‘NEW HAVEN’ RURAL TOURIST SPACES

Patricia Rego
RUcaS Real Utopias In Socially Creative Spaces
FCT/IGOT- University of Lisbon
RSA European Conference, Delft 2012
Tourism new niches

Health tourism niches

- Medical tourism
- Wellbeing tourism

Two important dimensions of well-being: leisure and physical wellbeing

The demand for healthy longevity and discipline of the body through exercise, diet or meditation

The consumption of unique experiences that foster personal transformation and development
Tourism new niches

Health tourism niches
- Medical tourism
- Wellbeing tourism

Two important dimensions of wellbeing: leisure and physical wellbeing

The demand for healthy longevity and discipline of the body through exercise, diet or meditation

The consumption of unique experiences that foster personal transformation and development

Touristic experiences can provide an holistic way of life joining physical and psychic existence fields.
Wellbeing tourism in Portugal

The rehabilitation of thermal tourism facilities

The growth of supply in this field in both urban (e.g. large number of spas in hotels) and, especially, in rural areas

Rural wellbeing tourism in Portugal

In rural milieux the wellbeing tourism has been associated with rural tourism – farms and country houses became ‘life style’ tourism units for a weekend or 7 days.

Some crucial concepts:

- Different and memorable experiences
- Ecological values and practices
- The authentic (food, environment, houses, etc.)
- Interpersonal relations
In rural milieux the wellbeing tourism has been associated with rural tourism – farms and country houses became ‘lifestyle’ tourism units for a weekend or 7 days.

Some crucial concepts:

- Different and memorable experiences
- Ecological values and practices
- The authentic (food, environment, houses, etc.)
- Interpersonal relations

Tourists are no more clients but special guests....
The focus

The innovative initiatives of health tourism that have been developed in the rural areas of southern Portugal over the course of the last decade.

How are these initiatives presented to the public?

How do they define their targets? What are the privileged activities and experiences?
Analized tourism units

12 rural tourism units in Alentejo - Internet advertising

Content analysis was based on the following main labels:

- Target
- Regional context
- Places around
- Accomodation (public spaces, rooms and facilities)
- Activities
- Experiences
- Gastronomy and winery/enology
Analized tourism units

12 rural tourism units in Alentejo - Internet advertising

Content analysis was based on the following main labels:
- Target
- Regional context
- Places around
- Accomodation (public spaces, rooms, facilities)
- Activities
- Experiences
- Gastronomy and winery/enology
Target main topics ‘cloud’
Target main topics ‘cloud’
Target main topics ‘cloud’

Interaction between guests and idealized rural places

Intangible place-based experiences

Dreamed and healthy break in protected and exclusive milieus
Activities main topics ‘cloud’
Activities main topics ‘cloud’

Hybrid products relating natural-tech, oriental-occidental cultures, rural-urban
Personal relations
Restricted access
Special and unique service supply
All activities in a rural (idealized) context
Experiences main topics ‘cloud’
Experiences main topics ‘cloud’
Experiences main topics ‘cloud’

Heterogeneous supply (for body and soul...)

Customized supply valuing senses and sensations

Importance of certain moments (morning, sunset and night)
Main findings

- Rural wellbeing tourism in Alentejo brings to light deprived and marginal spaces and places, specially through ICT emerging as creative and dynamics spots.

- New place-based identities are (re)constructed assuming hybrid, open and tolerant features (interaction between ‘guests’ and local people).