings sustainable and profitable development to small communities, where the supply side offers crafts, arts, culinary and other creative activities, thus creating a close link between the tourists, the local population and its cultural heritage.</p>

Source: Author based on the work of (Richards and Raymond, 2000); (Richards and Wilson, 2006, 2007); (Prahalaad and Ramaswamy, 2003, 2004); (Karlsson, 2005), (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009); (Ohridska-olson, and Ivanov, 2010); (Carvalho, 2011a, 2011b, 2013); (Richards, 2011, 2013a, 2013b).

Creative tourism is best understood in the experience paradigm (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). *“Modern consumers want context related, authentic experience concepts and seek a balance between control by the experience stager and self determined activity with its spontaneity,*

*freedom and self expression*” (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009, p312). The search for meaning in postmodern society has become a central matter for tourists as globalisation, the ubiquity of the internet among others, has changed the way tourists plan their holidays, book reservations and develop new relationships with tourism providers and consume the culture of a destination. This way, the reflexive self, searches for new narratives (Giddens, 1991), giving individualism (Lipovetsky, 1983) a relevant role.

Experience staging has been at the heart of many tourism policies where Pine and Gilmore’s four realms of the experience, has been put forward by many researchers as a successful way to promote destinations. Cocreation would allow consumers to choose a more active or passive participation. “*The changing nature of the consumer-company interaction as the locus of co-creation (and co-extraction) of value, redefines the meaning of value and the process of value creation*” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004, p6). As these authors mention, this process gives the consumer more importance in the consumption of experiences as their role as “*opinion makers*” helps to influence others. Today social media reviews and user generated content can make the difference in the decision making process of tourism services.

This process enhances the role of the tourist as the co-author of his effective experience. Binkhorst and Dekker (2009) state that tourism should be considered a global network of cocreation. “*Theoretically this would mean: no separation between supply and demand, company and customer, tourist and host, tourism spaces and “other” spaces, but viewing tourism as a holistic network of stakeholders all connected in experience environments in which everyone operates from different time spatial contexts*” (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009, p318). Although (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009) conceptualize and mention a greater participation and influence of the demand in the outcome of the experience, the supply side is still very important.

By changing the focus of tourism experiences from tangible cultural assets to intangible cultural assets (Richards and Wilson, 2006) every destination can be creative. Tourists are bored with traditional city tours, photographs, pins and handcraft. These have been slowly replaced by memorable experiences, new narratives that can change the self and provide the opportunity for tourists to develop new skills or their creative potential (Richards, 2011). The creation of new environments, atmospheres, new vibes have been replacing the old stone culture motifs of traditional cultural tourism. Long lasting transformational experiences have been the goal of creative tourists where a kind of specialised consumption has been taking place.

In this sense, “prosumption” gains importance (Carvalho, 2014). Toffler’s “prosumer” echoes this idea where cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986) is activated through an effective participation

in creative experiences based in the destination's culture. In this research, we argue that the cultural baggage of the tourist and the use of its cultural capital can influence directly the design and consumption of creative touristic experiences. For Karlsson (2005) cultural capital is important in the production of tourism since cultural capital is present in the existence of a long tradition of smaller business promoting other small business enterprises in tourism industry (Karlsson, 2005 cited by Carvalho, 2014).

Concepts such as habitus and cultural capital, have been used increasingly from 1990 to 2007 in sociology abstracts (Robson and Sanders, 2009), being cultural capital the most used one. Bourdieu postulates that: "Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), [...] and in the institutionalised state (i.e. educational qualifications)", (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital includes heritage, language, artefacts and the arts and socially accepted ways of thinking about the world and our role in it and accepted ways of getting things done (Flora and Flora, 2008). According to Back *et al*, (2012) Bourdieu's cultural capital can be defined as knowledge of arts and culture, the possession of particular cultural skills (such as being able to play a musical instrument).

The application of cultural capital theory to the study of creative tourism could be problematic because we are referring to the use of a broader concept of culture, "high and low" culture examples, aesthetic and mostly pragmatic knowledge through workshops and similar activities participation. The authors Laureau and Weiniger, (2003) refer that: "*We can identify nothing in Bourdieu's writing that implies a distinction between cultural capital and "ability" or "technical" skills. Instead, we argue that he considers them to be irrevocably fused*". (Lareau and Weininger, 2003, p580). "*Tourists are increasingly willing to learn and eager to increase their cultural capital by creating rather than just consuming*" (Richards, 2003, p16). Learning a skill or living an experience increases cultural capital improves creativity and can lead to self-enrichment and self-valorisation (Richards and Wilson, 2007).

In a recent study Carvalho (2014), mentions that "*three main research themes were identified using cultural capital theory in creative tourism: a) cultural capital accumulation, b) cultural capital possession and c) cultural capital application*" (Carvalho, 2014, p6). Among several conclusions the author highlights that cultural capital is accumulated by tourists through new knowledge (i.e. about local cultures) and skills, its application is used by choosing experiences and consumption practices not yet available to mass forms of tourism (Carvalho, 2014). This means that it is not only important to know what are the motivations that thrive tourists but also their "cultural" reasons behind it.

Another study has identified several types of creative tourists. Using Q methodology, Tan *et al* (2014), identified five typologies of creative tourists: Novelty seekers; Knowledge and skill learners; Aware of travel partners' growth; Aware of green issues and Relax and leisure type. In this taxonomy, we highlight the "*Knowledge and skill learners*" which according to the authors: "*People, who hold this view, emphasize "self-development" rather than "local culture" and "family togetherness". They are attracted by new and challenging activities in order to improve themselves*" (Tan *et al*, 2014, pp 254-255). In this context, the authors refer that: "*this means industry practitioners who target these tourists should strengthen the contents of the activities because these are the main factors for this group of creative tourists to interact with*" (Tan *et al*, 2014, p255).

Once again, the idea that both supply and demand need to develop new skills and tourists' cultural baggage is primordial. It is important to understand who holds cultural capital and how it is applied in the consumption of creative experiences (Carvalho, 2014). Several governments, institutions and enterprises have mixed creativity and tourism where differentiation has been one of several strategies developed by them. Events are among those strategies.

### **3. Cultural and creative events potential**

Events are an important motivator of tourism, and figure prominently in the development and marketing plans of most destinations (Getz, 2008). According to (Mossberg, 2000); (Getz, 1997); (Hall, 1992) e (Jago e Shaw, 1998) *cited by* (Pelicano, 2009), events have a limited duration, are themed based, are planned, provide benefits to communities and event goers and involve a set of participants. Positive impacts such as: the creation of jobs (even temporary ones), community pride, place making and destination image are only a few aspects pointed out by researchers. The organization of events can have many different goals. As Getz mentions: "*Stakeholders, encompassing the organizations that produce events, the community at large, and the beneficiaries of event tourism in the service sector, are likely to stress different aims and concerns*" (Getz, 2008, p407).

There is a range of different theoretical views of the social role of events that can be utilised to analyse events (Richards, 2014). The author mentions three approaches at a micro-level, meso and macro-level. At a micro-level, the individual is studied in the social setting of the event. Motivation for event attendance or satisfaction with the event experience are the most common approaches. Meso-level views include approaches, which relate to a group, community or organization. Interaction or community building within an event are the most common analyses followed by researchers. Finally, at a macro-level, the social role of events is studied in relation

to the interactions that take place over a large population, such as a nation, a society or even at global level (Adapted from Richards, 2014).

In this sense, tourism events are much more than marketing tools for urban development or strategies for image formation and branding. We perceive events as temporary happenings, which can help (re)activate local cultural assets and bring closer tourists and communities. We argue that due to the specificity of creative tourism and creative tourists, events are special occasions, which could include alternative ways for the specialised consumption of creative tourism experiences using cultural capital of both tourists and local communities. *Events can be understood as manifestations of acquired cultural capital and expressions of creativity, mainly geared at realizing innovative tourist experiences* (Wanhill and Jansen-Verbeke, 2008, p158).

The role of events as creative elements in cities has therefore become a major focus of attention in recent years (Richards, 2013b). Creative tourism literature points out several strategies followed by various destinations to differentiate themselves from traditional ones. As Richards and Wilson (2006) point out, three specific ways of developing creative tourism in cities are creative spectacles, creative spaces and creative tourism. In this context creative spectacles are pointed out as events [that] act as concentrators in terms of time and space, forming important nodes in creative networks and providing a direct link between creativity and tourism (Richards, 2011).

The same author points out several examples on how cultural and creative events can provide a setting where communities of enthusiasts can co-create extraordinary experiences; such events attract a significant group of creative tourists with a specific interest in culture and can have a significant impact on local creativity, particularly where they support local networks. Nonetheless, *“single events are not sufficient in themselves to change the image of a small city”* (Carvalho, Ferreira e Figueira, 2011) cited by (Richards, 2013a, p11).

Because creative tourism makes use of a broader concept of culture where material and immaterial assets are (re)activated for tourism purposes, old traditions, legends and local habits can be present in events. This way, events can help to create different atmospheres for touristic fruition. Creative tourism takes into account the role of the participant where creativity can be used in two ways: as an activity or as a backdrop (Richards, 2011). Activities can be workshops or learning activities about local culture (gastronomy, handcraft, arts, among many others), a kind of quick cultural version of the place aiming at a pragmatic participation of the tourist. As a backdrop when everyday life “naturally” influences the creative consumption of a place like watching performances or demonstrations (Adapted from Richards, 2011). The emergence of events as



temporary social organisations (...) places a new emphasis on the role of local and global intermediaries who can channel flows of resources to them (Richards, 2014).

Once again, the question of cultural capital use or application in creative tourism is important. As mentioned by Carvalho, (2014) the importance of tourists' cultural capital can influence the design and fruition of memorable experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Richards (2011), evokes Castells' (2009) concept of the "switcher" as an intermediary who links different global and local networks. "*Switchers and the networks they traverse, move, and in doing so create new connections and perspectives*" (Richards, 2014, p5). These gatekeepers are agents of change that can influence the regular function of networks. This highlights the importance of the establishment of a network of creative experiences supply in the Médio Tejo Region (Carvalho e Figueira, 2012), as we will see in the next section.

#### **4. Methodology**

Literature review was done in order to establish a coherent link between cultural and creative events and the three case studies (Yin, 2003). Three events were analysed according to the literature on creative tourism as the majority of the authors used in the present paper refer to it from the supply side. Official websites, blogs, were analysed using content analysis (Bell, 1993) to see if their creative potential and the creative use of local culture would help to develop creative experiences.

In this sense and after literature review about the supply side of creative tourism, the official website and travel blog about the Trays Festival refers to "cultural activities based in the tradition" of the destination, "community participation in the decoration of streets, processions", "different environments"; "processions joins people of all classes (...) encompassing dignity, brightness, colour and emotion". The development of trays and paper flowers workshops were not present on the internet but the authors have witness *in situ* these workshops using non-participant observation (Quivy and Campenhoudt, 1992). The official website of the Festival Bons Sons refers to "skill building among the local population", "tangible legacy: professional development and working experience for the members of the community", the importance of "village life, its sites [sights], sounds and traditions" and the offer of "music stages, a crafts market, art exhibitions". Finally in relation to the Festival Materiais Diversos, the official website refers to aiming at "artistic development, experimentation and to engage communities in contemporary performing arts, particularly dance", the "hosting of artistic residencies"; and refer to the Festival as "booster of economic, cultural and social value, contributing to Médio Tejo's region development, while rehabilitating structures, stimulating local trade and attracting more and more visitors every edition".

This research is also based on the previous work of (Carvalho, 2011a; 2011b) (Carvalho, 2013), (Carvalho e Figueira, 2012) and (Santos, 2011). These authors have analysed the creative potential and creative elements present in the Médio Tejo region, in the heart of Portugal by pointing out existing creative strategies and the main goals of such municipalities.

## **5. Contextualization and strategic location of the Médio Tejo Region**

This region is a NUT III (*Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics*) and consists of a group of thirteen municipalities. These are (Abrantes, Alcanena, Constância, Entroncamento, Ferreira do Zêzere, Ourém, Sardoal, Tomar, Torres Novas, Vila Nova da Barquinha, Mação, Sertão e Vila de Rei). “*The Comunidade Intermunicipal do Médio Tejo, (CIMT), is an administrative division in Portugal. It was created in December 2008 ([www.mediotejo.pt](http://www.mediotejo.pt)). It is established by the law n°75/2013 of 12<sup>th</sup> September, which institutes the legal framework of local municipalities ([www.dre.pt](http://www.dre.pt)).*”

The DMO of the Center of Portugal encompasses the Médio Tejo region. According to a recent study undertaken by this DMO (about its touristic image) at the national tourism fair (BTL- Bolsa Turismo de Lisboa), 95, 8 % of the respondents (1,116) knows the region. More than half associates the region to history, heritage and gastronomy, 64, 2%; 58, 4% and 42, 2% respectively. 44, 4% of the respondents admits to spend an average of 150 euros while visiting the region (Neto, 2015). Despite the fact that this study relates to the whole region of the center of Portugal, one can argue that the region has interest for tourism praxis.

Located in the centre of the country, the Médio Tejo region is rich with cultural resources such as the Convent of Christ in Tomar (UNESCO), medieval churches and castles, aqueducts, fortifications, cultural museums, among others. In terms of natural resources, we point out the river Tagus that receives water from other four rivers and the Sierras of Aire and Candeeiros. In addition, this extensive river system of the tertiary basin of the Tagus-Sado offers springs, streams, natural pools and reservoirs ([www.mediotejo.pt](http://www.mediotejo.pt)).

Santos, (2011) verified that several of the regions’ municipalities had included the subject of creativity in their political agendas, as the region possesses endogenous features and intrinsic potential to enable interventions and actions with a view to boosting the territory by means of creativity and innovation. Building on Richards and Wilsons’ (2006) three forms of creative tourism development (creative spaces, creative events and creative tourism), Carvalho and Figueira, (2012) characterized the Médio Tejo region in terms of creative potential.

We highlight the several creative events present in this previous study: (Trays Festival, Bons Sons Festival (Cem Soldos, Tomar), Medieval Fair (Torres Novas), World Music Festival Encontros

do Tejo (Constância), Materiais Diversos Festival (Alcanena and Torres Novas), Art Market (V. N. Barquinha) and the Creative Market (Abrantes). Adapted from (Carvalho e Figueira, 2012).

Creative events reveal themselves as promotion strategies for cities, allowing the celebration of local culture, contribute to the thematisation of venues, the creation of different ambiences and allow urban regeneration (Carvalho, 2011a). In the following subsections, the three events are characterised.

### **5.1 Trays Festival, Tomar**

Tomar is a city and a municipality in the Santarém district. Historically, is connect to the history of the Templar Knights, as the Order was present here since 1160. In this context, a visit to the Templar Castle and Convent of Christ is mandatory for every tourist passing through the region. It finds in the Trays Festival another important touristic “magnet resource” as it is said to attract almost half a million tourists every edition or even a million according to official authorities (Santos, Carvalho e Figueira, 2012). According to the official website: “*The Trays Festival or Festival of the Holy Spirit is one of the most ancient cultural and religious events in Portugal. Its Christianization dates back from the thirteen century, connected to the great devotion of Queen Santa Isabel, wife of King Dinis*” ([www.tabuleiros.org](http://www.tabuleiros.org)).

Unique in the world, the Trays Festival is held every four years, in the beginning of July, where “the adornment of the trays, houses and streets, paper flowers, bread and wheat spikes, are typical elements of ancient and traditional festivals of crops” *idem*. One travel blog informs that “*The tabuleiros (trays) which the girls carry in the [main] procession are decorated with symbols of the Holy Spirit: on top of the tray there is a dove and the crown, and from the top to the bottom, 30 loaves of bread, colourful paper flowers (generally field poppies) and ears of corn. All the sixteen districts of Tomar are represented in this procession, which takes place in the main streets of the town. Houses are decorated for the occasion with quilts hanging from the balconies. During the procession there is a shower of flower petals. Each tabuleiro has the same height as the girl who carries it*” ([www.pocketcultures.com](http://www.pocketcultures.com)). A curiosity is that the men cannot carry the tray over their heads but only women. In case of wind, lack of balance, weight or other difficulty, men carry the tray, only on their shoulders.

The program is filled with traditional activities, secondary parades or processions where the local community is heavily represented. Every four years a commission is elected to supervise the decoration of the streets, the organization of the program and secondary activities, materials needed to decorate houses façades and balconies. A Butler is elected to preside the trays commission; this function resembles a master of ceremonies. This includes the work of several

hundred people for more than six months, prior to the event by making the flowers that will decorate the trays and the popular streets, most of them located in the historic city center.

Intangible cultural resources are present in this event as the population takes on a central role. Locals and visitors often discuss if this festival could be organised every year or every two years, that is because it takes a lot of work to organise. The city becomes one colourful, visual spectacle for everyone as local pride is increased, and each street struggles for the best decoration recognition.

### **5.1.1 Creative potential resources**

Because creative tourists are interested in involving themselves in memorable experiences, this festival creative potential is immense. Previous editions included small workshops on how to build miniaturized versions of the classical tray made out of bread, canes, baskets and crowns, and paper flower activities (Santos, Carvalho e Figueira, 2012). According to the official website the tray “*consists of thirty loaves of bread stuffed into five or six branches (canes) starting from a wicker basket or wicker and is capped at the top by a crown surmounted by the dove of the Holy Spirit and the Cross of Christ*” ([www.tabuleiros.org](http://www.tabuleiros.org)). One local artisan in charge of this workshop, argued that all these materials must follow local tradition ruling out any mischaracterization in the construction of the trays (Carvalho, 2011b). This handcraft is sold in an expensive way to tourists but its construction techniques and materials can be redesigned for creative tourism purposes.

### **5.2 Festival Bons Sons, Village of Cem Soldos, Tomar**

Cem Soldos is the village where BONS SONS is held. Located in the parish of Madalena, municipality of Tomar, it lies 5 km from the city of Tomar ([www.bonssons.com](http://www.bonssons.com)). The role of the local community is paramount for the organisation of this music and arts festival. Home to about 1.000 inhabitants, Cem Soldos has retained a true community spirit, keeping traditions alive as well as an intrinsic part of the present. *Idem*

The event started in 2006 with a strong bet in Portuguese music, art exhibitions, short films and an art market. It has been growing ever since. Presently it offers eight different stages and has been visited by 138000 festivalgoers. It is organised by the Cem Soldos Workers Sport Club (SCOCS), a local cultural organisation. Its mission is to promote the social, cultural, sporting and recreational well-being of the population, privileging the mutual development of both the Association and the Community in all these fronts, according to the official website. The most visible and resounding outcome of the SCOCS activity is, of course, the festival, that went from

a local to a national and international event: Bons Sons ([www.bonssons.com](http://www.bonssons.com)). The festival has taken an annual edition since 2015.

According to Carvalho, (2011b) this local organisation developed successful training sessions for volunteers and local people in the areas of cultural production, projects financing, management stage and press office prior to the Festival. According to the official website the voluntary tasks developed for the present edition are “*Structures Assistant, Info point Assistant, Production Assistant, Camping Assistant, Communication Assistant, New Crafts Fair Assistant, Traffic control, Exhibition Assistant and many others*” ([www.bonssons.com](http://www.bonssons.com)). This incorporates the values of the event as organizers, local communities and other participants activate their cultural capital. These are also open to any person.

Again, it is the local community, which develops the festivals’ merchandising where a group of old ladies, their grandsons and granddaughters, makes the official mascot “Tixas” or Geckos, (Carvalho, 2011b). These filter crafts are shaped in key rings, brooches and hooks, which help to finance the event. In the present edition, there was even a workshop of “Tixas” organized on Facebook by a local stakeholder. During the days of the Festival, visitors are invited to truly enjoy the village life, its sites [sights], sounds and traditions, together with the inhabitants ([www.bonssons.com](http://www.bonssons.com)). In addition to raising audience awareness, the primary goal of Bons Sons is to contribute to local development by boosting the economy and contributing to keep the younger population in the region.

### **5.2.1 Local creative potential formation**

The locals welcome and attend to festivalgoers in a unique communion between hosts and visitors, originating an unparalleled experience of a music and arts event. The enthusiastic lending hand of all the volunteers is decisive to make this festival unique ([www.bonssons.com](http://www.bonssons.com)). This event offers the opportunity for local to develop their cultural capital, new skills and use them outside the event. This is very important as events can function as a way to acquire cultural capital to be used after the event or even in future editions. Arguably, once we learn one thing is for life, if it is interesting enough.

According to the organisers, the event is part of a bigger plan that revolves around advancing the development of the local population, through capacity building and training, the creation of jobs and the promotion of community spirit. “*Since its inception, it has successfully promoted the skill building of the population, namely through the ongoing training given to its team. As a project, Bons Sons ambitions to constitute a real benefit to all, involved leaving a tangible legacy: professional development and working experience for the members of the community, especially among the younger population, with a view to keeping them in the region and prevent*

*desertification*” ([www.bonssons.com](http://www.bonssons.com)). This has included two major projects: a construction of a village centre for the elderly, the “Lar Aldeia” and CAAL (Casa aqui ao Lado) artistic residencies and a kind of Hostel. “*Alongside the cultural aspect, another goal of the CAAL is for the space to generate income as a touristic facility*” ([www.bonssons.com](http://www.bonssons.com)).

### **5.3 Festival Materiais Diversos, Alcanena and Torres Novas**

This festival started in Minde, a parish of Alcanena Municipality, in the Santarém District, in 2009. It is a performing arts festival covering Alcanena and Torres Novas (city in the Santarém region). It has the main goal to decentralize contemporary cultural offer to people living outside major urban centres.

Developed by a not-for-profit cultural association Materiais Diversos (Diverse Materials), it aims to support artistic development, experimentation and to engage communities in contemporary performing arts. “*Materiais Diversos is a member of the European network Open Latitudes and REDE, the Portuguese association of contemporary dance organisations. In 2013-16, Materiais Diversos is funded by the Portuguese Government, in partnership with the municipalities of Alcanena, Torres Novas and Cartaxo*” ([www.materiaisdiversos.com](http://www.materiaisdiversos.com)). The activities are divided in three areas: the organization of the festival, the establishment of a regular supply contemporary dance programming in municipal cultural centres throughout the season as the hosting of artistic residencies and finally the development of creative projects of its associate artists Filipa Francisco, Marcelo Evelin and Sofia Dias & Vítor Roriz, nationally and internationally. *idem*

The festival asserted itself as a booster of economic, cultural and social value, contributing to the Médio Tejo’s region development, while rehabilitating structures, stimulating local trade and attracting more and more visitors every edition ([www.materiaisdiversos.com](http://www.materiaisdiversos.com)). While proposing several dance, theatre and music activities, the event includes “*proposals by established artists, young creators, and performances for young audiences, with emphasis on projects that integrate community’s participation in cooperation with local associations*” ([www.materiaisdiversos.com](http://www.materiaisdiversos.com)). Local community is responsible by housing teams and providing products and services needed to the development of the festival.

By concentrating their efforts, these municipalities thrive to boost cultural development in the region by engaging with local communities as cultural competences are enhanced.

#### **5.3.1 Public potential for cultural and creative capital development**

The organization has in mind the development of several secondary activities throughout the year, “*which have the goals to foster audiences outreach and critical thinking, (...) new tools to improve empathy and better interpretation towards artistic proposals*”, improving their cultural

capital as cultural competences and public formation. Such activities include “*performances, participatory projects, debates, conferences and workshops for specific audiences*” ([www.materiaisdiversos.com](http://www.materiaisdiversos.com)). Creativity is used here to challenge central cultural policies. By providing a strong quality cultural offer to low density areas outside urban and central regions, this festival makes the difference in the lives of these local communities. It provides the tools to cultural engagement and contemporary art fruition.

## **6. Discussion**

These three events constitute unique opportunities for the creative development of the region and cultural capital development as they constitute forms of acquired cultural capital (Wanhill and Jansen-Verbeke, 2008). The Trays festival is one of the most important events of the region as it makes use of tangible and intangible cultural resources (Richards and Wilson, 2006). Because it only occurs every four years, the potential for workshops and other learning activities is immense. They can be redesign and developed by the tourism supply in the years when it does not occur maintaining alive the spirit of the event. This would mean a stabilization of a creative tourism supply throughout the year and function as an example for the entire region.

Creativity can be used as both as an activity and as a backdrop (Richards, 2011). In this example, parades and processions can be used in order to enable their cultural and creative fruition for locals and for tourists (Richards, 2011); in this case, they function as a backdrop. Colourful paper flowers and ears of corn can be made available in similar learning activities for tourists as well as the already mention small versions of the trays. Local handcraft like tile painting can be also integrated into the program festival as many churches of the city of Tomar and the Convento de Cristo represent important monuments where sixteen and seventeen-century original tiles are still present. These symbolise many times flower themes like corn. In addition, local gastronomy, sweets and winemaking activities could also be made available for tourists. This would give the festival a more participatory characteristic (Ohridska-Olson and Ivanov, 2010) and tourists would have the possibility to develop their creative potential and learn local painting and cooking techniques, characteristic of the destination (Raymond and Richards, 2000).

In the case of the Bons Sons festival, we argue that a kind of spill over effect could be beneficial for the region. The idea of developing a positive multigenerational interconnection seems mandatory nowadays even more in this time of crisis. Here creativity can help boost local and regional economy (Richards, 2011) as tourism and events (Getz, 2008) help shape the image of the region. Creative tourism offers the opportunity for tourists to engage in transforming

experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) but also through volunteering, this will improve the quality of life of the destination.

If we value knowledge as the embodied form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986), Carvalho, 2014), this will relate even more to the lifelong learning paradigm we are living in. Also the objectified form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986), (Carvalho, 2014) is of major importance here where urban regeneration effects are present in the village. Other areas of the Médio Tejo region could benefit from this view providing better conditions for the elderly and the reintegration of their young.

The Festival Materiais Diversos incorporates best, the idea of networking where a major cultural bet is done in order to provide local cultural competences and territory cohesion (Richards, 2011). The specialised consumption of cultural and creative experiences is made possible by contemporary art present outside major urban centres. Between a more active or passive use of creativity (Richards and Wilson, 2006), the regular schedule of art performances, other municipalities could follow the example and provide an all year-round cultural and creative experiences to locals and tourists. As mentioned before, the cultural richness of the Médio Tejo region makes it possible for the decentralisation of cultural and tourism policies to be carried out successfully. Creative tourism can help boost these cultural and creative festivals and creative add ups can be developed by local and regional tourism enterprises in the region. The role of third sector associations is crucial here and demands more networking and effective planning of memorable experiences within these kinds of festivals.

## **6.1 Conclusions**

The main goal of this ongoing research is to encourage creative tourism research and its pragmatic application in the Médio Tejo region. Cultural tourism is present in the region as many cultural resources receive visitors, but as creative tourism becomes more important (Richards and Raymond, 2000); (Richards and Wilson, 2006,2007); (Richards, 2011) on both supply and demand sides, this region can put Portugal on the map of this special interest tourism.

Events (Getz, 2008), offer the opportunity for destinations to diversify and differentiate tourism supply, for these are places that suggest authentic (Wang, 1999) atmospheres for participants. As we have seen, three different community based events are characterised for their creative potential. These events can help to differentiate the existing cultural tourism in the region, if creative *add ups* are present within these festivals. The opportunity for tourists to engage in



meaningful experiences and immerse themselves (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) in the regional culture must be attained. Only by promoting effective local communities involvement in event management and planning, a broad use of local culture, urban regeneration and cultural capital development, it will be possible to boost regional economy in the region. These events constitute strong strategies to help established a creative tourism image in the Médio Tejo region.

One possible way to develop a creative tourism network (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009) is to incorporate all if not, the majority of the municipalities and the events with creative potential in the region. Only by combining political agendas, establishing partnerships with the private sector as well as with associations of the third sector, the region can leverage the creation of a creative destination as well as developing strategies within the cultural and creative industries. The authors conclude that the three examples analyzed here reflect only some of the principles present in creative tourism literature and we could not identify a well-developed creative tourism supply in the Médio Tejo region. Portugal already has some very positive examples of creative tourism offerings and cultural and creative events of quality, as it is the case of the Alto Minho, Guimarães, Óbidos, Santa Maria da Feira, among others. Only the city of Loulé in the Algarve has managed to incorporate the Creative Tourism network so far ([www.creativetourismnetwork.org](http://www.creativetourismnetwork.org)). The examples shown here indicate that we still have a long way to go.

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