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ABSTRACTS

Sustainable Transformation and Spatial Interaction of People and Places

Urban and Rural Landscapes for
mobility, migration and tourism



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Title

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THE ROLE OF INTANGIBLE HERITAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-BORDER REGIONS: THE CASE OF THE TERRAS DE TRÁS-OS-MONTES REGION

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Abstract

Purpose | This paper aims to show how territorial marketing and strategic policies to promote culture and intangible heritage operate as engines of development in low-density areas. Valorising intangible cultural heritage is often seen as a strategic factor for depressed regions (EC, 2022), while low-density cross-border areas face significant structural challenges including depopulation, economic stagnation and institutional weakness. Still, despite these hardships, we believe these regions can make the best of their rich intangible heritage and unique cultural identity as strategic assets for sustainable development.

Methodology/Approach | This research applies a qualitative methodology through content analysis of indexed scientific articles. Starting from a systematic review of the literature and an analysis of empirical studies about cultural events in rural and cross-border regions, its main goal is to identify the dynamics of economic and cultural appropriation of intangible heritage. The Terras de Trás-os-Montes region was chosen because (1) all its municipalities have a low population density; (2) it is the sub-region of Northern Portugal that has the fewest online resources despite its cultural wealth and rich intangible heritage.

Expected Results | The expected results indicate that territorial marketing is a strategic tool to disseminate culture and intangible heritage as crucial assets for sustainable development based on (i) Smart Growth, Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Growth. Besides, we intend to reveal the lack of methodological patterns to measure social and economic impacts, particularly as far as rural or intangible contexts are concerned. Accordingly, we propose participatory policies of transversal integration in which policies for education, tourism and land planning include heritage. This research also aims to create metrics that measure both economic and social and environmental benefits, as well as regional cooperation networks to allow these regions to share practices and funding through partnerships. This research concludes that valorising culture and intangible heritage not only strengthens a region's identity and attractiveness but also represents an efficient tool for environmental and socio-economic development as long as it is supported by strategic management adapted to local characteristics.

Keywords | Territorial Marketing; Tourism; Low Density Regions; Place-Based Policy; Social innovation.

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