

Co-Creation and Design - “Living Heritage Routes” Project: Memory Itineraries for the City of Lamego

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Abstract: The “Living heritage routes” project aims to interpret a given geographical area for tourism - the city of Lamego - based on the visual/oral perceptions and memories of the residents, so that it is possible to create tourist proposals, based on co-creation, that involve the local community, students and cultural agents through the contemporary interpretation of the space. The project has three distinct phases: 1st survey of the material and immaterial cultural heritage; 2nd elaboration of tourist itineraries and 3rd realization of an event that promotes and divulges the project - through a historical recreation of the space. The main objectives of this study were to involve the local population in projects that aim to recover and promote the local tangible and intangible cultural heritage. We believe that it is possible to create new cultural and artistic products, such as thematic itineraries, based on the image, perceptions and memories of the resident population, which can attract more visitors, improving the development of sustainable tourism aimed at local culture promoting. The methodology of this project, as far as its 1st phase is concerned, went through a qualitative approach, using mental maps, accompanied by interview, as a method of enquiry, in order to understand the local community's perception of their urban space. The analysis and interpretation of the mental maps will follow the methodology presented by Kozel (2007). The results obtained through a first analysis of the interviews and the mental maps, applied to 40 residents of the city of Lamego from four different age groups allowed, in a first preliminary analysis, the identification of new natural and cultural tangible and intangible heritage resources, as well as the identification of several points connected to the singularity and identity of the city and its districts. It was also clear that the connection of residents to their districts influences the way they perceive the city, as well as its symbolic and representational icons. The results reinforce the importance of involving residents, in the co-creation of heritage tourism products, allowing the construction and renewal of the tourism offer in small historical towns.

Keywords: historical centre, small town, mental maps, co-creation, itineraries

1. Introduction

The image of a city results from its inhabitants, their experience and their external emotions. It is a process. The city compiles the relationships between community members and residents, perceiving different stimuli. They may be conditioned by demographic, social, cultural and other aspects, but despite each individual perception, images are generally consistent within homogeneous groups (Lynch, 1964). Currently, in this field of studies, there are those who practice the use of a methodology under construction that appeals for the construction of mental images of places - mental maps.

Moreover, if we consider that the cultural, ethnographic and memory component is vital in the sustainability and authenticity of a small historical town, it was possible to make some assumptions based on the analysis of the symbolic field of the city of Lamego.

These questions led to the co-creation and design of a project - " Living heritage routes " - Creation of memory itineraries for the city of Lamego, in the scope of the Master in Cultural Heritage Management and Local Development, based on mental maps, aimed at improving the quality of the tourism offer.

This study assumes that the image of this city, supported by mental maps, allows us to determine material and immaterial reference points, perceived by the inhabitants, some being evident, and others being ignored in the construction of the tourist offer and in the sense of space.

This paper presents the "Living heritage routes" project and its constructive phases, the methodology used in the research, the results of some interviews and some of the most charismatic mental maps sketched, and is divided into five sections. After the introduction, the second section reviews the literature related to this project. The description of the project, as well as its contextualisation, is given in the third section. The fourth presents

the methodology used for empirical purposes and the final section provides some preliminary results of the study discussion and finally the conclusions.

2. Literature review

From the 1980s onwards, heritage reached a prominent place as a tourist product. Tourist demand increased significantly and, as expected, historic cities became the privileged stage for requalification actions for tourism purposes, on the one hand, due to the concentration of heritage assets and, on the other hand, due to the fact that many cities found themselves without development solutions (Alçada, Lisitzin and Manz, 2013). Throughout this process, we have witnessed negative impacts (cultural, economic and social), which result from an unplanned growth that has led to the degradation of resources and brings their viability into question (Chang & Huang, 2017). It is within this framework (considering the guidelines of the Earth Summit) that we are witnessing a new management philosophy based on sustainable tourism development.

Local residents' support for tourism development is seen as a prerequisite for sustainability (Sharpley, 2014). Thus, the success of any sustainable development effort depends on committed support from local communities (Nunkoo and Ramkisoon, 2010) and commitment from local authorities (Setokoe, Ramukumba, & Ferreira, 2019), especially in rural environments, as is the case of the city of Lamego. In this context sustainable tourism development and the understanding of its background by residents is of crucial importance for local government, policy makers and tourism (Ko and Stewart, 2002).

Destinations that aim to arrive or remain in the current market need to offer superior value propositions as a way to differentiate themselves in this strongly competitive environment intensely marked by informed, demanding and active consumers (Nora, 2017). The answer to this new challenge can be through co-creation, a term used to define a specific type of process that makes use of collaboration in the creation of value, through the sharing of inventiveness, design and other discretionary behaviors (Ostrom et al, 2010), as is the case of the project we present, based on mental maps.

Mental maps are a mix of objective knowledge and subjective perceptions: precise knowledge about the location of geographic features as well as impressions of places, rough estimates of size and location, and a general sense of the connections between places (Geography Education National Implementation Project).

For researchers from various scientific fields, mental maps try to connect the content of the map with the elements and organisation of space (Osóch and Czaplínska (2019); Holmén and Götz, 2022). In a broader perspective Jenkins (1993) considers that a mental map is a result of conceptualising space, places, buildings and other features and their interrelationships through specific categories of memory and imagination, achieved through sensory and emotional experiences. This will be the concept that will guide our work. Mental maps can therefore be effectively learned and explored on the one hand by collecting drawings that show spatial relationships, beyond the geographical ones, and on the other hand by collecting associations and metaphors that contain specific contents and meanings.

Contemporary critiques of cartographic theory are creating diverse relationships between physical, conceived, represented and socially lived space (Lefebvre, 1991) generating new concepts and understandings of place (e.g. Santos, 2007). These visions alter the way researchers approach communities and communities and the experience of space and place.

Cultural cartography heralds' new ways of describing and engaging with the cultural resources of communities and places. Stewart (2007) defines cartography as a process of collecting, recording, analysing and synthesising information to describe the cultural resources, networks, connections and patterns of use of a given community or group. From this perspective, cultural mapping can be considered as a systematic mapping and recording tool to engage communities in identifying and recording local cultural assets, implying that this knowledge can be used to generate collective strategies, planning and other sustainable initiatives, particularly in the field of heritage tourism (Roberts, 2012; Pillai, 2013; Duxbury et al, 2015).

And if the city is a human representation, then it is a social product. In addition, in this line, Lefebvre (1974), in *La production de l'espace*, helps us to understand that each society has the capacity to produce a space, its space, modelling and appropriating it to its image and similarity. Thus, it will be essential to know the mental

images of residents, collecting mental maps, through a direct survey. The results make it possible to know and deconstruct the city in the eyes of the inhabitants through a reading of the mental organization they make of it and the elements they identify as guiding the space and its culture.

This concept refers to the individual or emotional feelings established between an individual and a specific community. In the view of Casakin et al (2015) the concept of community attachment is defined as a state of solidarity between people and their geographical place of residence. It is "a complex, integrated and multifaceted concept that incorporates the relationship between people and their community", encompassing several components, whose core elements are linked to: emotion, affection, meaning, feeling of togetherness and value in the relationship with the community (Nicholas et al., 2009). The affection by residents to their community can lead communities to organise themselves properly for their differentiation and sustainability, namely through a proactive and corporate community attitude (Almeida, 2018), specifically in the creation of new products and new routes for reading the cities.

The connection of residents to the community can lead them to act towards supporting sustainable development (Eslami et al.2019).

3. "Living heritage routes" project

This project was approved in a funding program - Support Program for the Creation of Artistic Intervention Projects of the Polytechnic of Viseu. The project "Living heritage routes" intends to interpret a certain geographical space - the city of Lamego - based on the perceptions and memories of the residents, so that it is possible to create tourist proposals that involve the local community, the cultural agents and the students, through the interpretation and recreation of contemporary history.

This study was conducted at a small historic town in northern Portugal, Lamego, located within the Douro Valley World Heritage site. This town has about 12,073 inhabitants in an area of 20.20 square kilometres divided into two sub-municipalities (INE, 2021). The local economy is mainly dependent on services, small businesses and agriculture.

The development of the tourism industry in Lamego is a recent phenomenon. The nomination by UNESCO of the Douro Valley region as World Heritage site, in December 2001, boosted tourism in this historic town. Now, Lamego is attracting an increasing number of visitors and is the municipality that retains more domestic and foreign tourists in the Douro region. Several public and private organisations have undertaken a process of revitalisation of the town's heritage, particularly after the Douro Valley region's classification as World Heritage site, and the structural funds for the conservation and rehabilitation of heritage were made available by the European Union. Since 2012, Lamego's local authorities have worked on the conservation and restoration of monuments and in the dissemination of the town as a tourist destination. To this end, they have implemented a program ('Living Lamego – valuing and integrating the Historic Centre of Lamego'), financed by the European Union, with the purpose of reaffirming Lamego as cultural heritage and architectonic site (Municipality of Lamego, 2013). The program was based on two intervention plans that targeted the sustainability of this tourist destination. Firstly, the program aimed at increasing the local population's quality of life and its qualification in various aspects (cultural, social, economic and environmental). Secondly, the plan aimed at reinforcing the town's attractiveness and external visibility, taking advantage of its heritage and of the territory's specific characteristics, thus contributing to the creation of different economic activities, particularly tourism related activities, consequently retaining the population in the territory (Municipality of Lamego, 2013). However, there is still much to be done regarding the involvement of residents and the role of local government management of tourism in fostering residents' support to sustainable tourism development (Vieira, 2016; Rodrigues, 2020).

Based on this intervention and the need to create innovative and singular readings of the city, the project presented here, the Living heritage Project, aims to:

- Involve local cultural agents in the creation of events for the dissemination and promotion of cultural heritage;
- Involve the local population in projects to stimulate the Local Cultural Heritage;
- To create learning dynamics that bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application;

- Create new cultural and artistic products, through historical recreations, based on the perceptions and memories of the resident population;
- Attract more visitors, potentiating local development through culture.

The project comprises 3 distinct phases, and this paper focuses on the 1st phase - Application of mental maps to residents of the city of Lamego.

The 2nd and 3rd phases are still under study and implementation and presuppose:

2nd - Creation of new itineraries - designing an itinerary that considers not only the historical heritage survey, but also the perceptions and memories of its inhabitants. This new interpretation of the space meets the most current methodologies of heritage interpretation (WHIPIC, 2021; Ham 2014) that draw attention to the importance of involving the local community when building new tourism products.

Thus, it is our intention to build an itinerary that shows how the city has evolved since 1974 to the present day, showing the transformations that have taken place in the historic space of the city in all sectors of city life.

3rd - Phase historical recreation of the life of the historical centre and its monuments, considering the contemporary history of the city, through the perceptions and memories of its inhabitants, highlighting the change of uses and customs and (re)use of the space (Reis, 2012), from its decline to its reconversion as a tourist product. Besides the historical recreation performed by the actors, students, teachers and local inhabitants will be included in this recreation as extras.

4. Methods and the study area

The basis of the study is based on the implementation of a qualitative methodology, using mental maps as an inquiry method, to understand the perception that the local community has of its urban space, despite the controversial definition of perceived urban space and its use as tourist space (Włodarczyk, 2014). The method focuses on the application of Mental maps to the inhabitants of the historic center or later to other interviewees.

Lamego is one of the most ancient towns in Portugal, with a variety of historic heritage that chronicles several historic stages. Accordingly, the Chapel of S. Pedro Balsemão (7th century), the Castle (10th century), the Cistern (10th century), the Cathedral (12th century), the Church of Santa Maria Maior de Almacave (12th–13th century), constitute important national heritage monuments. One of the most visited monuments is the Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora dos Remédios (18th century).

But the liberalist policies which marked the 19th century were decisive in the transformation of places, now adapted to the new demands of the contemporary world. The loss of this logical, identity-based relationship, a hallmark of contemporary civilisation, has led to a desire to do and not to remake, to the need to build and not to rebuild, to the desire to forget and not to remember, contrary to the vision of current society, which aims to safeguard the memory of a distant past that insists on getting lost.

In this study, to focus on the most genuinely areas and for methodological reasons, we decided to divide the historical space of the city of Lamego into 4 geographical areas/ districts: Almacave, Bairro do Castelo, Sé and Bairro da Ponte, and apply it to 4 age groups (youth; young adults; adults and seniors).

The research always assumed the involvement of students from the Lamego Higher Education Institute (ESTGL) in the collection of mental maps from the local community. It is increasingly believed that the methodological and theoretical tourism field should be worked in an interdisciplinary manner (Decosta and Grunewald, 2011), despite the great difficulty which has been experienced in its applicability as is (Tribe, 1997), in which the student is active and interact in the environment in which he lives, thus contributing to the improvement of the teaching-learning process.

The students' groups involvement, previously established in a **Guidance for applying mental maps**, involves:

- Construction of 8 maps per districts;
- Application of 2 maps for each age group: [18-33] [34-49] [50-65] over 65;

- Request for authorization to record the interview and apply the story script.

The analysis and interpretation of mental maps will follow the methodology presented by Kozel (2007), applied in three moments:

- 1. classify the maps, drawn by the interviewees, based on categories or parameters;
- 2. associate the information given by the maps with the interviews of individuals;
- 3. finally, the elements identified in the mental maps are analysed through different theories linked to Peirce's linguistics and semiotics (2000).

However, this still represents a time-consuming and difficult process, usually requiring lengthy face-to-face interviews and producing results that are difficult to quantify. To combat these difficulties, we have constructed an “**visual application guide**”, which encompasses both the map creation process and the associated questionnaire.

Guidance for applying mental maps

Table 1: Visual application guide - districts

LAMEGO DISTRICT MAP	
Order	Requested activities
1	Draw _____'s neighbourhood in as much detail as possible
2	Indicate favourite place represented on the drawing, with a "+" sign
3	Indicate your least favourite place on the drawing with a "-" sign.
4	Indicate the most important place in the district, represented on the drawing, with the letter "I".
5	Indicate on the map the place that is most relevant/ important/ indicated to take tourists in the municipality, with the letter "T".

Table 2: Visual application guide - city

LAMEGO CITY CENTRE MAP	
Order	Requested activities
1	Draw _____'s city in as much detail as possible
2	Indicate favourite place represented on the drawing, with a "+" sign
3	Indicate your least favourite place on the drawing with a "-" sign.
4	Indicate the most important place in the city, represented on the drawing, with the letter "I".
5	Indicate on the map the place that is most relevant/ important/ indicated to take tourists in the municipality, with the letter "T".

Este "questionário mental complementar" visa estimular a visão e compreensão do indivíduo sobre os lugares/distritos descritos, identificados a partir da memória dos lugares, características, padrões e relações, tal como expressos pelo seu mapa mental.

Table 3: Complementary mental questionnaire

Thinking about "Lamego" ...	
i.	What are the first ideas that come to your mental?
ii.	How would you describe Lamego?
iii.	Do you like Lamego? Answer explaining why.
iv.	If you were lost in Lamego how would you find your way around?
v.	Identify the elements that you think best represent Lamego?
vi.	Can you attribute a symbol to Lamego? If yes, which. If no, explain why.

We obtained 40 mental maps by applying this method to the inhabitants of the historic centre, divided into 4 age groups (youth; young adults; adults and seniors).

When a tourist visits a historical city, he or she wants to be surprised, but usually faces with very standardized and unappealing information.

The Living heritage routes project aims, therefore, to interpret the geographical space of the city of Lamego through tourism, offering innovative proposals. For this, it is crucial to involve and commit several stakeholders, directing the communication plan to different target audiences:

- Dissemination of the project and involvement of the local community and identified partner entities - through press releases in the regional media and participation in data collection;
- Dissemination of the results to the local and political communities;
- Promotion of the new itineraries to potential customers (local community, visitors; tour operators, river operators, accommodation managers, among others), through the channels of tourism dissemination (partner organisations, blogs, etc.)

4.1 Lamego em mapas mentais como método de inquérito

For the analysis, as already mentioned, the adapted Kozel methodology (2007) was used as a basis, which aims to interpret the message conveyed in the sketches prepared by the residents. The initial group was made up of a universe of 20 people.

Many questions were applied in the residents' living space, randomly, as suggested by Lynch (2008), whose answers added details about feelings, desires, anguish, helping the decoding of the messages.

The data will be analysed, as follows, adapting the guidelines of Kozel (2007):

- 1. The maps were grouped into categories, gender, age initially, then as to how the drawings were presented.
- 2. The content of the maps will be analysed under the following questions:
 - a. interpretation as to the form of representation of the elements in the image;
 - b. interpretation as to the distribution of the elements in the image;
 - c. interpretation as to the specificity of the icons: (elements of the natural landscape; elements of the built landscape; mobile and immobile elements; human elements); and finally, other aspects or particularities were analysed.
- 3. To complement the analysis, the following aspects will be also observed
 - a. how do the forms appear in the images? (letters, map-like, lines, geometrical figures);
 - b. the distribution of the elements: (horizontally, isolated, dispersed form, in perspective, circular). This identifies the shapes, the expressions in the form of letters or words which complement the drawing with an explanation in formal language.

When analysing the mental maps, it is necessary not to think of them as mere drawings without meaning, as we should focus on the intention of what was intended to represent, as pointed out by the mentioned author.

At this preliminary stage, based on the qualitative data analysis tool NVIVO it was possible to classify and organise unstructured information in the mental maps.

To 'code' the fonts, to extract material, specific variables, themes and topics were defined. To do this, it was necessary to encode all the references through nodes.

Table 4: Categories of analysis - Thinking Lamego (nVIVO) -Nodes

MAIN CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS LIVING HERITAGE- District / City /
District
City
Thinking Lamego
DIVISION OF THE 3 CATEGORIES INTO SUB-VARIABLES
District
Most important place
Most relevant place for tourists
Least favourite place
Favourite place
Town
Most important place
Most relevant place for tourists
Least favourite place

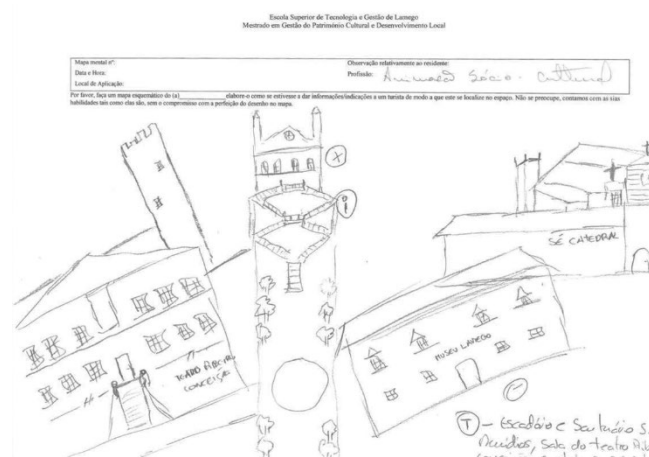
MAIN CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS LIVING HERITAGE- District / City /
Favourite place
Thinking about Lamego
How to get around Lamego
Reference Point
Description of Lamego
Representative elements of Lamego
Liking Lamego
Reasons for liking Lamego
General ideas
Symbols of Lamego
Reasons for the choice of symbol

The analysis started in the Castle district because it is the most emblematic. The maps drawn up by the residents are very disparate but show some informative continuity. The complementarity between the Maps of the district, the Maps of the city and the Complementary mental questionnaire - Thinking about Lamego should be highlighted. These sources of information will be vital in the development work of the following two phases: 2nd - Creation of new itineraries and 3rd - Phase historical recreation of the life of the historical centre and its monuments, by the diversity of information and elements to be visited, of endogenous, intangible and immaterial elements that are part of the oral tradition and traditions of the community.



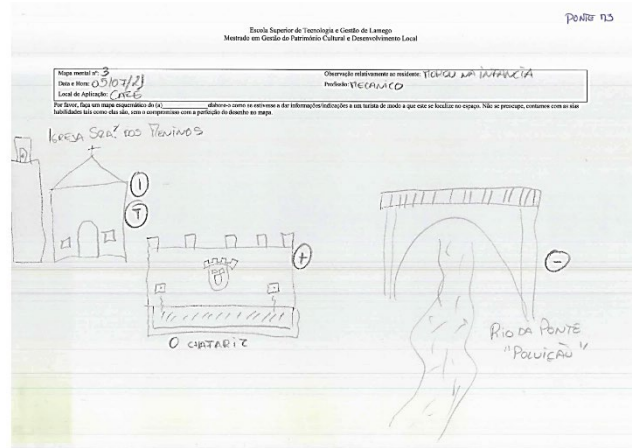
Source: students' work.

Figure 1: Selected example of Lamego district map/Castelo made by participant aged: (a) 42 years



Source: students' work.

Figure 2: Selected example of Lamego city map made by participant aged: (a) 42 years



Source: students' work.

Figure 3: Selected example of Lamego district map/Ponte made by participant aged: (a) 51 years

After this collection phase, it will be necessary to take into consideration the interaction models between urban spaces and the individuality or social group - age, gender, profession, etc. and the experiences of a given space - cultural surroundings, forms of representation, etc.

5. Some results and findings

In a first analysis we can highlight the following observations among the vast information provided:

- a) The Sanctuary of Remédios, regardless of where the survey method was applied, is the most symbolic monument of the city of Lamego for most respondents;
- b) Regarding the Almacave district, only one respondent considered the Almacave church an important monument to visit. This fact may be related to the poor state of conservation of the building inside;
- c) In the opposite direction, the majority of the residents of the Castle district, consider the Castle of Lamego as one of the most important monuments to visit, both in the district category and in the city category;
- d) Several smaller cultural and natural heritage elements are mentioned in several maps, such as: trees, fountains, gardens, manor houses, chapels, niches, commemorative statues, old craft workshops, among others, which may lead, in the future, to the enrichment of the routes;
- e) Gastronomy and wines (sparkling wine) are present in some of the maps analysed through the indication of wineries and commercial shops;
- f) The maps also reflect the concern of the inhabitants regarding the poor preservation of buildings as well as environmental problems, for example the pollution in the Balsemão River in Bairro da Ponte.

The elements collected are both tangible and quantitative (e.g. physical spaces, cultural organisations, public forms of promotion and self-representation, public art, cultural industries, natural and cultural heritage, architecture, people, artefacts, and other material resources) and intangible or qualitative (e.g. values and norms, beliefs and philosophies, language, community narratives, histories and memories, relationships, rituals, traditions, identities, and shared sense of place).

Put together, these elements help define communities (and help communities define themselves) in terms of cultural identity, vitality, sense of place, and quality of life - Living Heritage.

We must now proceed to the interpretation of the drawings, as to the distribution of the elements in the image; as to the specificity of the icons drawn and other particularities associated to the most drawn/referenced resources.

6. Conclusion

In this urban study, the will to live the city involves, for its inhabitants, the act of narrating their stories lived in this space, stories that point to the differences and otherness that make up a community. This perspective

enriches the debate around tangible and intangible cultural assets in the body of a greater reflection on a cultural preservation policy in Lamego.

When a tourist visits a historical city, he wants to be surprised, but usually he is faced with very standardized and unattractive information. This reality in the city of Lamego together with the active teaching in the Master in Cultural Heritage Management and Local Development led to the idea of the co-creation of this *Living Heritage Project*.

Despite its exploratory nature, this research seeks to address the mental representation that inhabitants have about the city of Lamego/districts, through the application of a mental and emotional cartographic inventory.

From the analysis of the drawings collected and the residents' answers to the complementary questionnaire, it is important to take as a general conclusion that the mental maps of the city are close in several points. The representation of the city corresponds essentially to the historical and central area. The elements located in the historical area, icons and symbols, are still present in the symbolic and representational images.

The intended future contribution is an attempt to group this set of maps concerning the representation of the city that will allow the design of more focused ethnographic studies, be they sociological or anthropological - memory products and itineraries.

It is important to point out that there is still a long way to go which involves analysing the stimuli of the internal (psychographic and demographic) and external (economic, social and cultural conditions of the environment) conditions of the respondents which, for sure, influenced the reading of the space and which will bring, as far as interpretation is concerned, unique elements that will enrich the proposal of a "new narrative" for this historic centre.

In the continuation of the project, there remains the elaboration of an itinerary which compiles the information transmitted, as well as a historical recreation which will count on the participation of the local community, students and cultural agents. This attraction will be as useful for visitors as for residents who, with the feeling of sharing, will be part of the new co-creation product and its dynamisation.

The Living Heritage Routes project aims to interpret the geographical space of the city of Lamego in a touristic manner, offering innovative proposals. To this end, it is crucial to involve and commit various stakeholders, directing the communication plan to different target audiences, which will ultimately be achieved through historical recreations.

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