

**THE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONALIZATION OF RURAL TOURISM IN  
INLAND NORTH CENTRE OF ALENTEJO REGION: FOCUSING ON THE  
BRAZILIAN TOURISTS**

Eugénia de Jesus Madeira Inácio

Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of  
Master in International Management

Supervisor:

Prof. Elisabeth Kastenholz, Associated Professor, Universidade de Aveiro, Department of  
Economics, Management, Industrial Engineering and Tourism

Co-supervisor:

Prof. Margarida Cardoso, Associated Professor with aggregation, ISCTE Business School,  
Department of Quantitative Methods for Management and Economics

Outubro 2017



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## **Resumo**

O tema desta dissertação diz respeito ao desenvolvimento e internacionalização do Turismo Rural (especificamente, o Turismo em Espaço Rural-TER e o alojamento em Turismo Habitação-TH, numa região específica de Portugal – Interior Norte e Centro do Alentejo (INCA), concentrando-se em particular no papel desempenhado pelos visitantes que residem no Brasil (turistas Brasileiros). Este projeto de pesquisa visou estudar de que forma, e com que meios e argumentos os visitantes provenientes do Brasil (turistas Brasileiros) podem ser considerados como clientes mais assíduos do Turismo Rural na região INCA.

A metodologia aplicada integrou a análise de um Estudo de Caso relativo aos estabelecimentos TER e TH na Região INCA, utilizando entrevistas semiestruturadas e questionários. Esta metodologia permitiu, sobretudo, compreender os aspetos que os turistas Brasileiros mais valorizam numa estadia rural em Portugal e suas motivações para passarem aí as suas férias.

Este estudo mostrou que os turistas Brasileiros podem contribuir para o desenvolvimento e internacionalização do Turismo Rural nesta região em particular, mas não de forma generalizada e massificada. Muitos destes turistas valorizam certas características num destino turístico que são possíveis de encontrar nesta área estudada. Dada a natureza dos estabelecimentos de Turismo Rural nesta região, muitos não estão preparados para receber este público, exigindo, portanto, vários intervenientes a trabalharem em conjunto, para uma estratégia de desenvolvimento apropriada e sustentável.

Além disso, este estudo incita outros investigadores a trabalhar sobre o potencial desta região do Alentejo, a região INCA, para que esta se torne numa forte marca de destino.

**Palavras-chave:** Turismo Rural; Internacionalização, Touristas Brasileiros, Alentejo.

**Sistema de Classificação JEL:** Z32 Turismo e Desenvolvimento; Z33 Marketing e Finanças.

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## **Abstract**

The topic of this dissertation concerns the development and internationalization of Rural Tourism (specifically Tourism in Rural Area (TRA) and in Manor House Tourism (MHT) accommodation), in a specific region of Portugal - the Inland North and Centre of Alentejo (INCA), focusing in particular on the role played by visitors living in Brazil (Brazilian tourists). This research project aimed to study under what ways, means and arguments visitors coming from Brazil (Brazilian tourists) can be enhanced as customers to Rural Tourism in INCA region.

The methodology applied considered the analysis of a Case Study regarding TRA and MHT establishments in the INCA Region, using semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. This methodology research allowed the comprehension of which attributes Brazilian tourists most value in a rural stay in Portugal and their motivations for taking here the holidays.

This study showed that Brazilian tourists can contribute to the development and internationalization of Rural Tourism in this particular region, but not in a mass and generalized way. Many of them value certain features in a tourist destination that are possible to find in the studied area. Given the nature of Rural Tourism establishments in this region, many are not prepared to receive this public, requiring, therefore, several stakeholders to work together to select an appropriate and sustainable development strategy.

In addition, this study incites other researchers to work on the potential of this specific Alentejo region, the INCA region, to become a strong brand mark.

**Key-words:** Rural Tourism; internationalization, Brazilian tourists, Alentejo

**JEL Classifications System:** Z32 Tourism and Development; Z33 Marketing and Finance

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**List of abbreviations**

CATPCA – Categorical Principal Components Analysis

CCDR – Commission for Coordination and Development at regional level - Alentejo

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

EUROSTAT – European Statistics Office

INCA – Inland North and Centre of Alentejo

INE - Statistics of Portugal (Instituto Nacional de Estatística)

IATM - International Association of Tour Managers

KMO – Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of Sampling Adequacy

MHT – Manor House Tourism

NRTE – National Register of Tourist Establishments

OECD – The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ORTE – Overall Rural Tourism Experiences

PCA – Principal Component Analysis

RATPA - Regional Agency of Tourism Promotion of Alentejo

RT – Rural Tourism

SME – Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

TRA – Tourism in the Rural Area

UNWTO – United Nation of World Tourism Organization

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## **Introduction**

*Why choosing Brazilian tourists?* The researcher was frequently asked about this. That caused some surprise to people. The immediate reply was: *why not?! Well, before coming to that issue, first other explanations need to be given.*

Starting with the researcher's personal interest in Rural Tourism (mainly regarding accommodation establishments), because her family has a Manor House Tourism (MHT) in Sousel, Portalegre. In her opinion, it needs to be generally better explored and clients from new markets could be one possible solution.

It is also important to mention that rural areas in Portugal, despite being underdeveloped, current investment opportunities need to be more assessed. The rural world has suffered changes, showing signs of decline and difficulty, increased by the existence of a marked rural / urban dualism. However, if there are people that do not want to give up some of the urban amenities, there are others that enjoy what rural areas can offer. This means important and rapid changes must happen. One of those changes translates into a phenomenon, whose expression are still to be researched. That is the moving of individuals from urban areas to rural areas in order to change their way of life and create their own businesses.

In Europe, Rural Tourism emerged with the aim of "halting depopulation, preserving the rural landscape, saving a certain type of family farming, maintaining a healthy environmental balance and providing the economic solvency of thousands of families" (Godinho, 2004:91-93). This type of tourism currently has an economic, social and cultural importance in some European countries. Rural Tourism is often referred to as a tourism product that can tackle the problems and weaknesses of rural areas. However, there is a certain contradiction between the high expectations and the positive impacts generated by this product in real terms. In fact, this potential beneficial effect may not be verified (Ribeiro, 2001), and there is even the risk of some negative impacts (Valente & Figueiredo, 2003).

Globalization and market liberalization led to a broader competitive tourism scenario. Surviving in this competitive destination arena is not an easy task, so leveraging existing tools is essential. One of the competitive keys to the tourist market development is identity, the genuine factor of a destination, together with the ability to communicate (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, Giordana, 2004). In terms of demand trends, rural areas are increasingly sought after for



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reasons of recreation, leisure and tourism based on natural, historical and cultural resources (Kastenholz, 2002). Given these trends and the potential of tourism to contribute to the development or regeneration of rural areas, it would be important to identify the most appropriate strategies for maximizing benefits. According to several authors (OECD, 1994; Cánoves et al, 2004), tourism can play an important role in these areas and can be a force for the development of the most disadvantaged rural areas.

In Portugal, Rural Tourism assumed after 2008 the designation of Tourism in the Rural Area (TRA) and Manor House Tourism (MHT). It is a tourist product, legally existing since 1986, created with the objectives of stimulating populations' economic income and the recovery of historical-cultural heritage. However, Rural Tourism is still characterized as a product with little success in Portugal (Godinho, 2004), associated to its small scale, low capacity of occupation, lack of resources, traditional character and weaknesses in terms of management and marketing. Another characteristic corresponds to the weakness of associations and partnerships, where owners of establishments are concerned (Kastenholz, 2002). In order to overcome various fragilities, aiming at the sustainable development of a specific rural destination, the Inland North and Centre of Alentejo region (INCA) and the success of the Rural Tourism product (TRA and MHT), some information and guidance is provided to the various stakeholders in the process. A constitution of partnerships and networks of companies are referred to as appropriate tactics for organizing supply. In this sense, the success of the Rural Tourism activity involves the definition of appropriate cooperative marketing strategies that allow effective management, distribution and promotion of products (Kastenholz, 2002).

Although research on Rural Tourism is already a reality, the various studies do not present as a priority the research on internationalization strategies for the rural tourism. Internationalization can be approached within a gradual evolution scheme with well-defined stages, allowing organizations to acquire resources and knowledge on the operation of foreign markets (Andersson, 2004).

Tourists choose to take holidays in Europe, mostly because of its cultural richness, the variety of landscapes and the quality of its tourist infrastructure. Nowadays, it can be said that "Europe leads the world in (the) rural tourism market (being) rich in monuments, villages, heritage sites, handicrafts and folklore, - all of which have been instrumental in forming the culture of European countries" (Edmunds, 1999:37-50).

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On the supply side, it seems fundamental to diversify markets. Brazil, being a real market, has potential for several aspects to be explored by Portuguese destinations. So again, *why Brazilian tourists?*

Before all, it's necessary to clarify that always when "Brazilian tourists" are mentioned in this study, the researcher wants this to be understood as people with or without Brazilian nationality but having their residence in Brazil.

Brazil was chosen for several reasons. Among them, there is the close history and cultural identities, similar language, the huge population, and the fact that Brazilians very much enjoy travelling abroad. Even if Brazilians are one of the nationalities choosing to visit Alentejo, in the INCA region, they are infrequent visitors, so this needs clarification, because it seems that this particular region has enough potential to attract more Brazilian travelers.

Another question, not less important, needs to be addressed. Why the INCA region? Firstly, the researcher needed to limit this study to a certain unity, as a Case Study methodology was chosen, and the INCA region (Inland North and Centre of Alentejo) was able to offer that. Secondly, it also consists of two adjacent counties (Évora and Portalegre) that present several potential resources, not forgetting that it is also here that the researcher's family owns a MHT (in Sousel, Portalegre). There is also, in the future, a possibility to consider INCA region as strong destination brand.

This study is divided into six chapters. The first two focus on a literature review and the theoretical framework of this research, related to Rural Tourism and its internationalization. The third chapter explains the methodological approach carried out in this study, which is an exploratory research project using questionnaires and interviews. The fourth chapter presents the Case Study, with a characterization of the INCA region, including the Rural Tourism accommodation establishments, as well as the approach to Brazilian tourists. The fifth chapter refers to the presentation of results, where the qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques are explained, and the results analysis are given. It is in this chapter that the innovative aspect of this study is most evident since there are new data to be presented. Finally, in the sixth chapter, is presented the main conclusions of the results obtained and some recommendations for future studies.

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This work contributed to identifying the existence of some flaws regarding the study of the TRA and MHT product concerning the offer's organization and the available data. In fact, some difficulties can be pointed out, namely the lack of answers to the questionnaire for the effective market (in which respondents were staying already in the INCA region in Rural Tourism establishments). This constraint was compensated for by the answers of the questionnaires applied to the potential market/customer, that is, potential tourists for the INCA region living in Brazil. The results showed that most rural tourism establishments are not well prepared to receive this public, who require high quality standards (both at the level of the facilities and staff), but they appreciate certain characteristics that are offered by this region. On the other hand, it seems that there is a lack of dissemination of information about the INCA region to this public, thus requiring an adequate marketing plan capable of highlighting its potentialities.

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## **Chapter 1: The Rural Tourism**

### **1.1. Tourism and rural areas**

Tourism offer can be defined as a set of facilities, goods and services that can be either acquired or used by visitors. The creation of such elements is also contemplated in the definition, relating to the visitor's needs and wants. Another element concerns the natural and cultural environment (Cunha, 2001). Therefore, Tourism is a composite product, resulting from "a complex and interactive multi-sector chain of activities in which each participant contributes with a small share to the final product" (Santos, 1998:4).

In rural areas tourism offer is linked to distinctive features such as tradition, rurality, vernacular heritage and unsettled environment. This is the core of the Rural Tourism segment (RT).

Directly intertwined with rural areas, RT is commonly considered as the tourism that takes place in the "countryside". The definition of "countryside" varies according to different countries (Lane, 2009), because different criteria are used (Davidson, 1992). The variety of conceptions of what is "countryside" has an influence on the definition of RT, resulting on an "absence of a commonly accepted definition as to what constitutes RT. Sometimes RT is equated with farm tourism. Yet, the latter is only one variety of the whole spectrum. Bed and Breakfast places or apartments rented by operators other than farmers, rural hotels or guest-houses, and camping often form the majority of accommodation in rural areas" (Oppermann, 1996: 86-102). Nowadays, we can still say "... there were long discussions about the name "rural tourism", discussions which are still alive today" (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015 1133-1156). This result in a variety of terms that describe tourism activity in rural areas: agrotourism, farm tourism, soft tourism and alternative tourism.

While defining RT, Lane (2009) exposed rural areas as areas having a specific character and function that reflect the unique forms of a particular environment, economy and history. According to the same author, any activity that does not take place in the rural environment and does not employ local resources cannot be considered as rural tourism.

RT can also be linked to a specific type of hosting, centred in a family owned rural structure, divided into three categories: ancient and noble structures, palaces and manor houses, whose owners take the opportunity to keep and recover the family estates; traditional agricultural facilities, such as barns and small farmhouses, owned by farmers that aim to increase their

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income and restored old houses in traditional villages, bought by indiscriminate individuals for specific touristic activities (Silva, 2006).

### **1.1.1. Objectives and characterization of Rural Tourism**

In Europe, RT has come up with the essential aim of "halting the depopulation, preserve the countryside, save a certain type of family farming, maintaining a healthy environmental balance and provide the economic solvency of thousands of households" (Godinho, 2004:91-93). It is also frequently referred as a development tool contributing to sustainable development of marginalized rural areas in quest for new economic opportunities (Eusébio, Kastenholz, Breda, 2014). Rural areas have witnessed a growing interest and demand for recreational and leisure purposes. Natural and cultural values, considered to exist in rural areas, the possibility of direct contact with nature and the experience of the "authentic", appear as the reasons for this growing interest.

The rural world stands out for its main functions: food production and transformation, the way of life, the set of values and behaviours and the undisturbed landscape that embodies the balance between nature and man (Ferrão, 2000). Countryside is perceived as a leisure area, with space for outdoor activities and contact with nature and traditional culture. A place where socialization is opposite to the elements associated with urban areas such as pollution, congestion, noise, rigid schedules, impersonality, dehumanization and even solitude. The return to origins and authenticity things, with some nostalgia for the "good old days" (Ribeiro & Marques, 2002; Figueiredo & Raschi, 2011; Kastenholz, 2010).

Rural areas enhance their placement in the leisure, recreational and touristic segment. This is believed to demine demographic, socio-economic and cultural transformation in the rural world, and emerge as an alternative to farming (OECD, 1994; Cristóvão, 2000; Alves, 2001; Ribeiro and Marques, 2002; Kastenholz, 2002; Valente and Figueiredo, 2003).

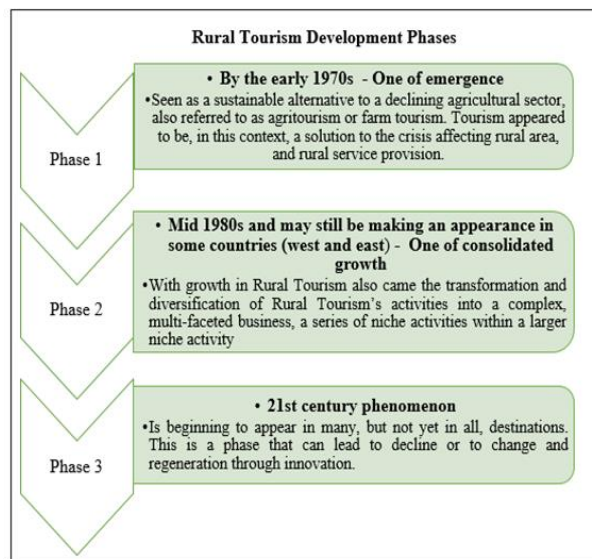
The distinctive feature for RT is the desire to provide the visitor with a personalized contact "hosts are not merely providing accommodation, activities and service in the traditional sense, but also the set-up for guests to socialise with each other and with their hosts" (Hultman & Cederholm, 2010:365-380) and with an experience of human and physical environment of the territory.

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## 1.2. Rural Tourism: development and sustainability

Between 1987 and 1997 employment in agriculture was receding in Europe: one of every three farming jobs was lost in Italy, Spain, Portugal and France (Bowler, 1985). Rapidly rural areas became places of low population density and with agricultural surplus. With the strong appeal from the city's high incomes several changes occurred in the rural world. Following these changes, the European Union reacted with a complete transformation in the development strategies and policies on the rural world. The 1991 European Programme for Rural Development (LEADER<sup>1</sup>), supported many public policies with RT projects and other non-agricultural activities. It was believed that the development of RT was a way to create jobs and promote regional development.

In terms of the RT development, Lane and Kastenholz (2015) have identified three milestones, expressed in the Figure 1.1:



**Figure 1.1.** Rural Tourism Development Phases. Own elaboration based on Lane & Kastenholz, 2015.

Tourism is acknowledged to be the sector of activity that can best seize local and endogenous resources and is capable of adapting to the specifics of each region (Reis, 2012). The most dominant strategy appeals to an economic diversification, where local economy receives an important contribution through RT at the level of both the individual resident and the region as

<sup>1</sup> European initiative launched in 1991. Available in: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leader2/dossier\\_p/pt/dossier/chap1.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leader2/dossier_p/pt/dossier/chap1.pdf).

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a whole. Visitors not only search for accommodation and meals in the RT, but also search for recreational activities and shop in local stores (Ilbery et al., 1998; project ORTE2 ).

Not only in local terms, but in wider contexts, tourism has been considered as a development tool. This justified the intervention of Governments that acted in RT policies. The actual extent of government intervention in RT varies from country to country, according to various political-economic-constitutional systems, and specific circumstances to each its regions.

In spite of this general assumption, the relationship between RT and local development has been widely debated. Although the benefits are defended by several authors and there are optimistic opinions about the effects, there is also an attitude of scepticism and criticism regarding the contribution of RT to regional development. In fact, RT has produced benefits for rural areas, but on a different scale from what was expected, contradicting the great expectations put on this product as a kind of solution for the economic problems of these areas.

Identifying potential in rural areas is a necessary task that needs to be accomplished in order to define the role of RT as a development agent. One result of a three years research project, ORTE, was the assessment of potential in some rural areas, based on unique features distinguishing the territories and their communities (Kastenholz et al, 2014). The research assessed that a given regional potential would only lead to development benefits when a significant set of tourism attractions and facilities are present, and a professional marketing approach is used (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Kastenholz, Carneiro & Marques, 2012; Pato & Kastenholz, 2017).

RT faces nowadays new challenges. The paradigm of *rural development* (as a replacement of the agricultural modernization paradigm - Van der Ploeg et al., 2000) pursues a new agricultural model, based on the valorisation of the landscape as a public good, on an economic model of scale, pluriactivity of rural families. New practices, such as landscape management, nature conservation, agrotourism, organic agriculture, regional products or direct sales make rural development a multifaceted process, with new roles and relationships with other sectors. The success of a region will ultimately depend on its ability to solve its own problems, to organize various stakeholders around common objectives and to adapt and adjust successfully to external

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<sup>2</sup> Work carried out within the framework of the research project "The global experience in rural tourism and sustainable development of local communities" (and identified by the acronym ORTE - Overall Rural Tourism Experiences). It's a project funded by the Science and Technology Foundation (Ref: PTDC / CSGEO / 104894/2008), with Community co-financing (COMPETE / QREN / FEDER), coordinated by the University of Aveiro, more precisely by the researcher in charge, Elisabeth Kastenholz.

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pressures. Thus, development sources reside in the population itself, in its sense of community and, perhaps more importantly, in the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship (Polèse, 1998).

There is a growing interest in the so-called "inland tourism", i.e., places yet unsaturated by mass tourism and that includes different modalities, identified as: rural, environmental, wine tourism, ecotourism, agrotourism, among others. These forms of tourism involve natural, cultural and social aspects linked to daily life of rural areas. RT encompasses some of these modalities which are not mutually exclusive, but complementary (Oxinalde, 1994). All these different forms of tourism highlight the rural areas assets and can be easily intertwined with RT, promoting its development.

However, the growth of the RT industry must balance the need for existing rural assets with the necessary economic development (Lane, 1994a). The principle of sustainable development must be also applied to this sector of activity (Butler, 1999). Sustainable tourism is defined as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005:11-12). According to UNWTO sustainable tourism meets the needs of current tourists and destinations, protecting and creating opportunities for the future. It aims to manage all resources so that economic and social needs are met, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity and life support systems. RT is strongly interlinked with sustainability, essentially because it is based on endogenous and limited resources. In order to reach a sustainable and multidimensional integration, government planning strategies must meet the protection of environmental and cultural heritage, encompassing the local communities and agents in decision making processes (Ertuna, 2012).

### **1.2.1. Opportunities and challenges of Rural Tourism**

We have seen how Tourism can act a trigger for rural development. But it can generate negative impacts when not controlled. Market fluctuations, host communities' strains and the destruction of cultural and environmental heritage constitute the main challenges to a global development approach (Lane, 1994a; Leal, 2001; OECD, 1994; Pearce, 1990).

One of the main issues is that RT did not correspond to the initial expectations (Correia et al., 2007) and it translated on a weak business setting in rural areas. One reason can be the lack of



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an integrated perspective (taking into account all factors like ecological, social, cultural and economic) by the RT stakeholders. The occurrence of RT in sensitive natural environments may also result in damage to the different natural resources - vegetation, soil, fauna, flora, as well as a threat to the existing calm, peace and authenticity. At a socio-cultural level, some challenges are related to the impact of the tourist's culture on the more traditional ones, the extent of change and the risk of acculturation (OECD, 1994). However, it is debatable what the real impact of tourism in a context of globalization, where the new communication techniques and the media (television and especially the internet) dominate. It must be also considered that not all rural areas are equally attractive and simply providing accommodation does not guarantee demand.

This claims the need for a more developed and organised RT. Such may require a significant financial investment that goes beyond the capacity of the business owner or that is not justifiable by a potential return. In such cases government support may be required (Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000). It is also necessary a more convenient service role. Local communities and businesses may find it difficult to adapt to such a paradigm, since agricultural values and guest-service values are frequently incompatible (Fleischer & Pizam, 1997). Individual RT business usually possess neither the skills nor the resources for effective marketing strategies and communication tools, a prerequisite to success (Embacher, 1994). In some cases, marketing and advertising support is available, although it has been assessed that rural communities can be suspicious or even resentful of 'outside' assistance. The lack of professionalism and the low entry barriers in RT, are a frequent complaint. This translates in staff with no relevant training or education that can seriously limit the potential to grow or prosper (Getz et al., 2004).

On the positive side, RT makes a significant contribution to rural economies, in financial and social terms, generating some employment effectiveness, encouraging new labour practices and supporting resources conservation (OECD, 1994). We can acknowledge potential benefits on rural development through RT: employment retention; job creation; employment diversification; retention of services; agricultural support; forest benefits; landscape and nature conservation; crafts; cultural offer; historical heritage conservation; environmental improvements; maintenance of traditional activities; role of women; new ideas and initiatives.

### **1.2.2. Relevant tools in rural tourism solutions: Networks and Partnerships**

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The frailty of the rural world itself and the frailty of many of its small business demands a strategy based on the establishment of partnerships and networks.

The development of a network offers the possibility to link and exchange partners' resources on a defined basis. These resources may involve knowledge, experiences, information or production capacities. Networks also can provide support, technology, customers, access to new markets, facilitate performance improvement, and assist in developing business (Bowen, Jones, & Lockwood 2006, Preble, Reichel & Hoffman 2000). Partnership come in many different forms and on various levels of involvement - from informal seasonal alliances to joint ventures. Entrepreneurial partnerships can be seen as an opportunity micro and small businesses growth. Therefore, it is an interesting business strategy to be pursued by micro and small businesses that characterize the RT.

Networking has an important social role as well. Access to information and the reduction of business risk increase the self-confidence and motivation of entrepreneurs. Relationships can be vertical – involving firms at different points of the value stream, and/or horizontal – between competitors, or even diagonal – between suppliers of complementary tourism products.

The first and perhaps the most important condition for a successful network is the trust factor (Gilmore et al. 2006; Hanna & Walsh 2008; Miller et al. 2007; Sommer & Haug 2008). Lack of it is pointed out as to be the most important obstacle for the network's success. Other reasons for poor network performance can be inadequate communication, mismatch of resources, inappropriate organizational structures/processes, mismanagement of the collective learning process, poor processing of information, and management of uncertainty (Hanna & Walsh, 2008).

Dubrovski (1997) lists the following conditions for successful networking: compatibility of different partners' goals, the possibility to ensure strategic advantage, inter-dependence of partners, acceptance of responsibilities, adequate amount of time, mutual trust and support, suitable management of the network and appropriate communication. Hwang & Lockwood (2006) believe the best practices in partnering and networking are based on mutuality, goal achievement, value for money, the professionalism of participants, longevity and involvement.

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### **1.3. Rural Tourism in Portugal**

RT emerged in Portugal at the end of the 70s (1978) an experimental form in Ponte de Lima, Vila Viçosa, Castelo de Vide and Vouzela. At the time, it was called “Turismo de Habitação” (Manor House Tourism - MHT), mainly country manor houses of considerable architectural or heritage value. Was conceived by the public sector as a way of taking advantage of regions of great interest in terms of architecture, history and landscape (Ribeiro, 2001).

In 1978 was published the Regulatory Decree (nº 14/78 dated 12 May 1978), that regulated the practice. In 1979 the first step towards an organised activity were taken, following the actions of a group of owners of country manors in Ponte de Lima, Minho that provided tourist accommodation in exchange for financial aid to renovate the properties. However, it was only after the publication of the Decree-law no. 251/84 that the RT really grew in Portugal. As shown in Annex 1 it integrated modalities A (Solar type building or palatial house, with architectural value) and B (Building located in rural areas of rustic nature or regional characteristics) and it was of an experimental nature with family owned houses with some degree of heritage meaning or erudite or rustic nature providing lodging facilities; an immediate adhesion of the "Solares" (Alto Minho region) occurred. The subsequent springing of more establishments, based on restored ancient country manors (restoration partially financed by EC funds) led to the legal definition of Tourism in Rural Area in 1986<sup>3</sup>, which was then divided into several sub-categories: the MHT, RT, and Agrotourism.

Several funding programmes encouraged the enlargement and diversification into new segments: in 1989, the Rural Hotel, and in 1997, the Village Tourism and Country Houses (Decree-Law 169/97).

The legal setting for tourism enterprises came with the Decree-Law 39/2008 (March 7), first time changed by the Decree-Law nº 228/2009 of September 14, and distinguished town and country house tourism accommodation (MHT) and – Tourism in Rural Area (TRA). A second change has been made with the Decree-Law No. 15/2014 of 23 January, and it represents the current legal body.

There are today in Portugal two main categories that operate in the rural setting:

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<sup>3</sup> Decree Law 256/86; New touristic products that are developed in the rural area.

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- Town and country manor house tourism accommodation (MHT): “Family-run establishments located in old, private buildings that for their architectural, historic or artistic value represent a certain era, notably palaces and manor houses, located in urban or rural areas” (Article 17°).
- Tourism in Rural Areas (TRA): “Establishments intended to provide accommodation services to tourists in rural areas that have for their operation an appropriate set of facilities, structures, equipment and complementary services, with a view to providing a complete, diverse tourism product in rural areas are deemed tourism enterprises in rural areas.” (Article 18°).

TRA can be graded under three groups: Country Houses, Agrotourism and Rural Hotels. Country Houses (*Casas de campo/Turismo de Aldeia*) are “properties located in villages and rural areas which, for their architecture, building materials and other characteristics fit in with the typical local architecture are country homes”. Agrotourism enterprises (*Agro-Turismo*) are “properties located on farms that allow guests to accompany and get to know agricultural activity, or take part in the work carried on there in keeping with the rules laid down by the farm manager are agrotourism enterprises”. Rural Hotels (*Hoteis Rurais*) are “hotels located in rural areas which, for their architectural design and building materials are in keeping with the dominant characteristics of the region, and they may also be set up in new buildings”.

In what concern the national strategy on RT we can observe primary concerns on the matter with the National Tourism Plan of 1986 that referred the importance of creating legal conditions for the development of various forms of tourism in rural areas, in order to stimulate the recovery of the historical-cultural heritage, to associate the offer of tourist accommodation with the traditions of rural lodging and to increase the economic income and the living conditions of the populations (Valente & Figueiredo 2003). In 2007, with the National Strategic Tourism Plan, RT or TRA does not figure as one of the ten strategic products (Turismo de Portugal, 2011). At present the national strategy is devised under the document “Tourism 2020 - Five Principles for an Ambition”<sup>4</sup>, and it states that the success of RT sets on innovation, creativity, the ability to generate value propositions that attract tourists. Aiming to grow more than identified competitors and several principles (a sustainable and quality destination; a destination of competitive companies; an entrepreneurial destination; a destination linked to the World; a well-managed destination; a destination that marks) is the government proposal for a strategic

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<sup>4</sup> Own translation into English from the Portuguese version “*Turismo 2020 - Cinco Princípios para uma ambição*”

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approach on the tourism sector for the next five years. Distance from a national devised and supported policy seems to describe the development of RT, whose main actors are almost entirely private initiative, reinforcing this distance from government.

RT in Portugal is a tourist product created with the aim of increasing local population's revenue and restoring the cultural heritage (Kastenholz, 2002). RT promotes recognition of the properties' old ties, and allows groups of people (mainly urban middle classes) to have contact with the rural setting, and these properties. The recovery of the vernacular heritage, some of them relevant historical marks, is one of the positive impacts of RT allowing owners to preserve an historical value. RT in Portugal also contributes to the preservation of traditional cuisine and ways of life.

RT's demand and supply are heterogeneous and operate within niche market (Clemenson & Lane, 1997). At a national level the indicators on the direct creation of employment from TRA and MHT, show a small number. According to Silva (2006), most units have only one or two permanent staff members, and others do not have any employees. As for part time workers, the majority of the establishments admit only one worker. In most parts the employees are female, as is usual the tourist activity in general, and RT in particular (Lane, 1994b). In Portugal, these employees are in charge of the performance of an extremely varied set of tasks, including gardening, cleaning and maintenance of the rooms, breakfast service and telephone service, among others (Silva, 2006).

In 2014 TRA lodging tourism had 883 operating establishments to offer and a capacity of 13.700 beds. The number of annual guests stood at 371.600 and the number of overnight stays amounted to 855.700. Average stays were 2.3 nights and the occupancy rate were 20.4% (INE - Statistics Portugal 2014).

In 2015, there were 1.298 TRA and MHT establishments. More than half (54.0%) are Country Houses (701 units), followed by Agrotourism (194 units with a relative weight of 14.9%), Other"<sup>5</sup> (115 establishments, 8.9% of the total) and Rural Hotels (73 establishments, 5.6% of the total). There were 215 MHT, which corresponded to 16.6% of the total. The available capacity was 21.800 beds. There have been increases in capacity in all modalities, especially in Country Houses and Agrotourism.

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<sup>5</sup> "Others" in Rural Tourism include the previous modalities of rural tourism and village tourism.

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The regions with the largest accommodation capacity, in terms of number of establishments and number of available beds were the North (37.8% of establishments and 36.5% of beds), the Centre (23.1% and 22.6%) and Alentejo (21.2% and 26.2%). The demand and occupation of the establishments were fixed at 569.700 guests and 1.3 million overnight stays. In these housing segments, the main destinations were North (30.2% of total overnight stays), Alentejo (25.8%) and Centre (21.0%). The average stay was 2.23 nights (-3.0% than the previous year). The grouping "Others" (2.43 nights on average) and the Country Houses (2.39) recorded the highest stays. The overall net occupancy rate was 18.8% (1.6% in 2014). The Rural Hotels modality was the highest (26.5%), followed by the group "Others" (18.7%), Country Houses (18.0%) and AgroTourism (17, 3%). (INE - Statistics Portugal 2015).

In 2014 there is a new category, possible not only in urban areas but also in rural ones, called Local Accommodation. In 2015 this modality registered 1.450 units, with an offer of 49.400 beds, having received 2,3 million guests and 5.3 million overnight stays. This category needs to be considered in futures studies under RT.

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## **Chapter 2 - Internationalization for Rural Tourism**

### **2.1. Tourism internationalization: a parallel with RT**

According to Eurostat (September 2017) “Tourism is an important activity in the EU which contributes to employment and economic growth, as well as to the development of rural, peripheral or less-developed areas.”, which means rural areas may gain betting on tourism. Following this, it’s possible to conclude that tourists must receive an appropriate care and attention, targeting both domestic and international markets. This study focuses on the international tourist market for a rural region in Portugal, namely the Brazilian market.

UNWTO defines an international tourist as “any person who travels to a country other than that in which s/he has his/her usual residence but outside his/her usual environment for a period not exceeding 12 months and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited, and who stay at least one night in a collective or private accommodation in the country visited” (UNWTO, 2001).

The year 2016 produced excellent results in international tourism, despite all the challenges. For the 7th consecutive year, international tourist arrivals grew, reaching 1.2 billion travels. UNWTO forecasts indicate a continuation of growth in international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2016b). Tourism as a worldwide export category, ranks third after fuels and chemicals and ahead of food and automotive products. In many developing countries, “tourism is in first place regarding the export sector”(UNWTO, 2016a:2).

Tourist activity has an international character, almost an intrinsic one. The vast majority of tourism companies expect foreign customers to come to their own country, where services are produced and consumed. To externalize their offers, these companies need to certify their ability to internationalize internal resources, through the use of regional attractions (natural environment, culture and history) and core resources (Crouch-Ritchie 1999). The internal offer should assure competitive advantages and provide unique facilities in a special environment - such as a natural or historical settings - sufficiently attractive. And it is here that RT may be an interesting option for some markets.

Four main motivations can be linked to international travel (UNWTO, 2011): leisure or vacation travel (51%), trips for health or religious reasons (27%) professional or business reasons (15%) and other unspecified reasons (7%).

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In the leisure travel context, “rurality” has had an increasing appeal in the tourism sector, and has presented increasing numbers of demand (Hall, 2004; Stamou & Paraskevopoulos, 2006) and challenges for supply in a highly competitive environment (Lane & Kastenzholz, 2015). Tourists search in “rurality” a differentiating element associating it with high-quality and “authentic” experiences, with tranquillity and with the personal attention provided by small-scale Rural Tourism establishments (Lane, 1994a). This search is nowadays directed not only to near-by domestic destinations, but also to other countries, where travellers seek new, unique experiences (Lane & Kastenzholz, 2015).

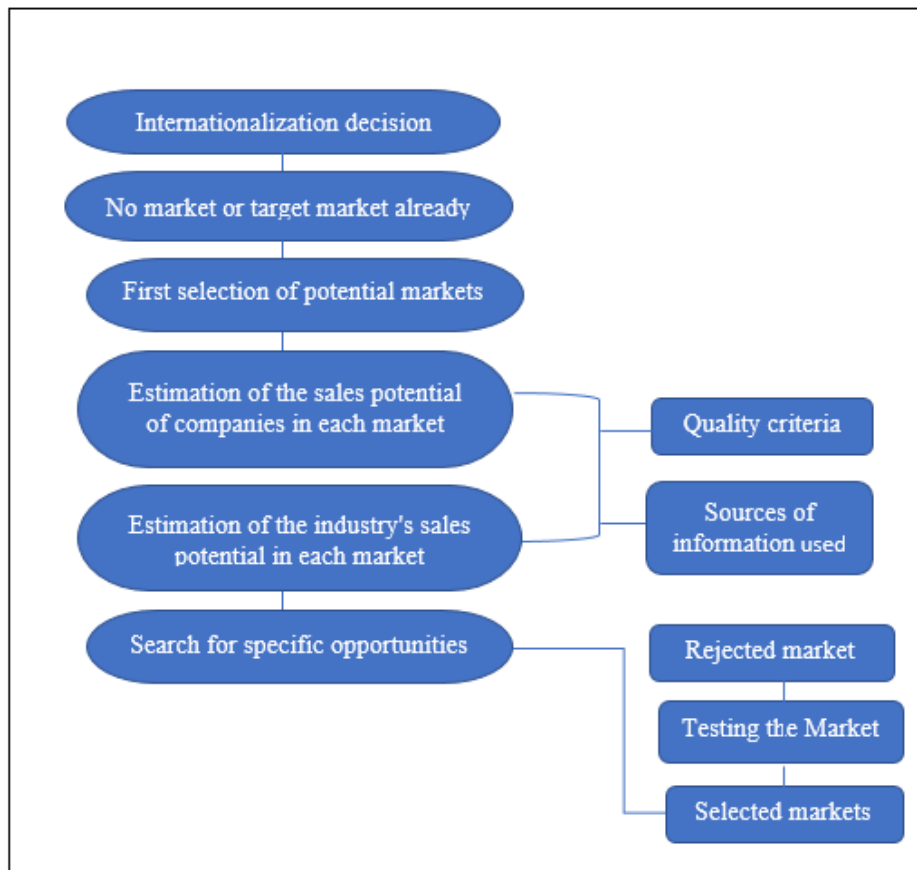
The internationalization approach must be understood as a process through which any organization begins to develop operations beyond the geographical delimitation of its home market (Hitt et al., 1999). Internationalization can be approached within a gradual evolution scheme with well-defined stages, allowing organizations to acquire resources and knowledge on foreign markets operations (Andersson, 2004). The organization gains experience by developing operations ‘out of doors’. However, this procedure is not simple and involves a number of important factors: motivations, market selection and decisions on the most adequate modes of entry.

As far as the motivations are concerned, several types can be identified: the possibility for increasing competitiveness in the long term, exploiting core competencies in new markets, increasing revenues with sales and reducing costs, while gaining experience (Serra et al., 2010). Geographic proximity, or even cultural, may be another factor that influences an international business strategy. When motivation is geographic, organizations tend to invest in countries close to their home countries (Viana & Hortinha, 2009).

Considering the international market, the most complex task resides in targetting the most adequate foreign market, taking into account several possibilities, risks and opportunities. A good bet will help any organization to achieve success and a rapid internationalization process. In this sense, several authors have looked at how organizations select foreign markets, as well as how they enter in these same markets, as explained in Figure 2.2:



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**Figure 2.2.** Select the target market. Source: Viana & Hortinha, 2009.

There are five indicators that represent the attractiveness of a given market (Brito and Lorga, 1999),

- Demographic;
- Market;
- Competition;
- Economic;
- Technical; and
- Technological.

Analyzing these indicators, organizations should be able to estimate the sales projections for each market, evaluating its product service potential and their consumption trends. Then, the organization must evaluate its possible market share, deciding further on the markets to bet or reject (Viana & Hortinha, 2009).

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Once the target market is selected, organizations will define the best entry way, through an elimination process of ways of access and with an analysis of external and internal factors. A second step towards internationalization resides in the analysis of several options and the comparison of possible forms of access taking into account the closest market, minimization of risks, avoiding customs barriers and administrative costs and the reduction of financial costs, (Viana & Hortinha, 2009).

There are two major types of entry modes to consider when moving into foreign markets (Katarzyna & Magdalena, 2013):

1) Non-equity mode: mainly on “export”<sup>6</sup>.

2) Equity mode: mainly on “joint venture”<sup>7</sup>.

Export and import are market-entry techniques that offer the lowest level of risk and the least market control. Taking exporting as the more appropriate (less risky) entry mode, companies can choose from two options: (1) export directly to customers abroad or (2) export indirectly with the help of a middleman (Peng & York, 2001). The literature shows the direct exporting as the most common way for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME<sup>8</sup>) to internationalize.

Indirect paths to internationalization are those “whereby small firms are involved in exporting, sourcing or distribution agreements with intermediary companies who manage, on their behalf, the transaction, sale or service with overseas companies” (Fletcher, 2004).

Export intermediaries (buyers, sellers, agents and distributors located either at home or abroad) play an important role in international trade, “linking individuals and organizations that would otherwise not have been connected” (Peng & York, 2001). They help their clients to identify

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<sup>6</sup> “The first and the most common strategy to be an international company is: import and export of goods, materials and services. Exporting is the process of selling goods or services produced in one country to other countries. There are two types of exporting: direct and indirect. Indirect export means that products are carried abroad by other agents and the firm doesn’t have special activity connected with international market, because the sale abroad is treated like the domestic one. For these reasons, it is difficult to say that it is an internationalization strategy. In the case of direct exporting, the firm becomes directly involved in marketing its products in foreign markets.” (Katarzyna, Magdalena, 2013)

<sup>7</sup> “(...) in joint ventures, the international firm has an equity position and a management voice in the foreign firm. A partnership between host- and home-country firms is formed, usually resulting in the creation of a third firm.” (Katarzyna, Magdalena, 2013 apud Byrne, Popoff, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> “Medium-sized enterprises have between 50 and 250 employees, and the annual turnover does not exceed 50 million euros, or the annual balance-sheet total is less than 43 million euros. Small enterprises, again, employ between 10 and 49 people, and their annual turnover does not exceed 10 million euros, or their annual balance-sheet total does not exceed 10 million euros. Micro-firms employ fewer than 10 employees, and neither their turnover nor the balance sheet total exceeds two million euros” (European Commission, 2003)

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customers, to obtain financing, act as distribution infrastructure providers (Balabanis, 2000), and also reduce knowledge gaps, uncertainties and other risks (Hessels & Terjesen, 2008).

As SME are usually regarded as resource-limited, lacking market power, knowledge and resources (Fujita, 1995; Coviello & McAuley, 1999; Knight, 2000; Hollenstein, 2005), collaboration, co-operation and networks are crucial in the internationalisation of tourism SME, where rural tourism companies are usually allocated. An RT international dimension can benefit from an entry strategy based on exportation of tourist services, after following the “Select the target market”, mentioned in the Figure 2.2.

### **2.1.1. Main markets**

According to UNWTO (2016), Europe Union is a major tourist destination, “ ... just over half the world’s total (51%). Europe was the fastest growing region in absolute terms, with 27 million more tourists than in 2014”<sup>9</sup>, and among its Member States there are five in the world’s top 10 destinations in 2015<sup>10</sup>. Tourists choose to holiday in Europe mostly because of its cultural richness, the variety of landscapes and quality tourist infrastructure. In 2014 the highest recorded number of overnight stays in rural areas was in Croatia (Jadranska Hrvatska) with 43.3 million, followed by Spain (in the Balearic Islands) with 39.8 million. Over 90% occupancy of overnight stays have been recorded in rural locations in the southernmost Belgian region of the province of Luxembourg (data from year 2013) in the western most region of Zeeland, the eastern most region of Burgenland and the two sparsely populated regions of the United Kingdom (data from 2012), namely Cumbria (north-west England) and Highlands and Islands (Scotland). There were 63 regions where overnight stays in rural locations represented 60% or more of total nights (EUROSTAT, 2016<sup>11</sup>).

Nowadays it can be identified that “Europe leads the world in (the) rural tourism market (being) rich in monuments, villages, heritage sites, handicrafts and folklore, - all of which have been instrumental in forming the culture of European countries” (Edmunds, 1999).

Worldwide economic factors, violent conflicts and terrorist attacks, as well as the refugee crisis in Europe have created very different impacts on the global tourism industry, in spite of the

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<sup>9</sup> Available in <http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284418145>.

<sup>10</sup> According to EUROSTAT.

<sup>11</sup> Available in <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/7604195/KS-HA-16-001-EN-N.pdf>.

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good results achieved in 2015/16 (23rd World Travel Monitor). The main trends in world outbound travel are city trips, cruise holidays and long-haul travel. People are choosing more traveling abroad on holidays, having increased 34% in growth between 2007 and 2014 (World Travel Monitor). However, countryside holidays have stagnated and now only represent 7% of all holidays, while city trips have reached 22%, and sun & beach holidays 29% (ITB World Travel Trends Report 2015 / 2016). Still, RT may present an alternative to the more massified tourism formats, offering unique experiences in an environment, generally perceived as calm and peaceful in a stressful world (Kastenholz & Carneiro, 2016), , increasingly perceived as unsafe (Seabra, Abrantes & Kastenholz, 2014).

### **2.2 Destination selection processes: the importance of motivation and destination image**

Several academic studies (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Kastenholz, 2002; Gallarza, Garcia & Saura, 2002; Choi, Tkachenko & Sil, 2011) have analyzed the influence of images on tourist behavior. Studies on destination image began with the works of John D. Hunt in 1975, and have consolidated to a relevant field of academic research in tourism, more specifically consumer behaviour and marketing studies in tourism.

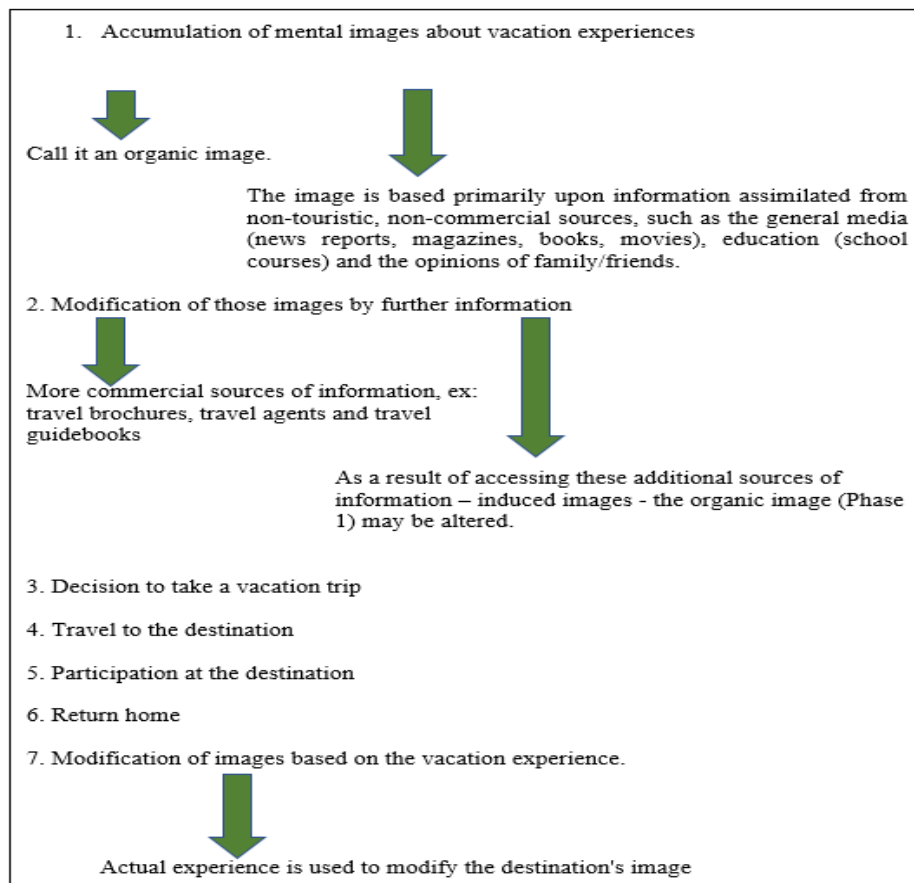
Not only image needs to be considered when choosing something, but the relationship between image, preference and choice has been an important issue in attempting to understand consumer behaviour: “choice is only affected by important and differently perceived items” (Johnson, 1974).

In tourism, Crompton (1977) suggested the destination choice as a result of the interaction between pragmatic constraints such as time, money and destination images. Destination image works on “beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people have of a place or destination” (Crompton, 1979a). Destination choice is a two phases process (Crompton, 1977): the first, a generic phase, refers to the decision to go or not on a vacation. Once the decision is made, the second phase is concerned with where to go, through a decision-making process that includes a set of all travel locations considered as potential destinations (“all the preferred destinations of your dreams”). This ‘evoked set’ suffers some alterations between the two stages: from a set in which people include everywhere they desire to travel to, without being repressed by any constraints such as money or time, to a set where people consider their situational constraints as well as their

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preferences. It seems that an 'evoked set' is developed simultaneously or after an important decision is made on whether or not to take a pleasure trip.

Destinations with strong and positive images draw more attention to visitors/consumers and are preferred in the travel decision process (Goodrich, 1978; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Therefore, the destination image has an important role in travel decision making (Schmoll, 1977; Moutinho, 1984; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). The process of destination image formation was developed by Gunn (1988), in his model of the travel experience, passing seven phases, as shown in Figure 3.2.:



**Figure 3.2.** Process of destination image formation. Own elaboration based on Gunn, 1988.

The tourist image formation occurs within several contexts. Firstly, the tourist perceives it through his own perspective, and based on diverse, generally, non-commercial sources, like literature, social media, word of mouth (organic image). The destination image formation resides in a complex attribution to a place based on multiplicity of its components (cognitive,

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affective and conative), while its nature may be both collective and individual (Kastenholz, 2002). On the other hand, the transmitted information about a tourism destination or product from commercial information sources (induced image) contributes directly to the formation of the image that is perceived before even visiting it (Gunn, 1988 *apud* Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Bignami, 2002). The use of digital resources to share information, such as blogs, media, social networks, facilitates information search, in both textual or visual format, about the intended places to visit (Torres, 2009), representing a different channel of communication between tourist destinations and consumers. Photographs are widely used in the process of communication of tourist destinations (Kotler, 2007; Chias, 2005; Rey, 2004). Information, photographs and comments made available on the Internet act as a source of information for the tourist and can influence their consumption decisions.

The image of tourist destinations is also defined as mental impression that relates to emotional aspects and imagination, a process of perception where one or more consumers present different knowledge about a certain locality object of tourist interest. The image of the tourist destination is projected on the tourist's mind even before the trip, either by the intentional search for information or by the exposure to this information, influencing directly their expectations and subsequent experiences (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999, Kastenholz, 2002; Middleton & Clarke, 2002, Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

As far as RT is concerned, destination image can be based on the history, geography and culture of the territory, and in their promotion, need to take into account that "images are co-constructed by the tourist and the suppliers" (Cánoves, Villarino, Priestley, & Blanco, 2004). Image projection in RT must also take into consideration that characteristic and traditional products and environments are keys assets to the perceived quality and sophistication of a RT experience sought. Local products and resources, beautiful landscapes, well-preserved heritage and local cuisine and traditions, typical of the visited area and somehow related to a so-called 'rural idyll', are frequently sought elements of the RT experience that need to be preserved for appealing RT destinations and services (Kastenholz & Carneiro, 2016). Tourists seek and value these factors, as mentioned so many times in the literature.

Tourist motivation is considered as a "significant mental disposition that adequately arranges an actor or group of actors to travel" (Silva, 2007). One of the main motivations of visitors to the countryside is centered in the discovery of the region and contact with nature (Eusébio, Carneiro, Kastenholz, Figueiredo & Sousa, 2017; Kastenholz & Carneiro, 2013). Visitors being

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lodged in the properties of accommodation units (TRA), enjoy the opportunity to undertake leisure activities, such as watching or getting involved in agricultural and cattle tasks. Interest in gastronomy and handicraft are part of the Portuguese holiday motivations, which sometimes seek to appreciate local dishes (Silva, 2007). In this context, one must understand that the tourism experience is co-created and experienced by various agents of a destination: tourists, tourism service providers and the local population (Kastenholz et al., 2012).

Tourists take an active role in defining their experience, initiating the process by searching for travel information, imagining activities and activating the service network available at the destination (Kastenholz et al., 2012). In addition, the way how tourists will participate and engage with the destination, its people and resources during the experience on-site will be the key to how they will remember it and keep an image of the visited place they will subsequently spread amongst others.

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**Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter describes the goals and objectives, research methods including data collection techniques. It also describes the studied subjects and exposes the research limitations.

**3.1 Objectives and research question**

This dissertation’s overall theme embodies the researcher’s personal aims. Owner of a family Manor House Tourism in the Alentejo region, the researcher thrived with the opportunity to understand possible strategies on RT development in line with a personal concern towards sustainability and responsibility.

Based on the research question, the work was planned to achieve the objectives mentioned in Table 1.3:

Research question	Objectives
Under which ways, means and arguments Brazilian tourists can be enhanced as customers to RT in INCA region?	1 – Characterization of the interests of Brazilian tourists for a RT region; 2- Understand whether the increase of Brazilian tourists will contribute to the development of RT in the INCA region; 3- Identify factors that increase Brazilian tourists’ interest for the INCA region; 4- Understand whether the Brazilians’ interests correspond to sustainable practices of RT in the INCA region; 5- Verify the possibility of the INCA region to attract Brazilian tourists.

**Table 1.3.** Research question and objectives.

A Case Study based research methodology was chosen, in order to respond to the purposed objectives, which is the Brazilian tourist behavior towards particular rural area in Portugal, called here as the INCA region.

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The INCA Region comprises two adjacent counties that present several resources with potential. Brazil was chosen for several reasons:

- 1- Close history with Portugal, with similar language and a shared cultural identity;
- 2- Portugal functions as a bridge to other countries in Europe, very appreciated by Brazilians;
- 3- There are some parallels to Portugal's attractiveness for Brazilian tourists, like the example of the Rural North of Portugal (Kastenholz, 2010). This suggests a rural areas' potential to attract and satisfy this specific tourist;
- 4- The very expressive demographic dimension of Brazil;
- 5- Brazilians appreciate very much travelling abroad;
- 6- Brazilian tourists are infrequent visitors to the INCA region, the reason for which needs clarification;
- 7- The potential of the INCA region to attract more Brazilian travelers.

### **3.2. Exploratory research**

The basis for the research project was a well-defined starting problem, with a set of conceptual and non-conceptual research questions, complemented with a restricted research scope. A qualitative methodological approach supports this research, using in depth literature review and a thorough data set to be analyzed and interpreted in a crossed analysis system.

The in-depth bibliographical review took into consideration diverse papers, scientific and academic studies, in pursuit of the state of knowledge on the studied object. In order to achieve the designated objectives, a Case Study methodology was chosen. With this methodology there is an attempt to take the best advantage of its analytical qualities that consider the individual, the role played by an individual or an organization, a small group, a community or even a nation, which are essential analytical units to understand the research question (Miles & Huberman, 1994), and therefore a justifiable choice to develop this study. Being this study limited to Brazilian visitors in INCA region, these constitute the analytical units that need to be assessed.

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The collected data was based in primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included surveys by questionnaire and exploratory interviews, which came to represent the main elements for the development of this project. Secondary sources are written documents of an official nature - statistical records, legislation-, as well as specific journals.

In a Case Study methodological approach, interviews are one of the most important sources for information (Yin, 2001), where the interviewee will express an opinion on a particular theme, using his own interpretation. In this research, interviews were understood as "procedures for collecting information that uses the form of verbal communication" (Almeida & Pinto, 1990), and "their main function is to reveal certain aspects of the phenomenon studied in which the researcher would not have spontaneously thought for himself, and thus complete the work tracks suggested by his readings "(Quivy & Campenhoudt, 1992).

As mentioned, questionnaire surveys were also used, and this is considered as "a technique that relies on a series of questions directed at a group of individuals" (Almeida & Pinto, 1990), which have a representative quality. In this research's questionnaire survey, questions were raised concerning "social, professional or family status, opinions, attitudes towards human or social options or issues, expectations, level of knowledge or a problem" (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 1995).

Questionnaires "quantify a multiplicity of data and therefore carry out numerous correlation analyzes" (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 1998), especially when analyzing a particular population, which was the case. It has also the advantage of being relatively inexpensive and is prepared according to specific standards and purposes, giving the researcher an assembly of answers to only a set of questions, designed to generate the data needed to achieve the project's objectives (Parasuraman et al.1988).

This method is especially appropriate to establish conditions and ways of life, values, opinions and behaviours of a given population. Analysis of social phenomena is thought to be better understood based on information related to the individuals of the population in question. It allows the interrogation of large numbers of people making it possible to quantify a multiplicity of data and to carry out large analyses and correlations. It is a complementary method, in which the statistical analysis of the data gives usefulness and meaning to the collected information.

Sample selection took into account that it needed to be a "suitably selected portion of the universe (population); is a subset of the universe" (Lakatos & Marconi, 2007).

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In this Case Study, the questionnaires focused on two main sample groups: 1) Brazilian tourist or tourist living in Brazil, vacationing in a RT establishment in the INCA region; 2) owners of TRA and MHT, also in this region. Due to the large target population in both cases, and the consequent difficulty to reach the total universe, it was used a non-probabilistic sampling technique, compounded accidentally or intentionally, since the elements were not randomly selected. Consequently, it is not possible to generalize the results of the research performed, in terms of population. This means that there is no guarantee of representativeness of the universe that is intended to be analyzed (Prodanov & Freitas, 2013). Therefore, we do not know the probability of each individual being selected for the sample and for this reason, we cannot generalize results with statistical precision.

### **3.3 Information collecting and processing techniques**

Data collection relied on the application of questionnaires and interviews.

The questionnaires were addressed to

- Brazilian tourists (and, if possible, other nationalities) in INCA region (and if possible, to other nationalities as well, that is why it was translated into English), in order to analyze the effective market in this region; - Questionnaire A
- Tourists living in Brazil, in order to analyze the potential market in this region. – Questionnaire B

The interviews, using a semi-structured formulation, enable human interaction providing a relaxed conversation, based on preset questions. Taking into account the qualitative nature of this research, semi-structured interviews were carried out to the following groups:

- Entrepreneurs/owners RT establishments (MHT and TRA) - Interviewees A (IA)
- CEO of a travel agency, TZ *Viagens*<sup>12</sup>, a travel agency specialized in the Brazilian market, with a considerable market share - Interviewee B (IB)

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<sup>12</sup> From this source <https://www.tzviagens.com.br/c/685/quem-somos/> is possible to be aware of the dimension of the entity.

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- Executive Director of the Regional Agency of Tourism Promotion of Alentejo (RATPA)
- Interviewee C (IC).

### **3.3.1. Structure and content of the questionnaires**

The questionnaire included a set of questions directed to the characteristics of the respondents or "cases" (Hill & Hill, 2008). Some aspects were considered in the preparation and final validation of the questionnaire: introduction, presentation, clarity and length. The questionnaire included instructions for a correct answer. In the Introduction, the potential respondent is informed about the research's nature and purpose, referring to its academic nature identifying the researcher and the research institution. It also briefly includes a request for cooperation and emphasizes confidentiality issues. Introduction is very relevant since it can determine first impressions and influence the decision-making process of cooperation on potential respondents (Hill & Hill, 2008).

The bilingual questionnaire, in Portuguese and in English, Questionnaire A (Brazilians and other nationalities, staying in TRA and MHT establishments in the INCA region, Annex 2) included the title, an introductory text, a set of 27 questions divided into 4 sections, and a brief final thanking message. This questionnaire, with several aims, as shown in table 2, was distributed by email to the establishment owners asking them to invite and to incite their guests to filling it out.

The structure of Questionnaire B (Brazilians living in Brazil - potential market) (Annex 3) includes a title, an introductory text with a message addressed to respondents, a set of 28 questions divided into 5 sections and a final thanking message. This questionnaire has several aims as identified in Table 3.

In both questionnaires, the layout and design were taken into account (Hill & Hill, 2008), as well as other issues related to its clarity, length and instructions for completion. Also in both, were created using the *SurveyGizmo* software, their layout and design were conditioned by the available options. They were also available in a text file (*Word*) to be used when necessary.

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The questionnaire’s title relates directly to the purpose of this research: “The development and internationalization of Rural Tourism (RT) in the Inland of North and Center Alentejo (INCA) region: focusing on Brazilian tourists”.

<b>Questionnaire A – Effective Market</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Information to be obtained</b>	<b>Aims</b>
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8	How travel was carried out by the target group to the INCA region	Know better the target public when he chooses for this region
9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15	About INCA region	Find out about motivations behind their choice for this region
16	What kind of trips when going abroad	Understand the preferences of this target group when go abroad
17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22	The profile of respondents	Characterize the target group, when choosing this region
24, 25 and 26	For respondents that aren’t the target group of this research, but have also chosen this region when go abroad	Obtain travel information about other countries and to see what motivations do they have for this region and to be able to make any relevant comparison, and, eventually, for further studies,
26	Date of filling out the questionnaire	Confirm it was done during the time of this research
27	Email address of the respondent	To build a potential target-group network for further initiatives.

**Table 2.3.** Questionnaire A (Effective Market) - Aims by question.

Regarding Questionnaire A, the owners (or their representatives) of TRA and MHT establishments in the Évora and Portalegre regions, were asked to invite their guests to complete the questionnaire, either through a web link or through Word paper version. This questionnaire was left in the establishments where the interviews were held, and the link was also sent by e-mail. But, no response was received back, and no questionnaire was filled out online.

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<b>Questionnaire B – Potential Market</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Information to be obtained</b>	<b>Aims</b>
1, 2 and 3	International travel choices made by the target group, focusing on European destinations.	This would allow this group to characterize itself as a traveller (whether for leisure or work) and the type of destinations (rural, urban or sun and sea) they travel to.
4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13	The nature of their (eventual) trip to Portugal	To draw a profile of the Brazilian tourist in Portugal.
14,15, and 16	RT in Portugal	understand if RT in Portugal is an option for this target group.
17,18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23	About INCA region	Produce data that help us understand if it represents a potential destination within this target group.
24, 25, 26, 27	Characterize the respondents profile according to socio-economic level, age, sex and education	Characterizing the potential target group of this research
28	Date of filling out the questionnaire Email address of the respondent	Confirm it was done during the time of this research To build a potential target-group network for further initiatives.

**Table 3.3.** Questionnaire B (Potential Market) - Aims by question.

Questionnaire B was addressed mainly to a target public living in Brazil (e.g. potential Brazilians tourists), contacted through various channels, *facebook* groups, personal acquaintances, family members and a network of Brazilian contacts in Portugal and Brazil. Brazilian universities were also included, especially those with protocols/agreements with the University of Aveiro and with ISCTE. From this exercise, 156 responses were obtained (106 were complete, 37 were partial and 13 null) and 143 were validated.

The answers provided to this type of questions – closed questions - allow the application of statistical techniques to data analysis (Hill & Hill, 2008). Taking this into account the type of

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questions used in these questionnaires were, mostly, closed-type questions, because it is easier to work with the data and analyse it.

A relevant literature review was carried out during the preparation of the questionnaires that allowed the development of the list of the main attributes to be used in the questionnaire to measure the destination image, following the suggestion given by some authors in their studies (Hankinson, 2005; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). From here, it was possible to identify the type of variables most used in surveys that measure the image of a tourist destination.

The scales used to characterize the qualitative variables were nominal and ordinal type. In the questionnaires, to assess the level of importance, a Likert Scale<sup>13</sup> (measure one's attitudes or behaviour) using scales with an odd number of options to have a midpoint. The type of questions and the scale chosen for each question were selected through *SurveyGizmo*, based on the platforms' existing options, which facilitated the structural organization of each of the response options. It was chosen a maximum of four pages in one questionnaire and five in the other, the maximum length acceptable for this type of questionnaire to assure a minimum concentration of the respondent on the issues in question and to enable them to respond. However, it was taken into account that there was a great risk that respondents would not answer (all) this number of questions.

The method used in the application of the questionnaires consisted of "direct administration", in which it is up to the respondent to complete the questionnaire (Quivy & Campenhout, 1998).

According to Pardal & Correia (1995: 52), "the internal validation and the critical assessment made by specialists or colleagues of the researcher, as the guarantor of a more successful questionnaire survey, and the pre-test, are operations carried out in name of the clarity and adequacy of the questionnaire to the target population".

Based on this, a pre-test in this study would verify the adaptation of the questions and scales used, as well as test the ability of the open questions to provide answers that could be considered as desired information. However, the researcher did not present a full pre-test, but showed a few Brazilian friends the questionnaire to detect whether there were any difficulties associated with its application or in understanding the questions and the ability to take advantage of

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<sup>13</sup> <https://pt.surveymonkey.com/mp/likert-scale/>.



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answers to open-ended questions, and a few corrections were done. After validation by the academic supervisors, the final versions of the questionnaires were launched.

### **3.3.2. Structure and content of the interviews**

"The interview is a process of social interaction, in which the interviewer has the purpose of obtaining information from the interviewee, through a script containing topics around a central problematic" (Haguette, 1995).

The interviews were previously planned, and scripts were prepared for the three types of participants above mentioned.

The interviews were carried out personally, by telephone and by email, and the interviewees mostly did not authorize the recording of the conversation (owners), and the researcher took notes of the responses. There were two interviews (from the representatives of *TZ Viagens* and of RATPA) which were authorized (tacitly) to be audio-recorded.

The technique of the semi-structured interview was chosen, because the interviewee had the possibility to express their experiences about the main questions proposed by the researcher. In addition, it allows free and spontaneous responses from the interviewee and values the performance of the interviewer. The questions elaborated for the interview took into account the theoretical basis of the research and the information that the researcher collected about the topic in question (Triviños, 1987).

The preparation of the interviews comes from previous work, involving research phases on data collection methods and preparation of three scripts adapted to the different interviewees. Files were used for the transcription of the interviews (especially those of the owners, whose script was most closely followed), where the questions and responses were inserted, in which the identification of the interviewee was kept anonymous (since the interviewer did not obtain a declaration of authorization from the interviewees). Besides this, is also indicated the date of the interview, means used to do the interview (email, face-to-face or telephone), code identification of the establishment (to assure confidentiality); the group / classification of the RT establishments (TRA + MHT), the location and the beginning of activity.

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Interviews were carried out with local and non-local populations related to the subject. We applied qualitative and semi-structured interviews, where the interviewer's purpose is to obtain qualitative information from the subject, using a pre-prepared script that contains topics developed according to a central problem. This type of interview allows the subject to describe their experiences, from a central focus proposed by the researcher, with free and spontaneous responses. The questions posed in the interview serve to support the theoretical research construction and the interview is used to complement and counter-point the data obtained through the literature review.

In addition, the interview was the subject of a systematic contents analysis, allowing to answer the research question. The semi-directional interview was used, in order to give the investigator some open guiding questions, and it was essential to receive information from the interviewee. It is not necessary to ask the questions in the order they are written down and under the intended formulation. Each interview, conducted with the various types of recipients, is structured in several parts or sections, which are divided into questions. These ones aimed at obtaining information on RT establishments (such on operation, equipment, types of products included in the offer, relation with other entities for cooperation, means used for promotion and disclosure of the business, the means or techniques used for the distribution of the products) and also the opinion of the owners regarding several aspects (such as the Brazilian tourist, the strategy of acting in promoting the development and internationalization of the RT in this region, and the management of the demand for accommodation, among others).

Interview A concerned the RT establishments in INCA region (see script in Annex 4). A total of 80 RT establishments were identified in the National Register of Tourist Establishments (NRTE) of Turismo of Portugal, for the counties of Évora and Portalegre. In Évora, we have about 45 registered establishments (as of 14 April 2016) and in Portalegre, there are about 35 registered establishments (as of 20 April 2016). All the owners of these establishments received an email asking for an interview and, also, to distribute a questionnaire (indicating the link) through their guests. Telephone contacts were still made afterwards, but there was a weak response, thus it was possible to carry out only six interviews in the district of Évora (two were conducted using email and one telephone) and five in the Portalegre district (one by e-mail). The interviews were conducted between April and May 2016. In general, mostly of the interviewees A showed resistance to recording the interview, therefore none of the interviews were audio recorded. The researcher tried to follow the script as much as possible, however

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there were times the conversation was flowing at the interviewee's rhythm, leading to incomplete interviews or skipping some questions (time given by interviewee was wasted and not all questions were asked). However, Interview B (see script in Annex 5) and C (see script in Annex 6) were audio recorded, and in one case all questions were asked, since the interviewee did not have time constraints. For the other interview time was limited, but most of the script was followed, trying to avoid repeating questions/subjects already mentioned before.

Regarding the interview B with the CEO of a travel agency, *TZ Viagens*, it was approached in two sections, with several questions about Brazil and RT, to try to understand if RT could be an option for Brazilians and if Portugal / INCA region would be a potential destination for the travellers. This interview, made with audio recording support, was transcribed.

In the case of the interview with the Executive Director of the RATPA, Interview C, the script presented five sections, with questions addressing essentially RT in the INCA region and also the Brazilian tourists. The main objective was to understand how the RT of INCA region is promoted by this entity in Brazil and for the Brazilian tourists. This interview, recorded in digital audio support, was transcribed.

The type of questions used were open-ended questions, since we wanted to obtain qualitative or additional information. The answers obtained through open-ended questions provide "richer and more detailed" information (Hill & Hill, 2005), presenting some depth of analysis elements, in which the flexibility and the weak directivity of this method allows to collect the testimonies and interpretations, without the influence of the interviewer.

### **3.4. Research limitations**

There were major limitations in this methodology taking into account the various target audiences. In the case of questionnaire B although a great effort was made to reach this huge population, it only resulted in the completion of 159 questionnaires and 37 of these were filled only partially. 13 cases ended not considered for data analyses since didn't reply that question that safeguarded the fact visitors lived in Brazil. The length of the questionnaire (27 questions, and in some cases a little less, according to options selected) represented a difficulty for obtaining full answers due to time constraints and the level of concentration required. Knowing this constraint, it was however considered that it would present itself as a good opportunity to

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collect information. For questionnaire A, the difficulty was such that it resulted in zero completed questionnaires. The reasons may lie in the lack of availability (or, if it exists, may not coincide with the researcher's availability), maybe because they are running their own business and that takes a significant amount of time, maybe because they do not see added value, or maybe because there are saturated with surveys (from the Tourism of Portugal/Alentejo; from other Masters and PhD students). Another difficulty relates to the fact that research target is geographically dispersed, and conducting interviews require time management not consistent with the duration of this project, and also high financial resource (for traveling around).

Regarding the interviews, in all of them it was felt that it is not easy to conduct the interview in order to approach all the foreseen questions during a given time, that can be longer or shorter according the respondent's availability. As a result of this there are some questions that were not answered. However, the researcher considers that relevant data was obtained from all interviews and analysis was as objective as possible.

In Interviews A (Entrepreneurs/owners of RT establishments), not audio recorded, most of them were not available to receive the researcher, and some only agreed to reply to the questions by phone or email and then replied only to some questions without understanding the motive, and they were not available to spend more time with this request. In Interview B (CEO of a travel agency, TZ *Viagens*), audio recorded, a long interview with too much information to manage. Interview C (Executive Director of RATPA), audio recorded, a limited time was given, thus not much to ask all questions, so some had to be chosen, according to aims of this study.

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## Chapter 4: Case-study – Analysing the Brazilian tourist market as a target for the Inland of the North and Center of Alentejo (INCA)

### 4.1 Rural Tourism in INCA region

This investigation focuses on a case study, geographically delimited in the so-called INCA (Inland North and Center Alentejo) region. This one is composed by two counties: Portalegre and Évora, as shown in Figure 4.4.



**Figure 4.4.** The INCA Region. Source: CCDR Alentejo.

Based on the opportunity that this location offers attractive natural sceneries, authenticity and unique features in many parts of the region, entrepreneurs have identified great tourism potential, in line with the tourism trends that we have explained earlier in this dissertation.

The city of Évora, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the city of Portalegre, both represent a great value to the INCA region, due to their well known beauty and cultural heritage. The other regions complement market opportunities with their individual features.

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The Alentejo is divided into five sub-regions (NUTS III)<sup>14</sup> and comprises fifty eight municipalities and around four hundred parish councils.

The five regions are:

- 1- Alto Alentejo - 118 352 inhabitants (6 230 km<sup>2</sup> - 15 municipalities)
- 2- Alentejo Central - 166 706 inhabitants (7 393 km<sup>2</sup> - 14 municipalities)
- 3- Alentejo Litoral - 100 895 inhabitants (5 308,11 km<sup>2</sup> - 5 municipalities)
- 4- Baixo Alentejo - 126 692 inhabitants (8,505 km<sup>2</sup> - 13 municipalities)
- 5- Lezíria do Tejo - 247 453 inhabitants (4 275 km<sup>2</sup> - 11 municipalities)

Only two of these five regions are considered in the present study: Alto Alentejo (North of Alentejo) and Alentejo Central (Center of Alentejo).

### **ALTO ALENTEJO**

Alto Alentejo – as shown in Figure 5.4., is a Portuguese sub-region (NUTS III), part of the Alentejo region (NUTS II), located in the north of the province, administratively corresponding to the entire County of Portalegre. It borders north with Pinhal Interior Sul and Beira Interior Sul, east with Spain, south with Central Alentejo and west with Lezíria do Tejo and the Middle Tagus. It has an area of 6.230 km<sup>2</sup> and an estimated population of 118.352 inhabitants (Census 2011). Its 15 municipalities<sup>15</sup> represent 45,73% of the INCA region (13.623 km<sup>2</sup>)<sup>16</sup>, and its inhabitants represent 45,86% of the total number of inhabitants<sup>17</sup> of INCA Region (285.058

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<sup>14</sup> “NUTS (Nomenclatura das Unidades Territoriais para Fins Estatísticos)” stands for Name of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes. It is an administrative system that divides the territory into smaller regions. This nomenclature was created by Eurostat in the early 1970s, aiming for a statistical harmony of the various countries, to collect, compile and disseminate regional data.

The nomenclature is subdivided into 3 levels (NUTS I, NUTS II, NUTS III) according to population, administrative and geographical criteria. (<https://www.pordata.pt/O+que+sao+NUTS>)

<sup>15</sup> Alter do Chão (2,66% of area and 1,25% of inhab); Arronches (2,31% of area and 1,11% of inhab); Avis (4,45% of area and 1,60% of inhab); Campo Maior (1,81% of area and 2,97% of inhab); Castelo de Vide (1,94% of area and 1,20% of inhab); Crato (2,92% of area and 1,30% of inhab); Elvas (4,63% of area and 8,10% of inhab); Fronteira (1,82% of area and 1,20% of inhab); Gavião (2,16% of area and 1,45% of inhab); Marvão (1,14% of area and 1,23% of inhab); Monforte (3,08% of area and 1,17% of inhab); Nisa (4,23% of area and 2,61% of inhab); Ponte de Sôr (6,16% of area and 5,87% of inhab); Portalegre (3,28% of area and 7,67% of inhab); Sousel (2,05% of area and 1,78% of inhab).

<sup>16</sup> Instituto Geográfico Português (2013). “Áreas de paróquias, municípios e distritos / ilhas do CAOP 2013” *Carta Administrativa oficial de Portugal (CAOP)*, versão 2013. Direção-Geral do Território. Novembro 28, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> INE (2012), Censos 2011 Resultados Definitivos – Região Alentejo, Lisboa: Instituto Nacional de Estatística, p. 97. July 27, 2013.

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inhabitants). The main urban centers are the cities of Elvas (15 900 inhabitants), Portalegre (15 200 inhabitants) and Ponte de Sôr (8 700 inhabitants) .

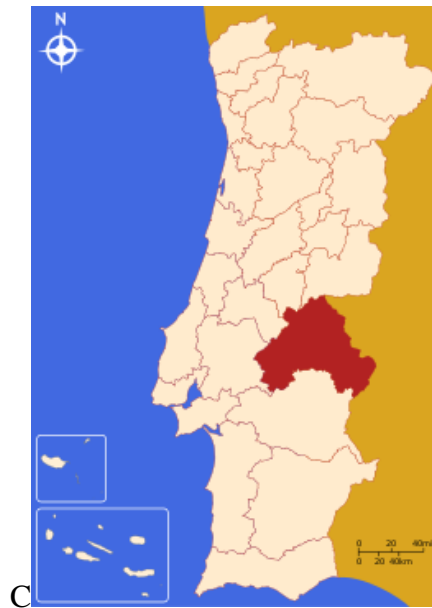


Figure 5.4. Map of Alto Alentejo. Source: Wikipedia

### ALENTEJO CENTRAL

Alentejo Central, as shown Figure 6.4., also a Portuguese sub-region (NUTS III) corresponds entirely to the Évora County. It borders north with Lezíria do Tejo and Alto Alentejo, east with Spain, south with Baixo Alentejo and Coastal Alentejo and west with the Setúbal Peninsula. It has an area of 7.393 km<sup>2</sup> and an estimated population of 166.706 inhabitants (Censos 2011). Its 14 municipalities<sup>18</sup> represent 54,26% of the INCA regional area<sup>19</sup> (13.623 km<sup>2</sup>) and its inhabitants represent 64,60% of the total n° of inhabitants<sup>20</sup> of the INCA Region (285.058 inhabitants). The main urban centers are the cities of Évora (56.596 inhabitants), Montemor-o-Novo (17.437 inhabitants) and Estremoz (8.369 inhabitants).

<sup>18</sup> Alandroal (3,98% of area and 2,05% of inhab); Arraiolos (5,02% of area and 2,58% of inhab); Borba (1,07% of area and 2,57% of inhab); Estremoz (3,77% of area and 5,02% of inhab); Évora (9,59% of area and 19,98% of inhab); Montemor-o-Novo (9,05% of area and 6,12% of inhab); Mora (3,26% of area and 1,75% of inhab); Mourão (2,05% of area and 0,93% of inhab); Portel (4,41% of area and 2,25% of inhab); Redondo (2,71% of area and 2,47% of inhab); Reguengos de Monsaraz (3,41% of area and 3,80% of inhab); Vendas Novas (1,63% of area and 4,16% of inhab); Viana do Alentejo (2,89% of area and 2,01% of inhab); Vila Viçosa (1,43% of area and 2,92% of inhab).

<sup>19</sup> Instituto Geográfico Português (2013). “Áreas de paróquias, municípios e distritos / ilhas do CAOP 2013” *Carta Administrativa oficial de Portugal (CAOP)*, versão 2013. Direção-Geral do Território. Novembro 28, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> INE (2012), Censos 2011 Resultados Definitivos – Região Alentejo, Lisboa: Instituto Nacional de Estatística, p. 97.

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**Figure 6.4.** Map of Alentejo Central. Source: Wikipedia.

Regarding RT in the INCA region, in May 15<sup>th</sup> 2106 - as shown in table 4 - there were 80 registered RT establishments<sup>21</sup> that compose this case study: 35 establishments registered in Alto Alentejo (Portalegre county) with a total hosting capacity of 664 guests, where – Tourism in Rural Area: Agroturism and Manor House Tourism represent the greater capacity to accommodate. In the Alentejo Central (Évora county), 45 establishments were registered, at the time information was provided from the “Turismo de Portugal website (as mentioned before), with a total hosting capacity of 879 guests, where TRA establishments represent the greater capacity to accommodate guests in this Region.

RT	TRA Agrotourism		TRA Country Houses		TRA Rural Hotel		Manor Tourism House		Total	
	Nº establishments	Hosting capacity (nº guests)	Nº establishments	Hosting capacity (nº guests)	Nº establishments	Hosting capacity (nº guests)	Nº establishments	Hosting capacity (nº guests)	Nº establishments	Hosting capacity (nº guests)
Alto Alentejo	16	274	3	31	6	176	10	148	35	664
Alentejo Central	20	281	9	51	9	436	7	111	45	879
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>1543</b>
	45%	35,96%	15%	5,31%	18,75%	39,66%	21,25%	16,78%	100%	100%

**Table 4.4.** Number of Establishments and hosting capacity by RT type in INCA region. Own elaboration based on data from Turismo de Portugal.

The INCA region (with 3% of the Portuguese Population)<sup>22</sup> concentrates its population in the age group 15-64, its main economic activity sector being the tertiary, and 28% of the population

<sup>21</sup> Information provided by Turismo de Portugal. Available in <https://rnt.turismodeportugal.pt/RNET/Registos.ConsultaRegisto.aspx?Origem=CP&MostraFiltro=True>.

<sup>22</sup><https://www.pordata.pt/Municipios/Popula%C3%A7%C3%A3o+residente+segundo+os+Censos+total+e+por+grandes+grupos+et%C3%A1rios-22>



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showing basic 1<sup>st</sup> cycle education level, even 16% presenting no schooling level and only 11% superior level of education. 6 231<sup>23</sup> foreign residents integrate this population, with Brazilians and Romanians representing the largest share, both with 22% of foreign residents.

Based on data produced by the Statistics Portugal in 2015, and taking into account the numbers available for the INCA region, Alentejo Central represents 58,85% of the total “Number of Guests” for INCA (73 127) and around 53,87% “Number of Nights” (134 572). On “Lodging income”, Alentejo Central has a higher percentage of income (56,02%), but Alto Alentejo has a better “Average stay in the establishment” that reaches 2,1 nights, while in Alentejo Central this rate is only 1,7 nights. Alto Alentejo has a “Bed occupancy net rate” that reaches 13,9% and Alentejo Central 15,7%. All these numbers reveal a below-optimal performance of the RT establishments in the INCA region.

Regarding the municipalities that integrate Alto Alentejo, Marvão, Portalegre and Elvas are the top 3 (by descending order) on “Number of Guests” and “Number of Nights”. Regarding Alentejo Central, the top 3 (by descending order), on the same variables are: Reguengos de Monsaraz, Évora and Montemor-o-Novo. On “Lodging income”, for Alto Alentejo, the top 3 (by descending order) are: Marvão, Elvas and Portalegre. And for Alentejo Central the top 3 (by descending order) are Reguengos de Monsaraz, Évora and Montemor-o-Novo. It is interesting to notice that both capitals of district are not placed in the first position, regarding accommodation in RT.

### **4.2. Internationalization of Rural Tourism in INCA**

#### **4.2.1. Reasons for focusing on the Brazilian Rural Tourism market**

The case study also focuses on a specific universe of tourists, those that come from Brazil. Brazil has a significant internal offer of RT, which is significantly connected to nature and vernacular sites. As far as travel to Europe is concerned, and according to interviewees (IB and IC), Brazilian tourists seem to privilege important urban centers, cities or capitals. A study on RT in Rio Grande do Sul identified for the Brazilian domestic RT market: as assessed through interviewing the rural accommodation owners perception of the market: “as main professional

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<sup>24</sup><https://www.pordata.pt/Municipios/Popula%C3%A7%C3%A3o+estrangeira+com+estatuto+legal+de+residente+total+e+por+algumas+nacionalidades-101>

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occupations liberal, scientific professions, medical doctors and lawyers, revealing a predominantly high socio-economic status of visitors. The impression some owners retain from their clients is expressed in the following discourses: *they come with luxury cars, appreciate the [transitory] change from city to the farm life and say they will come back*”, revealing a high socioeconomic status, the desire of a transitory change from urban to rural and loyalty to the establishments/places visited (Kastenholz and Santos, 2014). According to this study, this market also appreciates historical sites, ancient heritage, religious places and good gastronomy and, especially, wine. As far as Portugal is concerned, there is moreover a shared language, culture and history, as well as family ties and roots, eventually making the country attractive to Brazilian tourists.

This means that “the destination of Portugal has excellent possibilities with regards to Brazil. Starting with location-based differentiation, Portugal has the geographical advantage, as the first country after crossing the Atlantic Ocean (...) the historical-cultural link between the countries was very evident, and their respective ties in tourism should be strengthened” (Melo, 2013).

### **4.2.1.1. Brazilian Tourists: Portugal and INCA region as touristic destinations**

Between 2010 and 2014, the number of Brazilian tourists spending holidays in Portugal increased. According to data from Statistics Portugal, Portugal received in 2010, 373.752 Brazilian tourists and in 2014 it reached 581.007. For some years, Lisbon was the region with more Brazilian tourists; then the North, Central regions and Alentejo (this last one began to attract more tourists). Brazilian tourists represent in Portugal, from 2010-2014, 3% of RT clients, and in more recent years 4%.

However, according to the on-line journal *Opção Turismo*, despite a punctual decrease of 8.2% in the first semester of 2016, when compared with the previous year, “Brazil remains the sixth largest sender of foreign tourists to Portugal, behind the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, France and the Netherlands. Brazilians continue to be the non-European tourists who seek the most Portuguese destinations, followed by the Americans”<sup>24</sup>. This decrease of Brazilian tourists may have been caused by the economic and political crises that Brazil is facing nowadays, as

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<sup>24</sup> *Opção Turismo*, May 18th, 2016, online journal available at <http://opcaoturismo.pt/wp/turistas-brasileiros-em-portugal-sao-cada-vez-menos/>.

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suggested by a representative of a tour operator in São Paulo referring to “ (...) the crisis that hit Brazil and taxes on remittances sent out.” Another Brazilian trade representative stated that “since the stabilization of political issues people have returned to travel”. This journal article further reported that “It is the Portuguese language, the search for family roots and the desire to know the country, in its different aspects, that attract the Brazilians to Portugal, where, according to this Brazilian source, they currently stay between about 10 to 12 days ... [generally arriving]...in Oporto and Lisbon and from there they travel around the country looking for gastronomy, religion, wine tourism, many honeymooners looking for places, mainly Manor House Tourism s and solars, to host the wedding”<sup>25</sup>.

Regarding the INCA region, taking into account the data on “Accommodation in Tourism establishments in TRA and MHT of residents in Brazil, by month, district and municipalities, for the period 2013/2014” (INE - Statistics Portugal ), Évora county hosted 219 guests in 2013, receiving more Brazilians in April, September and then in October (by descending order). From the places mentioned the municipalities of Reguengos de Monsarraz (105 guests) and Évora (46 guests) have represented a total of 151 guests (this is 68,9% of all guests hosted in the Évora district). In 2014, 240 Brazilian guests were hosted with higher incidence in May, November and then April (also by descending order). Among all municipalities (again by descending order) Reguengos de Monsarraz (134 guests), Évora (50 guests), Montemor-o-Novo (22 guests), Portel (8 guests) and Mourão (4 guests) have received Brazilian tourists. The county of Portalegre, registered in 2013 a total of 115 Brazilian guests, especially in May, July and October (by descending order). According to INE - the Statistics Portugal 2013-2014, Marvão (with 84 guests from Brazil) and Portalegre (11 guests) summed a total of 95 Brazilians tourists, representing the vast majority of Brazilians hosted in the district. In 2014 there were 226 Brazilian guests hosted in this district mainly in May, April and October (by descending order). One may thus conclude that this market prefers to travel in spring and autumn to Alentejo. In all cases their stay lasted on average, less than 2 days, confirming what was reported on the Brazilian market as travelling around in the country to discover it, staying for relatively little time in each place.

### **4.2.1.2. Cultural Dimensions for Portugal/Brazil: Similarities and differences**

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<sup>25</sup> *Diário de Notícias*, October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.

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Cultural dimensions may help to better understand people from different countries of origin. Therefore, based on the theory here presented, it is interesting to see how Portuguese and Brazilians react in the same situations, in order to prepare an adequate tourism offer (or any other kind of offer) in the INCA region and this way attract more Brazilians here.

In 1980 Geert Hofstede<sup>26</sup> gave relevance to cultural dimensions in international business studies, being later also adopted in consumer behaviour research, in the context of cross-cultural research. Therefore, the cross-cultural dimension applies to this study assuming that Portuguese and Brazilian respond similarly under similar circumstances and are more prepared to build a closer relationship between them.

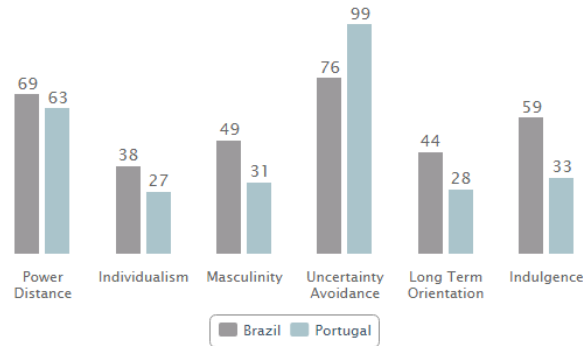
Hofstede (1980, 2001 and 2010) identified 6 independent dimensions<sup>27</sup>: Power Distance (large versus small), Uncertainty Avoidance (strong versus weak), Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Long Term versus Short Term Orientation and Indulgence versus Restraint. Studies conducted so far by Hofstede have always placed Brazil and Portugal in the same quadrant or are very close to each other in terms of classifications, as shown in Figure 7.4.:

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<sup>26</sup> Gerard Hendrik Hofstede (1928-) is a Dutch social psychologist and Professor Emeritus of Organizational Anthropology and International Management at the University of Maastricht, well-known for his pioneering research on cross-cultural groups and organizations.

<sup>27</sup> Power distance is “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.” Uncertainty avoidance is “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations.” Individualism “pertains to societies in which the ties between Individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family.” Masculinity represents “the dominant male sex role pattern in the vast majority of both traditional and modern societies.” Long-term orientation refers to long term versus short-term orientation toward the future. Indulgent cultures will tend to focus more on individual happiness and well-being, leisure time is more important and there is greater freedom and personal control. This is in contrast with restrained cultures where positive emotions are less freely expressed, and happiness, freedom and leisure are not given the same importance. Mentioned in <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/>

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**Figure 7.4.** Cultural dimension in Portugal and Brazil Source: <https://geert.hofstede.com/portugal.html> (1980).

Based on these premises Brazilian and Portuguese can be compared this way, as reported by Duarte (2008):

In the “Dimension of power distance” both countries are in the same strongly hierarchical quadrant, meaning inequalities amongst people are acceptable and those who occupy more powerful positions are allowed to have privileges. For the Brazilians in particular status symbols of power are very important, as they indicate social position and "communicate" the respect associated to it.

In the Dimension “Individualism”, Brazil presents an intermediate position on collectivism and individualism, while Portugal is closer to the pole of collectivism, the Brazilian culture can be characterized as mixed, with varied characteristics. In business, Brazilians consider it important to build trustworthy and enduring relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is essential. This society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for colleagues in their group.

The Dimension “Masculinity” analyses assertive versus modest behaviour. Brazil occupies an average position while Portugal is close to the pole of femininity/ minor assertiveness. In Brazil, the general rule is that women are more submissive to their husbands.

In the Dimension “Uncertainty Avoidance”, Brazil is optimistic and not very anxious, while the Portuguese tend to be more for prudent, valuing introspection and analysis. The Portuguese society is clearly more risk-averse, always analysing all items before entering something new

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and unknown. Brazilians also score high on this dimension. These societies show a strong need for rules and adequate legal systems to structure life.

Particularly, Portuguese have a very high preference for avoiding uncertainty. In their culture, there is an emotional need for rules (even if though rules never seem to work) and people have an inner desire to be busy and to work hard.

The dimension “Long-term orientation” refers to the way society thinks, plans and invests in the future (long-term), or thinks only of the present (short-term). This cultural dimension is linked to the optimism of this society, since they think that tomorrow will be a better day and that the problems will go away. They prefer not to plan the future and just live today with hopes of a more promising tomorrow. Portuguese culture prefers normative thinking to a pragmatic one. People in these societies have a strong concern to establish an absolute truth; they are normative in their thoughts. They show a great respect for traditions, a solution through the generation of economies for the future and a focus on obtaining fast results, felling impatience for achieving quick results.

As far as the Dimension “Indulgence” is concerned, Brazilians need to have good and relaxing moments in everyday life, talking to colleagues, enjoying a long meal or dancing with guests and friends. Due to their high scores in this dimension, Brazilians are very passionate and extrovert people: emotions are easily shown in body language.

The Brazilian society can thus be characterized as an indulgent society. People in societies ranked high in indulgence often exhibit a willingness to realize their urges and desires with respect to enjoying life and having fun. They have a positive, optimist attitude. In addition, they place a greater degree of importance on leisure time, wish to act as they please and spend money as they like. Portugal, however, reveals a less indulgent position, with a culture rather characterized by restriction. Societies with low scores in this dimension tend to present traces such as cynicism and pessimism. In contrast to indulgent societies, restricted societies do not emphasize and value leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are restricted by social norms and feel that to “let yourself go” is wrong.

Based on these considerations, it is possible to conclude that the two cultures compared here, although apparently similar, have peculiarities that require mutual knowledge, understanding and adaptation. It can also be concluded that, in spite of these differences, the gaps found are

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not too profound. In fact, the Brazilian and Portuguese cultures have several common traits, while also the common language and history are aspects that deserve attention, facilitating cross-cultural communication and understanding, as suggested very important for the rural tourism context (Kastenholz, 2010). Even though, Professor Hofstede, as mentioned in Duarte (2008), alerted that "because of the expectations created by people, a cultural shock can occur because people meet a culture that has the same language, the same religion and very similar customs, so they do not expect to have problems adapting, making the shock potentially even greater."

Still, according to Kastenholz (2010), an exploratory study on the effect of "cultural proximity" on the way tourists perceive a North Portugal as a rural holiday destination confirmed "... an impact of 'cultural proximity' on destination image." In this study tourists considered "culturally relatively close", "in terms of "cultural closeness due to common historical and cultural roots, with a common language" (including Brazilian tourists) showed a globally most positive image of the rural region. The author concludes that these 'relatively close market segments' may be 'easiest to satisfy, retain and transmit a positive destination image to'. These tourists are thus suggested to be better prepared to contact with residents (no language barriers), "sympathize more with their way of life" and better "explore" the culture of this region than the "*culturally more distant tourists*". Correspondingly this "culturally quite close" rural tourists, Brazilians are part of, may be a particularly interesting target market of rural areas in Portugal.

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## Chapter 5: Presentation of Results

### 5.1. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques

#### ➤ Interviews

In the analysis of the interviews, a set of communication analysis techniques was applied, since "there is no *pront-à-porté* content analysis, but only some basic rules (...)" (Bardin 2004: 26).

Content analysis is understood as a "set of communication analysis techniques aiming to obtain systematic and objective description of the content of the indicator messages" (Bardin, 2004:33), but only this does not define the specificity of the content analysis, but instead that allow the "inference of knowledge regarding the production conditions (or eventually, the reception) and this inference uses indicators (quantitative or otherwise)" (Bardin, 2004:34). Therefore, this technique proposes to analyse what is explicit in the text to obtain indicators that allow inferences to be made. For the type of interview in question the mode is qualitative analysis (try to analyse the presence or absence of one or several characteristics of the text).

#### ➤ Questionnaires

The exploratory statistical analyses of the data collected in the Questionnaires were conducted resorting to univariate analysis (descriptive statistics), bivariate (crosstabs and measures of association – Cramer's V and Eta) and multivariate analysis (using Principal Components Analysis). The Microsoft Excel and the IBM SPSS Statistics (version 22 for Windows) were used to conduct these analyses.

Bivariate analysis regards the relationship between two variables. For nominal data we adopt Cramér's V and when one variable is categorical and the other is quantitative we select Eta. Cramér's V and range from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating no association between the two variables and values close to 1 indicating a high degree of association – e.g. (Moroco, 2003).

Principal Components Analysis (PCA) transforms a set of correlated variables into a smaller set of independent variables (linear combinations of the original variables), simplifying data by reducing the number of variables needed to describe them (Moroco, 2003; Pestana and Gageiro, 2005). In this work PCA is used to identify affective motivations to spend holidays in Portugal and attributes that are valorised by respondents in a rural area for holidays, constructs that are measured in multi-items ordinal scales (questionnaire B). PCA is intended to better understand the latent structure of motives and attributes valorised and to reduce these variables to a smaller



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and interpretable set of quantitative variables. Since PCA is a technique that can only be applicable to quantitative variables (Maroco, 2003), Categorical Principal Components Analysis (CATPCA) is first used to allocate numerical quantifications to the categories of each qualitative variable. These numerical values, having metric properties, assigned to each level of the original ordinal variables are obtained by an interactive procedure called the "alternating minimum squares method" (Moroco, 2003).

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test are used on Q12 and Q15 quantifications to address the suitability of data for structure detection using PCA. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is a statistic that indicates the proportion of variance in your variables that might be caused by underlying factors. High values (close to 1.0) generally indicate that a factor analysis may be useful with your data. If the value is less than 0.50, the results of the factor analysis probably won't be very useful. Bartlett's test of sphericity tests the hypothesis that your correlation matrix is an identity matrix, which would indicate that your variables are unrelated and therefore unsuitable for structure detection. Small values (less than 0.05) of the significance level indicate that a factor analysis may be useful with your data". (IBM Knowledge Center).

Extraction of components is guided by the proportion of total variance explained by the components: a threshold of 75% of total variance is considered.

### **5.2. Results analysis**

After reading the data collected under the interview A, it was possible to encode data (highlight, classify, aggregate and categorize it) to facilitate the analysis, that is presented in Annex n° 7. And for interview B and C excerpts were taken from the transcribed interviews to be inserted in this study.

#### **5.2.1. Semi-structured interviews**

- a) Entrepreneurs / owners of Rural Tourism (RT) establishments (that is, MHT and TRA)**
  - Interviewee A (IA).**

These interviews aimed to find out:

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- The supply of Rural Tourism in INCA Region;
- Brazilian tourists, according to the Rural Tourism establishments' owners' experience;
- How owners promote their establishments, also to the International market
- How owners manage Rural Tourism supply, particularly regarding international markets;
- What kind of support owners receive for managing and promoting Rural Tourism supply.

A total of 11 interviews were carried out in the INCA region, between April and May 2016:

- Six interviews in Évora district - from those, there are two establishments of Agrotourism, one in Évora and another one in Estremoz; one Country House in Igrejinha; two Manor Houses in Lavre and in Montemor-o-Novo and one Rural Hotel in Monsaraz.
- Five interviews in the district of Portalegre - two Rurals Hotel in Elvas and Arronches; one Agrotourism in Arroches; one Rural Hotel in Urra and one Manor House in Sousel.

Some representatives of these establishments were interviewed personally, others by email or by phone, according to researcher's and their availability. But, unfortunately, not all responded to all questions and in some questions, we received less than 50% of replies.

The script used to carry out interviewee A has seven questions. Data collected indicates that:

Regarding the characterisation of the RT establishments, the beginning of activity was reported as in the time period between 2000 and 2016, with one case operating already for 50 or 60 years, although under a new management team.

Almost all establishments are open all year round, with only one closing during winter and another one during Christmas time. Some establishments (4 out of 10) have around five rooms, and one establishment stands out for its 29 rooms.

Regarding bed availability, there is an average of around 18 beds considering the total of the establishments, with an average price of around 94€ per night/ bedroom. There is an average staff number of around five persons, with seven referring to family members working there. Considering the respondents from the ten establishments that have replied to this sub-question, there is an average of close to four staff members working full-time two establishments reported three part-time collaborators. In six of eleven establishments that have replied to this questionnaire (54,54%), 12 or 13 staff members with training in tourism were registered. Most of the establishments studied offer accommodation, drinks and meals, but these two last

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services need to be previously reserved. Many of these RT establishments organize their own entertainment activities, however there are some that transfer that to external companies, as shown in Table 5.5.

<b>Activities offered by the establishments of RT</b>	
<b>Directly by the establishments</b>	<b>Through External companies</b>
Canoeing, fishing, wine tasting, cooking show, Arraiolos rug workshops, swimming pool, multipurpose room (with billiards, and screen for cable TV, reading, board games ...), children's area for swings, hiking and historical circuits, chocolate-tasting, bicycle tour and visit to a local museum.	Horseback riding, visiting Escoural caves, balloon flight, water rapids, wine tasting, wild mountain, boat trips, hiking trails, <i>Tuc Tuc</i> , karts, cork extraction, event with a public personality (Chef Chacal), visit to mines and boat trips.

**Table 5.5.** Type of activities offered by RT establishments. Own elaboration.

Tourists coming from Brazil, according to the five responses obtained, were described as middle aged (40-55 years old), usually opting for a short stay of 1-2 days or a slightly longer stay of 4-5 days. It was pointed out that these tourists were generally *Luso* descendants travelling with their family. They are reported to be mainly from the upper middle class, with a higher education degree, and as executives of large companies or entrepreneurs. They are interested in the region's culture and like good animation (eat and drink well), they are very kind and cheerful.

Those that had hosted Brazilian tourists, referred to some weaknesses and strengths. They were reported to be demanding and requiring premium service; are sometimes described as boring and talk active, requiring a lot of time and availability for attending them and explaining everything. Nevertheless, they consume and enjoy services, are very interested people, friendly and without economic problems, like good wines and to eat and drink well.

One interviewee referred to the fact that the Alentejo region should be generally promoted as a beautiful and quiet location, where culture, authenticity and diversity can be found.

When discussing the strategy for promotion, development and internationalisation of RT, most reveal an interest in knowing the Territorial Development Strategy (Objectives of Portugal 2020

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/ Regional Action Plan - Alentejo 2020). One got this information through the Regional Agency of Tourism Promotion of Alentejo (RAPTA), another suggested that something simpler and practical than extensive strategic documents is needed, something easy to be translated into actions and activities. Another respondent stated that the regional action plan was a failure without any results, that Politicians don't know how to deal with it and also Marketing needs to be developed. At the end, it was mentioned that only those having money can succeed in this region.

When asking about the satisfaction with the results obtained in the tourism activity and how to improve these results, out of seven replies, six said that they were satisfied with the business, but still want to improve it. They report that different market niches need to be explored and other investments be made, looking more sophisticated.

Most respondents agree with the opportunity of RT owners working together in the INCA region to promote RT and the region. Being a region with small-scale establishments, interconnection makes sense. The interviewees believe the creation of more activities could contribute to increasing the interest of the tourists, the duration of their stay and to reducing some seasonality in the INCA region.

Regarding changes that owners would like to see in this region, potentially contributing to the better functioning of RT and its greater internationalization, despite the few responses given, one interviewee suggests that public entities have to do even more, with a better communication and coordination between municipalities and their offers required.

Most of the owners use booklets, website, *Facebook*, *Booking* website and press/media bodies and fairs and exhibitions to promote their offer. On advertising RT establishments abroad, and particularly in Brazil, not much was said. Mainly, owners are not active in disseminating their establishments internationally. Some owners consider a joint marketing plan among a set of owners interesting, as well as segmenting the target-public or even creation of a Rural Tourism entrepreneurs' association. To promote more rural tourism in the INCA region, both nationally and internationally, cooperation between the various tourist offices was also suggested.

One respondent stated that the *Booking* website permits promoting their offer according to the type of host, however doubting the financial feasibility of this action. Another respondent considered that they target the clients with highest professionalism, knowing how to well-serve, and always focusing on the customer's well-being.

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When asking about managing the demand for TRA and MHT accommodation in the INCA region, most answered that the market is considered either a national or international priority. However, it seems that the domestic market has dominated, so far, corresponding to about 60% to 80% (around 50% North and 20% Lisbon), with the international tourists coming from countries like Ireland, Spain; United Kingdom, France, Norway and Brazil.

Respondents characterize their clients as specially families, others suggesting a diversified public, and others distinguishing between vacation and weekends-markets being usually families and during the week and rest of the year mainly business travellers. Through RAPTA (international market) usually retired people are attracted.

As far as business relations to tour operators are concerned, it seems RT owners prefer direct relations to customers, web platforms, annual contracts and occasional reservations, while traditional operators are considered irrelevant. The possibility of creating a portal that centralizes the reservations of several RT establishments of the INCA region was considered an interesting option by most respondents.

It seems owners lack a systematic approach on managing demand for this region. However, there is a group of respondents considering that the only way to promote the Alentejo, for all type of tourists, is to create a tourism bureau integrating the entire region, eliminating all single tourism bureaus.

The overwhelming view (of the few answers given) regarding the role of Public Entities in RT is that there is not much help from public entities for the RT establishments, sometimes evaluated as not very effective.

Finally, regarding strengths and weaknesses of RT in the region, seven interviewees pointed out the following:

**Weaknesses:** Lack more promotion; it requires a lot of the persons to manage the RT; lack of funding; RT's success is very dependent on the owners; in RT there is usually a lack of management skills, strategy and knowledge of the domain, lack of adequately trained staff and temporary or seasonal labour; a reduced number of rooms; not very known in this region which suggests that it does not promote itself properly, leading one to believe that in this region little can be done or visited.

**Strengths:** Very rich in making contacts, more socializing with the guests; personal attention to the guest; there is as increasing attractiveness of Alentejo by tourist, RT can be considered in

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the future an alternative for city inhabitants. It was also added that the room of an establishment is important, but activities should be something to be also concerned about. And owners must find other RT establishments to be partners with, especially when they need extra nights that are no longer available in their own establishment.

The majority of respondents are of the opinion that the region will not lose its authenticity after some development.

### **b) CEO of a travel agency – Interviewee B (IB)**

An interview was conducted with a CEO of TZ Viagens, a travel agency of a certain standing in Brazil, specialized in the Brazilian market. The interview, made on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016, aimed to get to know the interest of the Brazilian tourist for Portugal and for RT and the INCA region and Alentejo, in particular.

As for the characterization of the Brazilian tourist, the CEO emphasized that there is a great desire to travel abroad amongst Brazilians who, regardless of their social class, tend to buy the trips through a package. There is a great appeal for Europe, traveling mainly to France, England, Portugal, Spain and Italy. But the appeal for rural tourism may not be too strong: "(...) the Brazilian has this in Brazil; that is Brazil has an exuberant nature, (...) a large number of options, including in Sao Paulo, where hotels farms are very common"<sup>28</sup>.

The Brazilian tourist who travels to Portugal is primarily a Brazilian citizen, Portuguese descendent - usually a person who seeks culture and good gastronomy. He also identifies people who travel to Portugal following a good experience of friends or those who seek this destination for the ease of language. Finally, but not less important, the CEO referred to the religious issue: "... Our Lady of Fátima turns out to be a very strong pretext for many Catholic Brazilians to go to Portugal"<sup>29</sup>.

Tourists from Brazil may be interested in the Alentejo, but they must first have visited the other Portuguese regions.

"(...) within Portugal, the Brazilian tourist generally chooses Guimarães, Porto, Coimbra, Óbidos, Fatima, but also Lisbon, Sintra and Cascais. (...) that can be called "the gateway" of international tourism"<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Extract from an Interview B.

<sup>29</sup> Extract from an Interview B.

<sup>30</sup> Extract from an Interview B.

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Nowadays, in order to promote tourism, the internet is used a lot, and also digital marketing. These tools play a very important role in the commercialization of tourism, especially in Brazil: "(...) the Brazilian is an unconditional fan of Instagram and Facebook. When doing research, we realize that the Brazilian has a great appetite for this type of communication (...)"<sup>31</sup>.

According to the interviewee, the training of tourist agents by Tourism of Portugal is fundamental to sell a certain destination. Portugal is not so commercial in the approach used, it is very much institutional and tourism promotion cannot be only institutional. Institutional means spending a lot of money on advertising that does not have the proper return.

"(...) More than 90% of tourism sold in Brazil to Portugal is through travel agencies. Given this, travel agents have a very important role to play. When tourist agents know a destination, they not only speak with that feeling of propriety but also with passion. Hence the promotion should be closer to the sales force, and sales force is the Travel Agency (...)"<sup>32</sup>.

About 30% of the 200 million Brazilians are people of class A and B, possibly reaching 50 million people.

"(...) Brazil has a lot of people with lots of money. Brazil is not just that country that in Portugal appears usually in the news as being a third world country. For example, there is no region in Portugal with the luxury, exuberance and means as exist in certain parts of São Paulo"<sup>33</sup>.

According to the interviewee, RT should receive people from classes A and B, therefore people coming from high social classes. And Wine has to be a very important anchor to attract these people. Wine and Rural space in the Alentejo must be synonymous.

Interviewee said that Brazil is so large that when considering 50 million Brazilians as integrating classes A and B, only a few (according to their own profile) will consider RT (either in Brazil or in any other countries) as a possibility, but even though this could mean something like 20 million people. To reach those 20 million people in a country 93 times bigger than Portugal is certainly a huge effort to promote RT for this public, which means that it will have to be from the commercial point of view. These people are not concentrated in only in large cities like Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, but also in Curitiba (3 million inhabitants); Porto Alegre (4 million inhabitants); Florianopolis (1 million); Joinville (900 thousand), and others.

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<sup>31</sup> Extract from an Interview B.

<sup>32</sup> Extract from an Interview B.

<sup>33</sup> Extract from an Interview B.

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Hence the promotion needs to be done in partnership with tour operators and travel agents to reach the main Agencies of these cities.

In the case of Rural Tourism, not being mass tourism, but a very specific one, working in a much more personalized perspective. So, they are not exactly packages in which people have to come and go every day or week: "(...) Rural Tourism only happens when you have a specific demand"<sup>34</sup>.

According to this operator, the most important factor that leads Brazilians to the Alentejo is the wine. Of course, there are other aspects, such as Arraiolos or Évora attracting Brazilians: "(...) If we talk about wines, olive oils, sausages, among others, to make a circuit of several Alentejo wine production units, this is something that has a great appeal"<sup>35</sup>.

The Alentejo has some demand, in particular, for the descendants from this region. Therefore, personal roots are also a very important factor for tourism in the countryside. Another great appeal is adventure tourism, which may perfectly coexist.

"(...) If Rural Tourism in the Alentejo can get many extreme sports, for example, balloon rides and activities on the Alqueva lake (even in a video of Tourism of Portugal this is shown), it can become more appealing"<sup>36</sup>.

Also, the role of a strong regional image is referred to. It is fundamental to create an image that people associate with a certain thing that they want to know.

The operator suggests that the whole promotion effort has to be done together and that until this culture of joint effort is created, Portugal will only lose out.

### **c) Executive Director of the Regional Agency of Tourism Promotion of Alentejo (RAPTA) - Interviewee C (IC).**

A third interview was made with the Executive Director of RAPTA, on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017. This interview aimed to find out:

- How the agency envisages and promotes Rural Tourism;
- How Brazil can be an option for Rural Tourism in the INCA region;

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<sup>34</sup> Extract from an Interview B.

<sup>35</sup> Extract from an Interview B.

<sup>36</sup> Extract from an Interview B.



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- The quality and development of the Rural Tourism offer in the INCA region;
- How RAPTA can contribute to support the owners of Rural Tourism establishments in development and internationalization of Rural Tourism in the INCA region;
- How supply for Rural Tourism accommodation in the INCA region should be managed.

This interviewee refers that Rural Tourism in Brazil is associated with another concept, namely the concept of *Pousadinha*, which corresponds to an accommodation without much quality, that is to say, the "bottom step of the stairs". He suggests that Brazilians who travel abroad represent class A or class B or sometimes C+. Although the C+ customer, when traveling, has very specific motivations, very associated with group travel, cheap prices or coming with a very specific purpose like pilgrimage to Fatima, A and B clients have some financial capacity, and usually travel mainly to two destinations: to Europe and Miami. Within Europe, Portugal has gained an advantage, above all, due to language.

"(...) It is a country where the Brazilian can understand the language, the cultural reference is similar, where he knows that he will have hospitable people who respect him, and this contributes a lot to the motivation of the trip. This situation is progressively giving rise to the fact that the Brazilians go to Europe through Lisbon and thus discover other "Europes", besides the one that Portugal represents, namely the big capitals, London and Paris. Policies were created to increase or encourage this traffic to airlines. For example, this "stop over" TAP program, (...)"<sup>37</sup>.

The agency's Executive Director suggests that Brazilians only appear in the hotels that have a lot of quality, glamor and charm, thus, associated with a high-quality concept and status.

"(...) The Brazilian has some idiosyncrasies, and he has to prove that he went to Europe and that he was in certain places. And on that basis, he cannot go to unknown places. It has to be a place that is close to a reference or that it is a reference itself, and the units that have bet on it have achieved good results. (...)"<sup>38</sup>

The hotel units that have positioned themselves very well, i.e. at a very high level, only promote themselves in initiatives like "Travel Week" in São Paulo, IATM - International Association of Tour Managers, in the United Kingdom, "Pure Life Experiences" in Morocco, which are luxury segment fairs, where very significant investments are needed to be represented. Once present in these places, they will be able to attract the Brazilian luxury market.

According to this agent, in the INCA region, there are two processes that have to be taken into account. One in the northern most part, where the increase in Rural Tourism took place in the

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<sup>37</sup> Extract from an Interview C.

<sup>38</sup> Extract from an Interview C.

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1980s, in the phase previous to and in the early years of adhesion to the European Community. There were integrated territorial valorisation operations in the Northern Alentejo area, which allowed large amounts of money to be invested in the territory, particularly for the tourism sector. This allowed the owners to restore their homes and affect the buildings to the operation of Rural Tourism units. To get these units from the 1980s of northern Alentejo and adapt them to current times requires some investment.

"(...) the construction of that time, which was good, is now outdated and worn out. Today the construction techniques are different, the ability to generate comfort is different. There was no double glazing at the time, the radiant floor heating had not even been invented. And therefore, Rural Tourism is today something much more qualified (...)"<sup>39</sup>

He also points at the fact that most home owners are old people, who at the time had saved some money and with EU help were able to do the work. They would have been at that time 40 or 50 years old, now they are 80.

"(...) the will to keep the farm running is dwindling and the aging of this population is happening. There are many homes managed by impatient people. In part, this is the big picture we have. In which the owner is already unmotivated to keep his unit functioning or even thinking about remodelling it as well as lacking motivation to go to the market to look for customers (...)"<sup>40</sup>.

He further states that while initially customers even came by themselves, now it is the owner who has to go get them. There is a very large paradigm shift in demand. It is essential that the hotel unit is in the right place, where it can be searched. For example, in the North of Alentejo a powerful "highlight" for the Brazilian market is Marvão, as it "(...) is a historical reference and a site with a fantastic notoriety in Brazil. Everybody knows Marvão and is eager to visit Marvão (...)"<sup>41</sup>.

The accommodation units that surround Marvão may therefore more easily capture the Brazilian market, given that the offer is in accordance with the parameters of the Brazilian tourist requirements and must effectively be positioned in the market, using the right channels, where the Brazilians seek travel information. These have to provide Brazilians with the glamor and a certain exclusivity and status sought by this market. Therefore, if the establishments are anonymous and not on the right channels, they will not be able to attract the Brazilian public.

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<sup>39</sup> Extract from an Interview C.

<sup>40</sup> Extract from an Interview C.

<sup>41</sup> Extract from an Interview C.

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Ideally, they should be associated with wine, because, this way, the two valued assets come together, Marvão combines with a good vineyard, with wine, with the pleasure of cuisine, all this may be presented with a lot of glamor, a lot of charm.

For the case of Évora, the interviewee reports an average stay around 2 to 3 nights. The tourist arrives, settles down, visits, sleeps and then leaves, while the creation of a package with the possibility of visiting Évora and Marvão is something that the economic agents of the region have to know how to take advantage of.

A third dimension of this business, according to this respondent, has to do with the creation of high-level units that position themselves in the market for a high-end segment and that associate with this position the provision of services other than accommodation.

"(...) as the third motivation, are weddings. The Brazilian wants to be chic, and getting married in Europe is chic, and he wants to have something unique to tell his friends, he wants to stay with the hotel exclusively. Soon the smaller the hotel, the less it will pay (...)" <sup>42</sup>.

There are hotels that can offer exclusivity for that group for a week and the owners of these establishments end up by making a very attractive price. Therefore, the Brazilians will stay for a week to enjoy the services that the Rural Tourism units are able to provide. All this to tell their friends in Brazil, to broadcast live what they are doing. Therefore, there is a new road that should be designed for the North and Centre of the Alentejo in relation to the Brazilian market, integrating the modality *small luxury hotel*, which responds very well to what Brazilians are looking for.

RAPTA's Executive Director points at three types of interventions carried out in Brazil a year ago. The first intervention was at *Travel Week*, a meeting that lasted three days and allowed contacting several tour operators; a presence at ABAV - *Associação Brasileira de Agências de Viagens* (fair of the Americas) and finally they organized a Road Show in Brazil, taking along a group of Portuguese investors.

According to this interviewee, purchasing power in Brazil is mainly concentrated in São Paulo, with 20 million rich people living there, however being also difficult to reach. There is a second very rich community in Rio de Janeiro, and finally a third community with considerable economic capacity in the cities of the South, located in a very rural context, where families have

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<sup>42</sup> Extract from an Interview C.

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good incomes and did not go through crisis situations of recent times. In these cities, synergies should be concentrated in terms of promoting the tourist destination.

He refers to a phenomenon of Lisbon receiving less Brazilians this year, but Alentejo seeing the numbers climbing every month, probably associated with the type of clientele and the positioning that is sought. RAPTA positioned the region in Brazil as being a destination that is commercialized for only a certain elite, which he classifies this approach as a successful strategy.

As long as there is no such evolution at the RT level, neither in the North of the Alentejo nor in its central region, which qualifies and prepares to enter the radar of the operators of the segment that matters in Brazil, RT establishments will hardly be able to succeed with this market:

“(...) the owner has to have, in order to respond, horses, a wine cellar, an ultra-charming unit or else will not be able to distinguish himself, and enter the radar of the operator, ...the radar of tourism (...)”<sup>43</sup>.

Last, but not least, he underlines the need to invest in social networks, which have to be managed by someone very specialized, who knows when the type of customer to be targeted to is surfing on *Facebook*, and when the message about Alentejo needs to appear. This has been one initiative of RAPTA.

### **5.2.2 Questionnaires**

On questionnaire A (effective market), no replies were received.

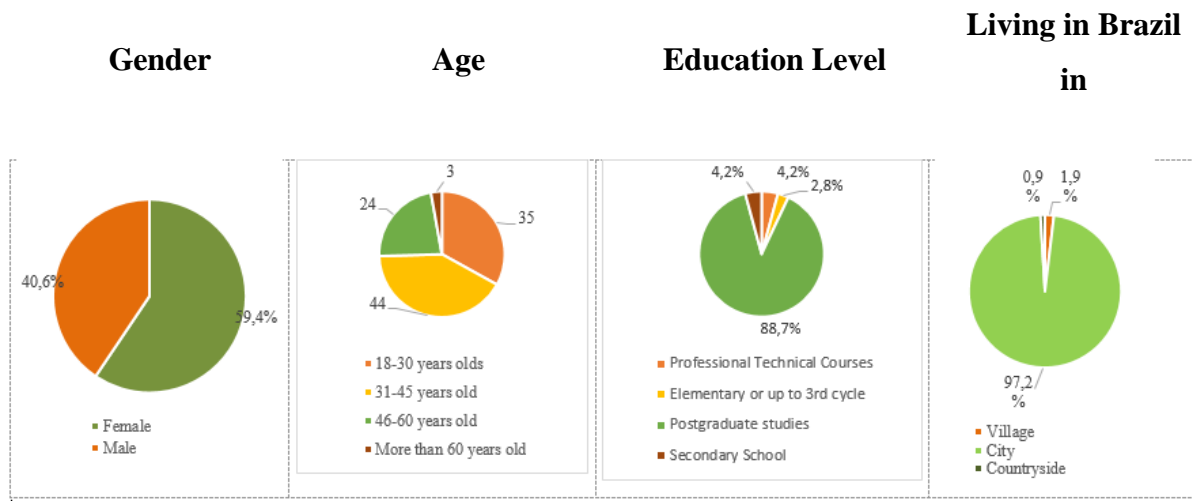
On questionnaire B (potential market), there was a total of 143 responses validated, from these, 74% were full responses and 26% represent partial responses (see Annex 8).

Regarding the profile of the respondents, as shown on Figure 8.5, most of them are female (59,4%), between 18 and 71 years old, and the average age is 39 years old (the majority of the respondents are 31-45 years old, with 44 cases), have a higher academic background (88,7%) and live, in Brazil, in a city environment (97,2%).

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<sup>43</sup> Extract from an Interview C.

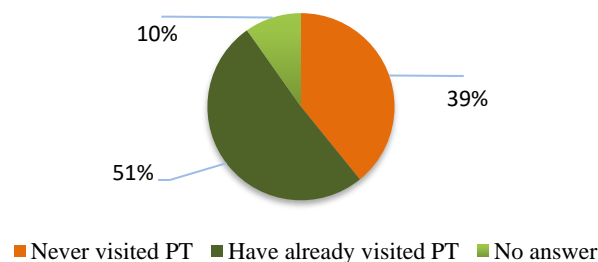
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**Figure 8.5.** Profile of the Respondents. Own elaboration.

According to the analysis of the questionnaires replied by visitors living in Brazil (Brazilians tourists), when they travel to other countries, they frequently choose urban destinations abroad and never or rarely go to rural, sun and sea destinations. According to the interviewee IB “There is a great appeal for Europe” by Brazilian Tourists, and interviewee IC “Brazilians go to Europe through Lisbon “, so based on this, Brazilians visitors seems to like to visit Europe, and in the questionnaire the majority (99%) confirm this preference. When they visited Europe, there were 12,8% that refer to Portugal and Italy, 10% France and 9,6% Spain.

It was interesting to acknowledge that many respondents, have never visited Portugal on vacation/leisure (49,6%) nor on duty/business (73,7%), while some (34,9%) have already been there twice or more times on vacation/leisure and a few (14%) on duty/business. But, when concentrating figures only on Brazilian tourists that have already visited Portugal (39,20%), against those that have not visited yet (51%), this may show some interest in Portugal by respondents.



**Figure 9.5.** Respondents that have and not have visited Portugal. Own elaboration.

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When considering all the reasons that attracted Brazilian tourists to visit Portugal, Figure 10.5., highlights the ones that were mentioned by respondents most frequently. Thus, it's possible to see that most of these reasons are about “study” (16 cases) and “visit family / friends” (6 cases), and few others were mentioned, but either can be included in the leisure category or in the duty/business category.



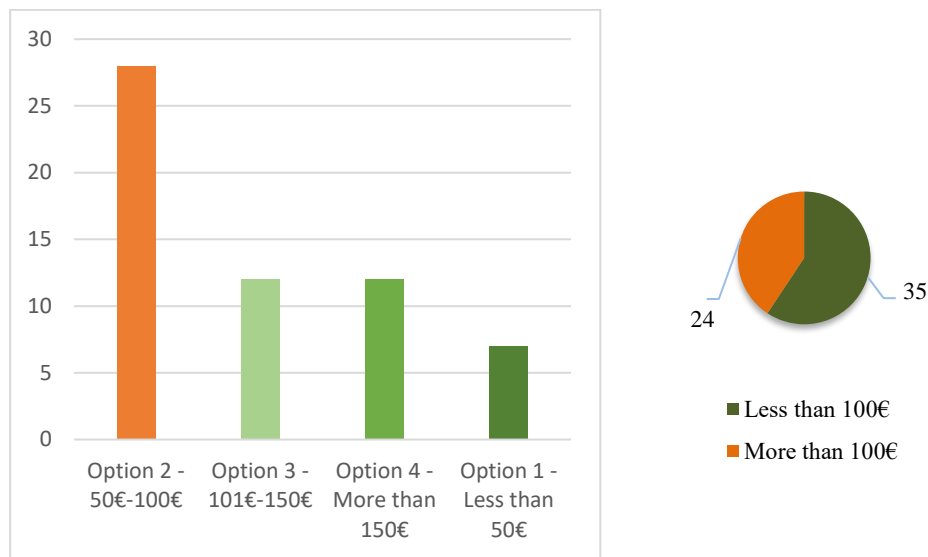
**Figure 10.5.** Reasons that attract Brazilian tourists to Portugal. Own elaboration.

Regarding stay duration in Portugal, respondents stayed in Portugal from less or equal to one week (28 replies) till more than 30 days (4). Trips were carried out, essentially, by two adults, and only 15 children were taken along.

Most of the respondents (75), mentioned that have searched the destination through the internet (33) and through family / friends (21). Most of respondents have chosen “Hotel/Inn” for their stay in Portugal. The “MHT and TRA” option, although it seems not a favourite one among these respondents, five of them (7%) have opted for it. Accommodation was mainly (26) booked “through other website/ internet” and the rest of the other options all were equally chosen, except the reservation done “directly with the accommodation by phone” (3), which was almost never an option.

On the estimate for expenses during the tourists’ stay, per person and per day, having received 59 replies, most of those visitors have spent less than 100€ (35). Below, in Figure 11.5., it's possible to see per each option that option 2 (50€-100€) was the most representative.

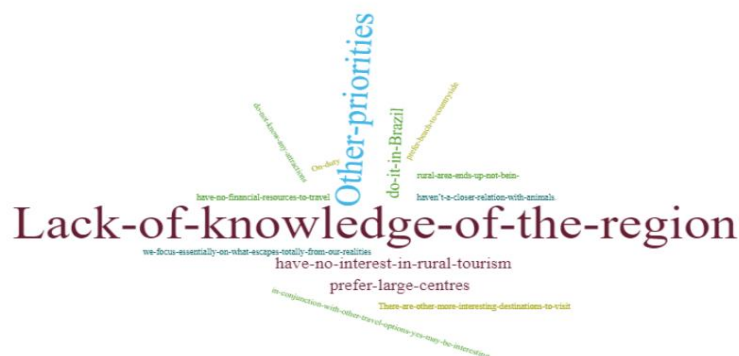
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**Figure 11.5.** Tourists' expenses, per person and per day. Own elaboration.

Despite the opinion mentioned in a few questions above on rural way of life, most of the respondents (79,3%) consider RT in Portugal as a possible option.

From the various reasons presented, as shown in Figure 12.5., for those who do not consider RT as an option (20,7%), most of them presented as the main reasons: “Lack of knowledge of the region”; “Other priorities”; “Do it in Brazil”; “Prefer large centres”; “Have no interest in Rural Tourism”.



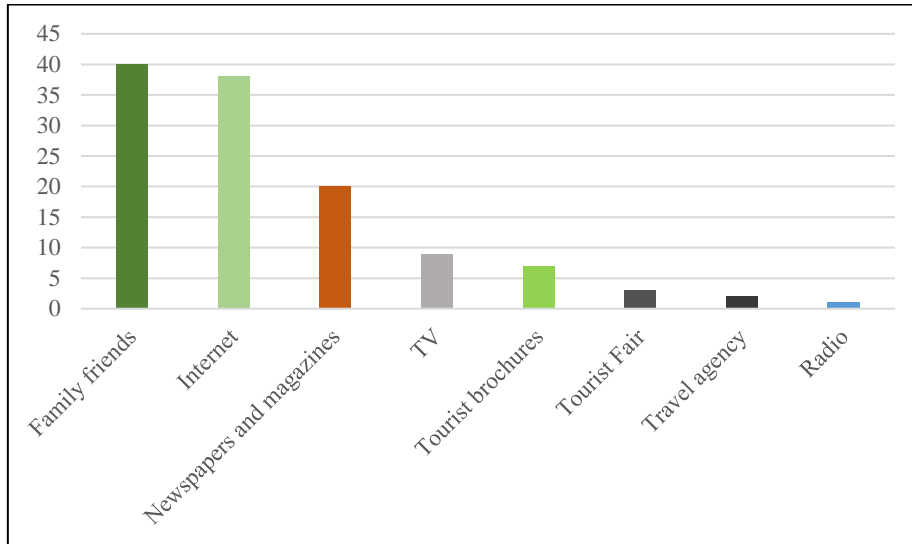
**Figure 12.5.** Reasons for not choosing RT. Own elaboration.

About 70,8% of the respondents have heard about the INCA region. However, from these, the majority (74,7%) have not visited it yet.

From those that said that have visited the INCA region (19 replies), seven respondents say they are "very likely" to return to this region for holidays. Eight respondents said that would

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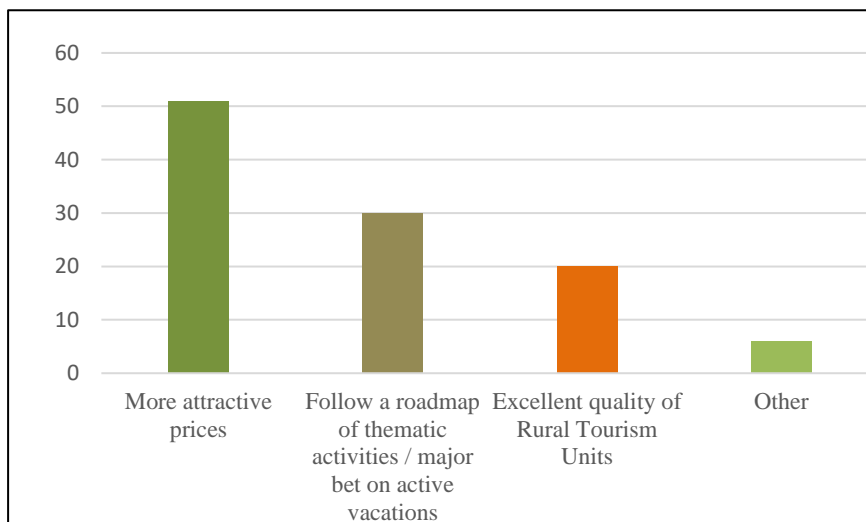
recommend it to others as a holiday destination. From those who already knew the INCA region, they knew it, essentially, through the family / friends, internet, newspapers and magazines – Figure 13.5.



**Figure 13.5.** How tourists got to know INCA region. Own elaboration.

The most preferred period of the year by the respondents, that have already visited the region, is between July and September (29). The least preferred one was pointed out as being the period between January and March (27).

The main reasons mentioned for a longer duration of visitors' stay in this region, are the most attractive prices, to follow a roadmap of thematic activities / major bet on active vacations and the excellent quality of RT establishments – Figure 14.5.



**Figure 14.5.** Main reasons for longer stays in INCA region. Own elaboration.



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Using the PCA for data analysis, as mentioned before, it was given a try to better understand the latent structure of Q12- *Motivations* that respondents found to take holidays in Portugal and of Q15-*Attributes* that tourists value the most in a rural holiday in Portugal. As previously referred, the CATPCA is used to first obtain the quantification of Q12 and Q15 items.

In order to check the suitability of PCA on Q12 and Q15 quantifications, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test measure for Sampling Adequacy were used: KMO is 0.582 for Q.12 and 0.630 for Q.15, while the Bartlett's test of sphericity indicates that base variables (quantifications) are significantly correlated (p-values below 0.01 in both cases).

PCA based on CATPCA quantifications for “What is the significance of the following motivations in the origin of your holidays in Portugal?” yields loadings for rotated components (rC) and % of variance explained presented in Table 6.5.

<b>rC1-Nature motivations</b>	<b>18.643%</b>
<i>Appreciate the nature (Quant.)</i>	0.867
<i>Enjoy peace and tranquillity (Quant.)</i>	0.784
<b>rC2- Social and health motivations</b>	<b>35.699%</b>
<i>Meet new people (Quant.)</i>	0.850
<i>Practice of physical activities (Quant.)</i>	0.780
<b>rC3- Gastronomy and rural life motivations</b>	<b>50.98%</b>
<i>Enjoy gastronomy and wine (Quant.)</i>	0.845
<i>Enjoying the environment and rural way of life (Quant.)</i>	0.719
<b>rC4- Exploring new experiences and historical motivations</b>	<b>66.993%</b>
<i>Explore an unknown region (Quant.)</i>	0.849
<i>Cultural / Historical interest (Quant.)</i>	0.750
<b>rC5- Meeting relatives motivations</b>	<b>78.342%</b>
<i>Visiting friends and relatives (Quant.)</i>	0.930

**Table 6.5.** Motivations respondents found to holidays in Portugal - Rotated components: % of total variance and correlations with items quantifications. Own elaboration based on SPSS outputs.

Component 1 explains 18,643% of total variance. This factor has the highest correlations with “Appreciate the nature” (0,867) and “Enjoy peace and tranquillity” (0,784). Therefore, this component is designated as **Nature motivations**. The remaining components can be interpreted in a similar way – Table 6.5.

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As a general conclusion, regarding Q12 “What is the significance of the following motivations in the origin of your holidays in Portugal?”, the principal components (underlying dimensions that can be viewed as the most responsible for correlations between the response items’ quantifications) are: Nature; Social and health; Gastronomy and rural life, Gastronomy and rural life; Exploring new experiences and historical; Meeting relatives – Table 6.5.

PCA based on CATPCA quantifications for Q. 15 “What aspects do you value more in a rural area for holidays in Portugal?” yields loadings for rotated components (rC) and % of variance explained presented in Table 7.5.

<b>rC1- Friendly, accessible, informed and accommodation attributes</b>	<b>12.426%</b>
<i>Good access (Quant.)</i>	0.776
<i>Tourist Information (Quant.)</i>	0.723
<i>Accommodation (Quant.)</i>	0.701
<i>Hospitality of the local population (Quant.)</i>	0.546
<b>rC2- Nature, tranquillity and safety attributes</b>	<b>22.551%</b>
<i>Relaxing place (Quant.)</i>	0.762
<i>Nature and landscape (Quant.)</i>	0.687
<i>Safety (Quant.)</i>	0.546
<b>rC3- Rural landscape, historic and cultural heritage attributes</b>	<b>32.192%</b>
<i>Cultural Heritage (Quant.)</i>	0.902
<i>Historic Sites (Quant.)</i>	0.901
<i>View of the sights of the region (Quant.)</i>	0.526
<b>rC4- Gastronomy and wine attributes</b>	<b>41.003%</b>
<i>Gastronomy (Quant.)</i>	0.849
<i>Quality of restaurants (Quant.)</i>	0.746
<i>Wine (Quant.)</i>	0.622
<b>rC5- Walking and rural environment attributes</b>	<b>49.103%</b>
<i>Rural environment (Quant.)</i>	0.857
<i>Conditions for walking (Quant.)</i>	0.777
<b>rC6- Entertainment and language attributes</b>	<b>55.987%</b>
<i>Festivals and fairs (Quant.)</i>	0.809
<i>Ease of communication / language (Quant.)</i>	0.622
<b>rC7- Authenticity of place attributes</b>	<b>62.612%</b>

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<i>Authenticity of place (Quant.)</i>	0,878
rC8- Attractions, Places of interest attributes	69.214%
<i>Attractions, Places of interest (Quant.)</i>	0.857
rC9- Good value for money attributes	75.176%
<i>Good value for money (Quant.)</i>	0.827

**Table 7.5.** Attributes that value most in a rural holiday in Portugal - Rotated components: % of total variance explained and correlations with items quantifications. Own elaboration based on SPSS outputs.

Component 1 explains 12,426% of total variance. This factor is highly correlated with “Good access” (0,776), “Tourist Information” (0,723), “Accommodation” (0,701) and “Hospitality of the local population” (0,546). This component will be designated as **Friendly, accessible, informed and accommodation attributes**. The remaining components can be interpreted in a similar way – Table 7.5.

As a general conclusion, regarding Q15 “What aspects do you value more in a rural area for holidays in Portugal?” the principal components (underlying dimensions that can be viewed as the most responsible for correlations between the response items’ quantifications) are: Friendly, accessible, informed and accommodation; Nature, tranquillity and safety; Rural landscape, historic and cultural heritage; Gastronomy and wine attributes; Walking and rural environment; Entertainment and language; Authenticity of place; Attractions, Places of interest; Good value for money.

A significant number of respondents (around 80%) replied that would like to receive information about the INCA region, which shows that there is interest to this region, and therefore a possibility for the future to have them as visitors.

After this general picture taken from questionnaire B, it will be interesting to focus on those respondents that have already visited INCA region and those that have not, to understand whether is possible to boost interest from these particular tourists for RT in the INCA region.

To find a profile of a tourist that chooses Portugal as a destination and, among these, those that have visited the INCA region, a set of questions were taken into account:

- The means used to choose their holiday destination in Portugal (question 9);
- How these tourists have booked their accommodation (question 11);

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- The importance of motivations that respondents found to take holidays in Portugal (question 12);
- In terms of expenses, how much was spent per person and per day (question 13);
- The aspects that they value most in a rural holiday in Portugal (question 15);
- How Brazilian Tourists knew about this region (question 20).

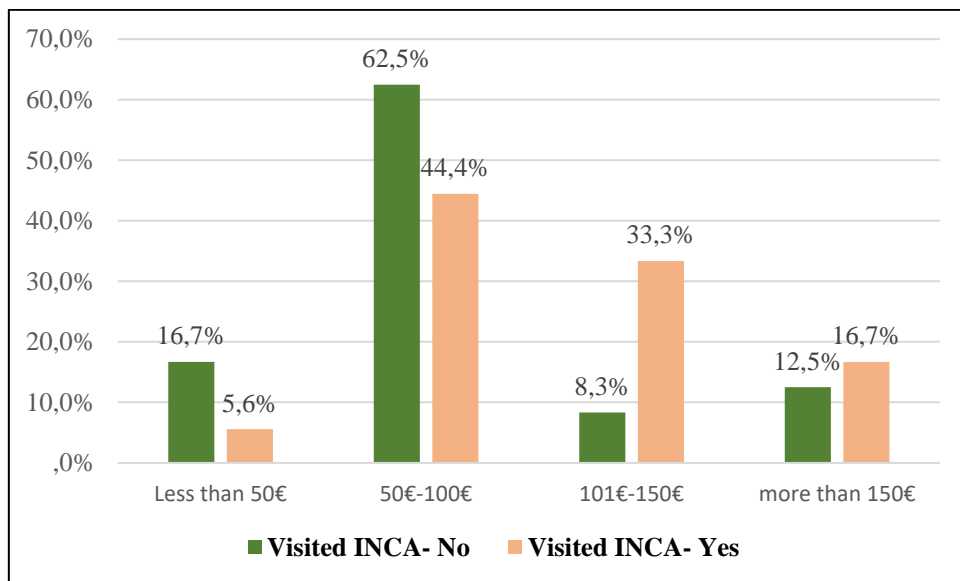
These specific questions give information on respondents' consumer behaviour, that when crossed with the fact that they have already been in INCA region and have not, it can underline any relationship that could help to understand how to bring to INCA more Brazilian tourist, in particular those that have not yet been there.

Thus, these six questions were chosen to analyse a possible relationship with "have visited INCA region" using Cramer's V and ETA associations measures. The results obtained all show a weak association - see also Annex 9. However, some of the questions stand out with a higher discriminant capacity between INCA visitors or not, when compared with the remaining ones.

The relationship between the means used to book accommodation by respondents and the fact they have been already in INCA region is measured by V equal to 0.421 (exact p-value is 0.112). This association expresses some differences between Brazilian tourists that have been in INCA region and the others, the Internet mean being more expressive in the later ones – Annex 9, Table A.

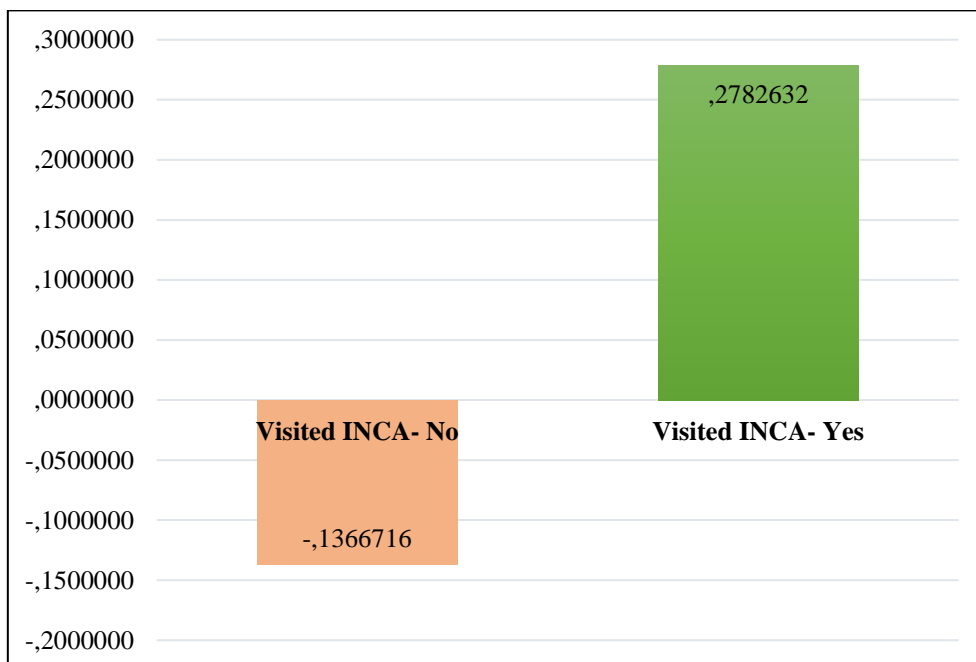
Cramér's V measure, indicates a weak relationship between the expenses, per person and per day, in Portugal and the fact they have been already in INCA region: V is equal to 0,351 (exact p-value is 0,172). Nevertheless, some differences between Brazilian tourists that have been in INCA region and the others can be found. In fact, the data depicted in Figure 15.5 shows that the tourists in INCA region tend to spend more in their stay.

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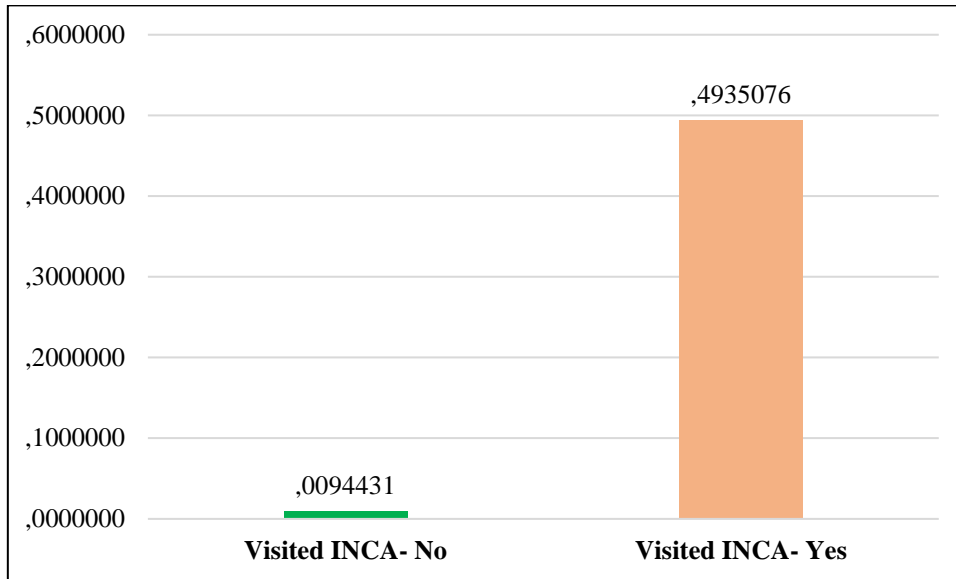
**Figure 15.5** - Q.13 and “have been in INCA” and “have not been in INCA”. Own elaboration based on SPSS collected data

Regarding the aspects that tourists most value (Q.15), rC6- Entertainment and language attributes (16.5) and rC9-Good value for money attributes (17.5), stand out among the other components for their association with “have been in INCA region” – Cramers’s V is 0.214 and 0.256, respectively. The tourists that visited the INCA region clearly value more the referred aspects – Figures 16.5.



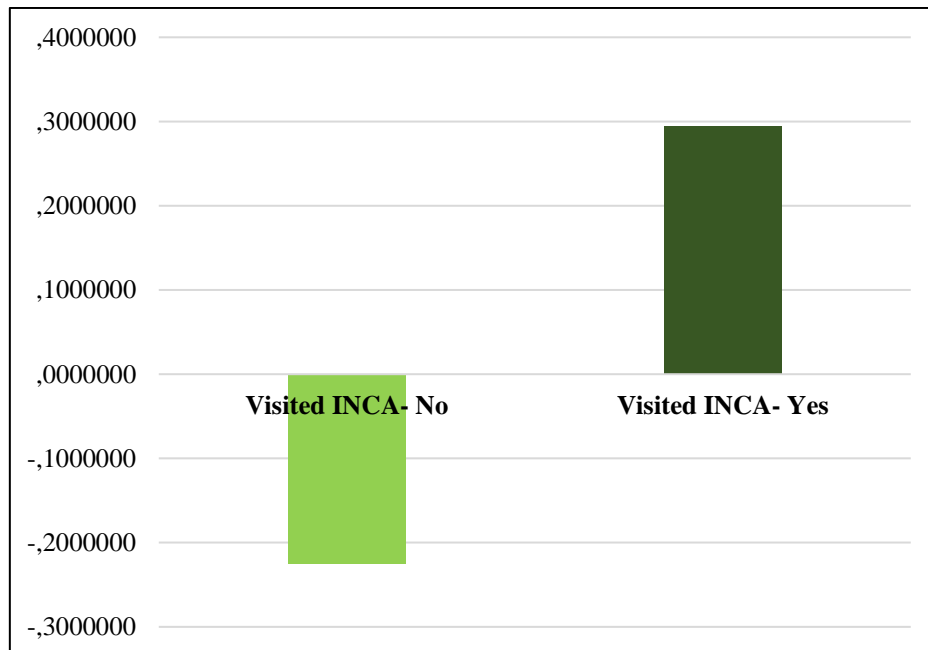
**Figure 16.5** - rC6- Value- Entertainment and language attributes (means). Own elaboration based on SPSS collected data

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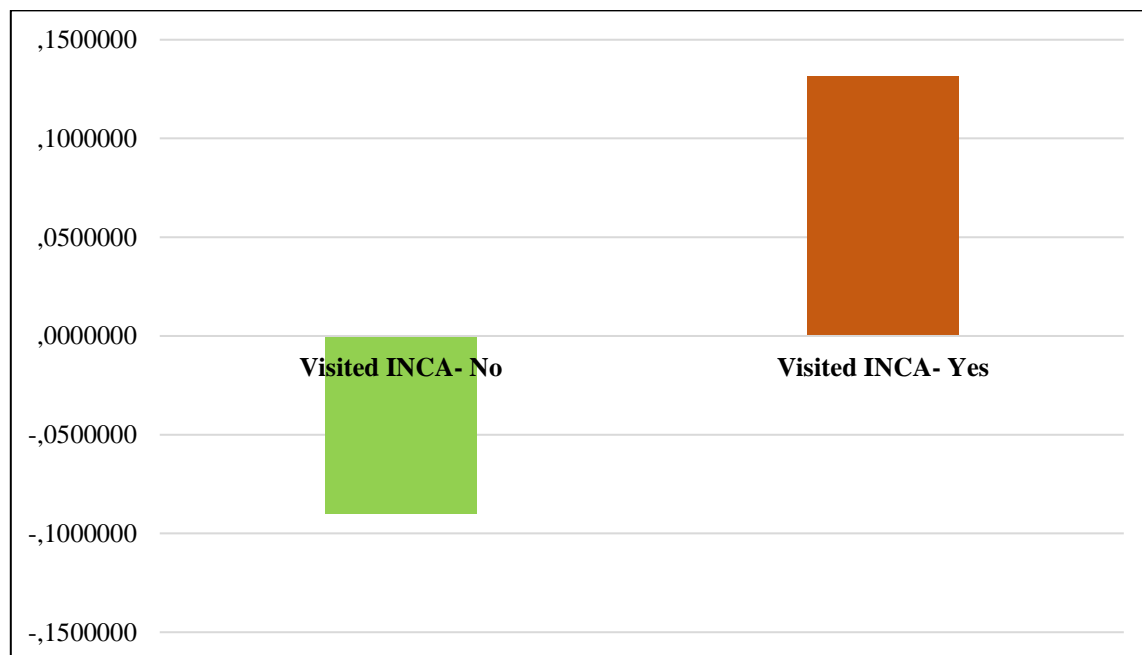
**Figure 17.5** - rC9- Value- Good value for money attributes (means). Own elaboration based on SPSS collected data

rC1 -Nature motivations (Figure 18.5) and rC5- Meeting relatives (Figure 19.5) are the ones with closer(although weak) association to the fact that Brazilian tourist have already visited INCA region – Cramers’s V is 0.260 and 0.110, respectively. The tourists that visited the INCA region clearly tend to value more the nature and the meeting with relatives motivations.



**Figure 18.5** - rC1-Motivations-Nature motivations (means). Own elaboration based on SPSS collected data

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**Figure 19.5** - rC5- Motivations-Meeting relatives motivations (means). Own elaboration based on SPSS collected data

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## **Chapter 6: Final Considerations**

### **6.1. Main Conclusions**

The theme of this dissertation concerns the development and internationalization of Rural Tourism in the INCA region, focusing in particular on the role played by Brazilian tourists. The developed research sought to study under which ways, means and arguments Brazilian tourists can be enhanced as customers to RT in INCA region.

The applied methodology integrated the analysis of a Case Study concerning the TRA and MHT establishments in the INCA Region, using semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. This methodology allowed, above all, to understand the aspects that Brazilian tourists value most in a rural stay in Portugal and their motivations to take vacations in Portugal.

Therefore, this study has been developed to address the research question: “Under which ways, means and arguments Brazilian tourists can be enhanced as customers to RT in INCA region?”. In order to reply to this question there were defined five related objectives:

- 1 – Characterization of the interests of Brazilian tourists for a RT region;
- 2- Understand whether the increase of Brazilian tourists will contribute to the development of RT in the INCA region;
- 3- Identify factors that increase Brazilian tourists’ interest for the INCA region;
- 4- Understand whether the Brazilians’ interests correspond to sustainable practices of RT in the INCA region;
- 5- Verify the possibility of the INCA region to attract Brazilian tourists.

According to CEO of *TZ Viagens* Brazilian tourists have a great propensity to travel abroad. Regardless of social class, they tend to buy their trips through a package. As a destination, Europe appeals to Brazilian tourists and they travel mainly to France, England, Portugal, Spain and Italy.

The Brazilian tourist that travels to Portugal is primarily a Portuguese descendent and usually seeks a cultural experience and good food and wine. He also relies on the opinion given by friends and finds in the similar language and culture a positive factor for travelling to Portugal. The main focus for the Brazilian tourist in Portugal lies in the country’s main attractions:



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Oporto, Lisbon (including Sintra and Cascais), Fatima (religious tourism), and also Guimarães, Coimbra, Óbidos. Only after visiting these locations they may be interested in the Alentejo region.

This research identified that Brazilians who travel abroad usually come from class A or class B or sometimes C+ that is people with some or high financial purchase power. They tend to choose accommodation with high quality standards, glamour and charm, associated this way with high-quality living and status. In the C+ customer case there are very specific motivations (like religious ones – e.g. Fátima) and they prefer group travels that offer cheaper prices. The main destination's dissemination tools among Brazilian tourists are personal networks (family and friends), internet and brochure, newspapers and magazines as well as TV. This market prefers to travel between spring and autumn to the Alentejo region and the least preferred time is between January and March. Their stay lasts on average less than 2 days staying for relatively little time in each place, since their motivation seems to be one of exploring the region.

Considering results from the interviews and survey, it may be that the appeal for RT in Portugal may not be too strong for the Brazilian tourist, since in Brazil is associated with the concept of *Pousadinha*, which refers to a type of accommodation without much quality. The Brazilian potential market can also be better understood through a cultural bias analysis. Hofstede's cultural dimension theory argues that the two cultures (Portugal and Brazil) when compared, although apparently similar, have particularities that require mutual knowledge, understanding and adaptation, but in an overall approach these gaps are not too profound. An exploratory research on "cultural proximity" undertaken by Kastholz (2004) classified Brazilian tourists as "culturally relatively close (...) due to common historical and cultural roots, with a common language". The study showed that neither those too culturally close (domestic market) nor those 'culturally too distant' (international travelers with more distinct language and culture), but those tourists classifiable as 'culturally quite close' (those with common language and cultural/historical roots) presented a globally most positive image of rural regions visited in the North Portugal. Consequently, Brazilian tourists may be a particularly interesting target market of rural areas in Portugal.

In our survey, Brazilian tourists consider RT in Portugal as a possible option for taking vacations. The main reasons presented refer to more attractive prices, the opportunity to follow a roadmap of thematic activities, a horizon of an active vacation and the excellent quality of RT units. In rural areas, Brazilians value certain features when taking holidays in Portugal: natural

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settings and beautiful rural landscape, history and cultural heritage, tasty gastronomy, good wine and understandable language on the endogenous resources side; tranquility, safe environment, good entertainment, interesting attractions and authenticity on the program offer side; friendly people, accessible RT (transports, good roads), proper RT accommodation and correct information on the provided service side. Brazilians are also one of the most represented nationalities living in the INCA region, and their personal network can be an important basis for dissemination of this particular destination, since many studies, including the present reveal the importance of personal recommendation for choosing a holiday destination.

However, the rural space in Alentejo needs to be better presented in order to attract this specific tourist; this means that rurality may not be the right argument to enhance Brazilian tourism in this region, but what is associated to it, particularly culture, history, gastronomy and wine. This may contribute to higher occupation rates, more economic activity, leading to a sustainable development of the INCA region. RT is based on endogenous and limited resources; therefore, sustainability is essential for its success (Lane, 1994a, Kastenholtz, 2004; UNEP & UNWTO, 2005; Carneiro et al, 2015). Sustainability also relies on environmental and cultural protection at larger levels, and this needs to be reflected in government planning strategies. Populations and visitors also need to assume their share of responsibility in preserving rural areas. Where Brazilian tourists are concerned, they apparently appreciate endogenous products and resources (food, wine, historic sites and ancient heritage). These products and resources, in a tourist's development approach, need to be preserved and set into value as much as possible. There are both optimistic opinions and scepticism/critical attitudes regarding the contribution of RT to regional development, however the more rural tourists consume not only tourism services but also local products they contribute to a positive effect on the local/ regional economic base while sustaining enrooted activities, thereby enhancing the region's social and economic sustainability (Kastenholtz, Eusébio, Carneiro, 2016). Brazilian tourists may thus also contribute positively to this development. Those that may or have already visited rural areas in Portugal, including the INCA region, were tourists with a considerable economic position that like shopping. If local trade, in a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship, respond to these needs, their business may boost.

RT in Alentejo does not integrate a mass tourism concept (also because there are no conditions for it), but instead is a very specific one, focusing on a personalized tourism approach, which probably makes it difficult to market through a vacation package. RT must also be ready to

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provide Brazilians with the glamour and a certain exclusivity and status sought by this market (as confirmed by Interviewee C). This means offering high-level units placing them in the high-end market segment, providing an assortment of services and activities other than plain accommodation. There are tourism establishments that can offer this concept of exclusivity with very attractive prices (in a weekly context, lived particularly by the honeymooners). In this case, Brazilian visitors can stay for a week and enjoy the services provided by RT. Once the expectations are fulfilled, they will spread the word in their personal network in Brazil. This means that there is a place for a new type of tourism product in the Alentejo rural area, the *small luxury hotel*, responding well to Brazilians A+B needs. RT target market in Brazil should focus on São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, which are locations with groups that have high purchase possibilities. In addition, the cities of the South of Brazil, located in a very rural context, have a considerable economic level and families with good incomes.

Another factor deserving attention is the apparent interest of many Brazilian travellers in communicating, exploring their experiences through intense social interaction with their hosts, as observable from interviews with RT establishment owners. This social dimension of the RT experience, already identified as relevant by Kastenholz et al (2013) for rural tourism in Portugal, seems to be particularly important and an asset to preserve when targeting the Brazilian market to Portuguese rural areas, where this communication is further enhanced through the common language.

Considering that Brazilians are the non-European tourists who most seek Portuguese destinations, and taking into account the referred cultural proximity, there is a good opportunity of appealing a more important share of this quite profitable tourist segment. The INCA region has characteristics valued by this market and RT entrepreneurs must prepare themselves to comply with Brazilian tourist specific needs and expectations.

The single RT establishments alone may not be enough to bring tourists to the INCA region. INCA region is essentially served by Agrotourism establishments (45%) and Manor House Tourism s represent only 21%, and with most of the staff with no specific qualification. Increasingly the Brazilian tourist segment requires also more qualified staff complying with the needs for high quality accommodation and excellent service. In this sense, a family run operation, the majority of the RT establishments, needs to step up and be more professional and client oriented, concerned with their building renovations plans. More investment would

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contribute to development and sustainability, stepping also away from a traditionally seasonal market to be able to attract distinct tourists from different origins in distinct times of the year.

More developed and organised RT is needed, based on effective marketing strategies and communication tools, with the accurate definition of channels. Such may require a significant financial investment, beyond the capacity of business owners; government support may therefore be required. Networks and entrepreneurial partnerships can also provide support, technology, customers, access to new markets, performance improvement and assist in developing business, as suggested by Bowen *et al* 2006, Preble *et al* 2000.

Disinterest in RT by Brazilians regarding the INCA regional is essentially linked to lack of knowledge of the region. Therefore, efficient marketing communication plans are needed. The complex process of destination image formation should be enhanced by national and regional institutions, whether governmental or private, in order to develop the appropriate image attracting specific tourists, like Brazilians ones.

Internationalizing gives access to different foreign markets, which are very interesting and profitable for destinations, including rural areas. The INCA region must prepare its internal offer, assuring competitive advantage and providing unique facilities in a special environment, such as a natural or historical setting. When focusing on the Brazilian market it seems that the INCA region has the potential and the Brazilians are indeed interested in its characteristics. Strategy is required to reach this market and develop the resources to respond to its demand. When the conditions are met, Brazilians may represent a great probability to contribute to the development and, as long as it will be well managed, also to the sustainability of this inland region.

### **6.2 Orientation for future studies**

Continuous research on RT can contribute to identify more appropriate development strategies, innovative tourism products and wider dissemination of good practice. Therefore, more studies on the subject are needed and they must continue to exist.

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Following this study, some ideas for future investigations emerge. The INCA Region, already a relevant research subject, can be analysed as a destination brand, focusing on quality criteria, certification and market orientation.

Moreover, the present study could also be replicated integrating tourists from other countries, beyond the Brazilian tourists. Particularly the role of 'cultural proximity' of also other international markets seems an interesting path of future research. Research on market segmentation analysis for RT in this region and on appropriate marketing strategy, seems a natural follow-up for this dissertation.

The present study has its limitations due to lack of time and resources to achieve a larger, more representative sample of the Brazilian tourist market. A larger and representative survey of the Brazilian population travelling abroad would be most interesting and important for increasing the potential of analysis. So, additional use of the questionnaire developed for this research is would be interesting, not only to try to achieve a more representative study, but also to reach more conclusions about tourists in RT at INCA region and implications on the region's marketing strategy.

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