

Please cite this reference as:

Kastenholz, E. (2012) “Living, sharing and marketing the overall rural tourism experience – a conceptual discussion and first results from a research project in 3 Portuguese villages” Communication presented at the CTLC-International Congress Tourism, Leisure and Culture, Coimbra, September 2011.

“Living, sharing and marketing the overall rural tourism experience – a conceptual discussion and first results from a research project in 3 Portuguese villages”ⁱ.

Elisabeth Kastenholz

Universidade de Aveiro, Research Unit GOVCOPP, Department of Economics, Management and Industrial Engineering (DEGEI), elisabethk@ua.pt

1. Introduction

This communication focuses on the “overall rural tourism experience”, suggested as a particular and rather complex phenomenon that deserves special attention from researchers in tourism, in an approach that would at best be interdisciplinary in nature. This is the aim of a three years research project, funded by FCTⁱ (PTDC/CS-GEO/104894/2008), in which the phenomenon, its nature, dimensions, determinants and consequences, as well as possible way to plan and manage it sustainably, are studied from the perspectives of marketing, in particular consumer behavior research, sociology and social psychology, economics, anthropology, geography, general management and planning. This is done, based on extensive field work in 3 case study villages in North and Central Portugal: Janeiro de Cima (Fundão), Linhares da Beira (Celorico da Beira) and Favaio (Alijó).

I will here first present some conceptual aspects that help understand the “overall rural tourism experience”, based on a selection of literature that has been reviewed extensively in the context of the project. I will privilege in this communication the perspective of experience or experiential marketing - however trying to incorporate dimensions of the before mentioned disciplines that need to be integrated to produce relevant inputs for a sustainable rural tourism marketing strategy. I will then briefly present the project in further detail and in the third part of the presentation show some first results from two of the villages analysed, where field work is most advanced: Janeiro de Cima and Linhares da Beira. These results are work in progress and refer to the qualitative data collection, focusing here on the interviews directed at tourists visiting the villages. Finally, some experience and destination marketing implications are suggested.

ⁱ This paper was produced in the context of a research project financed by the *Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia* (co-financed by *COMPETE*, *QREN* e *FEDER*), which has recently started: “The overall rural tourism experience and sustainable local community development” (PTDC/CS-GEO/104894/2008).