

The revaluation of patrimony by the sustainable action of tourism

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ABSTRACT: It is the aim of the present paper firstly to provide a theoretical frame which enables us to characterize the development of tourism, highlighting the application of the concept of sustained development, and the role played by tourism in the development of rural areas.

Aimed as an example and focussing this analysis on the cultural patrimony as a tourist resource, the paper also intends to present the intervention carried out in Cabeço de Vide's railway station, both as far as the buildings and the green areas are concerned, so as to transform it into a tourist resort, seeking to achieve an adjusted, adequate and agreed integration of the tourist activity.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism activity represents today an industry with sure perspectives of a positive evolution, not only at regional level but also at its national and international levels, able to raise the economic growth and development.

Although the economic benefits of tourism activity are vast, this should not be the unique perspective to take into consideration. One should also consider, on the one hand, the socio and cultural aspects, once that the freedom guaranteed to those who make tourism goes often against the rights, guarantees and freedom of the host populations; and, on the other hand, to tourism/environment interdependence - a topic which already represents today an essential issue, to which importance is progressively being recognised. At this level, it seems to have become indispensable the development of a sustainable tourism, whose principles are based on the concept of sustainable

development. As Telles refers to (1990:46), quoted by Luis (2001), “(...) tourism, made effective on the field and contributing to the development of other activities and improvement of the living conditions of the population, can only be achieved through a permanent action of territory planning (...)”.

The problematic of the development of this activity assumes specific forms in rural areas, nowadays subject of a process of population loss and socio-economic devitalisation. The good use of natural and cultural patrimony as a resource of these regions appears as a factor that intends to contribute to change this reality. The development of tourism projects based on thermal and cultural tourism is more and more seen as a possibility of dynamism and revitalisation of rural areas, allowing a diversification of regional economy.

1. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

1.1. The sustainable tourism development

Tourism has suffered an intense growth from the sixties onwards, being no longer an elite activity (Sousa, 1997:24). In this sense, the tourism of that time was the result of the improvement of the living conditions of the post-war years, of the generalisation of paid holidays and enlargement of the free time period, and of technological development. However, according to this author, the massification of tourism has brought along further problems to societies in such a way that the states, which had never understood tourism as a real industrial sector and for that reason had left it to the private enterprise, were forced, during the last thirty years, to pursue an increasingly stricter control to oppose the consequences of the tourism phenomenon.

According to Cooper *et al* (2001:233), when left entirely in the hands of the private sector, the planning of tourism development is basically motivated by short-term results, impelled mainly by the obtainment of profits. On the other hand, if the public sector dominates tourism development, this will not have the ideal growth rate in what concerns the maximization of economic benefits. So, the planning of tourism activity demands a careful coordination between the public and the private sectors.

In the opinion of Mendes *et al* (1994a:17), this reality has led tourism production to be more and more “understood not only as generator of wealth, but also and above all as a means of social transformation and territorial re-planning through a regional re-balance.”

As a result of the rise of consciousness of the environmental and socio-cultural negative impacts caused by unplanned tourism development the concept of “sustainable tourism” appears included in the debate on sustainable development, stressed by the “Brundtland Report” and by the “Earth Summit” (Youell, 1998). In the publication of the Tourism World Organization, “Tourism in year 2100”, sustainable tourism development is described as “the one that responds to the needs of today’s tourists and host regions, by protecting and increasing the opportunities of the future. It represents itself as a vector of all the resources in order that the economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, keeping the social integrity, the essential ecologic processes, biologic diversity and systems for life defence (Rocha *et al*, 2000:273-276)”. As this author refers, as well as Youell (1998), after the “Earth Summit”, which took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, three international organizations- The “World Travel & Tourism Council”, the “Tourism World Organization” (TWO) and the “Earth Council” joined efforts to produce a document called “Agenda 21” for tourism industry, having in mind a sustainable tourism development.

According to these authors, a challenge is proposed to tourism industries in “Agenda 21”: That these come to adopt an attitude of respect towards the environment through the implementation of systems of environmental management, with the development of policies and specific actions of environmental protection. This fact has led some enterprises of the tourism sector to adopt the use of alternative energies and the recycling of residues, to activate systems of energy and water conservation, to reduce the harmful effects of the means of transport and of their own activity. In short, these enterprises aim at including as much as they can the tourism activity in the rural or urban ecosystem in which they develop, reducing negative impacts of all kinds associated to this activity and have as main purpose the search of a sustainable, time-lasting tourism, as well as the preservation of space for their present and future enjoyment.

For Rocha *et al* (2000:273-276), the ecological consciousness of tourism enterprises is not limited to occasional actions. It is something that goes further beyond and it should affect their behaviour and strategic plans with the intention of influencing a change of perspective in management strategies. According to Youell (1998), the “World Travel & Tourism Council” considers “Agenda 21” as the basis for discussion around the future of tourism development, which should be immediately implemented in order to be able to survive and prosper in the long term. The same author refers that

the public sector develops an important regulating and tourism-coordinating role at international, national, regional and local level. As countries are evolving to market economies, the existence of a trend for less involvement and public investment in tourism development and marketing is likely to appear; this situation can become more serious in the long run. In what concerns international tourism, the public sector can play a role more directed to the facilitation of the private sector, mainly as a services and facilities provider. The strategic role of governments in the issue of tourism will still be quite relevant, mainly in what concerns topics like professional training, entrepreneurial development, control and planning of development, provision of new infrastructures and economic development. The same author also states that: “The application of the sustainability concept to tourism development means that natural and cultural resources used by tourism have to be preserved in a rational way, so that these may have a continued use in the future and may still bring profits to society in the present time.”

Being tourism development a multi-sector activity with environmental, social and economical impacts, it becomes necessary, according to Cooper *et al* (2001:233), a considerable planning to make it well succeed and sustainable. Although the roots of sustainable tourism are based on the wider concept of “sustainable development”, defined in Bundtland Report, all the process that leads to the birth of this concept has already been developing since the sixties (Luis, 2001:49).

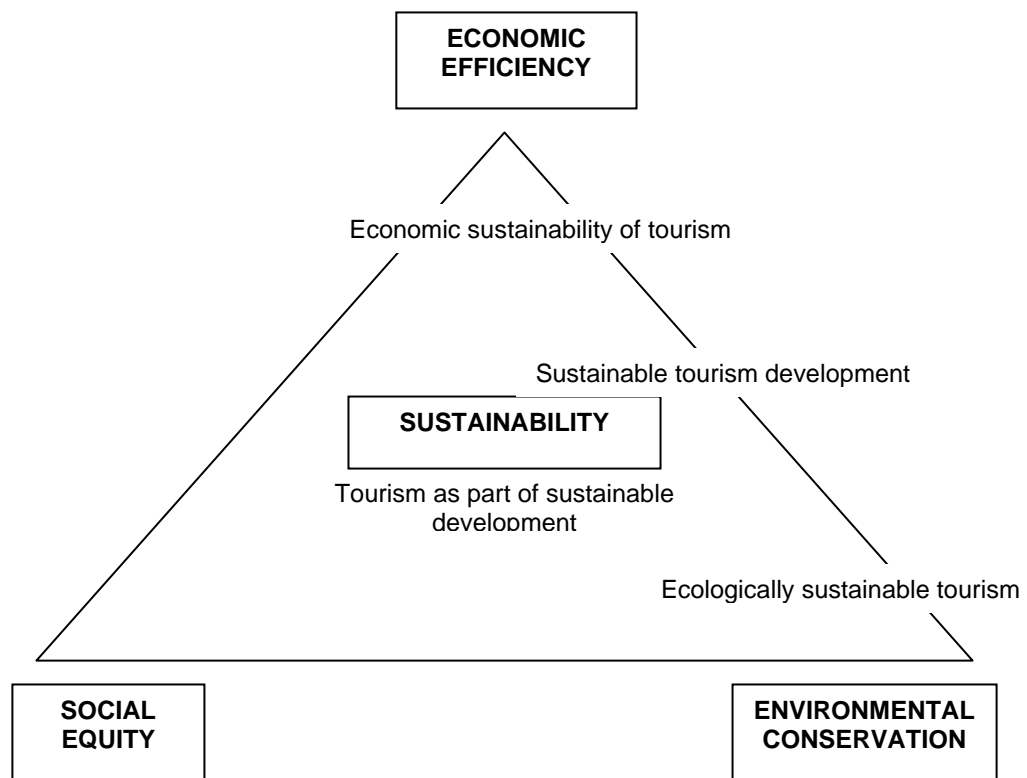
During the sixties, due to the rise of consciousness about environmental questions, the so-called mass tourism is more carefully analysed, being recognised its potential impacts. According to this author, it is especially during the seventies that the investigation begins to evolve in a more significant way, being developed the concept of “management of the number of visitors”, with which there is the attempt to diverge the demand and avoid the access of more visitors to crowded or environmentally weaker areas. Due to the growing concern about environmental questions and to the development of a denominated “green policy” in several countries, the concept of “green tourism” appears at the end of the eighties. “Green tourism” means essentially the reduction of eventual environmental costs along with the maximization of profits associated to tourism, taking thus into consideration the interaction between tourism and environment.

According to Luis (2001:49), it is especially in the nineties that the concept of “sustainable tourism” is spread, more widening than that of “green tourism”, as it

pretends to include, beyond the issues connected with the environmental issue, the economic and social areas. Swarbrooke (1999:83), also quoted by Luis (2001:49) refers that tourism has environmental, economic and social impacts and that sustainable tourism refers to the maximization of the positive impacts and the minimization of the negative ones.

Picture 1 represents in a very schematic way the dimensions of sustainable tourism identified by Swarbrooke (1999:83), and also referred to by Luis (2001).

Picture 1 – Dimensions of sustainable tourism.

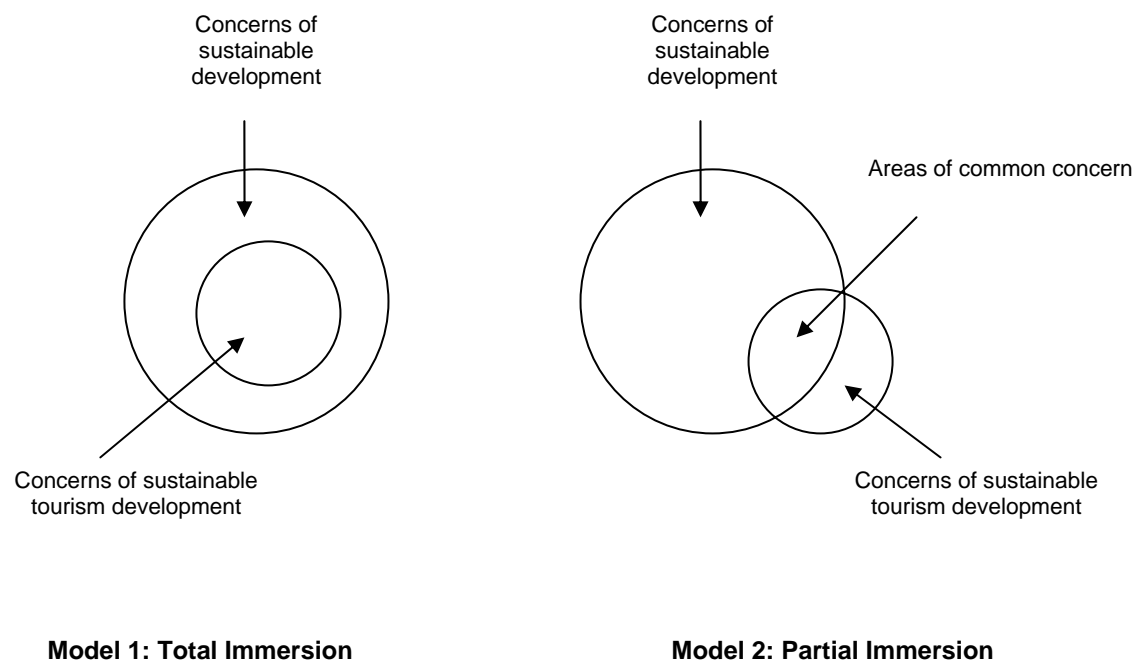


Source: Luis (2001) .

Without the existence of a consensual and widely accepted definition of sustainable tourism, one may attend, according to Starbrooke (1999:13) and also mentioned by Luis (2001:50), to the definition of sustainable development and talk about kinds of tourism that meet the present needs of tourists, of the “industry” and of host communities without jeopardizing the capacity of the future generations to satisfy their own needs.

Luis (2001:13) also puts forward Hunter's perspective (1995), he refers that nowadays there are two possible interpretations for sustainable tourism based on two paradigms, which analyse the relationship between sustainable development and sustainable tourism development. Picture 2 represents an attempt to translate visually those two interpretations.

Picture 2- Conceptual models of the relationship sustainable development / sustainable tourism development.



Source: Luis (2001). Adapted.

In Model 1, denominated “Total Immersion”, the concerns of sustainable tourism development are completely subordinated to the concerns of sustainable development, being the latter a more embracing paradigm. Model 2 is denominated “Partial Immersion”, as the concerns of sustainable tourism development and sustainable development are coincident, developing the former its own tourism-centred agenda at local level to the point where tourism development doesn't follow necessarily all the requisites and general concerns of sustainable development (Luis, 2001:53). Recognizing in tourism the possibility of contribution for the development and improvement of the living standards of the populations as well as for its self-sustainability, Sousa (1997:33-36) also distinguishes two dimensions of sustainable tourism: the natural and the social dimensions. In the first case are considered all the physical and biological conditions which reflect the growing importance attributed to

natural resources in the analysis of the development stages of the countries, such as their geographic, geological, oceanographic, botanic, faunal richness, hydro resources and air quality; the social dimension includes the phenomena of social relationships as well as the landscapist, historic, anthropologic, and recreational values associated with development.

When referring to the natural environment and considering that this one holds two major functions, on the one hand as a source of raw materials and energy, on the other hand as a “receptacle” into which substances connected to production and consumption are rejected, Serafy (1995:81-86) states that ecologists attribute a special relevance to the “stock” of environmental riches and that as for them, the ecologic compatibility leads to the attribution of priority to the balance between today’s “stocks” and those of the past, which they wanted to preserve. Moreover, this author refers that the economists who follow the ecologic perspective see in natural capital a class of distinct and independent capital, which should be kept intact, once that its deterioration could never be compensated by the growth of other forms of capital. Natural riches could be protected by “direct regulation or by indirect measures dependent, for example, on inspection, or by both simultaneously.

In what concerns the social dimension of tourism, Sousa (1997:36), quoting the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on development refers: “Development is first and above all social”. This author also puts forward the main aims of this organization for social development, which are: Create endogenous capacities; involve the population in social development; include cultural factors in the strategy of balanced development; promote a new vision of work in the wider scenery of the concept of “active life”; improve the quality of life of the rural populations; promote the environmental consciousness; value science and technology; understand communication in the sense of social development; promote endogenous capacities in the areas of elaboration, evaluation and management of social policies.

It is within this context - which favours the creation of endogenous capacities and population participation - of integration of cultural factors in development and of globalisation of the concept “active life”, that Sousa (1997:36) is based upon when he mentions that when the regional potentialities are analysed, one must take into consideration the landscapist, historic, anthropologic and recreational values associated with tourism development itself. The natural and social dimensions of tourism should promote, according to Sousa (1997:39), a connection between tourism, nature and

culture. The same author, based on the definition of environment put forward by Melo e Pimenta (1993:14), which is understood as “the set of physic, ecologic and socio-cultural systems with direct or indirect effect on Man’s quality of life”, considers that it is on the binomial nature/ culture that the whole tourism and leisure activity rest.

As for Rocha *et al* (2000:273-276), the relationship between tourism and environment holds a particular importance due to the nature of tourism activity. The overcharge of beaches and their inappropriate maintenance leads many tourists to change their tourism destination. Also the fast development of towns without a suitable planning makes them undesirable places. In this author’s point of view, tourism activity itself may cause the dissatisfaction of its clients, in case of massification of destinations and overcrowded flights, which are generators of stress in the tourist who looks for peacefulness and distance from crowds and everyday rush.

McBurney (1996) considers that organisations like “Tourism Concern”, founded in 1998, are in the forefront of a movement that tries to draw people’s attention to the misuse of the concept “ecotourism”, used by travel agencies as a marketing tool to attract tourists to third world countries. Sustainable tourism, which intends to invert the situation in underdeveloped countries, seems to be producing small effects. This author also refers to the inevitable suspicion that all the campaign around sustainable tourism is nothing but a national desire of keeping the third world as a cheap place to visit, and refers that the concept of sustainable tourism is full of internal conflicts. Thus, its supporters defend that the interests of local communities meet their own wish of preserving their regions and therefore they are entitled to prefer the development plans accomplished by the government of their own country. Besides, sustainable tourism also tends to forget that, by trying to preserve the civilisation backwardness that supports its image, it may also be keeping hideous levels of poverty and deep social injustice. Under this perspective, sustainable tourism may not be able to give its contribute in economic or moral terms to the regions that it proposes to help.

According to Mendes *et al* (1996:17), “accepting the principle of sustainable tourism development is recognising that tourism development depends on an efficient management of natural resources and on the guarantee of availability in the middle and long term, on the same advantages offered today by seashore ecosystems. In short, the chance for the tourism sector to assume itself as a strategic sector of future development will only become possible if the growth of tourism economy and environment and the

protection of quality of life come to be understood as two complementary and not alternative aims.”

Rocha *et al* (2000:273-276) considers that without the maintenance of the resources on which tourism activity is based, the tourism sector will no longer obtain profitability in the middle and long term, at the point when the needs of the present and future tourist are not satisfied. As for Mendes *et al* (1996:18, 24, 118), in a scenery of sustainable tourism development, tourism activity may be assured in a lasting way from renewable resources, as long as the necessary time for their regeneration is guaranteed. The use of non-renewable resources will still be made by tourism activity, which may be considerably increased thanks to technological progress, to the application of strategies of protection and maximization of resources, to the replacement of those resources by renewable ones, to recycling and to the creation of alternative products. For that purpose, it will be necessary to define an efficient strategy of sustainable tourism development, which conciliates an integrated plan of tourism development with the formulation of a tourism policy, trying to find the right solutions and answers for the diverse problems that the tourism phenomenon comprehends.

In Youell’s opinion (1998), the concept of sustainable tourism is something that includes not only the minimization of environmental impacts, but is also based on the need of protecting and respecting the integrity of different communities and cultures; for that purpose it should include, as much as possible, those local communities in the several matters related with tourism planning and development.

As for Rocha *et al* (2000:273-276), in the tourism case, an ecologic attitude is not only a question of consciousness, but also of survival of the sector; this author doesn’t refer only to the concern with the destinations to maintain their attractiveness, but to a higher ecologic consciousness of the clients, which will prove that they show their preference for tourism entities which reveal respect for the environment. The same happens with quality, as tourism operators may obtain an environmental certificate in order to include certain services in their tours. Besides, the environmental management of tourism enterprises may cause a very positive impact around their activity when promoting the environmental protection.

In an environment in permanent change, development is influenced by several mutating factors which, according to Cooper *et al* (2001:233), affect both the desired purposes and the necessary means to achieve those purposes, changing development

into a never-ending concept, capable of a more flexible approach, which allows a wider capacity of response as well as an adequate readjustment to each situation.

In Youell's opinion (1998), planning as a way of reaching a sustainable development becomes extremely important in the tourism sector, as a major part of tourism activity development depends on attractions related with the natural and cultural environment of the destination areas.

Cunha (1997) also believes that the valuation and strengthening of tourism goes through the defence of the historic patrimony, through the preservation and better use of monuments, through the enrichment of traditional values, from regional architecture to folklore, through gastronomy and through the defence of natural resources. In this context it is necessary to have a perspective of regional tourism development, which should be submitted to some conditions. Thus, according to this author:

- Tourism cannot be seen as the solution to all evils. In order to make it consistent, the existence of minimum values that justify it is indispensable;
- In most regions, tourism is not the alternative activity of development and, in these cases, tourism activities should be conceived as an incentive and a complement and not as main basis;
- The equipments and models of tourism development have to be programmed according to the characteristics and regional values and not with the adoption of foreign models;
- Tourism has to respect natural resources and the existing cultures or be a valuation factor.

As for Mendes (1995), quoted by Bernardes (1997), a good strategy of sustainable tourism development would basically consist on:

- Promoting the correct management of natural as well as of human tourism resources;
- Controlling tourism flows by establishing limits of tourism charge or capacity;
- Distribute these flows in time, avoiding their exclusive or almost exclusive occurrence during the seaside season;
- Extending the usable tourism area through the dynamic of new forms of tourism that can develop these areas in different spaces of tourism planning, distributed through the territory in a better way;

- Developing itinerant tourism through attractive tourism circuits and through the functional equipment of a set of tourism centres, what can go through the tourism hierarchy of the urban net;
- Changing the structures of tourism offer and demand according to the determinants of the national inventory of natural and human resources for tourism, as well as promoting the so-called social tourism and the internal tourism market;
- Improving the quality and quantity of the set of factors which are able to contribute to the social welfare and quality of life of tourists, as well as of the host communities, namely green areas, a valued landscape, an harmonious and integrated architecture, diversified leisure activities, security and health services;
- Fixing a fair tax for the price of usable resources;
- Guiding the technologic and equipment modernization in order to achieve inner and ecologic growing;
- Defining management and environment hygiene rules for tourism establishments, and
- Reforming and re-organizing the institutional system, so that the complementarities of tourism and environment development policies can be achieved.

1.2. The Role of Tourism in Rural Development

With the sub-valuation of space to the detriment of economy, Sousa (1997:101), stresses that “Planning and regional policy do not exist; regional development can only exist by chance”. This statement is based on the situation lived by our country after the oil crash of 1973, together with the reduction of emigrants’ remittances and tourism profits after the revolution of April, which resulted in a suffocating rise of the external debt. According to Sousa (1997:101), only after the admittance in the Community in 1986 and with the integration in the regional policy of the European Economic Community (EEC) did Portugal begin to develop stronger efforts to fight the regional differences helped by community funds, and a new stage of regional development began.

As referred to by Bernardes (1997:94), based on Lopes (1984), development, in its true essence, will be the guiding line of work planning, resulting from it the need to formulate policies and draw plans to implement them. Planning appears as a means of

accomplishing those policies, which, on their turn, will take to development. Development cannot be mistaken with economic development, as although the latter is necessary for development, what is expected is a significant improvement in quality and not in quantity. According to Lopes (1984), development is a synonym of regional development, because when a policy is implemented, it is implemented in a restricted area.

In the community the qualitative leaps of its regional policy have always been associated with its enlargement, due to the entry of countries whose relationship with the Gross National Product (PIB) per inhabitant becomes more and more distant from the community average, creating the need to rethink new realities. As Sousa refers to (2001:101-102), since the regional policy is not consigned in the Treaty of Rome, it is in Paris Summit that the new guidelines for Community Regional Action are defined. Here is advocated the creation of a fund of regional development. Thus, the European Fund for Regional Development (FEDER) is founded in 1975, being created the Regional Policy Committee. According to the same author, the Single European Act is going to recognise the Regional Policy through its Article 130^o-A, which advocates the reduction of differences between the various regions as well as the reduction of the backwardness of the less-favoured ones.

The rural space appears from the growing internationalisation of economies as a marginalized space, being its future decided in the essential, as Luis mentions (2001:60), in urban headquarters. These are but idealistic solutions, distant from the rural realities and imposed by the dominating model of economic growth, not sensitive to the wishes and hopes of the populations.

The characteristics that traditionally define the rural world have suffered on the way significant changes. According to the same author, the production of food as main activity; agriculture as the dominant economic activity; the peasant family as a social reference group and the landscape of balance between natural factors and human activities have given place to a rural environment where the main activity doesn't have necessarily to be the production of food and the dominant economic activity may not be agriculture. On the other hand, one is assisting to the valuation of the non-agricultural sector, dependent on three aspects or trends: the conservation and protection of nature related with the question of sustainable development; the historic and cultural patrimony; and the commerce of landscapes.

Diniz (1999) stresses that “rural world must be seen within a perspective of its interrelations with the other communities, it has a dynamic and in permanent change character”. As for Luis (2001:60), it is also fundamental to see the rural world in complement with the urban one, even because in a context of globalisation and growing homogenisation of societies, “modernity” reaches almost everywhere without the existence of a clear gap between rural and urban world.

As this author refers, the rural world is integrated in a wide and diversified territorial system, where particular the landscapist, environmental and socio-cultural characteristics, which are very valued nowadays, have to be maximized. For this reason, it is important to stop and, if possible, reverse the process of socio-economic weakening in which the rural world finds itself.

Luis (2001:60) also refers that the depopulation of rural areas means an even higher social and economic cost for those regions, once that the existent infrastructures, equipments and services no longer have profitability and those who can be transferred are effectively displaced to other areas. Thus, a vicious circle is created, as the inexistence of certain equipments, infrastructures and services or their sub-use have contributed for the aggravation of depopulation caused by the lack of opportunities in what jobs, leisure and quality of life are concerned.

In the search for solutions, several ideas have been suggested, almost always headed for the good use of local resources and their valuation, bearing in mind the diversification of family revenues, namely through the creation of new products and services better related with the market. It is within this context that tourism is to be found, considered as a sector with a high potential to stimulate rural development (Luis, 2001:60-61).

In Cunha’s point of view (1977), tourism as a maximizing factor of endogenous resources, motor of development and redistribution of revenues plays an important role as factor of rebalance and reduction of \development differences, as well as of the social dualities that urban centres always tend to stress, allowing the achievement, if conceived according to a regional perspective, of a more fair distribution of the living standards between regions.

Sousa (1997:102) also refers that tourism can, being an industry in full development, help reduce the regional differences, thus contributing for regional development thanks to the various potentialities it holds, attracting for the regions the

benefits that a service industry having in natural and cultural resources its own resources may involve.

According to Cunha and to several other authors, few other sectors of the economic activity can offer better possibilities for regional development, when this is understood in the duality of its implications in national economic development and in a better use of local potentialities. The same author sees tourism as the economic sector that better guarantees the close connection that should be present between regional development and national development, as its economic and social effects verified in a certain region are not the same in the whole of the national territory.

Without the existence of unique and magic formulas, different strategies have to be found, so that together they may actively contribute for the resolution of the problems the rural world faces. In areas that are social and economically fragile, Luis (2001:60) lays stress upon the fact that tourism might be one of those strategies to adopt. However, according to Cunha (1997), the possibilities tourism has to offer are identical in all regions and not all of them can base their development on tourism. For some of them, it assumes a vital importance, for others, it is a development factor and as for the rest, it is only a complement with more or less relevance, according to the existent conditions. In this author's point of view, tourism is simultaneously an instrument of regional development and a factor of global economic expansion. It is, along with the primary sector, the economic activity that can be better introduced in a process of regional development, as it is a result of patrimony and local values good use, being able to generate higher revenues in the region than industry itself.

Luis (2001:61) also mentions the fact that tourism is recognized by its capacity to motivate development at several levels, what justifies its inclusion in regional development programs, namely in rural areas. The development of tourism activity depends, according to Cunha (1997), on the specificities of each region and it is only possible when there are local values - natural, human, historic or cultural - which can guarantee the capacity to generate wealth. Therefore, tourism development gives a higher added value to rural space and to natural and cultural patrimony. It belongs to tourism, from Cavaco's point of view (1999), a determinant role in the conservation and management of landscape diversity - natural, historic and cultural, with its small villages and places - and of the edified patrimony with its particular architectonic lines, which represent, moreover, a tourism attraction. This role appears reinforced in the areas where the abandon of the agricultural activity and human desertification is higher.

In Cunha's point of view (1997), tourism operates a transfer of revenues from the more developed areas to the less developed ones and causes the export of goods and services to the countryside, what would never happen otherwise, and this stimulates the economic development of the region. According to the same author, tourism at regional level forces and justifies the implementation of infrastructures and social equipment, what would equally be difficult to do. These are at the service of the local population and also allow the settlement of other activities that increase local production.

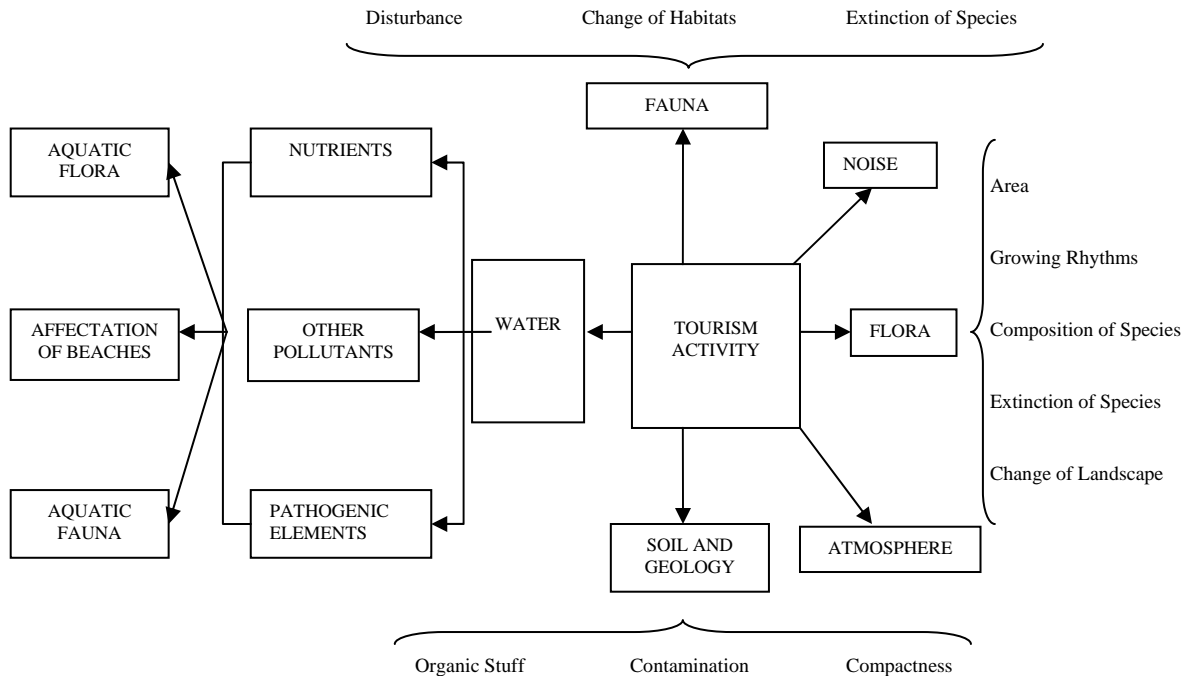
Tourism contributes for the dynamic and modernization of local production, as it enables the emersion of new activities and gives new strength to handicraft production (Cunha, 1997).

Tourism, due to its impacts, some of which negative, can only contribute for the aimed development of regional and rural areas if it is sustainable (Sousa, 1997:102). In what refers to the evaluation of the environmental impacts of bio-physic nature, the same author, based on Knudson (1984), mentions that in the economic estimative of the recreational value, several approximations can be given but none of them can be considered satisfactory. This situation results from the difficulty in quantifying, in economic terms, the costs resulting from the use of certain resources. In what refers to the evaluation of social impacts, these could be considered as a way of enrichment of the Environmental Impact Study.

Being able to cause negative structural changes in the economic and social areas and an irreparable degradation of the environment, tourism should obey, according to Cunha (1997:284-285), to a previous ordering of spaces, to the establishment of the exact goals to be achieved and to the adoption of measures. These measures should be able to make its growth compatible with the socio-economic development, as well as with the implementation of suitable basic infrastructures. As the same author refers, tourism may lead to speculation and to the destruction of traditional and cultural values, as well as to the marginalisation of local populations, and for these reasons it should be integrated in the specificity of each region; go along with local initiatives which may guarantee the satisfaction of its needs, so that the profits it generates can be retained in the region; and make populations participate in its advantages, as the major aim of its development should be the promotion of the welfare of the inhabitants of the region. The advantages that can be withdrawn from tourism depend on the region's capacity to retain its multiplier effect.

In Picture 3 are represented the several interrelations and impacts between tourism and environment.

Picture 3 – Bio-physic Environmental Impacts of Tourism.



Source :Mendes *et al* (1994b)

Tourism is an agent of change of the rural world, both of rural property and local economy and mentalities, therefore, according to Cunha (1997), it shouldn't be left at the free development of uncoordinated initiatives but be carefully fit, obviously without the creation of inhibiting forces to its development.

As Sousa points out (1997:104), in the rural area the sustainability of tourism goes through the compatibility with other activity sectors, diversifying the means for the production of wealth. Attending to the danger that any kind of monoculture represents, tourism by itself will not be able to solve the problems that affect these areas.

In Cunha's point of view (1997), the national policy of tourism itself must have a regional basis, through the maximization of endogenous resources; through the objective identification of the existing potentialities and of its balanced good use; through the valuation of natural, cultural and historic patrimony; and above all through the defence and promotion of particularities and regional differences. Whenever foreign values replace local values or whenever foreign settings are adopted, the region is de-characterized and consequently standardization is produced, reducing or eliminating differences and consequently their competitive strength.

2. THERMAL TOURISM AND CULTURAL PATRIMONY AS TOURISM RESOURCE

2.1. Thermal tourism

Although traditional, thermal tourism may be integrated, after Baptista (1997), in the range of possibilities of alternative tourism as tourism in non-urban space. Dating back from the antiquity, thermalism has gone along the centuries through periods of wide expansion alternated by others of clear lethargy (Montejano, 1991). According to Vinagre (1998), thermalism in the medical field appears in a more structured form in Ancient Greece, which attracted large crowds during the Olympic Games and offered those people a great number of attractions, such as theatre productions, athletic competitions, festivals and thermal baths. However, as Cunha refers (1997), it is with the development of thermal facilities in 25B.C. that the first tourism centres are born in Rome and last till today.

According to the same author, the Greeks had already used thermal fountains to carry out treatments 4000 years ago, but the Romans were the ones who transformed them into attraction centres scattered through the whole imperial territory: Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, England, Romania, North Africa and Asia Minor. Their magnificence included swimming pools, hot water baths, and sudation and massage rooms, along with theatre representations, circus games, car races and other pastimes to which we today call entertainment and that allowed thermalism to play from the beginning an important role in the field of travelling and entertainment.

From the middle of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century, thermalism found its golden age. In the middle of the “Belle Époque” the finest elite of the European society went to thermal resorts, some of them built under the style Art Nouveau and characterized by the “glamour” of their aristocratic ambience (Fúster, 1991; Vinagre, 1998; Vieira, 1997). After World War I, thermalism suffers a process of decadence and agony caused by the lack of clients. As a matter of fact, as these authors refer to, many thermal baths were not able to adapt to the “new trends” of tourism and ended up closing their doors with the advent and peak of technology, which took the medical therapeutic to concentrate around pharmacology, leaving behind other forms of therapeutic intervention.

As for Fúster (1991), in spite of the collapse that dictated the closing of many thermal resorts, some of them, thanks to the specialisation in treatments not mastered by

the so-called conventional medical science; to modernization with the best techniques in the field of thermalism; or even to the use of efficient techniques of tourism in the entertainment field, managed to survive. According to the same author, and also referred to by Alves and Simões (1998), after several decades of crisis, thermalism comes now to life again, due to the increasing prestige of the so-called “alternative medicine” with an essentially natural orientation, associating both methods (the healing action of the waters and the medical and sanitary assistance.) and adding to these the “cure of the spirit” provided by rest, by the landscape and by all the resources that tourism activity has at its disposal. This fact, according to Montejano (1991), gives back to tourism a growing popularity, not only by the older age groups, but also by the increasingly younger ones. In this author’s point of view, the healing action of mineral and medicinal waters together with a medical and sanitary assistance, make thermalism into an activity which attracts a growing number of tourists interested in the treatment of stress, caused by the rush life of the cities daily routine.

In the opinion expressed by Baptista (1997), “a tourism destiny that doesn’t have a spa and a lifestyle centre is outmoded, once that thermal treatments are today part of the experience of holidays.” After this author, the clients of thermal resorts have new demands nowadays, being not satisfied with the bucolic appreciation of the landscape around, or with the fruition of the waters. If there is from the more conservative clients the wish to keep spas with their unchanged characteristics, on the other hand there is a growing need to equip the thermal resorts with a set of equipments and services that may be able to respond to the new demands of those tourists more fond of active and alternative forms of tourism.

In the opinion of Lapa *et al* (2002), today it is necessary to join to the notion of thermalism, which defines the therapeutic practices carried out with mineral and medicinal waters to relief diseases, with the new notion of “thermoludism”, which defines the thermal practices with mainly recreational and leisure purposes.

In what concerns the profile of the regulars in thermal resorts, we can make the distinction, according to this author, between two kinds of tourists: on the one hand the traditional water-person, who goes to the spa to heal and, on the other hand, the visitors - holidaymakers who want basically to enjoy tourism and recreational services.

In the perspective of Lapa *et al* (2002), the legislation and traditions of Portuguese thermalism stimulate the predominance of the first profile, although today’s trends show that for the modern man the healing power of the waters is not enough, being this one

increasingly more interested in the prevention and recreation of water, as well as in keeping his physical appearance, relaxing or only enjoying himself through the use of the multiple services that thermal resorts can offer, such as saunas, Turk baths, aromatherapies, acupuncture, fang therapies, dietetic, massage, yoga, etc..

Duarte, also quoted by Lapa et al (2002), says that the traditional water-person represents a rather ageing population of a low socio-professional level, with very limited schooling and a reduced level of cultural capital, who limits himself to rest activities once a year in the restricted thermal area and low expenses in the region. On the contrary, visitors -holidaymakers belong usually to a younger age group than the former ones, have a high socio-cultural condition, a more advanced schooling level and a strong cultural capital. According to the same authors, holidaymakers wish to take the better use they can of their stay by the waters discovering the involving region, visiting exhibitions, assisting to concerts, etc. The expense made by this kind of tourist is much higher than the former. Thus, besides the interventions that attempt to equip thermal resorts with medical equipment and facilities needed for their efficient use, we assist to the valuation of the fitting conditions of thermalism (Alves and Simões, 1998). In this perspective, we can mention namely the elements that are connected with environment quality, quietness, authenticity, and with what is natural, which contributes for the promotion of alternative tourisms more suitable to the preferences, behaviour and values of the new kinds of demand. In Alves and Simões's point of view, (1998) thermalism is one of tourism possibilities that better allows the articulation of a balanced development with the opening of alternative horizons, contributing for the development of rural areas and improvement of the living conditions of the populations.

Its location predominantly rural may represent, as the same author refers to, an interesting basis of articulation with other kinds of tourism (rural tourism, green or ecologic tourism, nature tourism), allowing a diversification of clients through the appeal to the pleasure of natural landscapes or landscapes which are not very changed by Man's action. On the other hand, the development of thermal activity doesn't cause negative impacts so visibly as other forms of tourism. According to Alves and Simões (1998), although thermal resorts do not stimulate a large expansion of construction, they also do not generate much real estate speculation. It is also worth of remark the possibility of attracting more clients through the whole year, relieving the seasonal dependence more easily. Another important factor has to do with the absence of any direct competition with agriculture for the use of the soil, which means that the

development of thermal activity doesn't have necessarily to lead to the extinction of farming explorations. Finally, the specificity of the environmental conditions that surround thermal activity (quietness, suitable places for relaxation) leads to the establishment of urban rules that can prevent any aggressions to the environment.

The development of thermalism in rural areas may also contribute, after the same authors, to overcome the fragilities connected with aged and unskilled human resources, due to the difficulty there is in the settlement of the young population both at the level of job offers and availability of goods and services.

In what concerns the improvement of the living conditions of the host populations, thermalism has impacts that are very relevant at the level of job expansion and settlement of the young population; of diversification and qualification of local and regional economic basis; of qualification of the local offer of goods and services; and of the softening of isolation conditions of many of the communities, once that the existence of thermal baths justifies the construction or improvement of infrastructures of access. Simultaneously, according to these authors, the development of thermalism motivates the search for what is genuine and healthy, which values natural environment and those landscapes that are not very damaged; the search for traditional arts and the valuation of more or less set apart populations, such as the ageing people, who feel this way more useful to society; the respect for the edified patrimony and the valuation of traditional materials. Thus, thermalism may become an activity of high cultural level headed for very demanding clients in what the quality of tourism resources and its environment are concerned.

All the entertainment activities carried out in thermal resorts or involving areas that are interesting from a medical point of view and for health in general, such as physical activity, dietetic nutrition, acquaintance, the simple pleasure of resting, the rupture with the harmful habits of daily life or the meeting with ourselves are, in Vinagre's opinion (1998), compatible with the stay in our thermal resorts. The conciliation of the new needs of the users with the preservation of the identity of thermal centres, taking into account all the necessary requisites to the protection of thermal resorts and thermal water will be, after this author, a highly regenerating factor of this activity, changing them into real health and rejuvenating centres.

2.2. The Cultural Patrimony as Tourism Resource

From the beginning of times Man has demarcated the territory he occupies trying to build a representative space. Thus, he has been giving to the landscape representative

signs of the social, economic, political and cultural aspects that have influenced his way of life. Those signs, together with the socio-cultural aspects they are related with, form a legacy that still prevails today and represents the memory of the past (Carvalho and Figueira, 2001; Pinheiro, w. d.). From a legal point of view, “patrimony can be understood as all the inherited resources” and it may have, according to Perez (w. d.), both a private and a public sense; and it aims at guaranteeing the survival of social groups as well as linking generations together. This way, from generation to the other, patrimony can be accumulated, lost or transformed.

In Figueira’s point of view, (2002), patrimony either edified or not edified can be considered as a culture that characterizes a certain area or country.

Perez (w. d.) also refers that in the latest legislation “cultural patrimony” is seen in an increasingly anthropologic perspective to the detriment of the materialistic, monumental and historicist perspectives that used to characterise it.

Carvalho and Figueira (2001) define “Cultural Patrimony” as: “the myths, memories, vestiges, artefacts, tools, edifications, works of art, accessibilities, registrations and traditions, among others, which give evidence of the intervention of man in the territory and through the times, based on which there is the attempt to identify the past and project the future”.

Nowadays the taste for the natural and cultural aspects of a certain region is one of the main motivations for travelling (Figueira, 2002). About this point, (Cunha, 1997) says that those motivations are connected with the wish to see new things, increase knowledge, get familiar with the particularities and habits of other populations, different civilisations and cultures, participate in artistic moments beyond the religious aspects. Still referring to these motivations, Pinheiro (w. d.) stresses the search for a general enrichment in terms of culture, leisure, freedom, roots... that is, for individual and collective happiness”.

People who travel are obviously motivated by the satisfaction of certain specific needs. Thus, according to Figueira (2002), tourists try to find the answer to their needs in the places where are to be found the factors that are object of their search. Cultural Tourism developed in a certain region is based on the patrimonial resources of that region, which, after Figueira (2002), are divided in three types according to their relation respectively with nature, history or live culture. It can be said that there is an interrelation with the factors that make people travel and what the destination places have to offer, being created the conditions for the development of several kinds and/ or

ways of tourism based on the diversity of the aspects related with that interrelation. This way and after the same author, it is easily seen a privileged use of the patrimony as resource by Cultural Tourism.

Perez (w. d.) mentions moreover the existence of different theoretic-practical approaches about cultural patrimony. Thus, in short, the positions or attitudes towards the processes of recovery and conservation of cultural patrimony are the following:

- Traditionalist or folklorist – Cultural patrimony is here reduced to a set of material and immaterial goods, which represent the popular pre-industrial culture. Its perspective is historicist, as it considers cultural patrimony object and shrine of the past, but it is also conservationist, because it thinks that the ultimate ending of cultural patrimony should be its preservation, independently from its actual use;
- Constrictivist – Cultural patrimony is understood as the result of a social construction process, that is, according to times and social groups, raising his value and being some patrimonial assets legitimised and others not;
- Patrimonialist – Cultural patrimony is understood as the recovery of the past from a present perspective to explain the change in the ways of life;
- Productivist – Cultural patrimony is seen by this perspective as a resource for cultural tourism and for other economic activities, this positioning considers cultural patrimony a merchandise which should be able to satisfy modern consumption, hence the need of an interpretation process that can change resources into products or goods needed for the functioning of a system of post-industrial production; and
- Participationist – Within the perspective of this approach, the recovery and conservation of cultural patrimony must be done taking into consideration today's social needs through a democratic selection process of what is to preserve. This perspective defends a politic of cultural patrimony of clear options: in first place, the artisan, secondly, handcraft, and at the same time places with tourist instead of tourism places.

Tourism strength and ever-lasting character have to be based, according to Cunha (1997), on its capacity to answer to Man's deepest longings, rather than on its capacity to provide a pleasant stay, which may disappear without lasting values with the end of the journey. Cultural tourism has, in this perspective, an irreplaceable role to play.

3. THE RECOVERY OF THE RAILWAY STATION OF CABEÇO DE VIDE, INTEGRATED IN THE SULFÚREA THERMAL BATHS

After the disactivation of several railways carried out by the Portuguese Railway Company (C. P.), we have been assisting to a continuous degradation process of a set of railway stations and sub-stations scattered all over the country.

As it was indifferent to this reality, and feeling the need to make its edified patrimony profitable, as well as avoiding its degradation with all the consequent costs, CP decided to give to exploitation the former railway station of Cabeço de Vide with its backup facilities.

Conscious of the bad condition and terrible conservation of the whole of the railway station in spite of its great architectonic beauty, and being this property located nearby the Sulfúrea thermal baths, these also endowed with a singular beauty and representing an important centre of tourism attraction for this region of the northeast of Alentejo, the Town Council of Fronteira, taking over as promoter of the initiative, drew a project of revitalisation for this area, trying this way to give an answer to the needs felt by the population and satisfy in this area the lack of pleasant places where it was possible to recover from stress, stay overnight and spend some leisure moments.

Thus, with the aim of valuating the existing architectonic and natural patrimony, articulating and connecting them with the railroad, the project for a tourism complex was drawn, fitting in the Plan of Detail of Sulfúria Thermal Baths, in which the gardening of the whole complex was included.

3.1. Sulfúrea Thermal Baths

It is near the railway station, a bit farther than a kilometre from Cabeço de Vide, on the right side of National Road 369 heading to Monforte, that the Thermal Baths of Sulfúria are located. It is a rather delightful valley, where the copiousness of the waters or Ribeira de Vide join the thick shadow of the trees. Besides having a spa, this place also has a building with 30 rooms and a large restaurant belonging to the administrative council; a private Residential, a wide picnic park and a small bar, covered by luxuriant plane trees, and a water fall with doors, which transforms this

part of the river into a large swimming pool of running waters used during Summer time by bathers.

This place is characterized by the existence of several fountains of sulphurous water from deep rock shifts of volcanic origin and an abundant fountain of common water. The healing properties of the sulphurous waters of Cabeço de Vide have been empirically famous for a long time. According to Serras (1997), in 118 B.C., with the presence of the Romans in the region, which lasted about 600 years, these waters were already used. In the sequence of the archaeological excavations that took place between 1819 and 1824, as referred to by Dona (1900), several infrastructures were found. These excavations culminated, in the end of the 19th century, with the discovery of the ruins that had belonged to a majestic roman spa which, according to Serras (1997), are located under today's spa and are evidence of the importance of the place since the past, in what the practice of baths is concerned, due to the healing characteristics of its waters. After the same author, after the fall of the Roman Empire, there was almost an abandon of this practice, as the peoples that succeeded them -Goths, Arabs, and Christians - didn't have the cult for the body hygiene, and these baths were not visited very often. For centuries, the sulphurous waters run sub-used to the river or remained rotten in small pools where sick people and animals were bathed.

In the analysis made to the water of Sulfúria thermal baths in 12th October 1999, the Hydrology Institute of Lisbon, following the traditional classification used by this entity, concluded that it was a hyposaline water with a strong alkaline, sulphurous and oxydriled reaction. The same institute refers that among the anions, there is the predominance of the chlorine ion and among the cations predominates the sodium ion. However, the characteristics of this water are due especially to the presence of the hydroxyl ion and the sulphured ion. The same source also refers that according to legislation, the bacteriologic analysis made allowed the water to be considered bacteriologically proper.

According to Serras (1997), the waters collected in the baths of Sulfúrea belong to the same kind, either it is a depth or a surface collection. This author also mentions that these waters, according to Ricardo Jorge Institute, are classified in the class of hypothermal, hypo saline, carbonated, sulphurous waters and, as mentioned by Herculano de Carvalho, no others are known, at national and international level, simultaneously oxydriled and hyposaline.

In what respects its therapeutic applications, these waters are specially prescribed, at both external level in the treatment of skin diseases of any kind, wounds, articulation or gout rheumatism, sciatic pain and muscle neuralgias; and internal level, being rather effective in the treatment of gastrointestinal diseases, uterine diseases, leucorrhoea, in the disintegration of kidney and bladder calculus, as well as in the treatment of sinusitis, bronchitis and other problems of the respiratory system (Dona, 1900; Serras, 1997).

3.2. The Intervention carried out in the Railway Station

The degradation state in which the former Railway Station of Cabeço de Vide was found and its proximity with the Sulfúrea thermal baths led the Town Council of Fronteira to draw a recovery and restructuring project of the edified patrimony belonging to this station. Its main aim was its revaluation through the sustainable action of tourism activity to develop in that place.

The intervention project for the tourism complex of the Railway Station of Cabeço de Vide included:

- *The recovery of the main building of the former railway station and its adaptation to Hotel resort;*

The intervention carried away in the main building of the former railway station consisted in the use of the entire existent structure and in its adaptation to Hotel resort. Despite the conditions in which this building was found, it was possible to rebuild its entire front, keeping the original tracing, as well as the tile panels that were left.

- *The recovery of the former facilities of CP employees and their adaptation to tourism apartments of typology T1;*

The former facilities of CP employees also showed marks of clear abandon. Their recovery and adaptation to Two-star Tourism Apartments consisted in the conservation of the main walls and roof covering, as well as in the change of the typology of the apartments, aiming at a better use of the existent space and structure. In what concerns the secondary elements, such as spans and chimneys, there was the need to proceed to their modification, existing however the concern of fitting them in the traditional models.

- *The recovery of the former warehouse and its adaptation to a Restaurant/Bar, including the construction of a new backup building;*

In what refers to the recovery of the former warehouse and its adaptation to a Restaurant/Bar, the intervention carried out allowed, through the preservation and restoration of its shape and structure, the global reading of the original building. The need of backup facilities with a certain degree of complexity motivated the construction of another building equipped with a large kitchen, pantries, a storage area, cold storage facilities, sanitary facilities and dress rooms for the staff. This new building, due to its simplicity, does not deprive the set of its characteristics, allowing the indispensable functionality to the activity that is to develop there.

- *The installation of a backup set, with a Swimming Pool and concerning facilities, a Wall for Tennis and a Bar/Cafeteria placed between the Hotel resort and Tourism Apartments;*

- *The recovery of a well with a cistern and of a small community furnace that already existed;*

- *The construction of a backup Warehouse for the whole complex;*

- *The implantation of Car Parks;*

- *The execution of exterior repairs including the gardening of the entire complex.*

The implantation of the entire green structure, interactive with the edified area, consisted in the creation of a flowerbed with bushes and creeping plants; in the restructuring of the area between the railway station and the railway and also in the plantation of 26 trees in specific places all over the complex.

The analysis of the Detail Plan of the area where the complex of the Railway Station is located, taking into account its proximity with Sulfúrea Thermal Baths, enabled the identification of a conditioning that ended up influencing all the intervention in the green spaces. We could see that the area that involves the station is classified as Protection Area of the Headwaters of the Stream Channels or as Hydrogeologic Protection Area, what came to condition all the decisions taken in the run of the works. Attending to this fact, it became evident that the use of fertilizers and pesticides could bring negative environmental impacts, due to the possible contamination of the local hydric resources. Thus, to provide for the needs of fertilization of the entire complex, we decided to use Worm Humus, which guarantees an efficient maintenance of soil fertility, This Humus has a balanced composition in macro and micro nutrients and it doesn't cause an accentuated

lixiviation of composites, a characteristic of most chemical fertilizers of synthesis, with the consequent contamination of the ground water. Moreover, being this soil composed essentially by organic stuff, it presents a retaining action of soil humidity.

The watering of the entire green structure is done with the well water, through a completely automated system. That automation is assured by an electric programmer connected to the electro-valves installed in the interior of boxes. To this programmer was also connected a rain sensor, which allows, automatically, to avoid superfluous watering cycles and consequently the waste of water when it rains.

The choice of the different species of trees, bushes and creeping plants was based on the diversity of form, colour and glow of the foliage and flowers, as well as in the size and shape of the top. In what refers to the trees, the following species were chosen: *Schinus molle*, *Populus nigra*, *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, *Prunus pissardi nigra*, *Salix babilonica* and *Grevillia robusta*. From the elected bushes and creeping plants we point out the *Lonicera japonica*, *Tamarix africana*, *Budleia davidii*, *Budleia alba*, *Chlorophytum comosum*, *Escalonia macrantha*, *Solanum rantonnetii*, *Verbena x hybrida* “Blue Princess” and “*Senna bicapsularis*. With these species we could obtain a space dominated by big visual contrasts in colour, glow and size. Whenever possible were also preserved the trees and plants that already existed in the place.

In the installation of the lawns was used a mixture of gramineous plants adapted to the region and composed by 70% of *Festuca arundinacea* and 30% of *Lolium perenne*, which is suitable for the conditions of use planned for this area, thanks to its rusticity.

In the lawn by the Swimming Pool was previously installed a fence with bushes of species *Ligustrum sinensis variegatum*, not only to brighten up the space, but also to allow a certain privacy to its users.

In the area of the furnace and well was planted a lawn, where some species were introduced, which, by their characteristics, allowed a harmonious fitting of these infrastructures in the green area created.

The different bushes and creeping plants were planted in a big flowerbed by the sports area. The spaces between the plants were also covered by Pine Tree Bark. Besides giving beauty to the area, this cover prevents the appearance of infestations and helps retain the humidity in the soil.

The space between the railway station and the railway was firstly covered by land, which was also covered by Pine Tree Bark.

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of tourism as economic activity is unquestionable, both at international and national level. The Alentejo, taking advantage of natural conditions and historic-cultural values advantageous for tourism activity, has had in the last years a progressive growth in this activity sector. Although the demand is still very conditioned by a too restrict and seasonal offer, the possibility this sector holds as potential motor of development of the countryside can already be seen. This situation becomes more evident when patrimony is considered a resource that conveniently valued may represent an important advantage in socio-economic terms and in the cultural and environmental preservation.

The existence of thermal baths of recognised therapeutic value represents today a resource that when conveniently integrated in the tourism and regional development plans in close connection with other activities may become the basis for the dynamics of the entrepreneurial tissue and consequent economic and social revitalisation of the regions where these activities are located.

Within a perspective of sustainability, the development of tourism activity in the inland of the Alentejo, namely thermal tourism, may provide, through the action carried out in the preservation and revaluation of patrimony, a significant improvement of the living conditions of the populations, while simultaneously represents an important means of preservation of their cultural identity. Thus, it becomes evident the existence of an interrelation between the revaluation of patrimony and the durability of its use by tourism with the consequent withdraw of revenues from those who offer and from those who demand but also and above all from what is offered and/or demanded - patrimony.

With the recovery of the railway station of Cabeço de Vide, it became possible to reevaluate a patrimony that found itself in full decadence making it suitable for a new kind of use, providing it with a lasting character. This place was also equipped with a new leisure area through the integration of its use in the activity of Sulfúrea Thermal Baths, diversifying tourism offer in accommodation terms and in new activities likely to take place here.

In a scenery where the development of tourism activity becomes urgent due to the need of local and socio-economic revitalisation, only in a complementarity's perspective between the existent infrastructures in the thermal complex and in the railway station complex, together with the emergence of other tourism forms supported by local resources and all the environmental component may an efficient dynamic of this place be achieved, reconfirming it as a prosperous centre of sustainable development in the inland of the Alentejo.

In what concerns the use of the waters, attending to the specificity of the place, it becomes indispensable to minimize eventual negative impacts that any tourism or other activity may have on the quality of this resource, and only this way may a continuous lasting use be guaranteed. Thus, it is absolutely necessary to condition from the beginning any kind of intervention, including all the maintenance work of the green structure of the Railway Complex, due to the need of protecting the aquifers, ground or surface ones. It is based on this need that a rational use of fertilizers and pesticides is recommended, whenever possible with recourse to hardly lixivate and with low toxic content products. It is also important to refer that the sustainability of the Railway Station Complex of Cabeço de Vide does not end with the creation of infrastructures, not even with the recovery of what is edified. The dynamic of the whole set through the use of this space by increasingly demanding customers in terms of the quality of the tourism product they expect to find assumes a determinant role.

Finally, it is essential that part of the economic revenues resulting from the tourism use of the Railway Station of Cabeço de Vide come to be applied in the maintenance of its patrimony, and in particular in the complete restoration of all the wall tile panels, inclusively of those that are only registered in photography. This way, a truly sustainable development of the tourism activity practised in this place will be achieved.

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