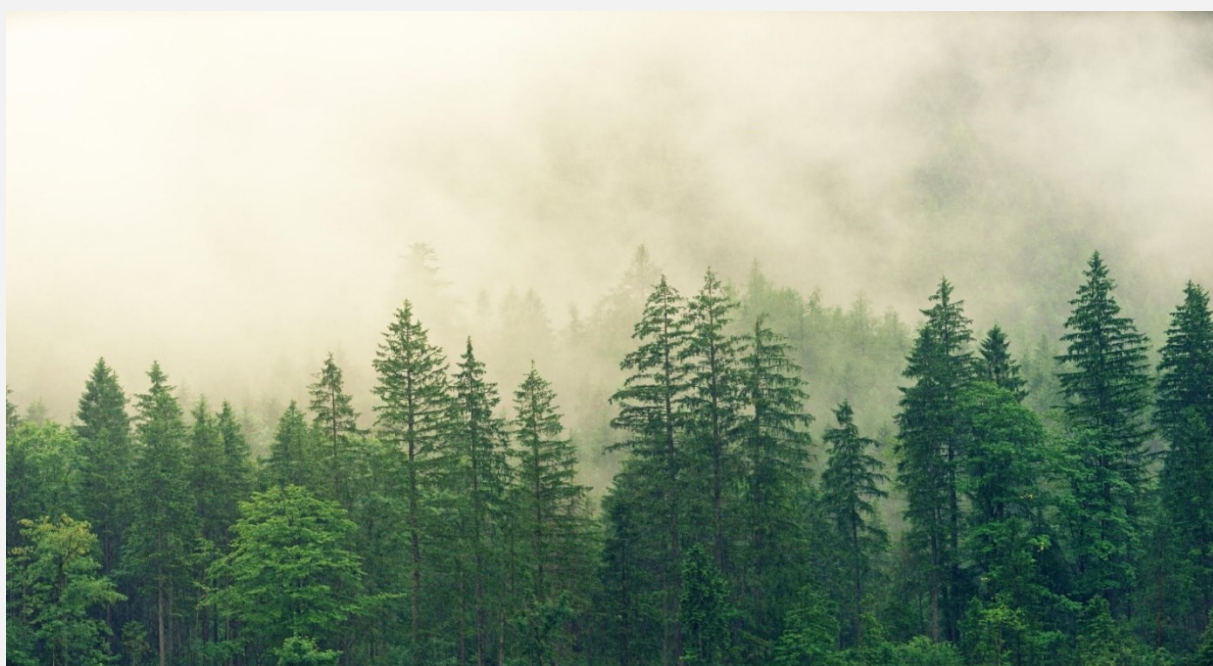


TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
CONFERENCE

18-19 MAY 2023, BULGARIA



AVANGARD PRIMA
2023

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CALDAS NOVAS A REFLECTION ON TOURISM: FROM HOT SPRINGS TO BUILT CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract: *The city of Caldas Novas, in the state of Goiás, Brasil, is well-renowned for its thermal springs and is the chief touristic destination in the state. The exploitation of this natural resource has always been the main source of income for the city, hence the importance of guaranteeing its sustainable use in order to protect the local economy and environment. In addition, the city possesses a significant cultural and historical heritage, which must be valued and promoted through sustainable heritage tourism. This study aims to investigate whether heritage tourism, in view of conserving the city’s cultural heritage, could potentially represent an opportunity to promote both the collective memory of its people and the preservation of cultural and heritage diversity. Our goal is to analyze the cultural heritage of Caldas Novas and its potential to attract tourists interested in authentic cultural experiences, with the purpose of strengthening the identity of the local population. This study employs a qualitative approach by means of bibliographic research, conducting a documental exploratory analysis based on images collected by the authors. The findings demonstrate the importance of preserving elements that constitute part of the historical development and the configuration of the city, and therefore are key elements in promoting the preservation of cultural assets and of the memory of a people, strengthening their cultural identity.*

Keywords: *Tourism, Cultural Heritage, Memory, Caldas Novas.*

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INTRODUCTION

The city of Caldas Novas is well-renowned as the biggest hydrothermal site in the world, consequentially also being the chief turistical pole in the State of Goiás, due to the economic use of a natural resource available within the local undergrounds: the thermal waters (Revista.ueg.br, 2018). This resource has propelled both the creation and development of the city throughout the years and is still considered Caldas Novas' main source of income in present days. In this context, ODS 14 (Sustainable Development Objectives) appears as an important element for preserving the waters in the region by guaranteeing that its uses are employed in a sustainable manner, without prejudice to local environment or economics, since the thermal springs are a source of life and the basis for the economy and for the livelihood of local communities.

Caldas Novas, also known as "The Thermal Springs City" is a sought after destiny for entertainment and rest in its local natural attractions, such as aquatic parks with hydrothermal springs, the State Park of Serra de Caldas (PESCAN), Lake Corumbá, in addition to its country music events which attract thousands of people every year, contributing to the city's notability in the music segment also. In this context, it is possible to state that the city of Caldas Novas survives through attracting people, ever since its creation. Furthermore, it is easily forgotten that the city also possesses an important historical and cultural heritage.

For that reason, tourism connected to conserving the cultural heritage of the city has become a theme of irrefutable relevance for its potentialities and thus was selected as the object of this paper. In this sense, the sustainable development of the city is intertwined with the valuing of its historical and cultural heritage, which is part of the identity of the local community, and with the promotion of a responsible and conscientious approach to tourism, which respects and preserves traditions and the environment.

ODS 11, which approaches sustainable urban development, is likewise essential in order to guarantee the quality of life of the local population, through public policies that promote social and economic integration, the improvement of public services and the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the city. Therefore, it is vital that cultural and heritage tourism in Caldas Novas is valued and balanced with the pre-existing touristic activities.

Considering the importance of cultural heritage as an element of identity and social cohesion, as well as its relevance in the context of sustainable tourism, the research question hereby presented is: can heritage tourism, in view of conserving the cultural heritage, be an opportunity to potentialize tourism? In this sense, the aim of this paper is to analyze cultural

heritage through sustainable heritage tourism, which can be perceived as a commitment engulfing the goals of promoting conservation and assessibility to this historical heritage (Pereira, Lima e Leoti, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The spacial outline of this paper, the city of Caldas Novas, belongs to the State of Goiás, at a distance of 308 km of Brasília/DF, capital of Brasil, and of 169km of Goiânia, capital of the state. It is located at the Center-West region, with a territory of 1.599km² and 95.183 population, according to the demographic census of the Brazilian Insistute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). Caldas Novas is a part of the 21 counties that compose the Geographical Micror-region of Meia Ponte. Its creation occurred in the year of 1777, when the thermal springs were discovered, however the county was formally established only in the 21st of October, 1991 (Ibge.gov.br, 2023).

This paper is the product of qualitative research, with a bibliographic approach – including a conceptual revision of books, scientific papers and eletronic media – and conducts and exploratory analysis of images collected by the researches of some of the most significant points of the built heritage here studied. The choice of buildings was based on what is commonly perceived as touristic heritage attractions within the city. The first building studied, the Parish Church, is centrally located in the city and often visited by tourists who aim to access the historical and religious heritage of the city, since this was the first church ever built in Caldas Novas and also its first historical building. The Gonzaga Estate is another spot well sought after by tourists who wish to better understand the local history, seeing as it is one of the oldest constructions in the city, and currently housing the county's Cultural Secretary which promotes cultural events within the city - The historical buildings studied in this paper are the most well-known in the city, with approximately 1.000 reviews in the specialized website TripAdvisor, which justifies their choice as objects of study (Tripadvisor.com.br, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Throughout the analysis of heritage goods and monuments, it is paramount to keep in mind that these objects are inserted in a spacial outline full of identity, which renders evident the need to comprehend the difference between space and place. Space is herein understood as any area or site, whereas place is a space that possesses a whole dimension of meaning and identity, that is, the existence of space is material, since space can exist without a place, but a

place cannot exist without space. Thus, by attaching an identity to a space it is possible to transform it into a place.

According to Norberg-Schulz (1979), the concept of place can be split in two: physical and palpable and the immaterial, which presents itself in the field of the imaginary of perceptions and consequentially is not visible to the eye. Gonçalves (2012) argues that the identity of a space is transmitted by its characteristics and roles, and is also transmittable by the spirit of a place. Therefore, identity and orientation are interconnected and directly related to cultural heritage and monuments of the memory of a place. Moreover on place, Tuan (2012) presents that the emotional link between person and place is denominated topophilia, which comprises a vivid concept of personal experience, capable of creating intimate relations between the subject and the place of experience.

This cultural identification of place, which is a part of the imaginary and cultural identity of a people, also referred to as "genius loci", derives from a process which cannot be created, but only happen spontaneously, and in truth being interpreted as a metaconcept, meaning in fact the spirit of the place (Vecco, 2019).

In Choay (2011), the concept of cultural heritage manifests the identities and memories of a people and contributes to maintain and safekeep the latter, therefore, the idea of notion that refer to the nation, the group and the community, being "heritage" the materialization of that which must be transmitted to future generations, for it is the expression of the history of a people.

Cultural heritage, still according to Choay (2011) is related to the collection of goods and values that are deemed by a society as worthy of being passed on to the future generations, which can be constituted in a material or immaterial form (monuments, historical buildings, archeological sites, works of art, traditions, habits, languages, music, dance and other elements that comprise the identity of a community). To the aforementioned author, cultural heritage is a reflex of the history and memory of a society and its preservation is fundamental to the cultural continuity and its diversity.

It represents, consequentially, the highlights of the cultural identity of a people, reflecting its way of life and its connections with the collectively constructed past, which can contribute to the formation of the historical memory of the place. Cultural heritage as touristic potential presents itself as an open air museum, capable of transporting the visitor to ancient times and of providing significant experiences (Felicidade e Silva, 2019).

It is noted that the objects which endure and survive throughout history are imbued with some sort of singular value, be it aesthetic, symbolic, cultural or economic, with the latter being the dimension with a biggest influence in the game of movement of capital and income.

Heritage tourism presents itself as viable for being a tourism modality in clear expansion owned to its economic and sustainable potential, with the potential to contribute in the decrease of income inequality, urban regeneration and even the upkeep of the local communities subsistence. It presents, however, a paradigm of egalitarian public policies and actual involvement of the community implicated in the process (Bhowmik, 2021).

It is one of the most crucial and of fastest growth components of tourism, since built heritage presents itself with an enormous potential to attract tourists through learning as a motivation for travelling. Consequentially, experiencing heritage has the potential to transform the tourist through the feelings and emotions experienced during the execution of a specific activity (Pereira, Lima e Leoti, 2022).

As previously presented, Caldas Novas is a benchmark in regarding to hydrothermal tourism, nevertheless its history has been constructed ever since the 19th century, and for that reason it is possible to observe elements that were part of the original formation process of the city and which have resisted the test of time, such as the Parish Church Our Lady of Sorrows, whose construction was made possible through the donation of lands by Domingos José Ribeiro, officiated in 1850.

Figure 1: Mestre Orlando Square and view of the Church Our Lady of Sorrows until 1928.



Source: Blog Pena & Poesia. 2015.

In 1853, the church was completed and baptized as Nossa Senhora dos Desterros (Our Lady of Exile). In 1888, under the vicary’s superstition, it had its name altered to Igreja Nossa Senhora das Dores (Church Our Lady of Sorrows, as shown in Figure 1), which remains standing in the central area of the city (Ferreira, 1958); during renovations conducted in 1928, one of its towers was removed due to the scarcity of resources available to be employed in the restoration. Nowadays, the Parish Church Our Lady of Sorrows is preserved such as can be observed in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Parish Church Our Lady of Sorrows



Source: Author, 2023.

Another relevant point perceived as a common element in the traditional formation of cities are the buildings related to figures of political and economic power who contributed to the formation of the city, such as the case of the Gonzaga Estate (Figure 3), one of the oldest buildings in town that is also located in the central region of Caldas Novas. Its history goes back to the beginning of the 20th century, when the region was still scarcely populated; according to historical sources, the Gonzaga Estate was built in 1911 by a portuguese named João Gonzaga, who established himself in the region with aims to explore the thermal springs.

Figure 3: A Picture of the Gonzaga Estate, 2023.



Source: Author, 2023.

The Estate served as housing for the Gonzaga family and as a meeting place for the inhabitants of the city; in due time the Estate acquired social-historical importance as a place for events, parties and important social gatherings. In the present days, the Gonzaga Estate is considered a historical and cultural heritage of Caldas Novas, being preserved by City Hall. The building still houses several cultural and touristic events, such as art exhibits, music and dance performances, a local handicrafts exhibition including laces, quilts, rugs, boots and liquors, ceramics, paintings and sculptures by local artists (Portalcaldas.com.br, s.d.).

Against such background it is possible to observe that, due to the natural riches abundant in the region, above all the benefits of its thermal waters, leisure tourism has predominated and is the chief axis in the city's economy; however, it seems to us that to approach tourism without including culture is to leave a conceptual and social vacuum, denying its potentialities, for tourism, culture and heritage are connected to the existence of a population that occupies a territory, with its customs and habits contributing to the value of the place.

In the paper “Culture is Ordinary”, Williams (1958) exposes his chief idea: culture belongs to everyone, that is, it is not restrictive, besides being a primordial element in the comprehension and understanding of who we are.

Cultural identity presents itself, therefore, as one of the main aspects of influence on cultural heritage – oftentimes intangible – being the symbol and the source of identity of the

touristic destination, attracting the interest of tourists, and motivating experiences in their travels (Zhang et al., 2020).

Following these considerations, tourism has the power to be a social culture exchange program between the host and the guest. Cultural heritage, in this context, represents a process of the historical construction of a place, and can be used as a guide to comprehend social phenomena of the urban setting itself, including the process of patrimonializing the cities (Pérez, 2009).

Through preserving historical elements, patrimonial or immaterial goods, one can guide oneself and find awareness of one’s place in the world; heritage tourism can collaborate in the preserving of such elements, considering its potentialities to generate income and economic value to the aforementioned elements.

SUMMARY POINTS

In this paper, we presented heritage tourism as a viable mean to the valuing of local history and as dotated of capabilities to promote from the cultural identification of a people of a territory to its potential as a touristic attraction. In this sense, preserving the cultural heritage is fundamental to the continuity of cultural diversity in a society.

We have likewise presented the specific case of the city of Caldas Novas which, despite being worldwide renowned as a thermal water region, still presents dormant potential for other touristic activities yet scarcely explored within the region. This paper has brought as objects of study the Parish Church and the Gonzaga Estate, two touristic attractions of the built heritage character that have persisted and withstood time, becoming local points of interest and visitation.

Additionally, we have demonstrated the importance of preserving elements that have been a part of the historical formation process and of the city’s configuration, which surpass economic matters, for the preservation of the cultural and memory goods of a people strengthens their own relation to the place, their identification and their cultural identity.

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