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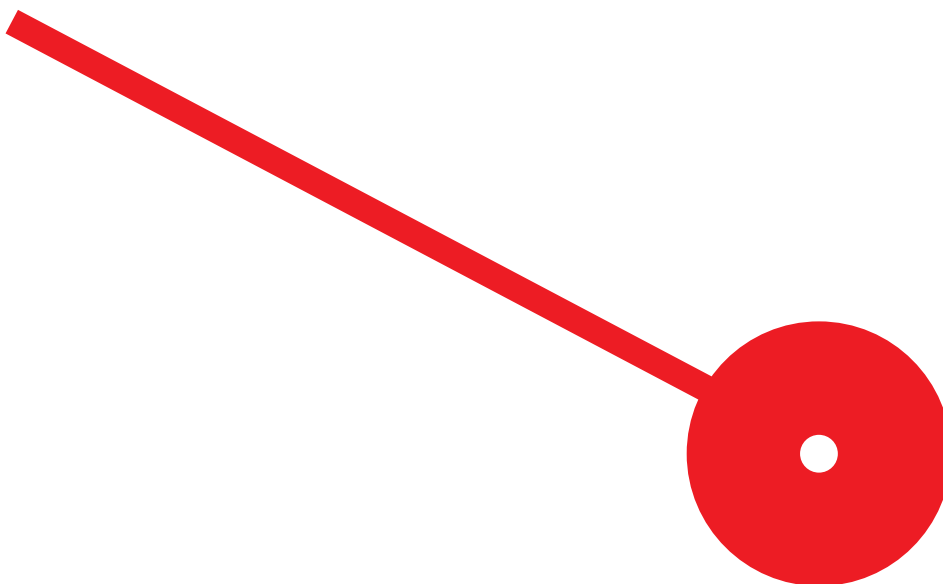
MASTER
Intercultural Studies for Business

Challenges and Opportunities in Regional Development: Case Studies of Douro and Alentejo

Daniela Damas Moreira

10/2024

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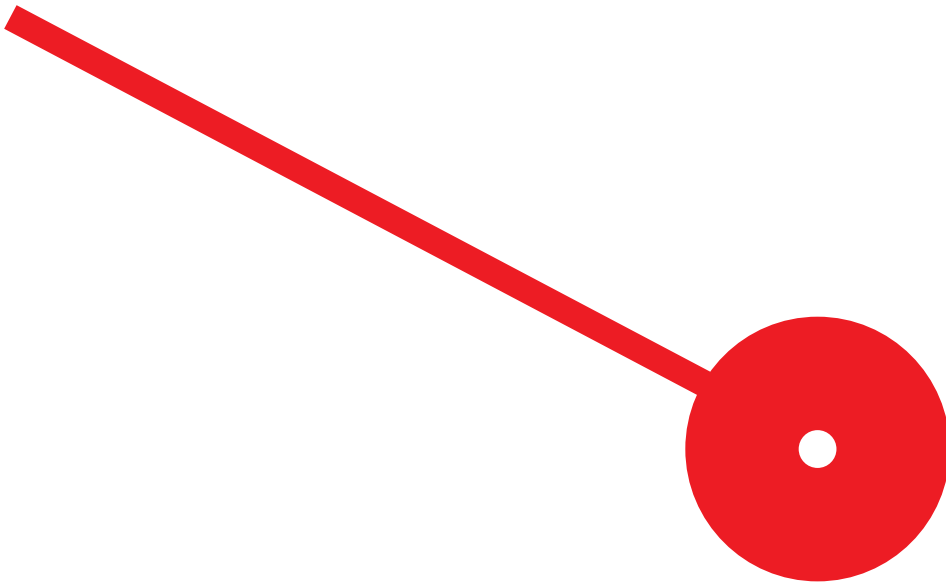
MASTER
Intercultural Studies for Business

Challenges and Opportunities in Regional Development: Case Studies of Douro and Alentejo

Daniela Damas Moreira

**Dissertation presented to Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e
Administração do Porto / Porto Accounting and Business School to
obtain the Master's Degree in Intercultural Studies for Business,
under the supervision of Professor Manuel Fernando Moreira da
Silva.**

Daniela Damas Moreira. Challenges and
Opportunities in Regional Development: Case
Studies of Douro and Alentejo
10/2024



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Resumo

Nos últimos anos, verificou-se um progresso económico significativo no Vale do Douro, impulsionado por políticas que melhoraram a infraestrutura, promoveram o turismo e inovaram as práticas agrícolas, especialmente na viticultura. Estes desenvolvimentos transformaram o Douro num modelo de crescimento regional, equilibrando o avanço económico com a sustentabilidade cultural e ambiental.

Dado que as regiões do Douro e do Alentejo partilham características como o potencial agrícola, o património cultural e o turismo de luxo, além da necessidade de revitalização económica, esta dissertação examina se as estratégias de desenvolvimento aplicadas na região do Douro podem ser aplicadas e adaptadas com sucesso ao Alentejo para promover o seu crescimento socioeconómico através do valor cultural. Como base desta investigação, o valor cultural é explorado, não só como um motor essencial da identidade regional, mas também como um catalisador para o desenvolvimento económico sustentável. A pesquisa foca-se na relação entre o mercado de luxo e o valor cultural, enfatizando a sua importância percebida, como parte de um programa de mestrado em estudos interculturais para negócios.

A investigação utilizou uma abordagem de métodos mistos, combinando dados quantitativos com perceções qualitativas, através de um desenho de estudo transversal, suportado por um inquérito digital auto-administrado. Esta metodologia integrou análise estatística com *insights* contextuais, proporcionando uma compreensão abrangente do tema da pesquisa.

Os resultados destacam a necessidade de estratégias específicas ao contexto, adaptadas aos desafios únicos do Alentejo, com o valor cultural a emergir como central para o desenvolvimento de ambas as regiões, e assim poderá potencialmente replicar o sucesso do Douro, aumentando a sua vitalidade económica e qualidade de vida.

Esta tese contribui para um discurso mais amplo sobre o desenvolvimento regional através do valor cultural, oferecendo recomendações práticas para os responsáveis políticos e as partes interessadas.

Palavras chave: Desenvolvimento Económico Sustentável; Douro; Alentejo; Valor Cultural.

Abstract

In recent years, significant economic progress has been observed in the Douro Valley, driven by policies that improved infrastructure, promoted tourism, and innovated agricultural practices, particularly in viticulture. These developments have transformed the Douro into a model for regional growth, balancing economic advancement with cultural and environmental sustainability.

Given that the Douro and Alentejo regions share characteristics such as agricultural potential, cultural heritage, luxury tourism, and the need for economic revitalization, this dissertation examines whether the development strategies applied in the Douro region can be successfully applied and adapted to the Alentejo to promote its socioeconomic growth through cultural value. As the foundation of this research, cultural value is explored not only as a key driver of regional identity but also as a catalyst for sustainable economic development. The research focuses on the relationship between the luxury market and cultural value, emphasizing its perceived significance, as part of a master's program in intercultural studies for business.

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights, using a cross-sectional study design supported by a self-administered digital survey. This methodology integrated statistical analysis with contextual insights, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

The results highlight the need for context-specific strategies, tailored to the unique challenges of the Alentejo, with cultural value emerging as central to the development of both regions. Thus, the Alentejo may potentially replicate the Douro's success, enhancing its economic vitality and quality of life.

This thesis contributes to a broader discourse on regional development through cultural value, offering practical recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders.

Key words: Sustainable Economic Development; Douro; Alentejo; Cultural Value.

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List of Abbreviations

ADWR - Alto Douro Wine Region

Covid - Corona Virus Disease

DDR - Douro Demarcated Region

DSP - Douro Strategic Plan

EAFRD - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GVA - Gross Value Added

Ha - Hectare

ISDR - Index of Synthetic Regional Development

Km - Kilometres

NUT - Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes

NSRF - National Strategic Reference Framework

PDO - Protected Designation of Origin Certification

RDP - Rural Development Program

SEO - Search Engine Optimisation

TMAD - Trás-Os-Montes E Alto Douro

UK - United Kingdom

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization

Introduction

Within the context of socioeconomic development of territories, specific measures ought to be adopted that take into account the physical, climatic and cultural specificities of the region. The Douro region of Portugal which is well known for its wine, particularly Port wine, has had tremendous growth in the socioeconomic aspect. This growth is explained with the implementation of well-balanced policies and strategies that have improved not only the economic performance of the region but also the environmental as well as social performance of the region.

Given the success in the Douro, this study seeks to find out if such strategies are viable in Alentejo, another Portuguese region with similar features in order to enhance its socio economic growth.

The key aim of this research that was done in study area of Douro region is to evaluate the development strategies which were utilized and their transferability to the Alentejo region, which has similar geographical and economic characteristics. This paper will address how the policies employed in the Douro may provide the groundwork for development in the Alentejo.

This study aims to explore the interconnection between the luxury market and cultural value in the Douro and Alentejo regions, and how this impacts regional development, to understand how these interactions can be used to promote economic and social development in both regions.

This research is directly related to intercultural studies as it explores how regional cultural values in the Douro and Alentejo regions influence business strategies, particularly in the luxury market. By examining how local traditions, heritage, and cultural identity shape consumer behavior and regional development, the study highlights the importance of understanding intercultural dynamics in the context of business growth.

This intercultural perspective allows for a deeper understanding of how cultural differences impact economic strategies, and provides valuable insights for businesses seeking to operate in diverse cultural contexts. The application of intercultural competence is crucial for adapting business practices to different cultural environments, ensuring that strategies are both effective and culturally relevant.

Moreover, the research will describe the Alentejo region and justify its choice for comparison, which will be important for this research due to entire geographical, climatic and socio-economic characteristics.

The practical significance of this work is in the possibility of exporting successful experiences of regional development from one region to another. The region remains one of the most important regions of Portugal with the production of wine which significantly impacts the economy as well as the international reputation of the country. Studying the progress of this area may provide useful lessons to areas of similar status and prospects for development, especially to Alentejo.

Learning from tried and tested development strategies applied in the Douro, other Portuguese regions, especially the ones with similar geography and climate as in Alentejo, could foster growth. This study also enhances the knowledge around the sustainable practices applied in the Douro that are transformative and can be adopted in designed regions for development while also preserving the environment.

In terms of awareness, this dissertation is expected to fill in the gap existing on regional development by providing a substantial case study, and consultation focused on regional development.

Due to the risks of development concentrating in large metropolitan areas like Lisbon and Porto in Portugal, there are many reasons why it's essential to foster the development of more rural regions like Alentejo. The Douro and the Alentejo both have important economic and tourism potential thanks to the employment of rich nature and culture.

Understanding how the Douro has capitalized on its resources can help the Alentejo do the same. Additionally, this research will provide practical insights for policymakers and regional planners, offering evidence-based recommendations for the formulation of more effective public policies and regional planning strategies. These strategies can ensure a more balanced and inclusive regional development that benefits rural areas and reduces regional disparities.

In the context of regional development in the Douro and Alentejo regions, understanding the concept of cultural value through an intercultural lens is essential. This

perspective highlights the dynamic and relational aspects of culture, emphasizing that cultural values are shaped by interactions among diverse cultural groups.

The interplay between cultural identity and economic development reveals how regional initiatives, such as wine tourism, can enhance local cultural identity while promoting sustainable practices.

Furthermore, integrating local cultural values into development strategies fosters community participation, which is crucial for garnering support for regional initiatives. By prioritizing intangible cultural heritage and promoting sustainable tourism that respects local traditions, stakeholders can create a cohesive regional identity that not only enhances economic growth but also preserves cultural diversity.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of policies supporting local networks for entrepreneurship and innovation hinges on a deep understanding of the cultural contexts in which they operate, underscoring the importance of intercultural competence among policymakers and stakeholders.

The aim of this dissertation is to determine whether the development strategies used in the Douro region can be effectively applied to the Alentejo, which shares similar traits, to foster its socioeconomic growth through its cultural value.

Given that this is a broad and complex topic, the research focuses on understanding the connection between the luxury market and cultural value through its perceived value, considering that the dissertation was raised within the context of a master's program in intercultural studies for business.

To address this, a thorough literature review was carried out on both regions, offering a detailed understanding of their contexts, commonalities, differences, and the main policies and strategies that have been implemented so far.

Additionally, a survey was conducted to further explore opportunities tied to cultural value, as perceived by both the local population and tourists. This survey was open to participants of all ages, genders, and nationalities, ensuring a diverse range of viewpoints.

In examining the relations between the luxury market and cultural value in Douro and Alentejo, a number of guiding questions have been highlighted to help in the study. Some of these include: “How is cultural value defined and perceived in the Douro and Alentejo regions?”; “In what ways has the cultural value of the Douro been integrated into regional development strategies?”; “Which aspects of the cultural heritage of Alentejo can be strengthened to support the development of a luxury market?”; “How does the appreciation of cultural heritage in the Douro contribute to attracting luxury tourists?”; “What specific cultural practices from the Douro could be adapted to promote cultural value in the Alentejo?”; “How can local community involvement in preserving cultural value influence regional development in both regions?”; “What is the impact of the luxury market on the preservation and promotion of cultural value in the Douro?”. These questions aim to deepen our understanding of how cultural value and regional development are linked, providing a strong basis for the analysis in this dissertation.

Additionally, this research seeks to offer practical recommendations specifically for Alentejo, drawing from a detailed comparative analysis. Local and regional authorities could use these insights to shape policies and strategies for sustainable development. Learning from the successful practices and experiences in Douro might help Alentejo develop targeted projects, encouraging investment and collaboration between the public and private sectors. Ultimately, this could lead to job creation, higher incomes, and a better quality of life for the communities in Alentejo.

This dissertation is organized into six chapters that address different aspects of regional development and the impact of cultural value, with a focus on the Douro and Alentejo regions. Each chapter provides a detailed analysis, from the theoretical foundation to the results and discussions on development strategies.

The first chapter explores cultural value as a driver of regional development, highlighting the impact of the luxury market. The focus is on how cultural value influences regional identity and, consequently, sustainable economic growth. The second chapter conducts a comparative study of the Douro and Alentejo regions, analyzing their similarities and differences in the context of regional development, and the policies and strategies applied in each. The third chapter addresses cultural identity and its influence on the development of the luxury market, comparing the realities of the Douro and Alentejo regions. The fourth chapter outlines the research design and methodological

approach, justifying the choice of the methodology used in the study. The fifth chapter presents the results obtained through data analysis, providing a comprehensive overview of the key findings of the research. Lastly, the sixth chapter focuses on the discussion of the results, incorporating the analysis of the data collected from the survey. This chapter examines whether the findings support or challenge the conclusions drawn in the literature review and provides a critical reflection on the results in relation to the theoretical framework, highlighting key insights and offering practical implications for regional development strategies.

1 Cultural Value as a Driver of Regional Development: Exploring the Influence of the Luxury Market

The luxury market has long been perceived as a significant driver of economic growth and cultural affirmation within various regions across the globe. This relationship is not merely transactional; rather, it is deeply rooted in the cultural, historical, and social fabrics of the regions in which luxury goods are produced and consumed. The luxury market's influence extends beyond mere economic metrics, as it plays a pivotal role in shaping cultural identities, preserving heritage, and fostering innovation.

This chapter aims to explore the intricate relationship between the luxury market and the cultural value of a region, examining how these elements coalesce to facilitate regional development and affirmation.

1.1 Defining the Luxury Market

The luxury market is a complex and dynamic sector characterized by high-quality, exclusive products and services that cater to affluent consumers. It encompasses a wide range of industries, including fashion, automobiles, jewelry, and hospitality, among others.

The defining features of luxury goods typically include superior quality, premium pricing, rarity, and a strong brand heritage, which together create a sense of prestige and exclusivity for consumers (Jin & Ryu, 2019; Amatulli et al., 2017; Heine & Phan, 2011). The luxury market is not merely about the products themselves but also about the experiences and emotional connections that these products evoke in consumers, which can significantly influence their purchasing decisions (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2019; Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015).

One of the critical aspects of the luxury market is the evolving definition of luxury itself. Contemporary consumers increasingly associate luxury with meaningfulness and well-being, moving beyond traditional notions of opulence and excess (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2019).

This shift has led to the emergence of "new luxury," where consumers seek products that not only signify status but also align with their personal values and lifestyles. This trend is particularly relevant in the context of sustainability and ethical consumption, as consumers become more conscious of the environmental and social implications of their purchases (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2019; Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015).

Moreover, the luxury market is heavily influenced by social dynamics and cultural factors. For instance, in many societies, luxury consumption is often tied to social status and identity. Consumers may purchase luxury goods to signal wealth, taste, and sophistication, thereby reinforcing their social standing (Gao, 2023; Pino et al., 2019).

This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in emerging markets, where luxury goods serve as symbols of success and aspiration (Pino et al., 2019; Shukla, 2012). The motivations behind luxury consumption can be categorized into internalized motivations, such as self-expression and personal enjoyment, and externalized motivations, such as social recognition and status display (Pino et al., 2019; Shukla, 2012).

The role of digital platforms and social media in shaping the luxury market cannot be overlooked. Luxury brands increasingly leverage social media to engage with consumers, create brand narratives, and enhance brand visibility (Ramadan et al., 2018; Athwal et al., 2019). The rise of influencers and "Instagram fashionistas" has transformed the way luxury brands communicate with their audiences, making it essential for marketers to adopt innovative strategies that resonate with contemporary consumers (Jin & Ryu, 2019; Athwal et al., 2019).

This digital engagement not only helps brands maintain relevance but also fosters a sense of community among luxury consumers, who often share their experiences and aspirations online (Ramadan et al., 2018; Athwal et al., 2019).

1.2 Cultural Identity and Economic Sustainability

Cultural identity is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the shared beliefs, practices, values, and traditions that define a group of people. It serves as a crucial element in shaping individual and collective identities, influencing how communities perceive themselves and their place in the world. In the context of the Douro and Alentejo regions of Portugal, cultural identity is particularly significant due to the rich historical, social, and economic narratives that these areas embody.

The preservation and promotion of cultural identity in these regions not only foster a sense of belonging among local populations but also play a pivotal role in tourism development and economic sustainability.

The Douro region, known for its stunning landscapes and terraced vineyards, has a cultural identity deeply intertwined with its winemaking traditions, particularly the production of Port wine. This identity is not merely a reflection of agricultural practices but is also a manifestation of historical narratives and social structures that have evolved over centuries. The region's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001 underscores the global recognition of its cultural significance and the need to preserve its unique landscape and heritage (Fonseca & Rebelo, 2010).

The interplay between cultural heritage and tourism is evident, as the region attracts visitors seeking authentic experiences that connect them to its storied past. This relationship between cultural identity and tourism is essential for economic development, as it creates opportunities for local businesses while ensuring the preservation of traditional practices (Lourenço & Rebelo, 2006).

In the Alentejo region, cultural identity is similarly rooted in its agricultural practices, particularly olive oil and wine production. The intangible cultural heritage of the Alentejo, which includes traditional music, festivals, and culinary practices, contributes to a strong sense of community and continuity among its inhabitants (Morozova & Morozov, 2018). The preservation of these cultural elements is vital for maintaining the region's identity, especially in the face of globalization and modernization that threaten to dilute local traditions.

The Alentejo's cultural identity is not only a source of pride for its residents but also a key factor in attracting tourists who are interested in experiencing the authentic lifestyle of the region ("Research on the Development Model of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Industry", 2023).

Both regions demonstrate the importance of intangible cultural heritage as a means of cultural identification. This heritage, which encompasses practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage, is passed down through generations and continuously recreated (Morozova & Morozov, 2018).

In the Douro and Alentejo, this includes traditional crafts, music, and agricultural practices that are integral to the local identity. The preservation of these practices is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and continuity among community members,

which in turn strengthens the social fabric of these regions (Pina, 2015). Moreover, the relationship between cultural identity and economic development cannot be overstated.

The integration of cultural heritage into tourism strategies has been shown to enhance the economic viability of regions like the Douro and Alentejo. By promoting cultural tourism, these areas can leverage their unique identities to attract visitors, thereby generating revenue and creating jobs (Dias-Sardinha & Ross, 2014).

However, this must be balanced with the need to protect and preserve cultural heritage, as the commercialization of culture can lead to inauthentic representations that undermine the very identity that attracts tourists in the first place (Diarta, 2017).

The challenges faced by the Douro and Alentejo in maintaining their cultural identities amidst economic pressures highlight the need for strategic planning and community involvement in tourism development.

Engaging local populations in the decision-making process ensures that tourism initiatives align with the community's values and cultural heritage ("The Realistic Dilemma and Innovative Path of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Development in the Information Age", 2023). This participatory approach not only empowers residents but also fosters a deeper connection between visitors and the local culture, enhancing the overall experience for tourists while preserving the authenticity of the region's cultural identity (Wang, 2017).

1.3 Luxury as a Catalyst for Economic Development

One of the defining characteristics of the luxury market is its emphasis on craftsmanship and heritage. Many luxury brands pride themselves on their artisanal techniques, which are often passed down through generations (Dallabona, 2014). This focus on craftsmanship not only enhances the perceived value of luxury goods but also reinforces the cultural significance of the regions in which they are produced (Dallabona, 2014).

For instance, Italian luxury fashion brands often draw upon the country's rich artistic traditions, integrating local materials and techniques into their designs. This

connection between craftsmanship and cultural heritage serves to affirm regional identities and promote cultural pride (Dallabona, 2014).

The luxury market can serve as a catalyst for economic development within a region. By attracting affluent consumers and tourists, luxury brands contribute to job creation, infrastructure development, and increased tax revenues (Zhang et al., 2023).

Moreover, the presence of luxury brands can enhance a region's global reputation, positioning it as a desirable destination for investment and tourism (Barrera & Ponce, 2020). This economic impact is particularly evident in regions known for their luxury goods, such as Milan, Paris, and New York, where the luxury market has become a cornerstone of the local economy (Barrera & Ponce, 2020).

1.4 Regional Identity and Luxury Consumption: Challenges and Opportunities

The consumption of luxury goods is often intertwined with regional identity, as consumers seek to express their cultural affiliations through their purchasing decisions. In regions with strong cultural identities, luxury consumption can serve as a means of affirming local values and traditions (Husić-Mehmedović & Agić, 2015). This phenomenon is particularly evident in regions known for their artisanal products, where consumers are drawn to luxury goods that reflect their cultural heritage. The interplay between regional identity and luxury consumption highlights the importance of cultural value in shaping consumer behavior.

While the luxury market presents numerous opportunities for regional development, it also poses challenges that must be addressed. Issues such as counterfeiting, market saturation, and changing consumer preferences can undermine the integrity of the luxury market and its cultural value. Additionally, the pressure to maintain exclusivity while appealing to a broader audience can create tensions within luxury brands. Regions must navigate these challenges carefully to ensure that the luxury market continues to serve as a vehicle for cultural affirmation and economic growth.

As the luxury market continues to evolve, its relationship with cultural value will remain a critical area of exploration. According to Kelleci (2022), the rise of conscious consumerism, technological advancements, and shifting cultural dynamics will shape the

future of luxury consumption and its impact on regional development. Regions that successfully leverage their cultural assets while embracing innovation and sustainability will be well-positioned to thrive in the luxury market.

This forward-looking perspective underscores the importance of adaptability and resilience in navigating the complexities of the luxury landscape (Kelleci, 2022).

1.5 Cultural Tourism: The Intersection of Luxury and Heritage

Luxury branding plays a crucial role in shaping cultural identity, as brands often draw upon local traditions and narratives to create a unique brand story. This branding process not only enhances the perceived value of luxury products but also reinforces the cultural significance of the region (Seo, Buchanan-Oliver, & Cruz, 2015).

For example, luxury brands that incorporate local symbols, materials, and craftsmanship into their designs can evoke a sense of pride and belonging among consumers. This connection between branding and cultural identity underscores the importance of authenticity in the luxury market (Seo, Buchanan-Oliver, & Cruz, 2015).

On the other hand, cultural tourism represents a significant intersection of luxury and heritage, where affluent travelers seek experiences that showcase cultural richness while providing a sense of exclusivity and prestige.

This sector of tourism is increasingly recognized for its potential economic benefits and its role in preserving cultural identities. The luxury tourism market, characterized by high-quality services and unique experiences, often draws upon local heritage to create compelling narratives that resonate with consumers seeking authenticity and sophistication (Iloranta, 2021).

The economic impact of cultural tourism is profound, particularly for regions rich in heritage. Cultural tourism can lead to substantial financial benefits for local economies, particularly through increased visitation to museums, historical sites, and cultural festivals (Wang, 2017). This economic influx can be crucial for maintaining and restoring heritage sites, thereby ensuring their preservation for future generations.

Moreover, luxury tourism often emphasizes personalized experiences that allow travelers to engage deeply with local cultures, which can enhance their appreciation of heritage while also contributing to the local economy (Iloranta, 2021).

In the context of luxury tourism, the concept of co-creation becomes particularly relevant. Luxury travelers are increasingly looking for personalized experiences that allow them to engage with local culture in meaningful ways. This shift has led to the development of co-creation strategies in heritage tourism, where tourists collaborate with local communities to create unique experiences that reflect the cultural identity of the area (Ross, 2020).

Such approaches not only enhance the tourist experience but also empower local communities by involving them in the tourism process, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the role of digital platforms in promoting cultural tourism cannot be understated. Social media has become a vital tool for heritage accommodations and luxury brands to market their unique offerings. By leveraging platforms like Facebook and Instagram, these entities can showcase their cultural assets and engage with potential tourists in innovative ways (Yoo & Lee, 2015).

This digital engagement not only helps in attracting luxury travelers but also in building a community around shared cultural experiences, which can enhance the overall appeal of heritage tourism. The luxury market is also evolving in response to changing consumer values, particularly regarding sustainability and ethical consumption. Modern luxury travelers are increasingly concerned about the environmental and social impacts of their travel choices.

This has led to a growing demand for sustainable luxury tourism options that prioritize cultural preservation and community engagement (Iloranta, 2021). By aligning luxury offerings with these values, tourism providers can attract a demographic that is not only affluent but also socially conscious, thereby enhancing the marketability of their cultural tourism experiences.

1.6 Cultural Value Through an Intercultural Lens: Implications for Regional Development in Douro and Alentejo

The concept of cultural value, when viewed through an intercultural lens, can significantly differ from traditional interpretations by emphasizing the dynamic and relational aspects of culture.

In regions like Douro and Alentejo, where diverse cultural identities coexist, understanding these differences is crucial for fostering effective regional development strategies. This analysis explores how intercultural perspectives on cultural value can influence approaches to regional development in these culturally rich areas.

Intercultural theory posits that cultural values are not static but are shaped by interactions among diverse cultural groups. This perspective aligns with the findings of Pina and Martins (2022), who discuss the revitalization of health and wellness tourism in the Douro region as a means of reclaiming cultural practices while adapting to contemporary demands.

This suggests that cultural value in the Douro and Alentejo is influenced by both historical legacies and current intercultural exchanges, which can lead to innovative approaches to tourism and regional development.

The interplay between cultural identity and economic development is critical in understanding regional dynamics. As noted by Graça et al. (2023), wine tourism in the Douro Valley can enhance local cultural identity while promoting sustainable practices. This dual focus on cultural preservation and economic growth exemplifies how intercultural engagement can reshape perceptions of cultural value, leading to more inclusive and sustainable development strategies.

The LEADER initiative emphasizes the importance of local participation in rural development. This approach aligns with intercultural theory, which advocates for recognizing and integrating local cultural values into development processes. By prioritizing community involvement and valuing local knowledge, stakeholders can create development strategies that resonate with residents' cultural identities, ultimately fostering greater support for regional initiatives.

The significance of intangible cultural heritage in sustainable development is highlighted by Pina (2015). In the context of Douro and Alentejo, preserving cultural

heritage can enhance regional identity while promoting sustainable practices. This perspective aligns with intercultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity in fostering resilience and adaptability in regional development. By integrating cultural heritage into development strategies, stakeholders can create a more cohesive and sustainable regional identity.

The effectiveness of public policies in supporting local networks for entrepreneurship and innovation is contingent upon understanding the cultural contexts in which they operate. Neto et al. (2014) emphasizes the need for policies that reflect local values and perspectives. This aligns with intercultural theory, which advocates for the development of intercultural competence among policymakers and stakeholders. By fostering intercultural awareness, policymakers can create more effective and culturally sensitive strategies that promote regional collaboration and development.

To effectively harness the potential of cultural value in regional development, stakeholders in Douro and Alentejo should integrate local cultural values into their strategies. This could involve promoting local traditions, artisanal practices, and sustainable production methods, as highlighted by Graça et al. (2023). By aligning development initiatives with local cultural identities, stakeholders can enhance community support and participation.

Encouraging intercultural dialogue among diverse cultural groups in the Douro and Alentejo can facilitate mutual understanding and collaboration. This approach can be supported through community events, workshops, and cultural exchanges that promote intercultural awareness and appreciation. By fostering dialogue, stakeholders can create a more inclusive environment that values diverse cultural perspectives.

Policies that support local entrepreneurship should prioritize cultural values and community engagement. As noted by Masot and Alonso (2017), the LEADER initiative emphasizes local participation in rural development. By empowering local entrepreneurs to incorporate cultural values into their businesses, stakeholders can create a more vibrant and sustainable regional economy.

Sustainable tourism initiatives that highlight the cultural heritage of the Douro and Alentejo can enhance regional identity while promoting economic growth. This aligns with the findings of Pina and Martins (2022), who emphasize the importance of revitalizing cultural practices in tourism. By promoting sustainable tourism that respects

local cultural values, stakeholders can create a more harmonious relationship between residents and visitors.

Additionally, establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the cultural impact of development initiatives is essential for ensuring their effectiveness. By assessing how well these initiatives align with local cultural values, stakeholders can make informed adjustments to enhance their relevance and impact on regional development.

1.7 Integrating Intercultural Competence and Economic Insights for Sustainable Growth in Regional Contexts

The integration of theories from intercultural studies and cultural economics into the analysis of regional cultures, particularly in the context of the Douro region and Alentejo, provides a nuanced understanding of how these cultures interact within national and international frameworks. The Douro Valley, renowned for its wine production, and Alentejo, known for its agricultural richness, both embody unique cultural identities that are shaped by historical, economic, and social factors.

Intercultural competence is increasingly recognized as a vital skill in navigating diverse cultural landscapes, particularly in regions like Douro and Alentejo, where tourism and international trade play significant roles. Schelfhout et al. (2022) emphasize that intercultural competence predicts effectiveness in intercultural interactions, highlighting the importance of understanding and adapting to different cultural contexts.

This adaptability is crucial in the Douro and Alentejo, where local customs and practices can significantly influence business interactions, particularly in the wine and agricultural sectors.

Furthermore, the work of Leung et al. (2014) underscores that intercultural competencies can be classified into traits, attitudes, and capabilities, which are essential for fostering successful intercultural exchanges. These competencies not only enhance interpersonal relationships but also contribute to economic growth by facilitating smoother transactions and collaborations across cultural boundaries.

The economic implications of intercultural interactions in these regions are profound. The Douro Valley, with its UNESCO World Heritage status, attracts

international tourists, necessitating a workforce that is culturally competent and capable of engaging with diverse visitors. According to Wang (2013), the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural settings is paramount for success in international business. This is particularly relevant for the wine industry, where understanding the preferences and expectations of foreign consumers can lead to better marketing strategies and product offerings.

Similarly, in Alentejo, where agriculture is a key economic driver, intercultural competence can enhance collaboration with international partners, thereby improving the region's competitiveness in global markets. Moreover, the concept of cultural economics provides a framework for understanding how cultural factors influence economic outcomes in these regions. Cultural economics posits that cultural goods and practices can significantly impact economic development and social cohesion. As noted by Acheson and Schneider-Bean (2019), the development of intercultural competence is not merely an individual endeavor but a collective one that can enhance the overall economic landscape.

In the context of Douro and Alentejo, this means that fostering intercultural understanding can lead to more robust economic networks, increased tourism, and greater investment in local industries. The interaction between regional cultures and national policies also plays a critical role in shaping the economic landscape. The work of Hajisoteriou et al. (2015) highlights the importance of intercultural education in promoting equality and mutual respect, which are essential for fostering inclusive economic policies.

In regions like Douro and Alentejo, where cultural diversity is evident, the implementation of policies that recognize and celebrate this diversity can lead to more equitable economic opportunities. This is particularly relevant in the context of European Union policies that aim to promote cultural heritage and support local economies through initiatives that encourage intercultural dialogue and collaboration.

Furthermore, the resilience of intercultural nationalism illustrates how cultural identities can persist and thrive even in the face of economic challenges (Conversi & Jeram, 2017). This resilience is evident in the Douro and Alentejo, where local communities continue to uphold their cultural traditions while engaging with global markets. The interplay of local cultural practices with broader economic trends can lead

to innovative approaches to sustainability and development, as seen in the growing interest in organic and sustainable wine production in the Douro Valley.

In addition to economic factors, the psychological dimensions of intercultural interactions cannot be overlooked. The research by Nesdale et al. (2011) reveals that open-mindedness is a critical predictor of intercultural effectiveness, suggesting that individuals who embrace diverse perspectives are more likely to succeed in intercultural settings.

This psychological readiness to engage with different cultures is essential in the Douro and Alentejo, where local populations must navigate interactions with tourists, expatriates, and international business partners. By fostering an environment that encourages open-mindedness and cultural empathy, these regions can enhance their appeal as destinations for both tourism and investment.

The role of education in promoting intercultural competence is also significant. As highlighted by Barrett, schools can play a pivotal role in cultivating the intercultural skills of young people, preparing them for future interactions in an increasingly globalized world (Barrett, 2018).

In the Douro and Alentejo, educational initiatives that emphasize intercultural understanding can empower the next generation to engage with diverse cultures effectively, thereby contributing to the regions' economic and social vitality.

Moreover, the impact of social media on intercultural communication cannot be understated as social media platforms facilitate intercultural exchanges, allowing individuals to connect and share experiences across cultural boundaries. In the context of Douro and Alentejo, social media can serve as a powerful tool for promoting local cultures, attracting tourists, and fostering international collaborations. By leveraging these platforms, local businesses can enhance their visibility and engage with a broader audience, ultimately contributing to economic growth.

In conclusion, the integration of intercultural studies and cultural economics provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of regional cultures in the Douro and Alentejo. By recognizing the importance of intercultural competence, economic interactions, and educational initiatives, stakeholders can develop strategies that promote cultural understanding and economic development. As these regions

continue to navigate the complexities of globalization, fostering intercultural dialogue and collaboration will be essential for ensuring their cultural and economic sustainability.

2 Douro and Alentejo: A Comparative Study of Regional Development

The following literature compares the Douro and Alentejo regions, which reveals that, despite their differences, there are significant opportunities to apply the successful strategies of the Douro to the Alentejo. Key elements such as promoting sustainable viticulture, implementing integrated public policies, and fostering collaboration among diverse local stakeholders are essential for advancing the economic and social development of both regions. This body of research provides a comprehensive framework to guide future research and development practices, stressing the importance of a holistic approach that considers the unique characteristics of each region.

Additionally, the literature emphasizes the crucial role of education and training in promoting sustainable development. The training of qualified professionals and the encouragement of sustainable entrepreneurial practices are vital for strengthening local economies. According to Rodrigues (2023), who highlights this point in his research on artisanal entrepreneurship, states that collaboration between educational institutions and local authorities can lead to innovative strategies that benefit both the Douro and Alentejo regions.

2.1 The Douro Region

2.1.1 Territory and the Douro Wine Region

Territory is defined by a set of elements, initiatives, and relationships that shape the interaction between society and nature. There are various types of territories, including viticultural ones, where vineyards and wine are central to territorial organization (Manfio, Medeiros, & Cristóvão, 2020).

In the Douro Wine Region, known as the Douro Demarcated Region (DDR) in northern Portugal, viticulture is deeply embedded in the history, landscape, culture, and economy. To sustain the local development of this territory, collective actions are undertaken to enhance local value, strengthen tourism—particularly related to wine—innovate in viticulture, and create new commercial opportunities for local products (Manfio et al., 2020).

The territory is formed through the dynamics of a social group that engages in various relations and actions, articulating its power and identity through spatial reproduction. Since territory is social, collective actions are evident upon it. These actions are crucial as the organization of local actors in initiating projects ensures territorial consolidation and development (Manfio et al., 2020).

However, understanding the Douro involves more than just its geography and the demographic characteristics of its people. This "garden of schist and vines" (Bianchi de Aguiar, 2001, p. 180) requires an attentive examination of its historical and social journey that has shaped it into the internationally recognized agricultural region it is today.

The Douro Demarcated Region, spanning about 240,000 hectares, aims to become a prominent tourist destination (Manfio et al., 2020). The DDR is a segment of the Douro, being the oldest regulated and delineated viticultural territory in the world (Aguiar & Rodríguez, 2001), encompassing 13 of its 19 municipalities: Alijó, Armamar, Carrazeda de Ansiães, Lamego, Mesão Frio, Peso da Régua, Sabrosa, Santa Marta de Penaguião, São João da Pesqueira, Tabuaço, Torre de Moncorvo, Vila Nova de Foz Côa, and some parishes of Vila Real. Its boundaries were established in the 18th century (1758-1761) when the Marquis of Pombal, on the orders of the Portuguese king, had markers erected throughout the region.

Currently, it is expanded and divided into three geographical zones: Lower Corgo, Upper Corgo (formerly Pinhão), and Alto Douro (Pocinho, Foz Côa, and Freixo de Espada à Cinta at the Spanish border).

The Alto Douro Wine Region (ADWR) was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2001, in the category of living evolving cultural landscape. However, the historical process of establishing the Douro as a renowned viticultural area dates back thousands of years (Sousa, 2007; Pereira, 2014).

More recently, in the late 17th century, the increased production in the estates scattered throughout the ADWR and the subsequent rise in wine exports led to intensive landscape transformation (Pereira, 2014). This labor-intensive work required substantial manpower for the construction of terraced fields and vine planting, predominantly with Galician and Beirã varieties (Agarez, 2016; Pereira, 2016).

This production surge was bolstered by the Methuen Treaty, signed in 1703 between England and Portugal, which granted Port wine preferential customs rates for export to England (Manfio et al., 2020). The export of wine facilitated unprecedented development in the region (Sousa, 2007), internationalizing Douro wines with the support of Pombaline policies, including the establishment of the Douro Demarcated Region in 1756. This was one of the earliest regulated and delineated wine regions globally (Sousa, 2003), and the Companhia Geral da Agricultura das Vinhas do Alto Douro, whose main goal was to ensure the quality and reputation of exported wines (Sousa, 2003).

These policies led to increased production, more estates, and a concentration of producers (Pereira, 2014). The Pombaline demarcation was significantly reformed and expanded in 1921 (Agarez, 2016). These ongoing reforms have ensured a growing production; in 2016, Douro wines exceeded 140,000 liters, more than 255,000 barrels, with 56.7% sold as Port wine and 40% of this being exported, particularly to France and the UK.

Nowadays, viticulture is a major tourist attraction in the Douro (Ribeiro, 1998), offering scenic, environmental, historical, and cultural resources. It features a tourist landscape highlighting agricultural characteristics and its relationship with nature (Rebelo et al., 2001). This human-modified landscape, shaped by terraces, access networks, and

biodiversity dependent on viticultural productivity (Ramos & Fonseca, 2014), has become synonymous with naturalness. Its authenticity lies in its transformation (Sousa, 2007) rather than its previous natural state. The sculpted landscape is a symbol of human resilience (Farinha-Marques & Fernandes, 2014, p. 94) and reflects the character of its people.

Agriculture plays a central role in shaping the Douro landscape, forming a key part of the region's identity and background for tourism activities (Manfio et al., 2020).

However, the ADWR is only a part of the Douro region (NUT III), a portion that is perceived as the whole in tourism narratives and imaginaries of the territory. The ADWR's landscape is a prime example of a Cultural Landscape (Pinto-Correia et al., 2001), intersecting natural factors and human action (Ramos & Fonseca, 2014).

In local and global discourses, the ADWR is associated with various keywords: authenticity, identity, universal uniqueness, excellence, historical significance, rarity, spirituality, socioeconomic sustainability, regulatory sustainability, organizational and management viability, and biodiversity (Manfio et al., 2020).

This semantic association helps to understand how the ADWR is often confused with the entire Douro region and vice versa, even though the latter encompasses much more than just a wine-producing area and includes other world cultural heritages (Bernardo, 2018). This reflects the idea under the UNESCO category for the Douro, which is an evolving and living landscape marked by exceptional cultural tradition, relevant technological and architectural prominence, representing the transformative power of culture over territory (UNESCO, 2016).

This distinction enhances the imagery of the ADWR linked to ideas such as authenticity, identity, historical heritage, rarity, socioeconomic and regulatory sustainability, among others (Sousa, 2007). This semantic association aids in understanding how the ADWR is often confused with the Douro and vice versa. The convergence of the Alto Douro Wine Region and the Douro Demarcated Region is a premise justified by its entanglement in common perceptions of the ADWR, where the part is often mistaken for the whole.

To avoid this confusion, Turismo de Portugal, specifically Turismo Porto e Norte de Portugal, defined the Douro destination as the area encompassed by NUT III – Douro in its 2015 Tourism Marketing Strategy. Ultimately, different delimitations address various criteria, which does not clarify that the ADWR is more than just the DDR, encompassing additional aspects such as agricultural productions like apples, chestnuts, and almonds (CIM Douro, 2014), and a vast built heritage including cultural landmarks like the Mateus Palace, the castles of Lamego or Penedono, the Lamego Cathedral, the churches of Torre de Moncorvo or Vila Nova de Foz Côa, the Portuguese Camino de Santiago, the Côa Valley engravings, among many others.

Other notable aspects include protected parks and areas such as Alvão, Douro International, and the Tua Valley, as well as traditional gastronomy and cultural and religious events dispersed throughout the territory. Today, tourism is becoming increasingly significant in the region, both economically and in terms of diversifying productive activities (Manfio et al., 2020).

Different institutions perceive tourism differently. For example, CIM Douro promotes its three World Heritage sites (Alto Douro Wine Region, Prehistoric Rock Art Sites, and Côa River Valley, Bisalhães Black Pottery) and reasons to visit the Douro that align with key elements of the region's tourism offer (Manfio et al., 2020), such as:

- UNESCO classified cultural heritages;
- Vineyards, wines, and grape harvests;
- Gastronomy and sensory experiences;
- Safety and well-being (relaxation, physical and mental recovery);
- Scenic and nature tourism (parks, nature reserves, viewpoints,...);
- Light, villages, and estates;
- Historical train and river cruises (tourist transport as an experience);
- Monuments, routes, monasteries, and historical tourism (Portugal's history);
- Intangible heritage (traditions, legends, ...);
- Sports and active life (e.g., hiking, trails, mountain biking,...).

On the other hand, according to its National Tourism Strategic Plan (Turismo de Portugal, 2007), views the Douro as a cultural touring destination (including river cruises), with gastronomy and wines, and nature tourism. These two perspectives highlight a potential issue in tourism governance (Manfio et al., 2020).

The Douro is a challenging territory for communication and has a history of relative distance (Pina, 1997; Pina, 2003; Silva, 2017), a region nestled between mountains (Pereira, 2016, p. 53), with relatively isolated estates (De Oliveira, 2012). However, it also signifies natural characteristics, cultural attractions, and human wealth that exhibit significant untapped tourist potential (Manfio et al., 2020).

2.1.2 The Douro Region: Rural Viticulture

The Douro is a region located in northern Portugal. The region is situated over a hundred kilometers from the Atlantic Ocean, at an elevation of approximately 1,400 meters. It is a mountainous area characterized by the Douro River and wine production, particularly Port wine. This region has a historical tradition tied to viticulture (Manfio et al., 2020).

Since the inception of Portugal, there have been records of vineyards along the Douro Valley, with the expansion of viticulture in the region driven by the common interests of landowners, peasants, and religious actions.

However, viticulture has experienced periods of growth and dynamism as well as decline and stagnation (Manfio et al., 2020). During one of the wine crises, Marques de Pombal, then Prime Minister of Portugal, established the Douro Demarcated Region and the General Company of Agriculture of the Alto Douro Vineyards to organize viticulture and regulate techniques, products, and services. This led to the creation of a wine territory in the Douro with specific regulations concerning environmental aspects (primarily soil, climate, and relief), types of grapevines, grape characteristics, and human aspects (Manfio et al., 2020). This territory is globally recognized for its unique spatial forms.

However, it is evident that the Douro region does not share the same social, economic, rural, and environmental characteristics throughout its entirety. As such, the region is subdivided to address these different aspects.

The Douro region is sub-regionalized into three spaces due to climate, soil, and socioeconomic conditions: Lower Corgo, Upper Corgo, and Alto Douro. These three sub-regions each have a history, economy, and culture associated with viticulture. Ribeiro (1998) highlights that vineyards and wine are significant in the region's life and socioeconomic framework, still being the primary source of employment and income. Generally, the Douro's geographical space is profoundly rural with villages experiencing high levels of aging and local agriculture in significant regression (Zan et al., 2017).

The region's almost exclusive economic dependence on wine leads to periods of socioeconomic fragility, which, combined with emigration and poor viticulture organization, results in a decline in Douro's development. In this region, municipalities are predominantly rural, with an extremely weak industrial and business fabric, particularly in terms of structure, size, and dynamics. Non-agricultural employment alternatives are very scarce, limited to (small) commerce, public administration, and civil construction, and are concentrated in the larger urban centers of the region (Ribeiro, 1998).

Although agriculture is the dominant activity, it fails to provide satisfactory livelihoods for those who work in it and make it their way of life (Ribeiro, 1998). Overall, the Douro is a region characterized by small holdings, averaging 1.17 ha per owner.

In terms of land occupation, small-scale production predominates in essentially family-owned properties. Besides small vineyards, there are also larger properties. Additionally, there are three types of properties in the Douro: traditional small family properties—without mechanization and without hired labor; intermediate properties, small but mechanized and with labor costs; and properties larger than approximately 30 ha, which are mechanized, require hired labor (both temporary and permanent, including foreign workers), and produce Port wine and certified Douro wines.

It is also important to note that in the Douro, there are various profiles of wine producers and market actors: small owners, medium owners, Cooperative Wineries

(which buy grapes from small and medium producers and thus produce and market the wine), associations, large viticultural estates known as *quintas*, and international companies that produce and export wine, such as Symington Family Estates Vinhos S.A and Gran Cruz, among others. This results in a diverse and complex array of actors, relationships, and situations in the Douro, affecting the region's development (Manfio et al., 2020).

These actors contribute to regional economic development; however, a significant weakness lies in territorial and social asymmetries, particularly in the Alto Douro, where aging populations are found.

In response to these challenges, various associations have emerged to create conditions for development at the heart of the Douro, focusing on the enhancement of regional resources. An important element in this context is the landscape, which is predominantly characterized by the Douro River and its tributaries, villages, estates, houses, rural infrastructure, vineyards with different configurations, especially terraced ones, alongside other agricultural crops, forests, and uncultivated areas (Manfio et al., 2020).

The Douro landscape is composed of a mosaic of elements: small houses, gardens, orchards, walls, vineyards, rivers and slopes, estates, villages, and old buildings. Additionally, other crops are gaining ground, such as olive and almond trees. Part of the Douro, known as the Alto Douro Wine Region, has been classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, recognized as a "cultural, evolving, and living landscape."

As Sousa et al. (2003) note, the Alto Douro Wine Region, like the entire region, is a constructed landscape where viticulture prevails in areas of steep slopes, where ancient viticulturists built terraces to plant vineyards, which is why this area was designated as a World Heritage site in 2001.

This recognition has led to the creation of new services, local restructuring, and rural development with support from various policies and funds (Manfio et al., 2020). At the same time, the population and public authorities have been pressured to preserve, enhance, and promote the unique characteristics of the territory.

Tourism has been a factor in development. As Schneider et al. (2019) state, pluri-activity and tourism represent a shift in rural work forms, serving as strategies for the reproduction of rural properties. Therefore, with tourism activities that enhance the local area, adding new tools for work and income and modernizing rural spaces, rural development can be promoted (Manfio et al., 2020). Rural territories need public policies to maintain their activities and stimulate the emergence of new economic forces. In this regard, collective actions are mechanisms for gathering public and private resources to invest in local development strategies.

2.1.3 Tourism and Hospitality in the Douro Region

Portugal is a country with significant physical, territorial, and landscape diversity due to its geographic location and geomorphological nature (Arroteia, 1994). Despite its relatively small size compared to neighbors such as Spain, France, and the United Kingdom, Portugal's 830 km of coastline and 1215 km border with Spain are marked by both continuities and differences that define each of its regional territories.

These regions can be characterized as "not only distinct but also opposite" (Ribeiro, 1967; 1991). Compared to central or southern mainland Portugal, the Northern Region of Portugal features a different relief and a more complex orography, with more pronounced altimetric variations, particularly in Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (TMAD) (Portela, 1989). In TMAD, the climate is marked by significant thermal disparities, constant rainfall, snowfall in winter, and high temperatures and dry, suffocating climate in summer (Oliveira & Galhano, 1994; Lavrador, 2011; Taborda 2011). The region, with its coast facing the Atlantic Ocean, is isolated, at high altitude, and features a "harsh and violent climate with stark contrasts" between mountains and valleys (Cortês, 1995, p. 91).

Geography, climate, and the sense of isolation are reflected in the oral tradition, as seen in sayings like "nine months of winter and three of hell" or "beyond Marão, those who are there send". Baron Forrester, a Briton who lived between 1809 and 1861 and was the son of a Port wine merchant, had a house in Ramada Alta and built a luxury *rabelo* boat to better perform his duties as a cartographer of the Douro (Pereiro, et al., 2020). He described in detail the territorial organization and mobility in the Douro in the 19th

century, noting: "...the roads leading to the Douro are almost impassable, to the point that mail takes 8 days from Porto to Barca D'Alva, covering 120 miles." (Forrester, 1848, cited in Rivas Calvo & D'Abreu, 2008, p. 78, authors' translation).

Historically, the Douro faced accessibility and isolation issues, developing an endogenous economy, particularly before the 18th century (Pina, 1997). Only the most western part had better transport conditions, and the Douro River played a crucial role in the transportation and flow of goods, merchandise, and people (Pereiro, et al., 2020). However, with the opening of the Marão Tunnel on May 7, 2016, the old geographic constraints and poor internal and external accessibility began to be questioned.

Between the *Terra Fria*, characterized by plateaus at about 800 meters high with a harsh climate and oak and chestnut vegetation (Cortesão, 1995), and the *Terra Quente*, shaped by the valleys feeding the Douro River and its vegetation resistant to the scorching summer heat, TMAD presents a significant landscape contrast (Vasconcelos, 1980; Ribeiro, 1991).

This contrast is also reflected in the literature, where the territory is often described as harsh and violent (Cortesão, 1995), in contrast to anthropological views that see it as collectivist (Oliveira & Galhano, 1994). This contrast seems to overlook the tensions and inequalities present in the territory (Pais de Brito, 1996; Parkhurst, 1996, 1997).

Cultural expressions and geographical and infrastructural characteristics reinforce a collective imagination that tends to homogenize, concealing diversities and continuous changes resulting from historical and social processes (Pereiro, et al., 2020). Among these changes, significant developments include the construction of highways since the early 1990s, and more recently, the opening of the Marão Tunnel in 2016. These transformations, along with economic, cultural, and social changes over the centuries, have shaped the current human map of the Douro (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

2.1.4 Socioeconomic Characterization of the Douro

The depopulation of Portugal has been an ongoing process since 1960 (Silva, 2009, p. 35). Since then, rural development policies have increasingly focused on tourism

rather than agriculture. Public investments have been directed towards projects aimed at halting depopulation and functionally and symbolically transforming Portuguese rural areas (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

The Douro region is a prime example of these efforts in rural reconversion and multifunctional diversification. The territory referred to as “Douro” is complex and difficult to define. For the purposes of this project, it corresponds to NUT III Douro (Pina, 1997; Bernardo & Pereiro, 2018). This subregion covers approximately 19% of the Northern Region's area, totaling 4,112 km² (GEPE, 2011), consisting of 19 municipalities and spread across four districts: Vila Real, Viseu, Bragança, and Guarda.

Demographically, the Douro is a subregion that has been continuously depopulating since 1960, with a significant loss of resident population over the past decades (Pereiro, et al., 2020). It currently has closer to 200,000 inhabitants in 2023, accounting for about 6% of the Northern Region's population. In 2018, the population density was 47.5 inhabitants per km², which is significantly lower compared to the national average (111.5 inhabitants per km²) and the NUT II Northern Region (167.9 inhabitants per km²). Approximately 44% of the Douro's population resides in the urban axis of Vila Real – Peso da Régua – Lamego. The Douro region faces ongoing socio-economic challenges, reflected in recent data.

In the Douro region, wages remain lower than the national average (Pereiro, et al., 2020). For example, in agriculture, animal production, and related sectors (which are significant in the Douro), the average salary was €976. The aging index, which was already high at 212.0 in 2016, has worsened, reaching 225.9 by 2018, indicating an increasingly elderly population.

The birth rate remains low, consistent with national trends of demographic decline, though exact figures for 2024 are not yet available. The illiteracy rate, recorded at 8.64% in 2014, has persisted at similar levels in 2018, marking it higher than both regional and national averages. Economically, the Douro continues to lag, with a GDP per capita of approximately €10,370 in 2018, far below national averages, reflecting the region's economic stagnation. These indicators highlight the Douro's enduring socio-economic difficulties, especially in terms of aging population, literacy, and income levels (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

The main economic activities in the Douro include hydroelectric power, viticulture, fruit cultivation (apple, chestnut, cherry, almond), olive cultivation (olive oil), and tourism, with the latter being an emerging sector (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

The identity of the Douro, similar to other wine regions such as Bordeaux in France, Tokaj in Hungary, Pico in the Azores, and La Rioja in Spain, is strongly associated with wine and landscape (Aguiar & Rodríguez, 2001).

However, the Douro's distinctiveness lies in the fact that the Douro River, nestled between mountains and valleys, gives the region a unique identity. It is described as the "structuring element of the region" by Ana Lavrador (2011, p. 170). The Douro is not like the Minho, which has maize fields; its habitat is more concentrated than the dispersed Minho and most of Galicia. The villages in the Douro are also more compact and less scattered compared to those in the Minho and the coast (Portela, 1989).

Like the rest of the country, the Northern Region is in a context of macroeconomic recovery following the financial adjustment program conducted between 2011 and 2014. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the region's economic development. Statistical data from 2015 indicate that the region's economy is predominantly based on the tertiary sector (INE, 2017a). From 1995 to 2011, the Douro (NUT III) held the position of the second lowest GDP per capita in the Northern Region, only above the Tâmega region.

More data reveal that the Douro is the third subregion with the worst record for the same indicator (INE, 2017a), a situation attributed not to economic development but to the division of the Tâmega territory into two subregions, Alto Tâmega and Tâmega e Sousa.

Between 1986 and 1998, the Douro region was characterized by a high concentration of employment in the construction sector and a less diversified productive structure (Cabral & Sousa, 2001, p. 4-5; CIM Douro, 2014). In 2014, the employment landscape included 42,114 men and 32,394 women employed (total: 74,508 employed) and 15,858 unemployed. Currently, the situation has changed significantly, with the service sector now playing the most significant role in the region's Gross Value Added (GVA). Despite representing only 7.2% of the Douro's total GVA, the primary sector employs the majority of the population, specifically 46.5%, compared to 41.9% in the tertiary sector and 11.6% in the secondary sector (INE, 2017a).

In 2015, the GDP per capita in the Douro was 10,370 euros, significantly below the national average and lower than the 12,900 euros in the Northern Region, highlighting regional disparities in the country, with a particular emphasis on the importance of remittances from emigrants (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

Additionally, the Douro is losing labor in agriculture and increasingly shifting towards the tertiary sector (Pereiro, et al., 2020). The subregion also has one of the lowest purchasing power indices in the country, at 76.1 in 2017, and over 13% of deposits in the region come from emigrants, compared to 3.1% nationwide (INE, 2017d). It is also important to note the Index of Synthetic Regional Development (ISDR), which showed positive development in 2015 compared to 2001 (Gomes & Dinis, 2016).

In terms of competitiveness, the Douro is the second-worst performing subregion in the North, surpassing only Alto Tâmega, and ranks in the 1st quintile (competitiveness index below 87.3). Regarding cohesion, the Douro performs better, ranking above three Northern subregions in the 2nd quintile [91.9; 96.4], although still below the national average (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

Lastly, in terms of environmental quality, the Douro stands out as the second-best performing subregion in the North, exceeding the national average. It is important to note that the environmental component shows the most positive results globally (Pereiro, et al., 2020). Thus, considering the individual assessments of the three components, the Douro presents a modest overall result, ranking as the third-lowest subregion nationally in terms of the synthetic regional development index (INE, 2017b). Administratively, the Douro is a subregion within the NUTS II Northern Portugal, characterized by a great diversity of natural and cultural resources.

Geographically, the Douro region covers approximately 19% of the Northern Region's area, equating to around 4,100 km². It includes 19 municipalities and spans the previously mentioned four districts. Demographically, this subregion has been experiencing a continuous process of depopulation since the mid-20th century, a trend that contrasts with the period between 1864 and 1950.

The region has seen an average annual population decline of nearly 2,000 individuals, totaling a loss of over 127,000 inhabitants. This demographic decline is attributed to migration towards urban coastal areas and emigration abroad, a response to

the gradual economic devaluation of agriculture, alongside a significant aging population and a low birth rate (INE, 2017c), and an elderly dependency ratio (INE, 2017c). Conversely, there has been a positive development regarding the illiteracy rate, which stands at 8.7% (PORDATA, 2017).

2.1.5 Main policies and strategies that have contributed to the economic, social, and environmental development of the Douro region and their impact

2.1.5.1 The Douro Strategic Plan

The Douro Strategic Plan (DSP) serves as a critical framework for guiding sustainable development in the Douro region, with the goal of fostering economic, social, and cultural growth while preserving the area's unique values and characteristics.

One of the plan's primary focuses is on the preservation of historical, cultural, and landscape heritage, particularly the vineyard landscapes classified as a UNESCO World Heritage site. This preservation is complemented by the promotion of sustainable tourism practices, which includes enhancing tourism infrastructure and high-quality services, such as wine tourism and the establishment of tourist routes (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the DSP advocates for the rehabilitation of both urban and rural areas, aiming to improve living conditions and make the region more attractive to residents and visitors alike.

In addition to the DSP, the European Union has significantly contributed to the development of the Douro region through various regional programs. The NORTE 2020 operational program targets the Northern region of Portugal, promoting economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection by investing in innovation, research, and urban development (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

This program funds technological projects in local businesses, the development of new products and processes, and improvements in tourism infrastructure, including the rehabilitation of historic urban centers and the creation of new tourist attractions. Its

impact can be seen in numerous projects aimed at revitalizing urban and rural areas and supporting agricultural innovation (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

The predecessor of NORTE 2020, the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), similarly focused on regional development and business competitiveness, funding infrastructure improvements and research in viticulture and tourism.

Moreover, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) plays a pivotal role in supporting the agricultural sector, financing modernization efforts, environmental protection initiatives, and rural development projects. Specifically, in the Douro region, the EAFRD funds vineyard modernization and agricultural tourism projects, thus contributing to the area's growth and sustainability through concrete examples such as sustainable practices implementation and vineyard upgrades (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

2.1.5.2 Sustainable Development and Heritage Preservation

Efforts to preserve and promote the cultural and natural heritage of the Douro are integral to its sustainable development. The Douro Demarcated Region's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site underscores its historical and cultural significance and raises awareness about the importance of safeguarding its distinctive landscape and heritage for future generations. Renowned for its stunning landscapes, historic vineyards, and rich cultural heritage, the Douro region relies on sustainable development and tourism to balance economic growth with environmental conservation (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

Effective management of water resources is vital in the Douro, where viticulture is a key industry. Sustainable water management projects are essential for producing high-quality wines while safeguarding aquatic ecosystems and ensuring water quality.

Protecting local biodiversity through sustainable agricultural practices and conservation programs is equally crucial. Initiatives are in place to preserve native flora and fauna by managing natural areas and protected zones, mitigating the negative impacts of human activities (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

The adoption of sustainable practices in viticulture—such as reducing pesticide use, promoting organic farming techniques, and implementing integrated pest

management strategies—is vital for maintaining the industry's viability. Projects like the Douro Sustainable Winegrowing initiative aim to advance these practices, with vineyards and producers increasingly obtaining sustainability certifications, including Sustainable Winegrowing and Organic Certification, to confirm their environmentally friendly agricultural methods.

Furthermore, energy efficiency policies and initiatives in agricultural operations and tourism infrastructure contribute to reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, with examples such as the installation of solar panels in wineries and efficient heating systems designed to lower carbon footprints.

Incentives for renewable energy sources further promote sustainable development by encouraging the use of solar energy and biomass in both agricultural operations and the tourism sector (Pereiro, et al., 2020). Sustainable rural development encompasses the rehabilitation and revitalization of rural areas to enhance residents' quality of life and attract visitors, focusing on restoring villages and creating sustainable infrastructure to support tourism and rural living (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

2.1.5.3 Tourism Development and Infrastructure Investments

Wine tourism is a fundamental aspect of the Douro region's tourism sector. The area boasts various wine routes that feature visits to wineries, wine tastings, and educational experiences related to wine production (Pereiro, et al., 2020). Notable initiatives include the Douro Wine Region and the Douro Wine Trails, which offer immersive activities such as riverboat tours, vineyard estate stays, and wine-related cultural events.

The Douro Demarcated Region's recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its terraced vineyards and river landscape further enhances its appeal, helping to attract tourists and raise awareness about the importance of preserving the region's heritage (Pereiro, et al., 2020). The Douro hosts various festivals and cultural events, such as the Porto Wine Fair and the Douro Jazz Festival, which celebrate local culture and draw visitors.

Investment in tourism infrastructure increasingly focuses on sustainability, with the development of eco-friendly hotels, inns, and other accommodations. Many

establishments seek sustainable tourism certifications and implement green practices (Pereiro, et al., 2020). Additionally, investments in transportation and mobility aim to promote eco-friendly transport options and improve accessibility for individuals with reduced mobility, ensuring a positive and sustainable tourism experience.

Significant investments have been made to enhance the quality of the roads connecting cities and towns within the Douro region. Key projects involve widening, paving, and maintaining these roads to ensure safe and efficient transportation for both goods and passengers (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

A notable example is National Road 222, often referred to as the "most beautiful road in the world," recognized for its breathtaking views along the Douro River. Investments here focus on enhancing safety and traveler comfort. The railway system also plays a crucial role, particularly for transporting wines and tourists. Modernization efforts for the Douro Line prioritize upgrading infrastructure and equipment to improve efficiency and passenger experience.

Furthermore, developing and modernizing river ports along the Douro is essential for both goods transportation and tourism. Investments in port infrastructure and navigation improvements contribute to the growth of river tourism and enhance logistical efficiency, as seen in upgrades to the Porto de Peso da Régua and other river ports, increasing capacity and operational efficiency (Pereiro, et al., 2020).

2.1.5.4 Urban and Rural Rehabilitation Initiatives

Urban rehabilitation projects in the Douro region aim to revitalize historical centers and deteriorated urban areas by restoring historic buildings, enhancing public infrastructure, and creating high-quality public spaces. For example, Peso da Régua has benefited from projects focused on the renovation of squares, streets, and historical buildings.

In contrast, rural rehabilitation initiatives concentrate on renewing villages and hamlets. This includes restoring traditional buildings, improving local infrastructure, and developing services that support tourism and rural living. The "Aldeias de Portugal" project exemplifies this effort, promoting cultural preservation and local economic development through the revitalization of traditional villages in the Douro.

The growth of tourism has driven investments in new hotels, inns, and accommodation services that emphasize sustainable practices and aim to provide unique tourism experiences. For instance, the Six Senses Douro Valley, a luxury resort, integrates sustainability with an immersive experience in the region's natural surroundings.

Investments in cultural and recreational facilities, such as interpretation centers and museums, also play a vital role in showcasing the region's heritage and history. Institutions like the Port Wine Museum and the Douro Interpretation Center offer educational and cultural experiences that enhance visitor understanding.

Additionally, improving tourist signage and accessibility for individuals with reduced mobility is essential for creating a welcoming environment for both tourists and residents.

2.2 The Alentejo Region

2.2.1 Territory and the Alentejo Wine Region

Alentejo, located in south-central Portugal, is the largest region in Portugal, covering a total area of 26,158 km², which accounts for about 29% of the country's total area (Repetur, 2021). Its name literally means "beyond the Tejo River". The region is divided into two main areas: Alto Alentejo (12,420 km²), which includes the districts of Portalegre and Évora, and Baixo Alentejo (13,738 km²), which encompasses the district of Beja and the municipalities of Alcácer do Sal, Grândola, Santiago do Cacém, and Sines, part of the Setúbal district (Repetur, 2021).

Alentejo is bordered to the north by the Tejo River, separating it from Beira Baixa; to the east by Spain; to the south by Algarve; and to the west by the Atlantic Ocean. The climate is Mediterranean temperate, characterized by hot, dry summers and mild, rainy winters. The reduction in maritime influence in the interior areas of the region results in a pronounced temperature range between day and night, and also between seasons, with very warm summers and relatively cold winters (Repetur, 2021).

Agriculture and livestock are the main activities in the region, although there are also industries and services, albeit at a less developed stage. Traditional extensive

agriculture is oriented towards the production of cereals, olive oil, wine, and meat. The main crops include wheat, rye, sunflower, and tomatoes (Repetur, 2021).

The climatic and soil conditions are also favorable for cork production, which is prominent in the Alentejo landscape, accounting for 72% of Portugal's total cork production. Évora, the capital city of Alentejo, is located just 132 km from Lisbon, situated between the Portuguese capital and the Estremadura region in Spain. With approximately 50,000 inhabitants, Évora is the main urban center of the Alentejo region and is the only Portuguese city to be a member of the Network of the Oldest Cities in Europe, having been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986 (Repetur, 2021).

The city offers a range of accommodations, from luxury hotels to traditional guesthouses and hostels, and the restaurant sector, driven by tourism, is also significant. Wine tourism is a strategic product for regional development in Portugal, showing strong growth in recent years (Repetur, 2021).

However, it is only in the past decade that investors, tourism professionals, and other regional players have started to recognize the link between tourism and wine as a key factor in regional development and economic sustainability.

Tourism in Alentejo is closely related to rural and cultural activities, as well as ecotourism (Repetur, 2021). Although Alentejo has the lowest hotel capacity among Portuguese regions, it ranks second in terms of Rural Tourism with 145 establishments, similar to the North region.

With a long history of winemaking that dates back to Roman times, and evidence suggesting that Alentejo's wine may have been the first Portuguese wine exported to Rome (Repetur, 2021), the region has more than 21,000 hectares of vineyards and is one of the largest wine producers in Portugal by volume, only behind Douro and Porto.

These records highlight Alentejo's identity: rural, with tourism focused on landscape, natural resources, and tranquility, yet still a sought-after destination due to its wine popularity and proximity to major cities like Lisbon. The region needs differentiation and strategic repositioning based on its endogenous and distinctive resources (Repetur, 2021).

Therefore, for a region like Alentejo, which has various cultural and natural value elements, cooperative networks and clusters among local actors emerge as a crucial sustainable and economic strategy at both regional and local levels.

Alentejo Wine Route Since 1993, supported by the European Union's Dyonisios program, wine routes have been the most prominent feature of wine tourism in Portugal. According to the first nationwide survey on Wine Tourism in 2014, the Portuguese Tourist Board found that 91% of wine tourism establishments in the country are located in designated wine areas, and 88% are part of a wine route.

Wine routes in Portugal serve as tools to promote wine tourism, facilitating strong interactions between the countryside and rural world, and contributing to the preservation of landscapes, architectural heritage, and gastronomy. This tool has been essential in revitalizing wine regions, crucial for their development and in addressing common rural issues such as desertification, depopulation, and economic decline (Repetur, 2021).

Currently, there are 12 active wine routes throughout Portugal. The first was the Port Wine Route, established in 1996. The Alentejo Wine Route, which is the focus of this study, was created a year later, in 1997, with its headquarters in Évora. The route includes 263 wine producers and 97 retailers (Lavandoski et al., 2016). In 2008, the route had 3 itineraries: São Mamede Route, Historic Route, and Guadiana Route, but these circuits are no longer featured on the Alentejo Wine Route website, though they continue to be promoted in other tourism publications and websites.

2.2.2 The Alentejo Region: Rural Viticulture

The Alentejo wine region stands out as one of the most prominent in Portugal, with a long tradition of winemaking that dates back centuries. Located in the south of Portugal, this region is renowned for its high-quality wines, which have gained international recognition.

The Alentejo is particularly famous for its robust red wines, made from indigenous varieties such as Aragonez, Trincadeira, and Alicante Bouschet, as well as international varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah (Lavandoski et al., 2016). The region's

diverse microclimates and soils allow for a wide range of wine styles, from the most full-bodied to the lighter and fruitier ones (Lopes, Costa, Egipto, Zarrouk, & Chaves, 2018).

Viticulture in the Alentejo not only contributes to the production of high-quality wines but also plays a crucial role in the local economy and rural development. This activity generates significant employment and income, both directly in the vineyards and in related sectors such as tourism, gastronomy, and commerce (Lavandoski et al., 2016).

Wine tourism, in particular, has shown growing potential for the region, attracting visitors interested in authentic experiences at wineries and cellars (Lopes et al., 2018). The Alentejo Wine Route, established in 1997, is an example of how the region promotes its tourism offerings, highlighting the diversity of producers and the quality of its wines (Lavandoski et al., 2016).

The type of tourism that Alentejo attracts is predominantly wine tourism, which combines visits to wineries with wine tastings and gastronomic experiences (Lopes et al., 2018). This type of tourism not only promotes wine culture but also enhances the local heritage, including the rich gastronomy of the region (Lavandoski et al., 2016).

Studies show that, on average, wineries in the region receive around 260 visitors per month during the high season, reflecting the growing interest in wine tourism experiences (Lavandoski et al., 2016). Additionally, in 2014, Alentejo was named the best wine tourism destination in the world, underscoring its potential and attractiveness (Lavandoski et al., 2016).

Opportunities for viticulture in the Alentejo are extensive, particularly with the increasing demand for quality wines and the emphasis on sustainable practices (Lopes et al., 2018). The adoption of sustainable viticulture techniques and the use of renewable energy in wineries are emerging trends, helping to reduce the carbon footprint of wine production (Campos et al., 2019).

Irrigation, a common practice due to the region's climatic conditions, allows vintners to adjust their production to climate changes, ensuring the quality and quantity of wines (Lopes et al., 2018). The Mediterranean climate, characterized by hot, dry summers, is favorable for grape ripening (Costa et al., 2020).

However, challenges related to climate change and water scarcity require producers to adopt innovative and sustainable practices to ensure the long-term viability of viticulture in the region (Lopes et al., 2018). Strategies such as efficient irrigation systems and the selection of grape varieties more resistant to extreme climatic conditions are being implemented by viticulturists.

In addition to wine tourism, Alentejo also attracts tourists interested in cultural and natural experiences, such as hiking, birdwatching, and visits to historical sites. The combination of wine tourism with nature and cultural tourism provides a diverse experience for visitors, contributing to the sustainable development of the region (Lavandoski et al., 2016). The promotion of events such as wine festivals and food fairs has also proven to be an effective strategy for attracting tourists and promoting local products.

In summary, viticulture in the Alentejo is a key pillar of the regional economy, with a significant impact on rural development and tourism promotion. The production of high-quality wines, combined with sustainable practices and a diverse tourism offering, positions Alentejo as an attractive destination for wine enthusiasts and tourists (Lopes et al., 2018). The future of viticulture in the region will depend on the producers' ability to adapt to climate change and continue innovating in their practices, ensuring the quality and sustainability of wine production (Lopes et al., 2018).

2.2.3 Tourism and Hospitality in the Alentejo Region

Tourism and hospitality have played crucial roles in the economic and social development of the Alentejo region in Portugal. With its stunning natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and unique gastronomy, Alentejo has established itself as an attractive destination for both local and international visitors (Lopes et al., 2018). The region benefits from a blend of rural, nature, and wine tourism, offering tourists an authentic and immersive experience.

The accommodation infrastructure in Alentejo is diverse, ranging from traditional hotels and inns to rural lodgings and country houses. This variety allows tourists to choose options that suit their preferences and budgets. Many establishments have invested in

training and innovation to meet visitor expectations, with an increasing focus on personalized service and creating memorable experiences (Lopes et al., 2018).

Additionally, the rise of alternative accommodation platforms like Airbnb has allowed property owners to offer their spaces to tourists, attracting those seeking more personalized and authentic experiences. However, it is crucial to regulate and manage these new forms of accommodation to ensure the sustainability of tourism in the region.

Wine tourism is particularly promising in Alentejo, as the region is renowned for its high-quality wines (Lopes et al., 2018). Many wineries offer guided tours, tastings, and special events, promoting wine culture and generating employment. Tourists visiting wineries often participate in vineyard tours and gastronomic experiences that complement the tastings. Promoting wine routes and related festivals has been an effective strategy for increasing the region's visibility as a tourist destination and stimulating the local economy, encouraging visits to other tourist attractions and creating a multiplier effect (Lopes et al., 2018).

However, the development of tourism in Alentejo faces challenges, such as the need for effective strategic planning and the adoption of sustainable practices that respect the environment and local culture (Lopes et al., 2018). Managing water resources and adapting to climate change are crucial issues for ensuring the sustainability of tourism and viticulture in the region.

Collaboration between wine producers, local authorities, and tourism organizations is essential to maximize the economic and social benefits of the sector. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the sector, requiring a reassessment of operational practices and adaptation to new market realities (Lopes et al., 2018).

In summary, Alentejo stands out as an expanding tourist destination with a diverse range of accommodation options and a rich cultural and wine experience. Wine tourism, in particular, represents a significant opportunity for economic development and the promotion of local culture. However, it is essential for the region to continue investing in sustainable practices and strategic planning to ensure a prosperous future for tourism in Alentejo (Lopes et al., 2018).

2.2.3.1 Luxury Tourism: Red Hotel case

The Alentejo region is increasingly becoming a destination for luxury tourism, and a case that demonstrates how the luxury market is starting to emerge in the Alentejo region, we can name the Hotel Vermelho, designed by the renowned designer Christian Louboutin.

Located in this charming region, the Hotel Vermelho exemplifies the Alentejo's growing presence in the high-end tourism market. Hotel Vermelho is a distinctive blend of sophistication and rustic charm. The hotel's design, created by Louboutin, is known for its bold and creative approach. The hotel offers a unique experience with its elegant interiors, personalized services, and a strong connection to the natural landscape of the Alentejo.

The choice of Alentejo for Hotel Vermelho is deliberate. The region is renowned for its tranquility, stunning landscapes, and historic vineyards, making it an ideal location for a luxurious retreat (Lopes et al., 2018). In addition to attracting high-net-worth tourists, the hotel also contributes to the local economic development by creating jobs and promoting Alentejo as a sophisticated destination.

Hotel Vermelho not only provides a luxury stay but also helps highlight Alentejo in the global luxury tourism market. Its presence diversifies the tourism offerings and attracts visitors seeking exclusive and memorable experiences.

Situated in "Herdade da Malhadinha Nova," Hotel Vermelho represents a unique fusion of modern design and traditional Alentejo aesthetics. The property offers a luxurious environment, with rooms decorated in Louboutin's distinctive style, and high-quality services, including a spa, gourmet restaurant, and exclusive activities such as horseback riding and wine tastings.

One of the hotel's main attractions is its innovative gastronomic offerings. The restaurant is known for using fresh, local ingredients and pairing dishes with regional wines, creating a memorable culinary experience. Additionally, the hotel provides

exclusive experiences to explore the culture and nature of Alentejo, such as vineyard tours and visits to local producers.

Hotel Vermelho by Christian Louboutin is a significant example of the growing trend of luxury tourism in Alentejo. With its innovative design, exclusive experiences, and commitment to sustainability, the hotel not only attracts high-level tourists but also contributes to the economic and cultural development of the region.

2.2.4 Socioeconomic Characterization of the Alentejo region

The socioeconomic and demographic profile of the Alentejo, a region in Portugal, presents a complex picture encompassing historical, cultural, economic, and social aspects. The Alentejo is notably characterized by its low population density, which poses significant challenges for regional development. The region has been experiencing a continuous process of depopulation, exacerbated by migration in search of better economic and social opportunities.

Demographically, the Alentejo has been witnessing a steady decline in population since 1960, with a marked reduction in recent decades. As of 2023, the region had about 500,000 inhabitants, representing approximately 15% of the population of Southern Portugal. In 2018, the population density was 23.7 people per km², well below the national average of 111.5 people per km² and the average for the Southern Region of Portugal, which was 35.2 people per km².

Around 30% of the population lives in the urban area of Évora, which is the main urban center of the region. The demographic profile of the Alentejo is marked by an accelerating aging population and a declining population, with one of the lowest birth rates in the country and a high mortality rate (Diogo, 2024). This demographic phenomenon directly impacts the available workforce and the sustainability of social services, particularly in healthcare.

Access to primary healthcare is a significant challenge, as many health centers are located in urban areas, leaving rural populations at a disadvantage (Freitas & Costa, 2021). Additionally, the literacy rate in the Alentejo is lower than the national average, with a 17.1% illiteracy rate, highlighting an urgent need for educational policies to improve the training and qualification of the population (Nico et al., 2010).

Economically, the Alentejo relies heavily on agriculture, particularly viticulture and olive oil production. The adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and the promotion of green jobs have been discussed as ways to revitalize the local economy and address land abandonment (Campos et al., 2019).

Viticulture, in particular, has benefited from initiatives that seek to align environmental sustainability with economic development, promoting a business model that values both production and environmental preservation (Ramos et al., 2019). Moreover, higher education institutions play a significant role in regional development by contributing to human capital formation and innovation (Pereira et al., 2021).

Migration is another crucial aspect of the Alentejo's socioeconomic profile. The region has attracted immigrants, particularly from non-European Union countries, seeking better living and working conditions. Many of these immigrants settle in rural areas, where there is a demand for labor, especially in agriculture (Diogo, 2024).

According to human capital theory, these migrants view migration as an investment in their families' future, seeking educational and health opportunities for their children (Diogo, 2024). However, retaining these immigrants is challenging as many face social and economic barriers that hinder their full integration into the local community (Diogo, 2024).

Tourism also plays a significant role in the Alentejo's economy, with considerable potential for sustainable development. The region has a rich cultural and natural heritage that can be explored through creative tourism (Dias-Sardinha et al., 2017).

However, the lack of collaboration between different sectors and the need for a management model that integrates various stakeholders are challenges that need to be overcome for tourism to become a sustainable source of income and employment (Dias-Sardinha et al., 2017). Implementing policies that encourage intersectoral collaboration and the valorization of local resources is crucial for the success of tourism in the region.

Rural development policies, such as the LEADER approach, have been implemented to address socioeconomic disparities in the Alentejo. These policies aim to promote endogenous development and innovation, seeking to diversify the local economy and improve the quality of life for communities (Masot et al., 2019; Masot & Alonso,

2018). The analysis of investments made under these policies highlights the importance of an integrated approach that considers local specifics and population needs (Masot et al., 2019).

Public health is a central concern in the characterization of the Alentejo. The region faces significant health-related challenges, including a high prevalence of chronic diseases and the need for accessible healthcare services (Freitas & Costa, 2021; Goes et al., 2019). The quality of life for the elderly in the region is heavily influenced by access to healthcare and the availability of adequate social services (Goes et al., 2019; Lopes et al., 2021).

Therefore, implementing policies that improve accessibility and quality of healthcare services is essential to meet the needs of an aging population.

In terms of infrastructure, the Alentejo faces significant challenges, particularly in rural areas. The lack of connectivity and basic services such as transportation and internet limits the region's economic and social development (Freitas & Costa, 2021). Improving infrastructure is necessary to attract investment and promote sustainable economic growth (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013). The analysis of infrastructure conditions should be accompanied by an assessment of local population needs to ensure that interventions are targeted and effective.

The interaction between socioeconomic and demographic factors in the Alentejo is complex and multifaceted. The combination of an aging population, migration, reliance on agriculture, and challenges in infrastructure and public health requires an integrated and collaborative approach to regional development. Public policies should be tailored to local realities, promoting social and economic inclusion, environmental sustainability, and the appreciation of the region's cultural and natural heritage (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, n.d.).

Demographically, the Alentejo has experienced a continuous decline in its population since 1960, with a notable drop in residents over recent decades. As of 2023, the region's population is approximately 500,000, accounting for about 15% of the total population in Southern Portugal.

In 2018, the population density in the Alentejo was 23.7 people per square kilometer, significantly lower than the national average of 111.5 people per square kilometer and the Southern Region's average of 35.2 people per square kilometer. Around 30% of the region's inhabitants live in Évora, its main urban center. The Alentejo continues to grapple with persistent socioeconomic issues, as evidenced by recent statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, n.d.),

Salaries in the Alentejo are still below the national average, with the agricultural sector, a major economic driver in the region, offering an average wage of €1,080. The aging index, which was 203.0 in 2016, worsened to 215.0 by 2018, indicating an increasing elderly population (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, n.d.). The birth rate remains low, consistent with the national trend of demographic decline, though specific figures for 2024 are not yet available.

The illiteracy rate, recorded at 7.5% in 2014, remained fairly steady into 2018, surpassing both regional and national averages. Economically, the Alentejo remains behind, with a GDP per capita of about €9,500 in 2018, which is significantly below the national average and highlights ongoing economic stagnation in the region. These metrics highlight the Alentejo's ongoing socioeconomic difficulties, particularly regarding its aging demographic, literacy rates, and income levels (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, n.d.).

The Alentejo's key economic sectors include agriculture, viticulture, olive oil production, and a growing tourism industry. The region's identity is closely tied to its wine and landscapes, akin to other renowned wine-producing areas like the Douro in Portugal, Bordeaux in France, and La Rioja in Spain.

However, the Alentejo is distinguished by its vast plains situated between plateaus and lowlands, giving it a unique character (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, n.d.). Often referred to as a "region of contrasts" due to its blend of agricultural land and natural landscapes, the Alentejo is noted for its more cohesive environment and compact villages, in contrast to the more dispersed regions such as Minho.

2.2.5 Main policies and strategies that have contributed to the economic, social, and environmental development of the Alentejo region and their impact

2.2.5.1 Tourism Promotion

The development and promotion of specialized tourist routes are essential to showcasing the unique attractions of the Alentejo region. A prime example is the Alentejo Wine Route, which features visits to wineries and local wine tastings. This route offers guided tours of cellars, vineyard walks, and tasting events, appealing to tourists interested in the region's winemaking tradition. To enhance its allure, investing in marketing and advertising to promote the route both nationally and internationally is vital. Establishing partnerships with tour operators and travel agencies can also help include the route in travel packages, making it more accessible to a broader audience.

Modernizing and building tourism infrastructure, such as hotels, visitor centers, and cultural attractions, is another critical policy for boosting tourism in the Alentejo. An example is the São Lourenço do Barrocal Hotel, situated on a former Alentejo farm, which offers modern accommodations alongside an authentic countryside experience. Projects like the São Mamede Nature Interpretation Center demonstrate the region's commitment to enhancing tourism-related facilities.

Financial incentives and subsidies should support the construction and modernization of tourism infrastructure, with public-private partnerships playing an essential role in funding these projects.

Organizing and sponsoring cultural and gastronomic events effectively attracts visitors and promotes local culture. One notable event is the “Alentejo Food & Wine Festival,” which celebrates the region’s cuisine and wines, drawing tourists and promoting Alentejo gastronomy. Creating a comprehensive event calendar, running targeted promotional campaigns, and collaborating with renowned chefs and wine experts can increase the visibility and appeal of these events to local and international tourists.

Utilizing digital marketing strategies is crucial for promoting the region and reaching a broader audience. The “VisitAlentejo” tourism portal provides valuable information about local attractions, events, and accommodations, complemented by visually engaging content designed to inspire potential visitors. Online advertising

campaigns, search engine optimization (SEO), and collaborations with travel influencers are vital strategies for enhancing the region's visibility on digital platforms and attracting more tourists to the Alentejo.

2.2.5.2 Support for Agriculture and Agroindustry

Providing subsidies and incentives for modernizing agricultural methods and adopting new technologies is a key policy supporting the agricultural sector. The Rural Development Program (RDP) 2020, for example, offers financial support to farmers for acquiring modern machinery, efficient irrigation systems, and implementing sustainable cultivation practices. This includes subsidies for installing drip irrigation systems and using precision technologies for crop monitoring. The policy is implemented through competitions and grants, allowing farmers and agro-industrial companies to apply for funding for specific projects. Additionally, seminars and workshops educate farmers about best practices and the latest technologies available.

Incentives for producing and marketing regional agricultural products focus on typical Alentejo goods, such as olive oil, wines, and cheeses. Support for Alentejo olive oil includes funding for marketing campaigns that promote extra virgin olive oil from the region and ensure quality and authenticity through Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) certification (Turismo de Portugal, n.d.). Collaborating with local cooperatives and producer associations is essential for developing regional brands and promoting these products at international fairs and gastronomic events. Investments in packaging and brand design further enhance the visibility and demand for these products (Turismo de Portugal, n.d.).

The development of agro-industrial tourism aims to attract visitors interested in learning about agricultural practices and local production. The "Alentejo Product Route" project offers tourists a tour that includes visits to wineries, olive oil mills, and cheese dairies, allowing them to observe the production process and participate in tastings (Turismo de Portugal, n.d.).

Tourism packages that combine visits to agricultural properties with culinary experiences enhance this offering. Targeted marketing campaigns promote these routes as unique tourist attractions, contributing to the region's economic growth.

2.2.5.3 Infrastructure Development

Investments in modernizing and expanding the road network focus on enhancing connectivity and facilitating the transportation of goods and tourists. A significant example is the requalification of National Road 2, which involved improvements in paving, signage, and safety to ease traffic and improve access to more remote areas of the region. Funding was secured through national and European Union funds, with the implementation divided into phases to minimize traffic disruption and ensure efficiency.

To meet the growing demand in rural and urban areas, significant investments have been made to expand and modernize water and sanitation infrastructure. The project for Central Alentejo's water supply and sanitation system includes constructing new treatment plants and enhancing existing networks to ensure water quality and efficient wastewater treatment. This initiative is financed through regional development programs and European Union co-financing, focusing on improving living conditions and promoting environmental sustainability.

2.2.5.4 Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

Efficient management and conservation of water resources are critical for agriculture and urban water supply in the region. The Alentejo Water Management Plan includes constructing reservoirs and implementing drip irrigation systems to reduce agricultural water usage.

Additionally, it focuses on modernizing water supply infrastructure and promoting water-saving technologies. Investments in irrigation technology and resource monitoring, coupled with awareness campaigns, encourage conservation practices among farmers (SUWANU Europe, 2021).

Protecting and restoring natural ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands, is prioritized to preserve biodiversity and the essential services these ecosystems provide. The Alentejo Wetlands Restoration Program aims to restore degraded wetland areas and protect critical habitats for local wildlife through replanting native vegetation and implementing sustainable management practices (SUWANU Europe, 2021).

3 Cultural Identity and Its Influence on Luxury Market Development: Douro Region vs. Alentejo Region

3.1 Douro Region

3.1.1 The cultural identity of the Douro as a competitive differentiator

As previously mentioned, the luxury market and the cultural value of a region are deeply intertwined, particularly in areas like the Douro Valley in Portugal, where cultural identity serves as a competitive differentiator. This relationship is multifaceted, encompassing various dimensions such as consumer behavior, cultural heritage, and economic development.

The Douro Valley, renowned for its wine production, particularly Port wine, exemplifies how luxury goods can be a reflection of cultural identity and regional pride. The cultural significance of wine in the Douro Valley is not merely economic; it is a symbol of tradition, craftsmanship, and social status, which aligns with the broader definitions of luxury consumption.

Luxury consumption is often influenced by cultural values, which shape consumer perceptions and preferences. Research indicates that cultural value orientations significantly affect consumers' perceptions of luxury value and their proclivity for luxury consumption (Σταθοπούλου & Balabanis, 2019). This is particularly relevant in the context of the Douro Valley, where local traditions and values influence the desirability of luxury wines.

The cultural heritage associated with wine production in this region enhances its perceived value, making it not just a commodity but a cultural artifact that embodies the identity of the Douro.

Moreover, the sharing economy has introduced new forms of luxury consumption that reflect changing consumer behaviors and preferences. The emergence of platforms like Airbnb Luxe has redefined luxury experiences, allowing consumers to engage with luxury in a more accessible and experiential manner (Christodoulides et al., 2021). This shift is evident in the Douro Valley, where luxury accommodations and wine tourism experiences are increasingly popular.

The region's ability to offer unique, culturally rich experiences enhances its appeal as a luxury destination, thereby reinforcing its cultural identity. The concept of inconspicuous luxury also plays a significant role in the Douro Valley's cultural landscape. Consumers are increasingly gravitating towards luxury goods that are subtle

and understated, reflecting a desire for authenticity and personal expression rather than ostentation (Makkar & Yap, 2018).

This trend aligns with the values of the Douro Valley, where the emphasis on tradition and craftsmanship in wine production resonates with consumers seeking genuine experiences. The inconspicuous nature of luxury in this context allows for a deeper connection between the consumer and the cultural heritage of the region.

Furthermore, the influence of social dynamics on luxury consumption cannot be overlooked. Research suggests that face and group orientation significantly impact how luxury goods are perceived and consumed (Monkhouse et al., 2012). In the Douro Valley, social gatherings and communal celebrations often revolve around wine, which serves as a medium for social interaction and cultural expression. This communal aspect of luxury consumption reinforces the region's cultural identity, as wine becomes a vehicle for storytelling and heritage preservation.

The economic implications of luxury consumption in the Douro Valley are also noteworthy. The region's wine exports, particularly high-quality Port wine, are characterized by luxury consumption patterns that reflect the cultural significance of wine in Portuguese society (Macedo et al., 2019). The income elasticity of demand for Douro wines indicates that as consumers' income increases, their consumption of luxury wines also rises, further embedding these products within the cultural fabric of the region. This economic aspect highlights the dual role of luxury goods as both economic drivers and cultural symbols.

Acculturation processes also shape luxury consumption patterns in the Douro Valley. As global influences permeate local cultures, the interplay between local traditions and external luxury trends creates a unique consumption landscape (Mo & Wong, 2019). This dynamic is particularly relevant in the context of wine tourism, where international visitors seek authentic local experiences while also bringing their cultural expectations and preferences. The Douro Valley's response to these influences can enhance its cultural identity while simultaneously appealing to a broader luxury market.

The rise of digital media and omnichannel strategies has further transformed the luxury market, allowing brands to engage with consumers in innovative ways (Christodoulides & Michaelidou, 2022).

In the Douro Valley, luxury wine brands are leveraging digital platforms to tell their stories and connect with consumers, thereby enhancing their cultural narratives. This digital engagement not only promotes the region's luxury offerings but also reinforces the cultural significance of wine as a symbol of heritage and craftsmanship.

Moreover, the post-COVID-19 landscape has catalyzed changes in luxury consumption patterns, with consumers increasingly valuing experiences over material possessions (Wang et al., 2022). This shift is particularly relevant for the Douro Valley, where wine tourism and experiential offerings can thrive in a post-pandemic world. The region's ability to adapt to these changing consumer preferences while maintaining its cultural identity will be crucial for its continued success in the luxury market.

In conclusion, the luxury market and the cultural value of the Douro Valley are intricately linked, with each influencing the other in profound ways. The region's cultural identity, shaped by its rich heritage in wine production, serves as a competitive differentiator in the luxury market.

As consumer preferences evolve, the Douro Valley's ability to navigate these changes while preserving its cultural essence will determine its future in the global luxury landscape. The interplay of cultural values, consumer behavior, and economic dynamics creates a complex tapestry that defines the luxury experience in the Douro Valley, making it a unique case study in the relationship between luxury and cultural identity.

3.1.2 Craftsmanship and local traditions in the Douro

The Douro Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is celebrated for its breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage, particularly in craftsmanship and local traditions. The region's long-standing tradition of winemaking, which dates back over 2,000 years, is a cornerstone of its cultural identity and economic vitality.

The craftsmanship involved in producing Port wine is a meticulous process that reflects the deep-rooted traditions of the Douro Valley, where local artisans employ time-honored techniques passed down through generations. This artisanal approach to winemaking enhances the quality of the wine and serves as a testament to the cultural values embedded within the region's identity (Patarata et al., 2020).

The terraced vineyards of the Douro Valley exemplify how local traditions and craftsmanship are interwoven with the landscape. These terraces, carved into the steep hillsides, are not merely agricultural structures; they represent a harmonious relationship between human ingenuity and the natural environment. The maintenance of these terraces requires significant labor and skill, as they are often poorly mechanizable, necessitating traditional farming practices that have been preserved over centuries (Pomatto et al., 2023).

The economic recognition of these traditional practices through quality certifications can incentivize farmers to continue their cultivation methods, thereby ensuring the preservation of both the landscape and the cultural heritage associated with it.

In addition to winemaking, the Douro region is home to various artisanal crafts that reflect its cultural identity. Local artisans produce traditional handicrafts, including pottery, textiles, and woodwork, often inspired by the region's natural surroundings and historical influences.

These crafts serve as a source of income for local communities and play a vital role in sustaining cultural traditions. The revival of ancient techniques and the appreciation of local products have been bolstered by the creative industries, which contribute to innovation and the promotion of endogenous products (Galvão, 2024).

This synergy between traditional craftsmanship and contemporary creative practices fosters a vibrant cultural landscape that attracts both tourists and locals alike.

The culinary traditions of the Douro Valley are closely linked to its winemaking heritage. The region's gastronomy is characterized by the use of local ingredients, many of which are complemented by the wines produced in the area.

The interplay between food and wine is a significant aspect of the Douro's cultural identity, as local dishes often highlight the flavors of the region's wines. This gastronomic culture is further enriched by the historical significance of wine in social gatherings and celebrations, where it serves as a medium for cultural expression and community bonding (Roe, 2016).

The promotion of regional food identities, often spearheaded by local chefs and culinary initiatives, enhances the cultural narrative of the Douro Valley and reinforces its status as a destination for gastronomic tourism.

Moreover, the Douro Valley's landscape is not only a backdrop for its cultural practices but also a vital component of its identity. The unique topography and climate of the region create an ideal environment for viticulture, which has shaped the local economy and cultural practices. The interaction between the natural landscape and human activities has led to the development of a distinct cultural landscape recognized globally for its beauty and historical significance (Garcia-Martin et al., 2020).

This relationship between the environment and local traditions underscores the importance of sustainable practices in preserving both the landscape and the cultural heritage of the Douro Valley.

The role of local communities in sustaining these traditions cannot be overstated. The engagement of local producers in initiatives that promote sustainable agriculture and tourism has been instrumental in revitalizing the region's cultural identity.

These efforts are often supported by European and Portuguese agricultural policies aimed at fostering rural development and preserving traditional practices (Mendonça, 2022). By empowering local communities to take ownership of their cultural heritage, the Douro Valley can ensure the continuation of its artisanal traditions and craftsmanship for future generations.

In conclusion, the craftsmanship and local traditions of the Douro Valley are integral to its cultural identity and economic development. The region's rich history of winemaking, coupled with its artisanal crafts and culinary practices, creates a multifaceted cultural landscape that is both unique and deeply rooted in tradition. The preservation of these practices is essential not only for maintaining the cultural heritage of the Douro Valley but also for promoting sustainable economic growth and tourism. As the region continues to navigate the complexities of modernity, the reaffirmation of its cultural identity through craftsmanship and local traditions will remain a vital component of its ongoing development.

3.1.3 Luxury tourism in the Douro

Luxury tourism in the Douro Valley is a vibrant and evolving sector that intricately combines the region's rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and high-quality wine production. This form of tourism not only contributes to the local economy but also plays a significant role in affirming and promoting the cultural identity of the Douro Valley. The luxury tourism experience in this region is characterized by exclusive wine experiences, gourmet dining, and bespoke accommodations, all of which are deeply rooted in local traditions and craftsmanship.

At the heart of luxury tourism in the Douro Valley is the wine experience, particularly the opportunity to engage with the region's renowned Port wines. Visitors are often granted exclusive access to prestigious vineyards and wineries, where they can participate in private tastings and tours led by knowledgeable winemakers. These experiences are designed to immerse tourists in the winemaking process, allowing them to appreciate the craftsmanship and dedication that goes into producing each bottle.

The Douro Valley's designation as the first demarcated wine region in the world, established in 1756, adds a layer of historical significance to these experiences, making them not just about tasting wine but also about connecting with a storied tradition (Pérez-Rodríguez et al., 2022). The integration of sustainability into luxury tourism is another defining feature of the Douro Valley. Many wineries and tourism operators are committed to sustainable practices, which resonate with the growing demand for eco-friendly travel options among luxury consumers.

For instance, wine tourism in the Douro Valley often emphasizes the connection between the landscape and the wine produced, promoting a sustainable image that enhances the region's appeal (Graça et al., 2023). This focus on sustainability not only attracts environmentally conscious travelers but also fosters a deeper appreciation for the local ecosystem and the importance of preserving it for future generations.

Gastronomy plays a pivotal role in the luxury tourism landscape of the Douro Valley. The region is known for its exceptional cuisine, which often features locally sourced ingredients that complement its wines. Luxury dining experiences in the Douro typically showcase traditional Portuguese dishes, prepared with a modern twist, allowing visitors to savor the authentic flavors of the region. The culinary offerings are often paired

with the region's wines, creating a harmonious dining experience that reflects the cultural identity of the Douro Valley.

This gastronomic aspect of luxury tourism is increasingly recognized as a vital component of the overall experience, where food and wine become vehicles for cultural storytelling (Quintela, 2023).

Accommodations in the Douro Valley cater to the luxury market by providing unique and personalized experiences. High-end hotels, boutique lodges, and even luxury river cruises offer guests a chance to immerse themselves in the region's beauty while enjoying top-notch amenities and services.

Many of these establishments incorporate local architectural styles and materials, creating a sense of place that enhances the overall experience. The emphasis on personalized service, such as private tours and tailored itineraries, further elevates the luxury experience, ensuring that guests feel valued and catered to during their stay (Trigo & Silva, 2022).

The rise of experiential travel has also influenced luxury tourism in the Douro Valley. Today's luxury travelers are increasingly seeking unique and immersive experiences that go beyond traditional sightseeing. This shift is reflected in the way luxury tourism is marketed, with a focus on storytelling and emotional engagement.

Tour operators and local businesses are leveraging digital platforms to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Douro Valley, attracting a global audience interested in luxury experiences that are both meaningful and memorable (Santos et al., 2021).

The emphasis on creating lasting memories and emotional connections is crucial in fostering loyalty among luxury travelers, as they are more likely to return to destinations that resonate with them on a personal level. Moreover, the interplay between local traditions and global luxury trends creates a dynamic environment for luxury tourism in the Douro Valley.

As the region continues to develop its luxury offerings, it must balance the preservation of its cultural identity with the demands of a global market. This involves not only maintaining the authenticity of local practices but also adapting to the evolving preferences of luxury consumers. The success of luxury tourism in the Douro Valley hinges on its ability to create a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation, ensuring

that visitors leave with a profound appreciation for the region's cultural richness (Correia & Brito, 2014).

The economic impact of luxury tourism in the Douro Valley is significant, as it generates income for local businesses and supports job creation in the region. Wine tourism, in particular, has become a vital source of revenue for many wineries, allowing them to diversify their income streams through accommodations, cellar door sales, and events (Trigo & Silva, 2022).

This economic growth is essential for sustaining the local community and preserving the cultural heritage of the Douro Valley, as it encourages investment in infrastructure and services that benefit both residents and visitors alike.

In conclusion, luxury tourism in the Douro Valley is a multifaceted phenomenon that encapsulates the region's cultural identity, artisanal craftsmanship, and the desire for unique experiences among affluent travelers. By emphasizing wine tourism, gourmet dining, and bespoke accommodations, the Douro Valley not only enhances its economic prospects but also affirms its cultural heritage. As this sector continues to evolve, the challenge will be to sustain the delicate balance between tradition and modernity, ensuring that the luxury experiences offered are both authentic and reflective of the region's rich cultural tapestry.

3.1.4 Sustainable development and social responsibility in the Douro region

The Douro Valley, known for its stunning landscapes and rich viticultural heritage, has increasingly positioned itself as a leader in sustainable development and social responsibility within the luxury tourism sector.

This positioning is not merely a response to global trends but is deeply rooted in the region's cultural values and commitment to preserving its unique environment. The interplay between luxury tourism and sustainability in the Douro Valley reflects a multifaceted approach that encompasses environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic viability, ultimately enhancing the region's cultural identity and appeal.

Environmental sustainability is a cornerstone of the Douro Valley's luxury tourism brand. The region's wineries and tourism operators are increasingly adopting eco-friendly practices that minimize their ecological footprint. Many vineyards are implementing

organic farming techniques, reducing pesticide use, and promoting biodiversity within their agricultural practices Sonnenberg (2024).

This commitment to sustainability not only protects the natural landscape but also enhances the quality of the wines produced, aligning with the luxury market's growing demand for environmentally responsible products.

The Douro Valley's emphasis on sustainable viticulture serves as a powerful marketing tool, attracting affluent travelers who prioritize eco-conscious choices in their consumption patterns (Istenič & Bajec, 2021).

Moreover, the Douro Valley's unique topography and climate create a fragile ecosystem that requires careful management. The terraced vineyards, a UNESCO World Heritage site, are a testament to the region's historical relationship with the land. Sustainable tourism initiatives in the Douro Valley often focus on preserving these landscapes while promoting responsible tourism practices that educate visitors about the importance of environmental conservation (Iloranta, 2021).

By fostering a culture of stewardship, the Douro Valley not only enhances its appeal as a luxury destination but also reinforces its cultural identity as a region that values its natural heritage.

Social responsibility is another critical aspect of the Douro Valley's luxury tourism positioning. The region's tourism operators are increasingly aware of their role in supporting local communities and preserving cultural heritage.

Many wineries and hotels engage in fair trade practices, ensuring that local workers receive fair wages and benefits (Novotná & Kunc, 2019). This commitment to social equity resonates with luxury consumers who seek authentic experiences that contribute positively to the communities they visit. By prioritizing social responsibility, the Douro Valley enhances its brand image as a destination that values not only luxury but also ethical practices.

Additionally, the Douro Valley's luxury tourism sector actively promotes local culture and traditions. Many tourism experiences are designed to showcase the region's rich culinary heritage, including traditional Portuguese dishes paired with local wines. This emphasis on local gastronomy not only supports local farmers and producers but also provides visitors with a deeper understanding of the region's cultural identity (Correia

et al., 2017). By integrating local culture into the luxury tourism experience, the Douro Valley fosters a sense of connection between visitors and the community, enhancing the overall travel experience.

On the other hand, the economic viability of luxury tourism in the Douro Valley is closely tied to its sustainable development initiatives. The region's focus on sustainability has led to the creation of new business opportunities and revenue streams for local entrepreneurs.

For instance, the rise of wine tourism has spurred the development of boutique hotels, gourmet restaurants, and experiential tours that highlight the region's cultural and natural assets (Correia et al., 2017). This diversification of the local economy not only enhances the region's resilience but also ensures that the benefits of tourism are distributed equitably among community members.

Moreover, the Douro Valley's commitment to sustainable tourism practices has attracted investment from both public and private sectors. Initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure, promoting local products, and enhancing visitor experiences are increasingly supported by government policies and funding (Iloranta & Komppula, 2021). This collaborative approach to sustainable development ensures that the Douro Valley remains competitive in the luxury tourism market while preserving its cultural heritage and natural environment.

When it comes to cultural identity and branding, the Douro Valley's positioning as a sustainable luxury destination is also closely linked to its cultural identity. The region's rich history, characterized by centuries of winemaking and traditional craftsmanship, serves as a foundation for its luxury brand.

By emphasizing the cultural narratives associated with its wines and landscapes, the Douro Valley creates a compelling story that resonates with luxury consumers seeking authentic experiences (Stolz, 2022). This narrative not only enhances the perceived value of the region's offerings but also reinforces the importance of sustainability and social responsibility in shaping its cultural identity.

Furthermore, the Douro Valley's branding efforts highlight the interconnectedness of luxury, sustainability, and cultural heritage. Marketing campaigns often focus on the region's commitment to preserving its landscapes and traditions while providing high-

quality luxury experiences. This holistic approach to branding positions the Douro Valley as a leader in sustainable luxury tourism, appealing to a growing segment of consumers who prioritize ethical consumption and meaningful travel experiences (Wyatt, 2023).

In conclusion, the Douro Valley's positioning within the luxury tourism market is characterized by a strong commitment to sustainable development and social responsibility. By integrating environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic viability into its tourism practices, the region enhances its cultural identity and appeal as a luxury destination. As the luxury market continues to evolve, the Douro Valley's focus on sustainability and social responsibility will be crucial in attracting discerning travelers who seek authentic experiences that align with their values. This multifaceted approach not only affirms the region's cultural heritage but also ensures its long-term viability in the competitive luxury tourism landscape.

3.2 Alentejo Region

3.2.1 Cultural identity of Alentejo as a competitive differentiator

The cultural identity of the Alentejo region in Portugal serves as a significant competitive differentiator in the luxury market, particularly as it relates to the development and affirmation of the region. Alentejo, known for its vast landscapes, rich history, and unique culinary traditions, has increasingly positioned itself as a luxury destination that emphasizes authenticity, craftsmanship, and sustainability. This positioning is deeply intertwined with the region's cultural values and heritage, which resonate with luxury consumers seeking meaningful experiences.

At the heart of Alentejo's cultural identity is its authenticity, which is reflected in the region's traditional practices and artisanal craftsmanship. The production of high-quality wines, particularly from the Alentejo Wine Region, showcases the meticulous care and dedication of local winemakers.

The emphasis on traditional winemaking techniques, combined with the use of indigenous grape varieties, creates a unique product that appeals to luxury consumers who value authenticity and heritage in their purchases, as stated by Seo et al. (2015). This connection to the land and its history not only enhances the perceived value of Alentejo wines but also reinforces the region's identity as a luxury destination.

Moreover, the Alentejo region is characterized by its rich cultural heritage, which includes ancient castles, megalithic structures, and traditional villages. These historical elements contribute to the region's allure, as luxury travelers are increasingly drawn to destinations that offer a sense of place and a connection to the past (Yang et al., 2018). The promotion of cultural tourism, which highlights the region's historical sites and local traditions, serves to enhance Alentejo's brand as a luxury destination that is both unique and culturally rich.

Additionally, the craftsmanship inherent in Alentejo's artisanal products further differentiates the region in the luxury market. Local artisans produce a variety of goods, including ceramics, textiles, and traditional food products, all of which reflect the region's cultural identity.

For example, the production of Alentejo's famous cured meats, such as presunto, and its rich cheeses showcases the region's culinary traditions and the importance of local

ingredients (Bitane, 2019). These artisanal products not only provide luxury consumers with high-quality goods but also allow them to engage with the local culture and support the community.

The emphasis on craftsmanship is particularly relevant in the context of luxury branding, where consumers are increasingly seeking products that embody quality and authenticity. Alentejo's commitment to preserving traditional methods of production aligns with the luxury market's focus on artisanal craftsmanship, making the region's products highly desirable among discerning consumers (Shammout et al., 2022). This connection between craftsmanship and cultural identity enhances the overall luxury experience in Alentejo, as visitors are able to appreciate the skill and dedication that goes into each product.

Sustainability is another critical aspect of Alentejo's cultural identity that serves as a competitive differentiator in the luxury market. The region has embraced sustainable agricultural practices, particularly in its wine production, where many wineries are adopting organic and biodynamic methods (Chiou & Hsiao, 2017).

This commitment to sustainability resonates with luxury consumers who prioritize ethical consumption and seek to align their values with their purchasing decisions. By promoting sustainable practices, Alentejo positions itself as a responsible luxury destination that respects both its cultural heritage and the environment.

Furthermore, the social responsibility initiatives undertaken by local businesses contribute to the region's appeal. Many luxury tourism operators in Alentejo engage in community development projects, supporting local artisans and promoting fair trade practices (Jiang & Shan, 2018). This focus on social equity not only enhances the region's brand image but also fosters a sense of connection between visitors and the local community.

Luxury consumers are increasingly drawn to destinations that offer authentic experiences while contributing positively to the communities they visit, making Alentejo's commitment to social responsibility a key aspect of its competitive positioning.

The Alentejo region's cultural identity is also reflected in its focus on experiential luxury. Luxury travelers are increasingly seeking immersive experiences that allow them to engage with the local culture and environment. Alentejo offers a range of activities,

from wine tastings and culinary workshops to guided tours of historical sites, that provide visitors with a deeper understanding of the region's heritage (Devanathan, 2023).

This emphasis on experiential luxury aligns with the broader trends in the luxury market, where consumers prioritize unique and memorable experiences over material possessions. By curating experiences that highlight the region's cultural identity, Alentejo enhances its appeal as a luxury destination.

Visitors are not only able to enjoy high-quality products but also engage with the local culture in meaningful ways. This connection to the region's heritage and traditions enriches the overall luxury experience, making Alentejo a compelling choice for discerning travelers.

With that said, the cultural identity of Alentejo serves as a powerful competitive differentiator in the luxury market. By emphasizing authenticity, craftsmanship, sustainability, and experiential luxury, the region positions itself as a unique destination that appeals to luxury consumers seeking meaningful experiences.

The interplay between cultural heritage and luxury branding enhances Alentejo's appeal, allowing it to carve out a distinct niche in the competitive landscape of luxury tourism. As the region continues to develop its offerings, maintaining a strong connection to its cultural identity will be essential for its ongoing success in the luxury market.

3.2.2 Craftsmanship and local traditions in Alentejo

The Alentejo region of Portugal is distinguished by its rich cultural identity, which is deeply rooted in craftsmanship and local traditions. This cultural heritage not only enhances the region's appeal as a luxury destination but also serves as a competitive differentiator in the luxury market. The craftsmanship found in Alentejo is reflected in its artisanal products, traditional food practices, and the preservation of local customs, all of which contribute to a unique luxury experience that resonates with discerning consumers.

At the heart of Alentejo's cultural identity is its artisanal craftsmanship, which encompasses a wide range of products, including ceramics, textiles, and traditional food items. The region is particularly renowned for its pottery, characterized by vibrant colors and intricate designs that reflect the local landscape and heritage. Artisans in Alentejo often use traditional techniques passed down through generations, ensuring that each

piece is not only functional but also a work of art that embodies the region's cultural narrative (Batat, 2021). This emphasis on craftsmanship aligns with the luxury market's growing demand for authentic, handmade products that tell a story and connect consumers to the culture from which they originate.

Moreover, the production of high-quality wines is a significant aspect of Alentejo's artisanal heritage. The region's winemakers employ traditional methods, such as foot treading and aging in oak barrels, to create wines that are celebrated for their unique flavors and characteristics.

This dedication to craftsmanship in winemaking enhances the perceived value of Alentejo wines, making them highly sought after in the luxury market (Halwani, 2020). The emphasis on local grape varieties and sustainable practices further reinforces the region's commitment to quality and authenticity, appealing to luxury consumers who prioritize ethical consumption.

The culinary traditions of Alentejo are another vital component of its cultural identity. The region is known for its rich gastronomy, which features locally sourced ingredients and traditional recipes that reflect its agricultural heritage. Dishes such as *açorda* (bread soup) and *migas* (bread crumbs with garlic and olive oil) showcase the simplicity and depth of Alentejo's culinary offerings (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2021).

The emphasis on traditional cooking methods and local flavors not only enhances the dining experience but also allows visitors to engage with the region's culture in a meaningful way.

Luxury dining experiences in Alentejo often highlight the connection between food and wine, with many restaurants offering curated pairings that showcase the best of the region's produce. This focus on gastronomy aligns with the broader trend in luxury tourism, where consumers seek immersive experiences that allow them to explore local culture through food (Wu, 2022). By promoting its culinary heritage, Alentejo positions itself as a destination that offers not only high-quality products but also a rich cultural experience that resonates with luxury travelers.

Additionally, the preservation of local traditions is essential to Alentejo's cultural identity and its appeal as a luxury destination. The region is home to numerous festivals

and events that celebrate its heritage, such as the Festa de São Martinho, which honors the grape harvest and showcases local wines and foods.

These events provide visitors with an opportunity to engage with the community and experience the region's cultural practices firsthand (Donzé & Wubs, 2019). By fostering a sense of connection between visitors and local traditions, Alentejo enhances its brand as a luxury destination that values authenticity and cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the region's commitment to sustainability and social responsibility is reflected in its approach to tourism.

Many local businesses prioritize fair trade practices and support community development initiatives, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are shared among residents (Praça et al., 2023). This focus on social equity resonates with luxury consumers who seek to make ethical choices in their travel experiences. By promoting sustainable practices and community engagement, Alentejo positions itself as a responsible luxury destination that respects both its cultural heritage and the environment.

To summarize, the craftsmanship and local traditions of Alentejo play a crucial role in shaping the region's cultural identity and enhancing its appeal as a luxury destination. The emphasis on artisanal products, culinary heritage, and the preservation of local customs not only differentiates Alentejo in the competitive luxury market but also provides visitors with meaningful experiences that connect them to the region's culture. As the luxury market continues to evolve, Alentejo's commitment to authenticity, sustainability, and social responsibility will be essential in attracting discerning travelers who value cultural richness and heritage in their luxury experiences.

3.2.3 Luxury tourism in Alentejo

Luxury tourism in the Alentejo region of Portugal is a burgeoning sector that intricately combines the area's rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and high-quality artisanal products. This unique blend not only enhances the region's appeal as a luxury destination but also serves as a competitive differentiator in the broader luxury market.

The Alentejo's emphasis on authenticity, craftsmanship, and experiential offerings positions it as a prime location for affluent travelers seeking meaningful and immersive experiences.

At the core of Alentejo's luxury tourism is its deep cultural heritage, which is reflected in the region's traditional practices and artisanal craftsmanship. The Alentejo is known for its rich history, characterized by ancient castles, megalithic structures, and traditional villages that provide a backdrop for luxury experiences.

Visitors are often drawn to the region's historical significance, which adds depth to their travel experience. The authenticity of local traditions, such as the production of high-quality wines and traditional foods, enhances the perceived value of luxury offerings in the region, as mentioned by Novotná & Kunc (2019).

The Alentejo Wine Region, in particular, has gained recognition for its exceptional wines, produced using traditional methods that emphasize quality and craftsmanship. The opportunity for luxury tourists to engage in exclusive wine tastings, vineyard tours, and interactions with local winemakers allows them to connect with the region's cultural identity on a personal level (Correia et al., 2017). This focus on authenticity resonates with luxury consumers who prioritize unique experiences that reflect the local culture and heritage.

The craftsmanship inherent in Alentejo's artisanal products further differentiates the region in the luxury market. Local artisans produce a variety of goods, including ceramics, textiles, and traditional food products, all of which reflect the region's cultural identity.

For example, the production of Alentejo's famous cured meats and cheeses showcases the region's culinary traditions and the importance of local ingredients (Correia et al., 2017). Luxury dining experiences often highlight these artisanal products, allowing visitors to savor the authentic flavors of the region while supporting local producers.

Culinary tourism has become a significant aspect of Alentejo's luxury offerings, with many restaurants and food tours emphasizing the use of locally sourced ingredients and traditional recipes. This emphasis on gastronomy not only enhances the dining experience but also provides visitors with a deeper understanding of the region's culture (Michael, 2023).

The integration of food and wine experiences into luxury tourism allows Alentejo to appeal to affluent travelers seeking immersive and memorable culinary adventures.

The Alentejo region's luxury tourism is characterized by a strong focus on experiential offerings that allow visitors to engage with the local culture and environment. Travelers, in general, are increasingly seeking unique and immersive experiences that go beyond traditional sightseeing.

In Alentejo, this translates into a variety of activities, such as guided tours of historical sites, cooking classes, and outdoor adventures that showcase the region's natural beauty (Iloranta & Komppula, 2021). These experiential offerings not only enhance the overall luxury experience but also foster a sense of connection between visitors and the local community.

Moreover, the emphasis on sustainability in luxury tourism is becoming increasingly important. Many local businesses in Alentejo are adopting eco-friendly practices and promoting sustainable tourism initiatives that resonate with environmentally conscious travelers. This commitment to sustainability not only protects the region's natural resources but also enhances its appeal as a luxury destination that values ethical consumption (Iloranta, 2021). By integrating sustainability into its luxury offerings, Alentejo positions itself as a responsible and forward-thinking destination.

Additionally, the social responsibility initiatives undertaken by local businesses contribute to Alentejo's appeal as a luxury destination. Many tourism operators prioritize fair trade practices and support community development projects, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are shared among residents (Dias-Sardinha & Ross, 2014).

This focus on social equity resonates with luxury consumers who seek to make ethical choices in their travel experiences. By promoting sustainable practices and community engagement, Alentejo enhances its brand image as a destination that respects both its cultural heritage and the environment. Additionally, the region's commitment to preserving its cultural identity through tourism helps to foster a sense of pride among local residents.

This pride is reflected in the warm hospitality that visitors experience, further enhancing the luxury tourism experience in Alentejo (Thirumaran & Raghav, 2017). The integration of local culture into the tourism experience not only enriches visitors'

understanding of the region but also strengthens the community's connection to its heritage.

3.2.4 Sustainable development and social responsibility in Alentejo

Sustainable development and social responsibility are increasingly vital components of the luxury tourism landscape in the Alentejo region of Portugal. This region, characterized by its rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and artisanal craftsmanship, is leveraging these elements to create a unique luxury experience that resonates with modern consumers who prioritize ethical and sustainable practices. The interplay between luxury tourism and sustainability in Alentejo not only enhances the region's appeal but also affirms its cultural identity and commitment to responsible tourism.

The Alentejo region has made significant strides in promoting sustainable tourism practices that align with the principles of environmental stewardship and social responsibility. Many local businesses, particularly in the wine and gastronomy sectors, are adopting sustainable practices that minimize their ecological footprint.

For instance, wineries in Alentejo are increasingly implementing organic farming techniques and biodynamic practices, which not only enhance the quality of the wines but also contribute to the preservation of the local ecosystem ("Using data envelopment analysis to evaluate the efficiency of creative tourism in Portugal", 2023). This commitment to sustainability resonates with luxury consumers who are increasingly seeking products that reflect their values and support environmentally responsible practices.

Moreover, the integration of sustainable tourism initiatives is evident in the region's approach to promoting its natural and cultural resources. The Alentejo's vast landscapes, including its rolling hills and pristine coastline, are being marketed as destinations for eco-friendly activities such as hiking, birdwatching, and cycling (Rodrigues et al., 2010).

These activities not only provide visitors with immersive experiences but also encourage them to engage with the local environment in a responsible manner. By

promoting sustainable tourism activities, Alentejo positions itself as a destination that values both luxury and environmental conservation.

Social responsibility is another critical aspect of Alentejo's luxury tourism strategy. Many local tourism operators prioritize fair trade practices and community engagement, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are shared among residents.

This focus on social equity is particularly important in rural areas, where small enterprises often struggle to compete in the global market. By fostering collaborations among local businesses and supporting community development initiatives, Alentejo enhances its brand image as a responsible luxury destination that values its cultural heritage and the well-being of its residents (Dias-Sardinha & Ross, 2014).

The region's commitment to social responsibility is also reflected in its efforts to preserve local traditions and promote cultural heritage. Many luxury tourism experiences in Alentejo highlight the region's artisanal craftsmanship, such as traditional pottery and textile production, allowing visitors to engage with local artisans and learn about their crafts (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2013). This not only enriches the visitor experience but also supports local economies and helps to sustain traditional practices that are integral to Alentejo's cultural identity.

On the other hand, effective governance and strategic planning play a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism in Alentejo. Local authorities have recognized the importance of sustainable development in enhancing the region's appeal as a luxury destination. Initiatives such as the "Genuine Alentejo" project aim to promote authentic local experiences while ensuring that tourism development aligns with sustainability goals ("Using data envelopment analysis to evaluate the efficiency of creative tourism in Portugal in Portugal", 2023).

Alentejo is working towards a cohesive approach to sustainable tourism that benefits both visitors and residents by fostering collaboration among stakeholders, including local businesses, government agencies, and community organizations.

Furthermore, the region's tourism policies emphasize the importance of preserving natural and cultural resources while promoting economic growth. This balanced approach is essential for ensuring that tourism development does not compromise the integrity of Alentejo's landscapes and cultural heritage (Dias-Sardinha & Ross, 2014). By prioritizing

sustainability in its tourism strategy, Alentejo is positioning itself as a leader in responsible luxury tourism, appealing to consumers who seek meaningful and ethical travel experiences.

Additionally, the growing awareness of sustainability among luxury consumers is driving demand for responsible tourism practices in Alentejo. Research indicates that consumers are increasingly seeking luxury experiences that align with their values, including environmental sustainability and social responsibility (Wu & Zhao, 2021).

This shift in consumer preferences presents an opportunity for Alentejo to differentiate itself in the competitive luxury market by emphasizing its commitment to sustainable practices and community engagement. Luxury brands operating in the region are also recognizing the importance of corporate social responsibility in enhancing their brand equity. By actively promoting their sustainability initiatives and engaging with local communities, these brands can strengthen their connection with consumers and enhance their overall appeal (Lai et al., 2016).

This alignment between luxury branding and sustainability is essential for attracting discerning travelers who prioritize ethical consumption in their travel choices.

4 Research Design and Methodological Approach

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to understand whether the development strategies adopted in the Douro region can be applied to the Alentejo, which shares similar characteristics, in order to promote its socioeconomic development, through its perceived cultural value. To achieve this, an extensive literature review was conducted on both the Douro and Alentejo regions, providing a comprehensive understanding of their contexts, similarities, differences, and the key policies and strategies implemented thus far.

A survey was conducted to further explore the potential opportunities through the cultural value, as perceived by both the local population and tourists. This survey did not target any specific age group, gender, or nationality, allowing for a diverse range of perspectives.

This chapter outlines the methodological approach used to address the research objectives defined in a previous section. Specifically, it will cover the rationale behind the chosen methodology, the data collection techniques employed, the structure of the survey, the population and sample, as well as the techniques used for data analysis.

4.2 Justification of methodology

The importance of methodology in various fields cannot be overstated, as it serves as a foundational framework for understanding, analyzing, and optimizing the use of resources across diverse contexts. In this case, the methodology employed in this study is a mixed-methods approach, primarily quantitative, supported by a qualitative component. A cross-sectional study design was used, with data collected through a self-administered digital survey. This strategy facilitated the integration of statistical analysis from the quantitative data with contextual insights provided by the qualitative responses, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

The mixed-methods approach employed in this study is justified by its ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of complex research questions through the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data. This methodology is particularly beneficial in fields where multifaceted phenomena are being investigated, as it allows for a richer exploration of the subject matter by combining numerical data with contextual insights.

Firstly, the mixed-methods approach is recognized as a natural complement to traditional qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that this approach is grounded in pragmatism, which emphasizes the practical application of research findings. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods, researchers can address the limitations inherent in each approach when used in isolation.

For instance, quantitative data can provide statistical significance, while qualitative data can offer deeper insights into participants' experiences and perceptions, thus enhancing the overall validity of the findings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Moreover, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the research topic.

Hands (2022) illustrates that employing various integration techniques, such as convergence tables, can help clarify the relationships between different data types, ultimately leading to broader answers to research questions. This is particularly relevant in exploratory studies where the aim is to identify new patterns or themes that may not be captured through quantitative measures alone.

The cross-sectional study design utilized in this research further supports the mixed-methods approach by allowing for the simultaneous collection of data at a single point in time. This design is effective for capturing a snapshot of the phenomena under investigation and is particularly useful in contexts where rapid data collection is necessary (Rice et al., 2014).

The use of a self-administered digital survey facilitates the efficient gathering of quantitative data while also providing participants the opportunity to express their thoughts qualitatively, thereby enriching the dataset (Rice et al., 2014).

Additionally, the mixed-methods approach is particularly advantageous in addressing the complexities of contemporary issues, as noted by Suryani et al. (2012). Their study highlights how mixed methods can help avoid construct bias, which is crucial when examining culturally specific phenomena. This is relevant to our study as it ensures that the findings are not only statistically significant but also culturally and contextually relevant (Suryani et al., 2012).

In this dissertation, qualitative tools such as interviews and focus groups were not employed; however, their potential benefits for enhancing the understanding of cultural identity in the Douro and Alentejo regions should be acknowledged for future recommendations or research. These methods could offer valuable insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of local communities, enabling a deeper exploration of cultural dynamics that quantitative approaches may not fully capture.

By integrating interviews, researchers could gather personal narratives that illuminate how individuals perceive their cultural identity and its evolution over time. Focus groups could facilitate discussions among diverse participants, uncovering shared values and cultural themes relevant to regional development. These qualitative insights would enrich the analysis by revealing the motivations behind community participation and identifying barriers to intercultural collaboration.

Incorporating these tools in future studies could lead to more informed recommendations for stakeholders, ensuring that development strategies align more closely with local cultural values and traditions. Ultimately, considering qualitative methods in future research could enhance the understanding of cultural identity and foster more effective and inclusive approaches to regional development in the Douro and Alentejo.

In conclusion, the mixed-methods approach employed in this study is justified by its capacity to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic through the integration of quantitative and qualitative data. This methodology not only enhances the richness of the data collected but also allows for a more thorough exploration of the complexities involved in the research question. By leveraging the strengths of both data types, the study aims to produce findings that are both statistically robust and contextually insightful.

4.3 Data collection techniques

4.3.1 Survey

To conduct the survey, the 'Google Forms' platform was used, through which anonymous responses were collected from individuals, whether living in Portugal or not, who may have visited the Douro Region, the Alentejo Region, or both. A survey consists

of a set of structured and predefined questions directed to a sample of the population, allowing the researcher to conduct statistical analysis and generalize the results to the entire population. Therefore, it can be considered the most practical and viable instrument for this type of research.

Additionally, surveys are used to analyze how and why a specific phenomenon is occurring at a given time. Thus, the structured questions in these research surveys will be applied to test the impact of different variables on the likelihood of individuals visiting Alentejo if the same conditions were to be offered and contributing to its socioeconomic development.

4.3.1.1 Pre-test

Prior to the survey launch, pre-tests were conducted to refine the survey design and identify potential issues, such as ambiguous wording or unclear questions, that may only become evident to the target population. A diverse sample of five individuals, representing different ages, genders, backgrounds, and from different regions of the country, were invited to participate. They were asked to complete the survey and provide detailed feedback on each question, including suggestions for improving clarity or modifying wording where necessary.

To ensure more informed feedback, the survey was also reviewed by the dissertation supervisor. Participants were encouraged to offer constructive criticism regarding the phrasing, response time, any points of confusion, and suggestions for improvement. Following an analysis of the feedback, further adjustments were made to enhance the clarity and accessibility of the survey.

4.3.1.2 The questionnaire structure

This questionnaire was designed based on the findings of the literature review, with each set of questions targeting specific research objectives. Furthermore, essential methodological principles for effective questionnaire construction were rigorously followed. The survey opened with an introductory section to clearly state the purpose of the research, helping to engage and inform respondents about the scope of the survey. The questions were carefully worded to be clear and neutral, avoiding bias and ensuring

that respondents could easily understand and answer them accurately. The questionnaire was then divided into several sections to reflect the different themes being explored, maintaining clarity as the context shifted.

The first section focused on sociodemographic questions, followed by sections addressing the luxury market in the Douro region, the cultural value in the Douro, and then the regional development in the Douro region. Identical sections were then dedicated to the Alentejo region, exploring its luxury market, cultural value, and regional development.

Finally, the last section compared both regions, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the differences and similarities between the Douro and Alentejo, as well as the perceived value of the participants. The questionnaire predominantly included multiple-choice questions, complemented by five open-ended questions on the last section to enable respondents to express their perceptions, opinions, and suggestions in greater depth.

An open survey, as is the case, is advantageous because it allows participants to express their perceptions and experiences in their own words, providing richer, more detailed insights. This open format enables the collection of qualitative data that captures the nuances of personal opinions, which might not be possible with closed-ended questions and it offers flexibility for respondents to share unique perspectives, leading to a deeper understanding of their views and experiences.

4.3.1.3 Dissemination of the survey and data collection

The survey was launched on October 6 and remained open until October 13. For its dissemination, an online distribution strategy was employed, through social media, which ensured that the survey could be shared efficiently, flexibly, and at minimal cost.

This approach allowed respondents to complete the survey at their convenience, thereby increasing the potential for a larger sample size. Online surveys are not only simple to complete, but they also facilitate the organization of data for subsequent analysis.

The use of social media as a recruitment tool in social science research has gained increasing recognition due to its proven effectiveness in engaging diverse populations.

The literature supports the notion that social media users are highly responsive and often willing to contribute to research efforts.

As Stofer et al. (2020) point out, social media is now a critical element in engagement strategies across various sectors, including academia. Researchers are leveraging these platforms to improve public outreach, which enhances the likelihood of participant involvement.

Similarly, Bombaci et al. (2015) highlight the growing trend of individuals seeking scientific information through social media, making these platforms ideal for disseminating research and gathering participant feedback.

To optimize the sharing process, the survey was promoted through multiple social media platforms, with posts scheduled on different days to reach a broader audience.

Additionally, a list of Facebook groups, primarily consisting of Portuguese-speaking individuals was curated to further expand the survey's reach. An attempt was made to distribute the survey via email to ISCAP students, but unfortunately, it was not shared in time as the survey closed before approval from the responsible party was obtained.

4.3.1.4 Target Population and Sample

Defining the target population is a fundamental step in the research process, as it establishes the group from which data will be collected and conclusions will be drawn. The target population includes individuals or entities whose characteristics are relevant to the research question, ensuring that the study's findings are applicable and meaningful within its context.

In this case, the ideal goal was to understand the perceived value of individuals who have visited the Douro or Algarve, or both regions, based on their personal experiences.

However, the scope was extended to include those who may not have visited either region but possess knowledge of them through secondary sources, such as hearing from others or reading about the regions. This inclusion allows for a broader understanding of their perceived value. Therefore, the target population was defined as anyone with

knowledge about these regions, whether through personal experience or acquired knowledge.

In research, it is essential to differentiate between the target population and the sample. The target population refers to the entire group that the researcher aims to study, while the sample is the specific subset from which data is collected. Although this research did not target a specific gender, the sample consisted of significantly more female participants than male (82.3% female, 17.4% male, and 0.3% who preferred not to say). Although there is an overrepresentation of female participants in this study, potentially indicating a sampling bias, this demographic pattern aligns with established research in the luxury market. Boisvert and Ashill (2021) estimate that women constitute approximately 60% of luxury purchases, suggesting that women are naturally more engaged in luxury-related studies.

Furthermore, research by Wang and Tong (2017) highlights distinct gender differences in luxury purchasing behaviors, noting that women are often more motivated by social and emotional factors, which frequently leads to higher engagement and spending within the sector. This context helps explain the greater female participation in this study.

Since this survey focuses on individual perceptions and values within the luxury market, this gender imbalance does not impact the overall validity of the results, as these perceptions are subjective and not necessarily influenced by gender.

The predominance of female participants aligns with research suggesting that women are more actively engaged in the luxury market compared to men.

Although the research had a predominantly international perspective, the questionnaire was specifically targeted at a national sample, encompassing various regions of Portugal. This choice was made to ensure that the responses were representative of the perceptions and experiences of individuals who have a closer understanding of the cultural and economic realities of the regions in question, namely the Douro and Alentejo.

Focusing on a national sample allowed for richer and more contextualized data collection, as respondents were able to share their opinions and perceptions based on personal experiences and direct knowledge of the regions. This approach is particularly

relevant in the context of the study, as it aims to understand how the specific cultural and economic characteristics of each region influence the perceived value by consumers.

Furthermore, including participants from different areas of the country enabled a variety of perspectives, reflecting the regional and cultural differences that can impact perceptions of the luxury market and the associated cultural value. This targeting ensured that the collected data were not only relevant but also meaningful for analyzing the proposed research objectives.

4.4 Results treatment

4.4.1 Questionnaire

To conduct a comprehensive analysis of the questionnaire results, the researcher utilized the automatically generated graphs from Google Forms and its data exportation feature to Excel for the multiple-choice questions. This approach allowed for a systematic examination of the quantitative data.

In regard to the open-ended questions, the researcher reviewed all responses to identify overarching themes and patterns, which facilitated the development of relevant categories encapsulating the diverse perspectives expressed by participants.

Additionally, correlations were established within the data to derive more precise insights, thereby enhancing the depth and accuracy of the analysis.

5 Results

5.1 Sociodemographic data

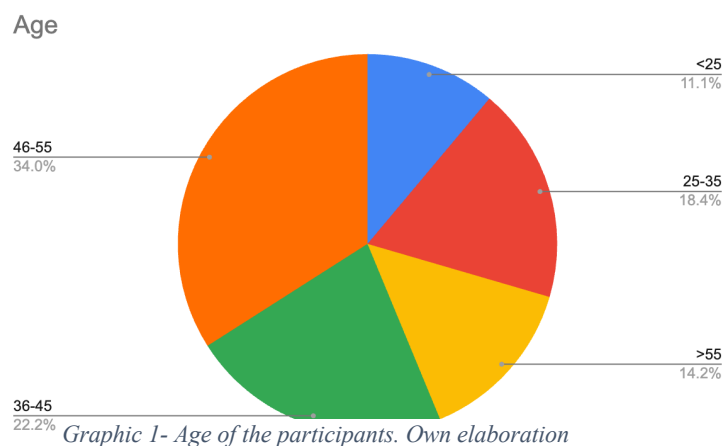
5.1.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

Among the 288 participants of the survey, all responses were deemed valid, resulting in a complete and representative sample for analysis. In terms of age distribution, the largest proportion of respondents falls within the 46 to 55 years category, representing 34% of the total sample (98 individuals). This indicates a significant presence of a more mature generation, often associated with higher purchasing power and a strong interest in niche markets, particularly in sectors such as luxury and cultural tourism, which are key areas of this research.

Following this, 22.2% of respondents (64 individuals) are aged 36 to 45 years, making this the second-largest age group. Typically, this age range includes individuals in the peak of their professional careers, potentially playing crucial roles as both decision-makers and influential consumers in the regional development context.

Next, 18.4% of participants (53 individuals) are between 25 and 35 years old, representing a younger demographic, often more open to new experiences and trends. This group may have particular significance in understanding the impact of cultural identity on consumption patterns and economic development within the regions under study.

A smaller portion, 14.2% of respondents (41 individuals), is aged over 55 years. Despite being fewer in number, this age group still constitutes an important segment of the sample. Older individuals might play a key role in consuming products that promote cultural preservation or are linked to regional heritage, which is particularly relevant for understanding the socioeconomic dynamics explored in this research.



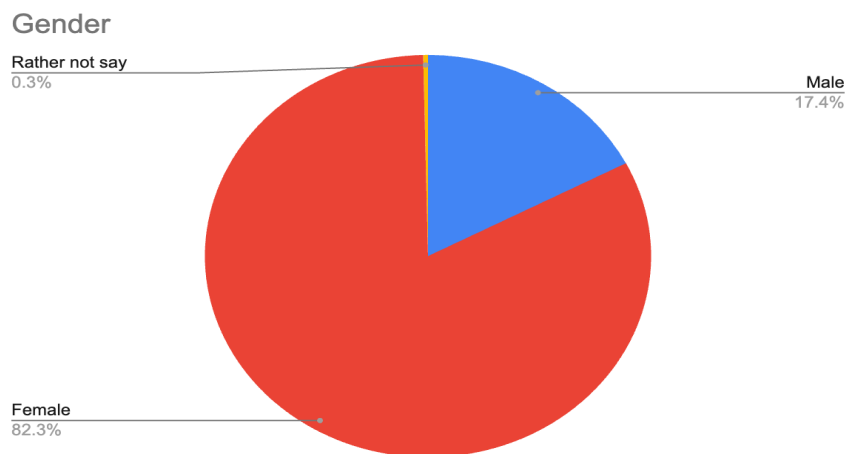
Lastly, only 11.1% of respondents (32 individuals) are under 25 years old. This younger demographic appears to be less engaged with the themes of the study, possibly due to their different consumer habits or priorities. They may have less direct involvement with sectors like cultural or luxury markets or may simply be less represented in the survey's target audience.

5.1.2 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Among the 288 valid responses collected, the gender distribution reveals a significant predominance of female respondents, who make up 82.3% of the sample (approximately 237 individuals). This notable majority may reflect a growing trend of female engagement in sectors related to luxury, culture, and regional development, which are focal points of this research.

In contrast, 17.4% of respondents (about 50 individuals) identify as male. This smaller proportion may suggest a potential gap in perspectives between genders, which could influence consumption behaviors and attitudes toward cultural and luxury products within the studied regions.

Additionally, a minimal 0.3% of respondents (1 individual) opted for the "prefer not to say" option. While this number is negligible, it highlights the importance of allowing participants the choice to maintain their privacy regarding personal information.



Graphic 2- Gender of the participants. Own elaboration.

The gender distribution, combined with the earlier age demographics, suggests that the majority of participants are likely to have unique viewpoints and consumption patterns influenced by their gender and age group. This demographic context is essential

for understanding the implications of cultural identity and economic development in the luxury market and the broader regional landscape.

5.1.3 Distribution of Respondents by Portuguese Regions

In Portugal, there are nine regions corresponding to the second-level divisions of the Statistical Territorial Units, also known as NUTS. Among the 288 valid responses, participants provided information regarding their region of residence. The responses have been grouped according to the following administrative regions of Portugal:

- Norte: 34.9% (101 individuals)
 - Includes: Douro (18.8%), Porto (12.2%), Minho (3.8%), Braga (1%), Vila Real (0.3%)
- Grande Lisboa: 22.2% (64 individuals)
 - Includes: Lisboa (21.9%), Grande Lisboa (0.7%), Cascais (0.7%), Almada (1%), Sintra (0.7%)
- Península de Setúbal: 5.6% (16 individuals)
 - Includes: Setúbal (5.6%)
- Alentejo: 5.6% (16 individuals)
 - Includes: Alentejo (5.6%)
- Algarve: 3.5% (10 individuals)
 - Includes: Algarve (3.5%)
- Centro: 2.8% (8 individuals)
 - Includes: Centro (2.8%), Coimbra (0.7%), Leiria (0.7%), Castelo Branco (0.3%)
- Madeira: 0.7% (2 individuals)
 - Includes: Madeira (0.3%), Ilha da Madeira (0.3%)
- Açores and Oeste e Vale do Tejo: 0% (0 individuals)

The data show a clear concentration of respondents from the Norte Region, accounting for 34.9% of the total, highlighting strong representation from areas such as Douro and Porto, which are culturally and economically significant, especially in relation to the luxury market. The Grande Lisboa Region follows with 22.2% of respondents,

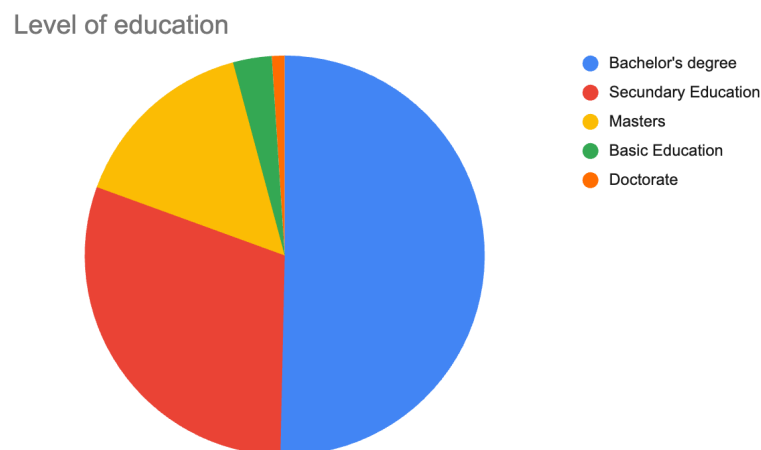
indicating that urban centers like Lisbon are crucial hubs for cultural consumption and economic activities.

The Centro and Alentejo regions each account for 5.6%, indicating a smaller but meaningful presence in the survey responses. In contrast, the Algarve region, while known for its tourism appeal, received only 3.5% of responses, suggesting potential areas for further engagement in cultural activities.

Notably, the Açores and the Oeste e Vale do Tejo regions had no respondents.

5.1.4 Education Level Distribution

Among the 288 responses, participants reported their education levels, revealing a notable emphasis on higher education within the sample. A significant majority, comprising 50.3% (145 individuals), hold a bachelor's degree, indicating a well-educated group that is likely to be informed and engaged in discussions related to cultural consumption, particularly in the luxury market.



Graphic 3- Level of education of the participants. Own elaboration.

Following this, 30.2% (87 individuals) reported having completed secondary education, suggesting that many respondents possess a foundational level of qualification that may influence their perspectives and engagement with cultural activities. In addition, 15.3% (44 individuals) of participants have obtained a master's degree, while a smaller segment, comprising 1% (3 individuals), reported holding a doctorate. This demonstrates that there is a considerable representation of individuals with advanced educational backgrounds.

However, it is noteworthy that only 3.2% (9 individuals) of the respondents indicated they had basic education.

5.2 Analysis of the Luxury Market in the Douro

The analysis of the first section reveals a combination of opportunities and challenges. The limited familiarity with the luxury market in the Douro Region, along with low participation, points to the need for targeted marketing and promotional efforts. The emphasis on wine and tourism as representative luxury products should be central to engagement and development strategies.

Furthermore, the positive perception of growth in the luxury market in recent years is an encouraging indicator for stakeholders but should be accompanied by actions that increase knowledge and participation within the community.

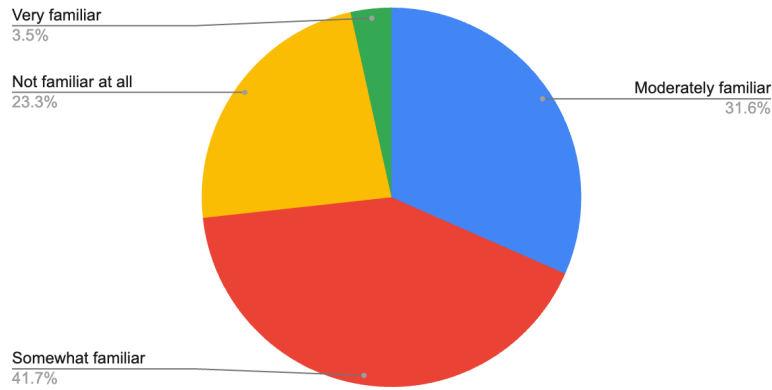
The responses also suggest a significant alignment between tourism and the luxury market, which can be explored through wine tourism experiences that not only promote wine but also expand local culture and economy.

5.2.1 Familiarity with the Luxury Market

The first question, "How familiar are you with the luxury products market in the Douro region?" revealed that the majority of respondents (41.7%) feel somewhat familiar, while 31.6% consider themselves moderately familiar. Only 3.5% stated they are very familiar, and 23.3% reported not being familiar at all.

These findings suggest a significant challenge in terms of awareness about the luxury market in the region. Despite the Douro's rich winemaking tradition, the low level of familiarity indicates a need for more effective marketing and communication strategies to educate and engage the public about luxury offerings.

How familiar are you with the luxury products market in the Douro region?

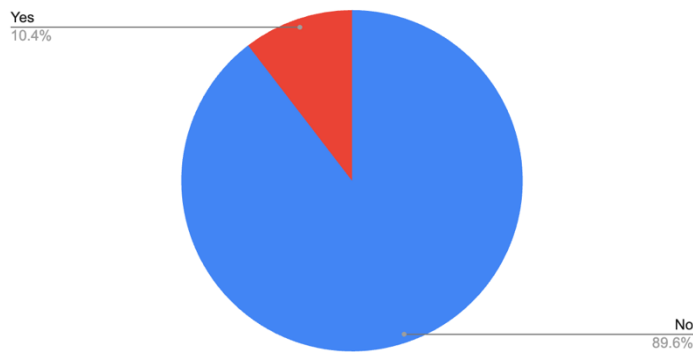


Graphic 4- Familiarity of the participants regarding the luxury products market in the Douro Region. Own elaboration.

5.2.2 Participation in Luxury Events

The second question, "Do you regularly participate in events or purchase products considered luxury in the Douro?" demonstrated a clear disconnect between familiarity and participation. With 89.6% of respondents indicating no participation, and only 10.4% stating yes, it is evident that, despite some recognition of the luxury market, the majority of the population is not engaged. This presents an opportunity to promote luxury events and experiences in the region, highlighting the relevance and value of what the Douro has to offer.

Do you regularly participate in events or purchase products considered luxury in the Douro?



Graphic 5- Percentage of how much the participants participate in events or purchase luxury products from the Douro region. Own elaboration.

5.2.3 Representative Luxury Products

In the third question, which allowed more than one option to be chosen, was regarding which luxury products are considered most representative of the Douro, a

significant majority of respondents identified wine as the primary reference, with 92.0% (265 respondents) selecting this option.

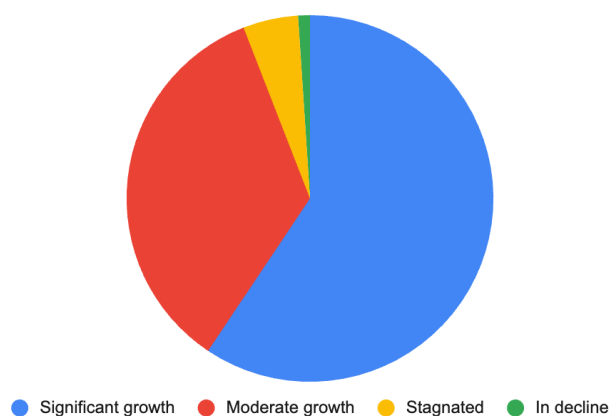
Following wine, luxury tourism was chosen by 79.9% (230 respondents), while handicrafts received 16.0% (46 respondents) and fashion garnered only 4.9% (14 respondents). In the option “Other”, 1 person has selected “Nothing”, representing 0.3% and another person “Experience Tourism”, also representing 0.3%.

This response reinforces the image of the Douro as a prominent wine region, with wine being recognized as the leading luxury product. The strong association between tourism and luxury products is a trend that can be leveraged to attract visitors and buyers, particularly in the context of wine tourism, which combines wine experiences with travel.

5.2.4 Evaluation of Market Evolution

The fourth question, "How do you evaluate the evolution of the luxury market in the Douro region over the last 10 years?" showed that 59.4% of respondents perceive significant growth. This data is encouraging, indicating a positive perception regarding the development of the luxury market in the region. 34.7% responded that there has been moderate growth, while only 4.9% felt the market has stagnated and 1% believed it is in decline. This perception of growth could signal to investors and entrepreneurs the viability of luxury initiatives in the region.

How do you evaluate the evolution of the luxury market in the Douro region over the last 10 years?



Graphic 6- How participants evaluate the luxury market in the Douro region over the last 10 years. Own elaboration.

5.2.5 Driving Factors of the Market

Finally, in the fifth question in this section, "In your opinion, what drives the luxury market in the Douro?" respondents also had the opportunity to choose more than one option and they indicated that tourism (238), is the main driver, followed by product exports (145) and wine tourism (151). The internal market received much lower representation (19), while other responses such as "I do not know enough to comment" and "experience tourism" were mentioned only once when the option "Other" was selected.

The strong link between tourism and luxury products suggests that strategies promoting luxury tourism experiences in the Douro could not only increase market participation but also enhance the visibility of local products.

5.3 Analysis of Cultural Value in the Douro

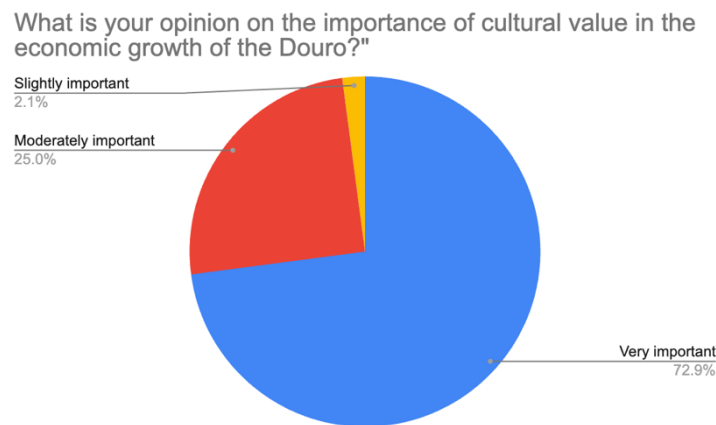
The analysis of the responses regarding cultural value in the Douro reveals a strong consensus among participants about the significance of cultural heritage in economic growth and the luxury market. The data indicate a clear recognition of the connections between luxury products, cultural traditions, and the preservation of regional identity.

These insights can be pivotal for stakeholders aiming to promote luxury products while simultaneously enhancing the cultural fabric of the Douro. As cultural value is seen as an important factor for market differentiation, businesses and organizations can leverage this perception to create marketing campaigns that emphasize the unique cultural narrative behind luxury offerings. By doing so, they can foster both economic development and cultural preservation in the Douro region, ultimately enriching the experiences of both local residents and visitors alike.

5.3.1 Importance of Cultural Value

In response to the question, "What is your opinion on the importance of cultural value in the economic growth of the Douro?" an overwhelming 72.9% of respondents

indicated that cultural value is very important. Furthermore, 25% rated it as moderately important, while only 2.1% viewed it as slightly important. Notably, 0% of respondents dismissed its importance altogether. This data underscores a strong consensus on the essential role that cultural value plays in fostering economic development in the Douro. The positive perception of cultural value suggests that stakeholders in the region can leverage this sentiment to promote cultural initiatives that align with economic objectives.

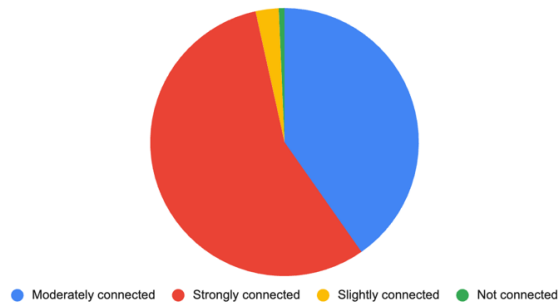


Graphic 7- Participants' opinion on the importance of cultural value in the economic growth of the Douro. Own elaboration.

5.3.2 Connection Between Luxury Products and Cultural Heritage

The second question, "In your opinion, are the luxury products of the Douro connected to local traditions and cultural heritage?" yielded similarly affirmative results. 56.3% of respondents affirmed that the luxury products are strongly connected, while 40.3% felt they are moderately connected. Only 2.8% considered them slightly connected, and 0.7% asserted that they are not connected at all. These findings reveal a strong perception among respondents that luxury products in the Douro are deeply intertwined with the region's cultural traditions. This connection can serve as a compelling marketing narrative, highlighting how local luxury products reflect the unique cultural identity of the Douro.

In your opinion, are the luxury products of the Douro connected to local traditions and cultural heritage?



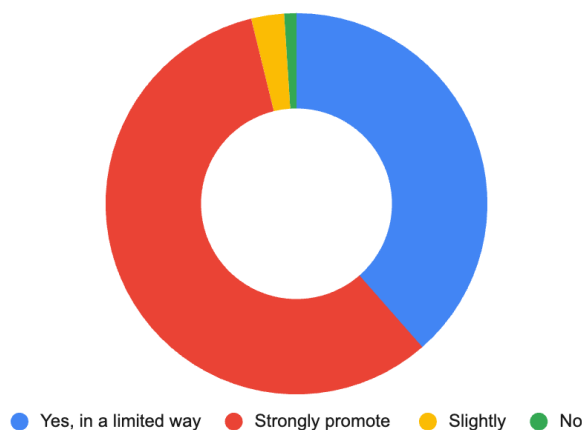
Graphic 8- Participants' opinion on if the luxury products of the Douro are connected to local traditions and cultural heritage. Own elaboration.

5.3.3 Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Value

The third question, "In your opinion, do luxury products in the Douro preserve and promote the cultural value of the region?" received a positive response, with 57.6% stating that they strongly promote cultural value, and 38.5% agreeing they do so, but in a limited way. Only 2.8% felt they slightly preserve cultural value, while 1% stated they do not preserve it at all.

The majority view that luxury products contribute significantly to the preservation and promotion of cultural value suggests that the luxury sector can play a crucial role in maintaining the region's cultural heritage while also appealing to consumers who value authenticity and cultural significance.

In your opinion, do luxury products in the Douro preserve and promote the cultural value of the region?

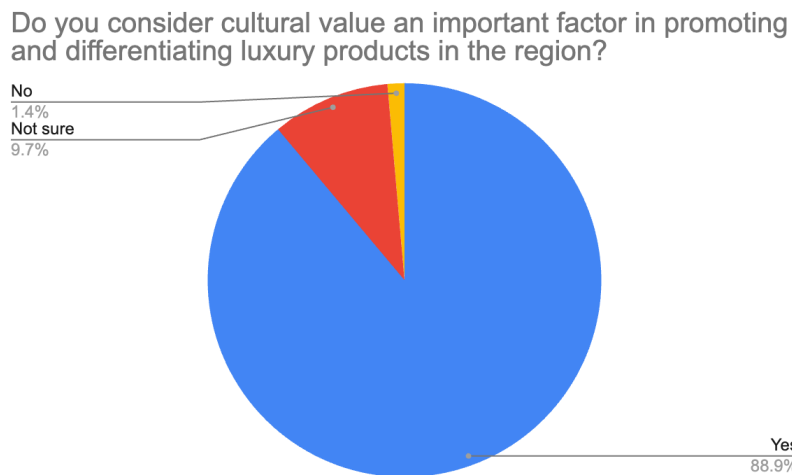


Graphic 9- Participants' views on if the Douro preserves and promotes the cultural value of the region. Own elaboration.

5.3.4 Cultural Value as a Differentiating Factor

Finally, the fourth question, "Do you consider cultural value an important factor in promoting and differentiating luxury products in the region?" highlighted the critical role of cultural value in market positioning. An impressive 88.9% of respondents affirmed its importance, while only 1.4% disagreed, and 9.7% expressed uncertainty.

This response demonstrates that cultural value is perceived not just as an asset but as a vital component for distinguishing luxury products in the competitive market. This finding emphasizes the potential for targeted marketing strategies that highlight cultural heritage as a key selling point, attracting consumers who are increasingly seeking unique, culturally rich experiences.



Graphic 10- Participants' perception on cultural value in promoting and differentiating luxury products in the Douro region. Own elaboration.

5.4 Analysis of Regional Development in the Douro

The analysis of responses regarding regional development in the Douro emphasizes a strong belief in the potential of the luxury market to act as a driver for economic growth. However, there are also notable concerns regarding inclusion, sustainability, and the challenges that must be navigated to fully realize this potential.

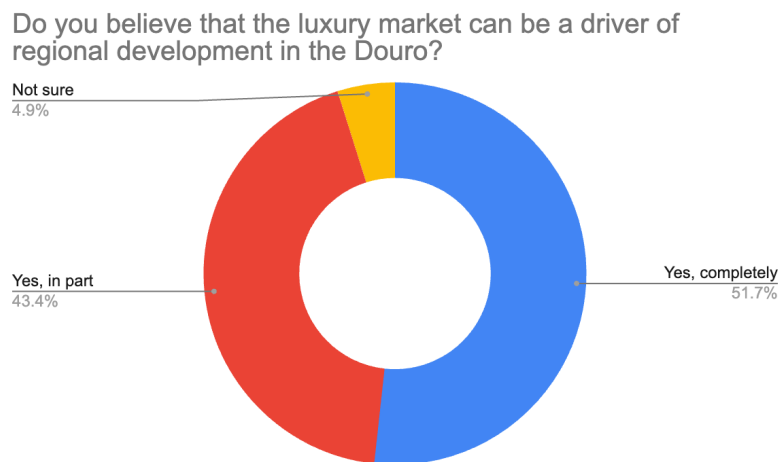
For stakeholders and policymakers, these insights underscore the importance of creating an environment that fosters local participation and addresses infrastructural needs while promoting cultural heritage. By tackling these challenges and enhancing the

positive aspects of luxury market development, the Douro can achieve a more inclusive and sustainable model of regional growth that benefits all community members.

5.4.1 Potential of Luxury Market as a Driver of Regional Development

In response to the question, "Do you believe that the luxury market can be a driver of regional development in the Douro?" a significant 51.7% of participants expressed agreement with "yes, completely," while 43.4% answered "yes, in part." Notably, 4.9% were uncertain, and 0% disagreed.

This overwhelming majority indicates a strong belief in the luxury market's ability to stimulate regional growth, suggesting that stakeholders in the Douro can confidently pursue strategies aimed at developing this sector as a means of enhancing the local economy.



Graphic 11- Participants' views on if the luxury market can be a driver of regional development in the Douro region. Own elaboration.

5.4.2 Impact on the Local Community

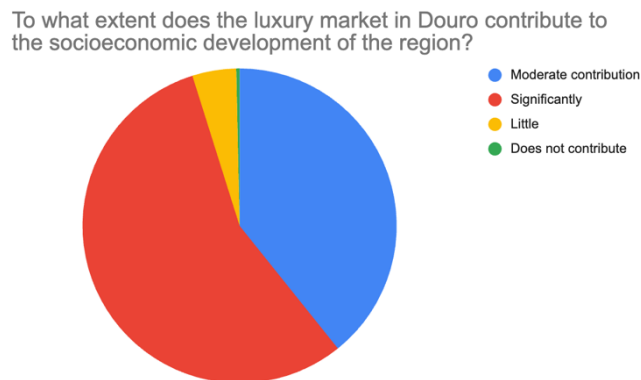
When asked about the impact of the luxury market's development on the local community, 80.2% of respondents characterized it as positive, citing benefits such as job creation and investment attraction. In contrast, 10.1% perceived it as neutral, while 7.3% viewed it as negative, attributing potential downsides such as price increases and social

exclusion. Additionally, a small group of 7 individuals, which is the equivalent of 2.4%, identified both positive and negative impacts.

The strong majority suggesting a positive impact reinforces the idea that luxury development can enhance local livelihoods and contribute to broader economic objectives. However, the minority expressing concerns highlights the necessity for balanced and inclusive development strategies that mitigate potential adverse effects on the community.

5.4.3 Contribution to Socioeconomic Development

When asked to what extent does the luxury market in Douro contribute to the socioeconomic development of the region, 55.9% stated it contributes significantly, and 39.2% indicated a moderate contribution. Only 4.5% felt it contributes little, and a mere 0.3% believed it does not contribute at all. This data underscores the belief that the luxury market is a significant player in the Douro's socioeconomic landscape, reinforcing the need for policies and initiatives that support its growth.

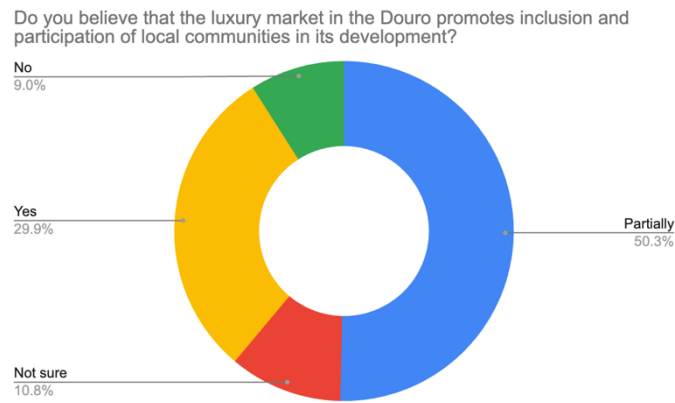


Graphic 12- Participants' perception of to which extent the luxury market in the Douro region contributes to the socioeconomic development of the region. Own elaboration.

5.4.4 Inclusion and Community Participation

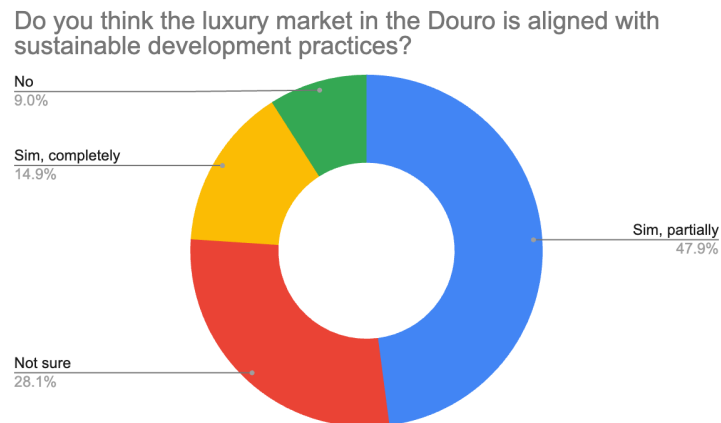
When asked “Do you believe that the luxury market in the Douro promotes inclusion and participation of local communities in its development?”, 29.9% of participants answered yes, while 50.3% responded partially. Additionally, 10.8% were uncertain, and 9% said no.

These results suggest that while there is recognition of some degree of inclusivity, a significant portion of respondents believes that opportunities for local participation are limited. This highlights a critical area for improvement, as fostering greater involvement of local communities in the luxury market could enhance both the legitimacy and sustainability of this sector.



Graphic 13- Participants' beliefs on if the luxury market in the Douro promotes inclusion and participation of local communities in its development. Own elaboration.

5.4.5 Alignment with Sustainable Development Practices



Graphic 14- Participants' opinion on if the Douro is aligned with sustainable development practices. Own elaboration.

Regarding the alignment of the luxury market with sustainable development practices, when asked “Do you think the luxury market in the Douro is aligned with sustainable development practices? “, 47.9% of respondents affirmed that it is partially aligned, and 14.9% said it is completely aligned. Conversely, 28.1% were uncertain, and 9% disagreed.

These findings reveal a mixed perception of the luxury market's commitment to sustainability. Addressing concerns about sustainable practices could enhance the sector's reputation and ensure long-term viability while aligning with contemporary consumer values that prioritize environmental and social responsibility.

5.4.6 Challenges in Developing the Luxury Market

The final question focused on identifying the main challenges to developing the luxury market in the Douro. The most common responses included "lack of cultural valuation" (37.2%) and "absence of supportive policies for the luxury market" (34%). 21.5% noted "lack of adequate infrastructure."

Additional concerns from the remaining 7.3% of the respondents included a variety of issues such as the need for better tourist infrastructure, workforce qualification, and the preservation of cultural authenticity. The recognition of these challenges highlights the necessity for a strategic and comprehensive approach to address barriers to growth while ensuring that development is sustainable and culturally respectful.

5.5 Analysis of the Luxury Market in Alentejo

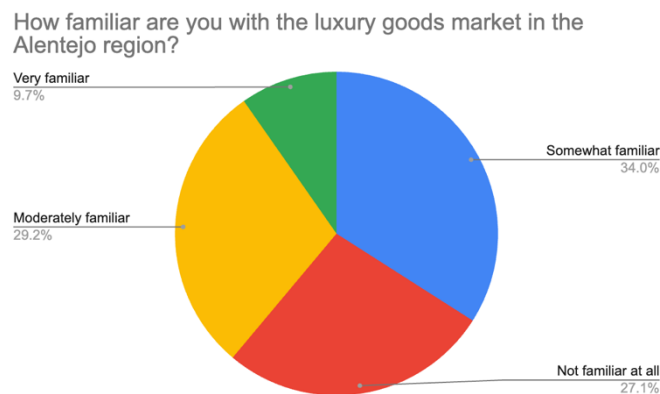
The overall trends in the Alentejo luxury market reflect a region deeply connected to its cultural and agricultural roots. Wine, tourism, and handicrafts emerge as key elements that define luxury in the region, suggesting that Alentejo's luxury market is not only about high-end products but also about experiences that are tied to the region's identity and heritage.

The dominance of tourism as a driver of luxury is consistent with findings from the Douro region, but Alentejo's stronger emphasis on handicrafts and enotourism suggests a more diversified luxury landscape. These products and experiences are not only valuable from an economic standpoint but also serve as expressions of the region's cultural value. This aligns with the central hypothesis of this research, which posits that cultural value can drive sustainable economic development by reinforcing regional identity and attracting luxury consumers who seek authentic and meaningful experiences.

The data from Alentejo in this section reveals a luxury market that is still developing but holds significant potential for growth, particularly in areas related to tourism, exportation, and enotourism. The strong association with cultural products like handicrafts and wine underscores the importance of leveraging cultural value in future development strategies. By aligning luxury market growth with cultural preservation, Alentejo has the opportunity to build a sustainable luxury sector that not only boosts the local economy but also enhances the region's identity on a global scale.

5.5.1 Familiarity with the Luxury Market

In the first question, regarding familiarity with the luxury market in the Alentejo, a large portion of respondents were either "somewhat familiar" (34%) or "moderately familiar" (29.2%). Only 9.7% of participants claimed to be "very familiar," and 27.1% were "not familiar." These results reflect a slightly higher familiarity rate compared to the Douro region, but both regions exhibit a similar distribution of moderate or low familiarity, suggesting that luxury markets in both regions are not widely recognized or may not be well integrated into the daily experiences of the general population.

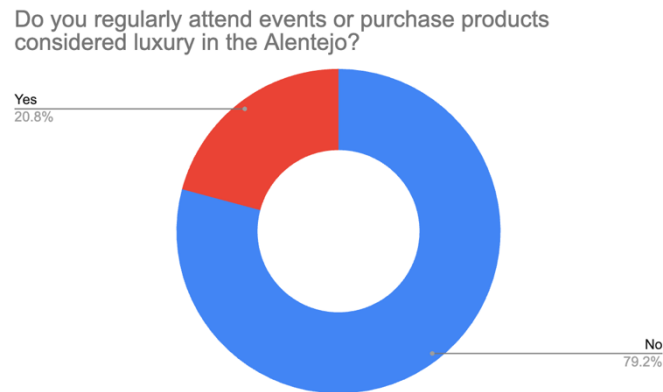


Graphic 15- Familiarity of the participants regarding the luxury products market in the Alentejo Region. Own elaboration.

5.5.2 Participation in Luxury Events and Products

The second question asked participants whether they regularly participate in luxury events or purchase luxury products in the Alentejo. A significant majority (79.2%) responded "no," with only 20.8% answering "yes." This finding mirrors trends in the Douro, where most participants also indicated little regular involvement in luxury

consumption. Despite the low rate of participation, the slight increase in engagement in Alentejo may point to the region's greater accessibility or appeal in terms of luxury products and experiences. It is possible that luxury in Alentejo is more associated with local culture and traditional industries (e.g., wine, handicrafts), making it more relatable or attainable for the local population.



Graphic 16- Percentage of how much the participants participate in events or purchase luxury products from the Alentejo region. Own elaboration.

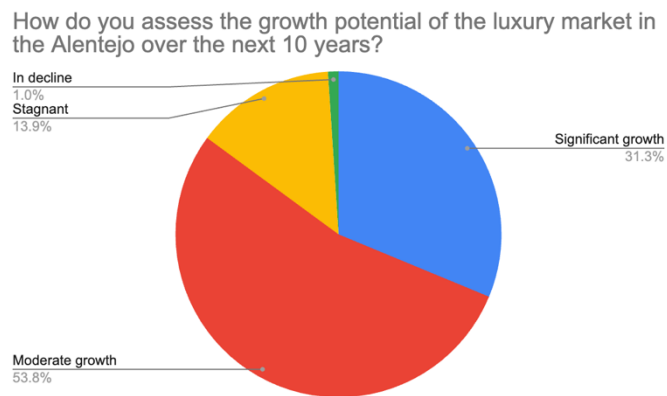
5.5.3 Representative Luxury Products in Alentejo

In the third question, participants identified the luxury products they consider most representative of the Alentejo region. The results show that wine was the most popular choice (72.9% with 210 answers), followed by luxury tourism (67.7% with 195 answers) and handicrafts (52.1% with 150 answers). These products reflect a blend of Alentejo's agricultural strengths and cultural heritage, with fashion being the least chosen category (2.4% with 7 answers). Interestingly, the prominence of handicrafts in Alentejo (52.1%) is much higher compared to Douro (17.4%), highlighting a unique cultural element that defines luxury in Alentejo.

The responses in the "Other" category, including gastronomy, heritage, cork products, and typical regional products, also suggest that the luxury market in Alentejo is deeply rooted in its cultural identity and local resources. This is consistent with the idea that cultural value is a key driver of regional identity, which aligns with the research focus on cultural value as a catalyst for economic development.

5.5.4 Potential for Growth in the Luxury Market

When asked about the potential growth of the luxury market in the next ten years, the majority of participants (53.8%) predicted moderate growth, while 31.3% expected significant growth. A smaller portion, 13.9%, believed the market would remain stagnant, and only 1% foresaw a decline. These results are largely positive and suggest an optimistic outlook for the future of luxury in Alentejo. The combined 85.1% predicting moderate or significant growth indicates a general belief in the market’s potential, though it is worth noting that the predictions for significant growth are lower compared to Douro.



Graphic 17- How participants evaluate the luxury market in the Alentejo region over the last 10 years. Own elaboration.

This cautious optimism may reflect underlying concerns about the region's infrastructure, accessibility, or capacity to fully integrate luxury markets into its socioeconomic landscape. In contrast, the Douro region, which is more internationally recognized for its wine industry, had a higher expectation for significant growth. This could suggest that the Alentejo is still in the process of establishing its reputation as a luxury destination, but the potential is widely acknowledged.

5.5.5 Drivers of the Luxury Market in Alentejo

In the final question, participants were asked to identify the main drivers of the luxury market in Alentejo. An overwhelming majority (81.9% with 236 answers) selected tourism, followed by exportation of products (40.3% with 116 answers), and enotourism (34% with 98 answers). The internal market was seen as a less significant driver, with only 17.7% of participants selecting it, with a total of 51 answers.

These results indicate that, similar to the Douro, tourism is perceived as the primary driver of luxury markets in Alentejo. However, Alentejo's reliance on exportation and enotourism suggests that its luxury market has a strong outward-facing component, catering to international visitors and markets. The strong link between luxury and wine (as seen in the product selection) further supports the idea that enotourism plays a crucial role in shaping Alentejo's luxury economy.

Interestingly, while the internal market was less frequently cited, this could indicate that local consumption of luxury products is relatively limited, and the region's luxury economy is primarily driven by external factors. This is an important insight for future development strategies, as it suggests that fostering local appreciation and consumption of luxury goods could be a potential growth area.

5.6 Analysis of Cultural Value in the Alentejo Region

The survey results suggest that while there is significant recognition of the importance of cultural value, the luxury market in Alentejo may not be fully capitalizing on the region's cultural potential. The moderate connection perceived between luxury products and cultural heritage points to an opportunity for luxury brands to further embed traditional elements into their offerings, thereby enhancing authenticity and appealing to both domestic and international consumers.

Moreover, the uncertainty regarding the global competitiveness of luxury products rooted in cultural value indicates that the region has yet to fully communicate its unique cultural assets to the world. To address this, Alentejo could adopt a more proactive approach in branding and marketing its luxury products, emphasizing their cultural roots and differentiating them from competitors.

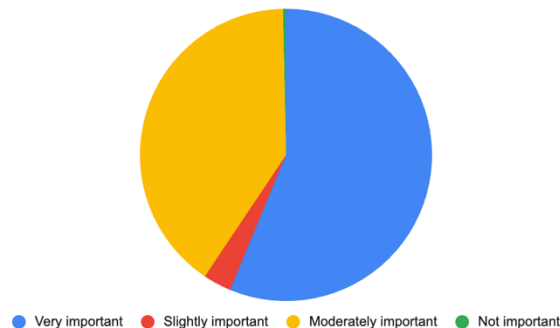
The analysis of cultural value in the Alentejo highlights both its recognized importance for regional development and the opportunities to further leverage this value within the luxury market. By strengthening the connection between luxury products and cultural heritage, Alentejo could position itself more strongly in both the local and global luxury markets, driving sustainable economic growth through its unique cultural identity.

5.6.1 Importance of Cultural Value for Economic Growth

The first question of this section asked respondents to evaluate the importance of cultural value in driving economic growth in the Alentejo. A majority of 56.3% considered it "very important," while 40.3% deemed it "moderately important." Only 3.1% believed cultural value had little importance, and a negligible 0.3% stated it was "not important."

This overwhelming recognition of cultural value as a key factor in economic growth highlights the significant role that heritage plays in the region's development. The results suggest that there is a broad consensus that cultural elements should be leveraged for economic purposes, aligning with the hypothesis that cultural value can serve as a strategic asset for regional identity and economic advancement. In comparison with the Douro, these findings indicate a similarly high appreciation of cultural value, reinforcing the importance of heritage in regional development strategies across both regions.

What is your opinion on the importance of cultural value in the economic growth of the Alentejo?

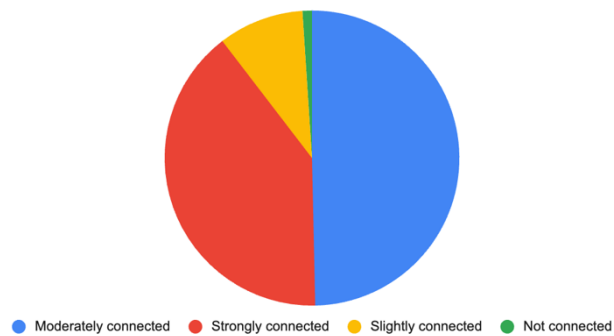


Graphic 18- Participants' opinion on the importance of cultural value in the economic growth of the Alentejo. Own elaboration.

5.6.2 Connection Between Luxury Products and Cultural Heritage

In the second question, participants were asked whether luxury products in the Alentejo are connected to the region's traditions and cultural heritage. The majority (49.7%) felt that luxury products are "moderately connected" to local traditions, while 39.9% believed they are "strongly connected." Only 9.4% saw a weak connection, and 1% stated that luxury products are "not connected" to cultural heritage.

Do you believe that luxury products from the Alentejo are connected to local traditions and cultural heritage?



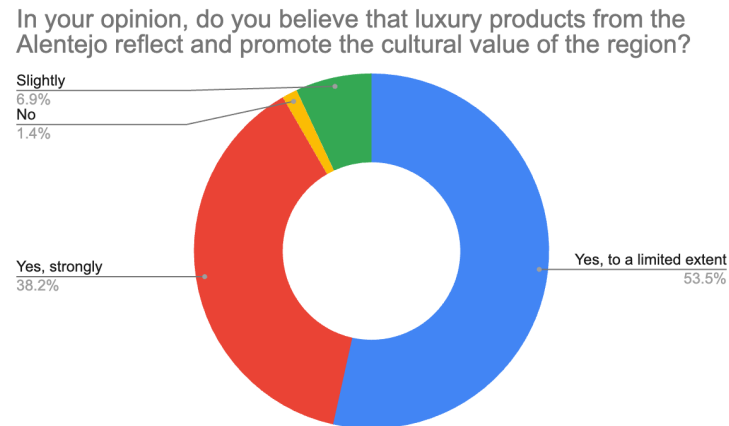
Graphic 19- Participants' opinion on if the products of the Alentejo are connected to local traditions and cultural heritage. Own elaboration.

The responses reveal that while the majority perceives some level of connection between luxury products and cultural traditions, there is room for further strengthening this link. The fact that nearly 50% chose "moderately connected" suggests that many luxury products in the region may not fully emphasize their cultural roots. This represents an opportunity for luxury brands in the Alentejo to further embed cultural elements into their products, enhancing their uniqueness and appeal both locally and internationally.

When compared to the Douro region, which is renowned for its strong cultural and luxury market ties (especially in wine production), these results indicate that the Alentejo may have more untapped potential to develop its cultural narrative in the luxury sector.

5.6.3 Reflection and Promotion of Cultural Value through Luxury Products

The third question explored whether luxury products in the Alentejo reflect and promote the region's cultural value. More than half of the participants (53.5%) believed that luxury products reflect and promote cultural value "to a limited extent," while 38.2% felt they do so "strongly." Meanwhile, 6.9% saw only a weak reflection of cultural value, and 1.4% believed there was no such reflection.



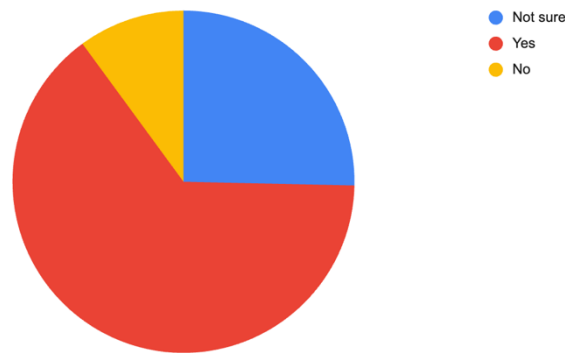
Graphic 20- Participants' views on if the Alentejo preserves and promotes the cultural value of the region. Own elaboration.

These findings suggest that while there is some acknowledgment of cultural promotion through luxury products, there remains significant room for improvement. The fact that the majority of respondents feel this reflection is "limited" points to a gap in fully utilizing cultural value as a core element of the luxury sector in the Alentejo. By comparison, the Douro region's luxury market, particularly in wine and tourism, is more strongly associated with cultural heritage, reflecting a higher degree of integration. This presents a potential opportunity for the Alentejo to draw inspiration from Douro's strategies and more effectively link its luxury offerings with its rich cultural traditions.

5.6.4 Contribution of Cultural Value to Global Competitiveness

The final question of this section asked whether the cultural value of the Alentejo contributes to the global competitiveness of its luxury products. A significant majority of 64.6% answered "yes," while 25.3% expressed uncertainty, and 10.1% believed that cultural value does not contribute to global competitiveness.

Does the cultural value of the Alentejo contribute to the competitiveness of the region's luxury products in the global market?



Graphic 21- Participants' perception on cultural value in promoting and differentiating luxury products in the Alentejo region. Own elaboration.

This positive outlook on the contribution of cultural value to global competitiveness aligns with the broader framework of this research, which argues that regional identity, supported by cultural heritage, can be a differentiating factor in international markets.

However, the relatively high level of uncertainty (25.3%) suggests that the link between cultural value and global competitiveness is not yet fully understood or communicated by local producers. In contrast, the Douro region's strong association with its cultural heritage—especially in wine production—has arguably helped it secure a more prominent place in the global luxury market.

This means that several key patterns and correlations emerge from this section of the analysis:

1. **Cultural Value as a Strategic Asset:** The majority of respondents recognize the importance of cultural value for both economic growth and global competitiveness, reinforcing the hypothesis that heritage is a vital asset for the Alentejo. However, there is still work to be done in translating this cultural value into tangible benefits for the luxury market.
2. **Moderate Connection to Heritage:** A consistent theme across the questions is that while cultural value is acknowledged, the connection between luxury products and heritage is perceived as "moderate" by most respondents. This suggests that the cultural narrative could be more fully integrated into the marketing and production of luxury goods.

3. **Opportunities for Growth:** The data indicate that the luxury market in Alentejo has room to grow, particularly by enhancing the connection between cultural value and luxury products. By promoting this link more effectively, the region could improve both its local economic development and its position in the global market.
4. **Uncertainty about Global Competitiveness:** The 25.3% of respondents who are uncertain about the contribution of cultural value to global competitiveness highlight a need for better communication strategies. Luxury producers in the Alentejo should focus on articulating how cultural heritage adds value to their products on the international stage.

5.7 Analysis of Regional Development in the Alentejo

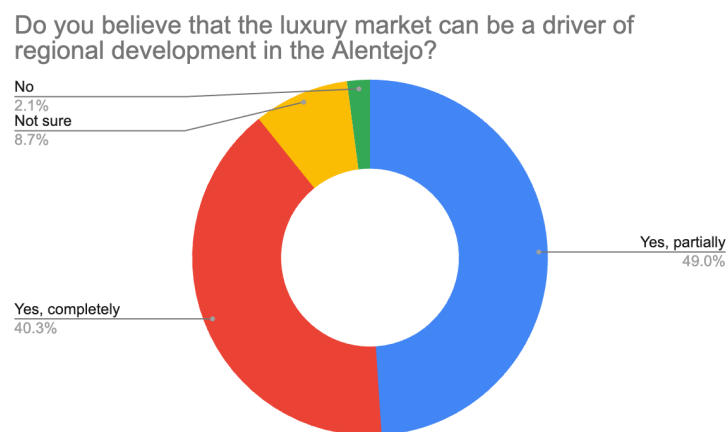
The data indicate that while there is optimism about the potential of the luxury market to drive regional development in the Alentejo, there are also significant concerns about its inclusivity, sustainability, and the adequacy of infrastructure and policy support. The moderate contributions to socioeconomic development and the partial integration of local communities suggest that while the luxury market offers opportunities, its growth is not yet fully aligned with broader regional development goals.

For the luxury sector to realize its full potential, there must be greater investment in infrastructure, policies that support sustainable and inclusive growth, and efforts to better integrate local communities and cultural heritage into the development process. Addressing these challenges could help the Alentejo develop a luxury market that not only drives economic growth but also enhances regional identity and promotes long-term sustainability.

5.7.1 Luxury Market as a Driver of Regional Development

In the first question, respondents were asked whether they believe the luxury market can be a driving force for regional development in the Alentejo. Nearly half (49%) answered "yes, partially," while 40.3% agreed "yes, completely." A small percentage (8.7%) were uncertain, and 2.1% believed the luxury market could not be a driver of regional development.

The overall positive outlook (89.3%) on the role of the luxury market suggests that most respondents recognize its potential to contribute to regional growth, albeit with some reservations about the extent of its impact. The significant percentage of those who believe the luxury market is only "partially" a driver indicates that while there is potential, the market has not fully realized its ability to propel development. This mixed response may reflect underlying concerns about the luxury market's inclusivity and sustainability, which are explored in later questions.



Graphic 22- Participants' views on if the luxury market can be a driver of regional development in the Alentejo region. Own elaboration.

5.7.2 Impact of the Luxury Market on the Local Community

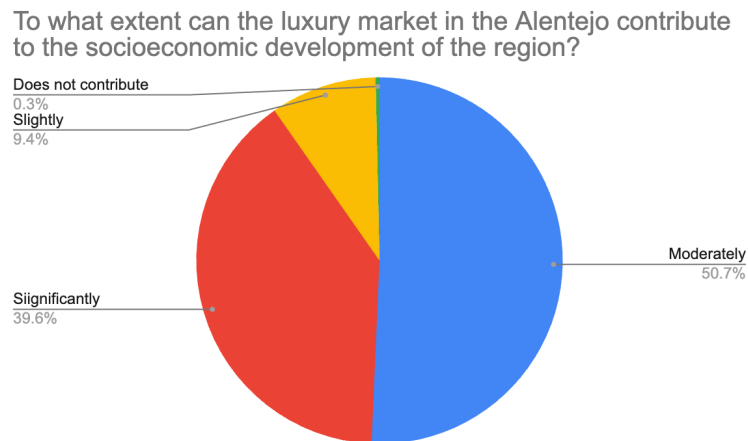
The second question focused on the perceived impact of the luxury market on the local community. An overwhelming 75.7% of respondents viewed the impact as "positive," citing benefits such as job creation and investment attraction. Meanwhile, 13.9% considered the impact "neutral," and 8.7% saw it as "negative," highlighting issues like rising prices and social exclusion. Additionally, 2.1% of participants, in the option "Other", considered both, positive and negative impacts at the same time.

This generally positive perception aligns with the idea that the luxury market can bring economic benefits to the region. However, the concerns raised by the minority regarding exclusion and rising costs are significant, as they point to potential negative externalities of luxury development.

These issues may exacerbate inequalities within the community, particularly if economic benefits are not distributed equitably. The small but notable percentage of respondents who identified both positive and negative effects underscores the complexity of the luxury market's impact, where growth may bring both opportunities and challenges.

5.7.3 Contribution of the Luxury Market to Socioeconomic Development

The third question asked participants to evaluate how much the luxury market contributes to the socioeconomic development of the Alentejo. The majority (50.7%) believed it contributes "moderately," while 39.6% felt it contributes "significantly." A smaller portion (9.4%) thought the market contributes only "a little," and a negligible 0.3% stated it does not contribute at all.



Graphic 23- Participants' perception of to which extent the luxury market in the Alentejo region contributes to the socioeconomic development of the region. Own elaboration.

The responses indicate that while there is general agreement on the luxury market's role in socioeconomic development, most participants view its contribution as moderate rather than transformative. This suggests that although the luxury sector has potential, its impact on the region's overall socioeconomic landscape may be limited by factors such as infrastructure, community integration, and policy support, which are explored in subsequent questions.

5.7.4 Integration of Local Communities in Luxury Market Development

The fourth question explored whether local communities are being integrated into the development of the luxury market. The largest group of respondents (42.4%) felt that integration is happening "partially," while 24% were uncertain, and 23.6% believed the communities are "fully" integrated. A notable 10.1% felt that local communities are not integrated at all.

The fact that less than a quarter of participants see full community integration suggests that this is a significant area for improvement. The uncertainty expressed by 24% of respondents highlights a potential gap in communication or visibility regarding the involvement of local communities in the luxury market. Ensuring greater participation of local stakeholders could help to address concerns about social exclusion and promote more inclusive and sustainable development.

Is the luxury market in the Alentejo integrating local communities into its development?



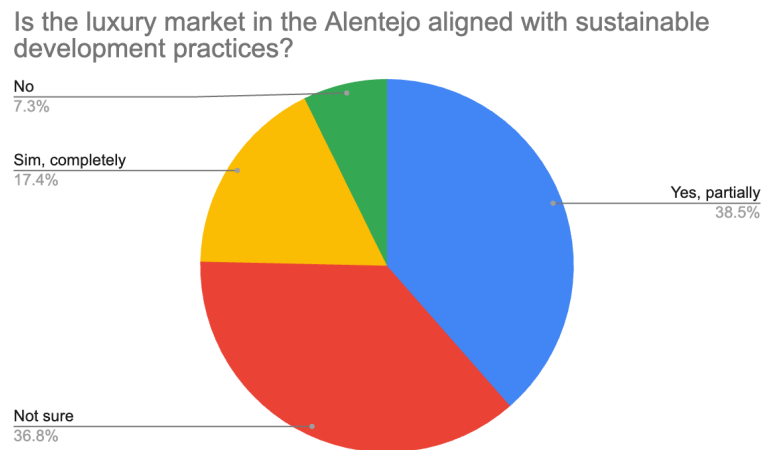
Graphic 24- Participants' views on if the luxury market in the Alentejo promotes inclusion and participation of local communities in its development. Own elaboration.

5.7.5 Alignment with Sustainable Development Practices

In the fifth question, participants were asked whether the luxury market in the Alentejo aligns with sustainable development practices. The most common response (38.5%) was "yes, partially," followed by 36.8% who were unsure, and 17.4% who felt the market is fully aligned with sustainability. Meanwhile, 7.3% believed the luxury market is not aligned with sustainable practices.

The significant level of uncertainty (36.8%) and the majority opinion that the market is only partially aligned with sustainability reflect broader concerns about the environmental and social impact of luxury development. These findings suggest that

sustainability is not yet a core focus of the luxury sector in the Alentejo, and there is room for improvement in adopting more comprehensive sustainable practices. Addressing this issue could enhance the long-term viability and global competitiveness of the luxury market while mitigating potential negative impacts on the environment and local communities.



Graphic 25- Participants' opinions on if the Alentejo is aligned with sustainable development practices. Own elaboration.

5.7.6 Key Challenges Facing the Development of the Luxury Market

The final question asked participants to identify the main challenges hindering the development of the luxury market in the Alentejo. The most frequently cited challenge (47.6% with 137 answers) was the "lack of adequate infrastructure," followed closely by the "lack of recognition of local culture" (47.2% with 136 answers) and the "absence of policies supporting the luxury market" (37.8% with 109 answers). In the option "Other", 6.5% of participants answered that they did not have enough knowledge to answer this question. Additionally, other challenges mentioned included the lack of skilled workers, unsustainable practices, and low wages.

These responses highlight several critical barriers to the development of the luxury sector in Alentejo. The lack of infrastructure and cultural recognition suggests that while the region has significant cultural assets, it may lack the physical and policy frameworks needed to support a thriving luxury market. The absence of government support and the need for better infrastructure are recurring themes, indicating that for the luxury market to grow, there must be greater investment in these areas. Additionally, the concerns about

unsustainability and low wages suggest that the market's growth must be balanced with fair labor practices and environmental stewardship.

We can then conclude that several key trends and correlations emerge from this section of the analysis:

1. **Moderate Optimism about Luxury Market Growth:** While respondents generally view the luxury market as a potential driver of development, the responses indicate only moderate confidence in its ability to deliver transformative change. This is consistent with the perceptions of moderate contributions to socioeconomic development and partial community integration.
2. **Challenges Related to Infrastructure and Policy:** The lack of infrastructure and supportive policies is seen as a major barrier to the development of the luxury market. This suggests that regional growth may depend on strategic investments in these areas, particularly in developing physical and institutional frameworks that can support luxury tourism, production, and marketing.
3. **Sustainability and Inclusivity as Areas for Improvement:** The uncertainty about the luxury market's alignment with sustainable practices, as well as concerns about community integration, reflect broader challenges in ensuring that development benefits all stakeholders. Addressing these issues could improve the luxury market's reputation and its long-term sustainability, while also fostering a more inclusive growth model.
4. **Cultural Value as a Potential Asset:** The frequent mention of the "lack of recognition of local culture" suggests that the luxury market may not be fully leveraging the region's rich cultural heritage. By better incorporating cultural value into luxury products, the Alentejo could enhance both its local identity and its appeal in the global market.

5.8 Analysis comparing the Douro and the Alentejo regions

The responses from this section of the survey reveal important insights into the luxury markets of Douro and Alentejo. Despite sharing agricultural potential and cultural heritage, the Douro and Alentejo regions differ significantly in geography, climate, and

socioeconomic factors. These differences require careful adaptation of development strategies. Adapting Douro's strategies to the Alentejo requires acknowledging these regional traits, as it might change the outcome of the policy or strategy. In this case, the suggestions for Alentejo's growth reflect a need for tailored strategies that build on its unique characteristics while learning from Douro's success in areas like marketing and wine exportation.

The overall sentiment indicates that the luxury market can play a crucial role in promoting cultural value and supporting sustainable regional development in both Douro and Alentejo.

5.8.1 Similarities Between the Luxury Market in Douro and Alentejo

The first question asked participants to identify the main similarities between the luxury markets in Douro and Alentejo. The qualitative responses show a clear consensus on a few central themes:

1. **Wine Production and Cultural Heritage:** Many respondents noted the strong connection to high-quality wine production as a key similarity. Both regions have internationally recognized wine traditions, and this is closely linked to their cultural heritage. The idea of offering exclusive tourism experiences around wine production, such as winery tours and gourmet dining, is seen as a unifying characteristic between Douro and Alentejo.
2. **Tourism and Exclusivity:** Both regions cater to high-end tourism, with an emphasis on providing unique and authentic experiences. Respondents highlighted luxurious accommodations, fine dining, and immersion in the cultural and historical heritage of the regions as key draws for tourists seeking exclusivity.
3. **Sustainability and Craftsmanship:** There is a shared emphasis on promoting local, artisanal products that reflect regional identity. Both regions are increasingly integrating sustainability practices into their luxury offerings, aligning with global trends that prioritize environmental responsibility.

The similarities identified suggest that both regions share a foundation in leveraging cultural authenticity, local craftsmanship, and premium wine production to attract a

luxury market. These aspects can be seen as the backbone of the luxury sector in both regions.

5.8.2 Differences Between the Luxury Market in Douro and Alentejo

The second question focused on identifying the key differences between the luxury markets in the two regions. A few distinct themes emerged:

1. **Geography and Product Focus:** Respondents frequently mentioned that the Douro region's dramatic, terraced vineyards and its specialization in Port wine set it apart from Alentejo, which is characterized by a flatter landscape and a broader range of agricultural products, including olive oil and cork. This geographical and product diversity gives each region a unique appeal in the luxury market.
2. **Development and Infrastructure:** The Douro region, with its longer history of international recognition, is perceived as more developed in terms of luxury infrastructure. It attracts more investments and tourists, particularly due to its wine-related tourism, such as river cruises and prestigious wineries. In contrast, Alentejo is seen as still emerging in the luxury market, with potential for growth but less developed in terms of international exposure and luxury experiences.
3. **Tourism Style:** Douro is associated with more structured luxury tourism centered around wine, while Alentejo is considered more rural and tranquil, offering an experience that blends nature, history, and cultural immersion. This difference in tourism focus creates a divergent appeal to different segments of the luxury market.

5.8.3 Lessons from the Douro: Opportunities for the Alentejo

The third question asked participants to identify areas where Alentejo could learn from Douro's luxury market development. The quantitative responses indicate strong support for the following areas:

1. **Marketing and Cultural Promotion:** 72.9% of respondents (210 people) identified marketing and cultural promotion as an area where Alentejo can learn from Douro. This aligns with the perception that Douro has done a better job of positioning

itself on the international stage, particularly through effective marketing strategies.

2. **Luxury Tourism:** 53.5% of respondents (154 people) suggested that Alentejo could benefit from focusing on luxury tourism, which has been a key driver of Douro's success. This includes developing more luxurious accommodations and unique, high-end experiences for tourists.
3. **Wine Exportation:** 46.2% (133 people) noted that Alentejo could learn from Douro's success in wine exportation, further emphasizing the importance of wine as a central product in the luxury market for both regions.

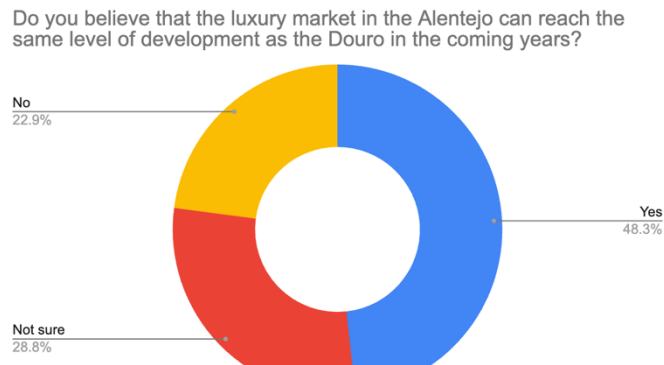
These areas point to a clear path for Alentejo's development in the luxury market, focusing on enhancing its international presence through better marketing, expanding its luxury tourism offerings, and leveraging its wine industry for greater export success.

5.8.4 Prospects for Alentejo's Luxury Market

The fourth question asked whether participants believe that Alentejo's luxury market can reach the same level of development as Douro in the coming years. The responses were somewhat divided:

- 48.3% said "yes", showing optimism about Alentejo's potential to grow.
- 28.8% were uncertain, indicating hesitation due to either lack of knowledge or uncertainty about the region's prospects.
- 22.9% said "no", reflecting skepticism that Alentejo can catch up to Douro, potentially due to the differences in current development levels and infrastructure.

This spread in opinions reflects the general uncertainty surrounding Alentejo's future, though there is a significant portion of respondents who are optimistic about its growth potential.



Graphic 26- Participant's perception on if the Alentejo can reach the same level of development as the Douro in the coming years. Own elaboration.

5.8.5 Adapting Douro's Strategies for Alentejo

The fifth question asked about specific adaptations of Douro's strategies for the Alentejo region to be taken, based on the participants' opinion. The qualitative responses indicate several key adaptations:

1. **Diversification of Products and Experiences:** Many respondents felt that Alentejo should not directly copy Douro's strategies but rather adapt them by diversifying its product offerings. For example, while Douro focuses heavily on wine, Alentejo could emphasize a wider range of agricultural products, like olive oil and cork, and offer more rural and cultural tourism experiences.
2. **Focus on Sustainability and Local Identity:** Respondents also suggested that sustainability should be central to Alentejo's development, aligning with the region's rural character and enhancing its appeal to luxury tourists who value authentic, eco-conscious experiences.

These suggestions highlight the importance of context-specific strategies, where Alentejo's unique strengths and characteristics are leveraged to complement its development efforts in the luxury market.

5.8.6 Strengthening Cultural Value through the Luxury Market

The sixth question focused on how the luxury market can strengthen cultural value in both regions, according to the participants' opinions. A key theme emerged:

1. **Preservation of Traditions and Authenticity:** Respondents frequently mentioned that the luxury market should promote the preservation of regional traditions, artisanal products, and local heritage. This includes supporting traditional wine and olive oil production, promoting certified products, and encouraging luxury experiences that allow tourists to immerse themselves in the regions' cultural identities.
2. **Economic Development through Cultural Promotion:** The luxury market is seen as a vehicle for sustainable economic development that can help preserve cultural heritage while providing economic opportunities for local communities. This interconnection between luxury and culture is viewed as essential for long-term regional growth.

5.8.7 Policies for Regional Development

Finally, the seventh question asked participants to suggest policies or strategies for enhancing the connection between the luxury market and regional development. Several key strategies were proposed:

1. **Investment in Luxury Infrastructure:** Respondents emphasized the need for exclusive, high-end infrastructure, such as boutique hotels and luxury resorts, that reflect and promote the regions' cultural heritage.
2. **Certification and Authenticity:** Certifying local products, such as wine, olive oil, and artisanal goods, was seen as crucial to reinforcing the prestige and authenticity of the regions' luxury offerings.
3. **Public-Private Partnerships:** The development of public-private partnerships was suggested as a way to create sustainable tourism infrastructure and ensure that local communities benefit from the luxury market's growth.

6 Discussion of the results and recommendations

The results gathered from the survey provide crucial insights into the luxury market dynamics within the Douro and Alentejo regions, allowing for a comparative analysis and highlighting several patterns and correlations related to regional development strategies, cultural value, and potential future growth.

6.1 Similarities between Douro and Alentejo's Luxury Markets

The responses indicate a shared understanding among participants of the key similarities between the Douro and Alentejo luxury markets, particularly in terms of wine production, cultural richness, and high-end tourism experiences. A significant number of participants emphasized the international recognition of wine from both regions, along with the focus on offering exclusive experiences that blend high-quality gastronomy, historic heritage, and artisanal products. Both regions are seen as prioritizing authenticity and exclusivity, elements that resonate well with luxury market consumers.

Additionally, the increasing emphasis on sustainability and local craftsmanship in both regions points to a growing trend where regional identity and ecological practices are integral to the luxury market.

The alignment between these two regions in terms of their cultural heritage, artisanal value, and sustainability demonstrates that both Douro and Alentejo are tapping into similar market drivers that cater to the luxury-seeking clientele. These trends suggest a strong cultural value embedded within their luxury offerings, which is key to both regions' appeal on the global stage.

6.2 Differences in Market Focus

While similarities were acknowledged, the participants also identified key differences in market focus. The Douro region is perceived to have a more established and internationally renowned luxury market, primarily revolving around wine tourism and Port wine production. Its geographic uniqueness, particularly the terraced vineyards and river cruises, offers a distinct experience that sets it apart from the more rural and tranquil appeal of the Alentejo. The Alentejo, on the other hand, is recognized for a broader range of luxury products, including olive oil and cork, with a more serene and

nature-oriented tourism experience. This distinction reflects the Alentejo's need to further develop its luxury infrastructure and marketing strategies to catch up with the Douro's more established presence.

This variation in focus not only highlights differences in geographic and product strengths but also signals a potential gap in the luxury tourism infrastructure that could be addressed in the Alentejo to foster more sustainable and comprehensive luxury market growth.

6.3 Opportunities for Alentejo to Learn from Douro

Participants highlighted that the Alentejo could benefit from adopting some of the Douro's successful strategies, especially in luxury tourism, wine exportation, and cultural marketing. A majority of participants (72.9%) indicated that the Alentejo could learn from the Douro's approach to marketing and promoting its cultural identity to enhance visibility on an international scale. Additionally, areas such as luxury tourism and wine exportation were frequently mentioned as crucial aspects where the Alentejo can draw inspiration from the Douro to boost its luxury market.

This observation points to an important strategic opportunity for the Alentejo to focus on marketing efforts that better communicate its unique selling points—authenticity, rural tranquillity, and cultural richness—to appeal to international luxury consumers. By developing sophisticated marketing campaigns and enhancing infrastructure in line with the Douro's successful model, the Alentejo could significantly improve its competitiveness in the luxury sector.

6.4 Potential for Alentejo's Market Growth

The question of whether the Alentejo's luxury market could reach the same level of development as the Douro in the coming years saw varied responses. Nearly half of the participants (48.3%) expressed optimism, believing that with the right strategies, the Alentejo could achieve this growth. However, a significant portion (28.8%) was uncertain, and 22.9% believed the Alentejo would not reach the Douro's level of

development in the near future. This divergence in opinion reflects both the potential and the challenges facing the Alentejo.

The Alentejo's perceived slower development highlights the need for targeted policies that address its infrastructural and marketing gaps, and promote the region's strengths more effectively. Although the Alentejo's luxury market may not yet be as mature as the Douro's, there is a clear opportunity for strategic development in areas such as exclusive tourism experiences and product diversification, which could enable it to close this gap over time.

6.5 Strategies for Adapting Douro's Approach to Alentejo

When asked about the adaptations required for Douro's strategies to be effective in the Alentejo, responses frequently mentioned the need for diversification of products, tailored luxury tourism experiences, and improved marketing efforts. Participants suggested that the Alentejo should focus on promoting its distinct characteristics—such as rural tranquility, cultural heritage, and artisanal production—rather than trying to replicate the Douro's wine-centric approach.

This feedback suggests that while the Douro's success offers valuable lessons, the Alentejo needs to carve out a differentiated niche within the luxury market that leverages its unique strengths. The focus should be on developing a luxury tourism model that aligns with the region's ecological and cultural identity while ensuring that it remains distinct from the Douro's wine-dominated offering.

6.6 Cultural Value as a Driver of Luxury Market Growth

The results reinforce the idea that cultural value plays a crucial role in driving the luxury market in both regions. Participants consistently emphasized that luxury tourism and products can strengthen the cultural identity of both Douro and Alentejo by promoting local traditions, artisanal craftsmanship, and regional authenticity. Many responses pointed to the need for luxury markets to not only commercialize these elements but also ensure their preservation and sustainability for future generations.

This correlation between cultural value and luxury market development aligns with the overarching theme of the research, indicating that the integration of local traditions and ecological practices into luxury products and experiences could serve as a sustainable model for both regions. By prioritizing cultural preservation within their luxury offerings, the Douro and Alentejo can continue to enhance their appeal to a growing segment of luxury consumers seeking authenticity and exclusivity.

6.7 Cultural Identity and Luxury Consumption by Bridging Perspectives Between Residents and Tourists in Douro and Alentejo: Policy and Strategy Recommendations for Regional Development

Participants offered numerous recommendations for strengthening the interconnection between luxury markets and regional development. Suggestions included investing in high-end infrastructure, promoting certification of local products, and fostering public-private partnerships to ensure sustainable growth. Many respondents underscored the importance of training local communities to participate in and benefit from luxury market opportunities.

The emphasis on infrastructure development, certification, and local involvement indicates that there is significant room for policy interventions that could accelerate the growth of both regions' luxury markets. These strategies also underscore the importance of aligning luxury market development with broader regional development goals, ensuring that the economic benefits of luxury tourism and product sales are shared with the local communities.

To deepen the examination of intercultural interactions in the Douro and Alentejo regions, particularly regarding how cultural identity shapes and is shaped by the luxury market, it is essential to analyze the discrepancies between residents' and tourists' views. This analysis can reveal how external cultural influences impact regional perceptions and contribute to the evolving luxury market dynamics in these areas.

The luxury market in the Douro and Alentejo is significantly influenced by the interplay of local cultural identities and external perceptions. Seo et al. (2015) discuss how luxury brand markets serve as confluences of multiple cultural beliefs, emphasizing that consumers navigate between global and local cultural contexts.

In the Douro and Alentejo, where traditional practices such as winemaking and artisanal crafts are prevalent, the luxury market must reconcile these local identities with the expectations of international tourists and luxury consumers. This negotiation can lead to a unique luxury experience that reflects both the authenticity of the region and the aspirational qualities sought by tourists.

Moreover, Dubois et al. highlight the psychological dimensions of luxury consumption, noting that various motives—biological, socio-psychological, and structural—interact to shape consumer desires. In the context of the Douro and Alentejo, local residents may view luxury consumption through the lens of cultural heritage and authenticity, while tourists might prioritize status and exclusivity. This divergence in perspectives can create tensions in how luxury brands position themselves in these regions.

For instance, while local producers may emphasize the artisanal nature of their products, tourists may seek luxury experiences that align with global trends, leading to a potential clash of values.

The concept of inconspicuous luxury consumption, as explored by Makkar and Yap, also plays a crucial role in understanding regional dynamics. Inconspicuous luxury, characterized by subtlety and understated elegance, may resonate more with local residents who value authenticity and cultural heritage.

Conversely, tourists may gravitate towards more conspicuous luxury items that signal status and wealth. This discrepancy can influence how luxury brands market their products and how local consumers perceive these brands. Understanding these nuances is essential for luxury brands aiming to cater to both local and tourist markets effectively.

Furthermore, the ethical considerations surrounding luxury consumption, as discussed by Bitane, reveal how moral identities shape consumer behavior (Bitane, 2019).

In the Douro and Alentejo, where community and tradition are highly valued, local residents may prioritize ethical consumption practices that support local artisans and sustainable production methods.

This contrasts with tourists who may be less aware of these local values and more influenced by global luxury trends. By fostering a dialogue around ethical luxury

consumption, stakeholders can bridge the gap between residents' and tourists' perceptions, promoting a more cohesive luxury market that respects local cultural identities.

The role of cultural values in shaping luxury consumption is further emphasized by the work of Σταθοπούλου and Balabanis (2019), who examine how cultural orientation affects perceptions of luxury value. In the Douro and Alentejo, cultural values rooted in tradition and community can influence how luxury is defined and consumed.

For instance, local consumers may prioritize products that reflect their cultural heritage, while tourists may seek luxury experiences that align with their own cultural backgrounds. This cultural interplay can lead to a richer understanding of luxury consumption in these regions, highlighting the importance of cultural context in shaping consumer behavior.

Additionally, the impact of globalization on luxury consumption cannot be overlooked. As luxury brands expand their reach into emerging markets, they must navigate the complexities of cultural identity and consumer expectations. The findings of Goenka and Thomas (2020) suggest that conspicuous consumption is often influenced by social acceptance and cultural norms

In these regions, where community ties are strong, luxury consumption may be viewed through a different lens than in more individualistic societies. This cultural context can shape how luxury brands communicate their value propositions and engage with consumers.

Tourism also plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of luxury in the Douro and Alentejo. As noted by Walters and Carr (2017), media representations of luxury can influence consumer behavior and expectations. Tourists visiting these regions may arrive with preconceived notions of luxury that differ from local understandings. By promoting local luxury experiences that highlight cultural authenticity and heritage, stakeholders can create a more harmonious relationship between residents and tourists, ultimately enriching the luxury market.

Overall, the survey results demonstrate a strong potential for both Douro and Alentejo to leverage their cultural and natural assets in the luxury market. While the Douro is more established, the Alentejo shows promise, particularly if it adopts a differentiated approach that highlights its unique rural and artisanal appeal.

The data reinforces the idea that cultural value is a significant driver of luxury market growth, and both regions could benefit from policies that promote sustainability, local craftsmanship, and strategic marketing. As such, the luxury market presents an opportunity not only for economic development but also for the preservation and promotion of regional identities.

6.8 Limitations

This study has faced some limitations. One notable limitation relates to the sample size, as the number of participants (288) may not fully capture the diverse perspectives or represent specific demographic groups within the Douro and Alentejo regions. Additionally, because survey responses were based on personal perceptions and opinions, there is a risk of subjective or biased answers, particularly on topics like cultural value and luxury.

Na important limitation of the open survey is the variation in the depth and completeness of the responses. Since participants were free to answer in their own words in some questions, some provided detailed insights while others gave shorter or less clear responses, which can complicate data interpretation. This variation, along with the time and effort required to categorize and analyze qualitative data, introduces challenges in drawing clear conclusions or identifying patterns.

Furthermore, the open-ended nature of the questions may have led to subjective biases, as different participants could have understood or interpreted the questions in various ways.

A further limitation arises from the study's regional focus, restricted to the Douro and Alentejo. Consequently, conclusions about regional development strategies may be limited in applicability to these regions and may not transfer directly to other areas with differing cultural and economic characteristics.

Another limitation involves the study's temporal scope. The data reflect a single point in time and do not consider future trends or changes. This restricts the study's ability to anticipate how the relationship between the luxury market and cultural value might evolve over time.

Lastly, external factors, such as macroeconomic conditions or regional public policies, were not thoroughly explored here, despite their potential to significantly impact the success of strategies similar to those used in the Douro when applied in the Alentejo.

7 Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to explore the interconnectedness between the luxury market and cultural value in the Douro and Alentejo regions, examining how these relationships impact regional development. The central objective was to determine if the successful development strategies utilized in the Douro could be adapted to the Alentejo, which shares similar cultural and geographical characteristics, to foster socio-economic growth through its cultural value. To achieve this, the study focused on several guiding research questions, offering a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between cultural value and regional development.

Primarily using quantitative methods, this study also referenced relevant literature to analyze external cultural influences on the Douro and Alentejo regions. Although the study did not include direct examination of intercultural dimensions through additional primary data, insights from existing research highlight the relationship between local identities and external factors, such as globalization, tourism, and social media. Understanding how these influences shape perceptions and practices is critical for contextualizing regional development.

Additionally, the role of intercultural education and cultural heritage in fostering community engagement and enhancing local pride emerges as fundamental. This broad perspective emphasizes the importance of integrating wider cultural dynamics into future studies to deepen the understanding of regional identities and their economic implications.

The survey responses indicated that cultural value is perceived as closely tied to regional traditions, heritage preservation, and the authenticity of local products in both regions. In both the Douro and Alentejo, cultural value is seen as a vital expression of identity and a driver of regional development.

However, while the Douro has successfully incorporated this value into its development strategies, the Alentejo faces challenges in fully leveraging its cultural potential. This finding addresses the first research question, confirming that cultural value is similarly defined in both regions, although their levels of integration into market strategies vary.

Further analysis showed that cultural value is a cornerstone of the Douro's successful development strategies. The emphasis on cultural heritage, especially through premium wine production and enotourism, has been integral to the region's growth. The luxury market in the Douro benefits from a rich cultural narrative that draws tourists seeking authentic experiences, thereby answering the second research question and affirming the successful integration of cultural value into the Douro's development strategies.

The findings also revealed that the Alentejo has considerable potential to capitalize on its cultural assets, particularly through culinary heritage, olive oil production, and the cork industry.

However, data suggests that the Alentejo has yet to establish a luxury market strategy as robust as the Douro's, largely due to limited tourism infrastructure and lower international visibility. These results support the third research question, underscoring the importance of cultural promotion in the Alentejo to attract luxury tourists, similar to successful strategies employed in the Douro.

Survey data confirmed that the Douro's cultural heritage significantly influences luxury tourism by combining wine traditions with scenic landscapes and exclusive experiences that attract high-end consumers. This outcome affirms that appreciation of cultural heritage is essential for drawing luxury tourists, thus effectively answering the fourth research question.

Regarding adapting the Douro's cultural strategies for the Alentejo, survey participants identified approaches such as increased promotion of local products, development of cultural itineraries, and establishing a strong regional brand focused on authenticity.

However, these strategies must be adapted to fit the unique characteristics of the Alentejo, rather than replicating the Douro model directly. This finding positively addresses the fifth research question, emphasizing the need for a customized approach to Alentejo's market.

Community involvement in preserving cultural value emerged as another key factor for sustainable regional development in both areas. Active local participation in traditions and the production of luxury goods strengthens regional identity. While the Douro has seen success in engaging its community, the Alentejo has opportunities to promote similar

engagement to support its luxury market development. This insight addresses the sixth research question, affirming the importance of community engagement in both regions.

Finally, the study demonstrated that the luxury market in the Douro significantly contributes to cultural preservation by driving demand for authentic and exclusive experiences. This demand incentivizes the maintenance of traditions and cultural practices, highlighting the luxury market's role in safeguarding cultural heritage. Consequently, the seventh research question is answered, confirming the luxury market's role in the Douro's cultural preservation.

In addressing the primary goal of this dissertation—evaluating the applicability of the Douro's development strategies in the Alentejo to stimulate socio-economic growth through cultural value—the findings offer a largely positive yet nuanced conclusion.

Secondary research further enriched these conclusions, adding insights on cultural and political dynamics that influence regional collaboration between the Douro and Alentejo. Although not directly derived from survey data, this contextual information is valuable for understanding broader factors affecting regional development.

A literature review highlighted essential patterns for how intercultural engagement and alignment of national policies with local contexts can foster sustainable development and enhance community participation in tourism.

Dewi et al. (2019) emphasize that government initiatives that encourage community engagement in tourism positively shape residents' perceptions and willingness to participate in development efforts. This aligns with intercultural theory, which argues that active involvement of local communities in tourism planning and decision-making bridges cultural gaps and fosters collaboration, ultimately leading to more sustainable tourism practices.

While the Alentejo can benefit from the Douro's approach, it must tailor these strategies to its unique context, emphasizing authenticity and regional identity. The Alentejo has the potential to build a competitive luxury market, but doing so will require infrastructure improvements, greater international visibility, and fostering community engagement in cultural preservation.

In conclusion, while the Douro's development strategies can be adapted to some extent for the Alentejo, it is essential that they respect and promote the region's unique cultural identity.

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9 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

Mercado de Luxo, Valor Cultural e Desenvolvimento Regional: análise do Douro e Alentejo



B *I* U

No âmbito da Dissertação para a conclusão do Mestrado em Estudos Interculturais para Negócios, do Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, foi realizado o seguinte questionário. Este questionário tem como objetivo explorar a interconexão entre o mercado de luxo e o valor cultural nas regiões do Douro e Alentejo, percebendo o seu impacto no desenvolvimento regional.

O questionário possui 32 perguntas no total e demorará cerca de 7 minutos a ser preenchido. As suas respostas ajudarão a compreender como estas interações podem ser usadas para promover o desenvolvimento económico e social em ambas as regiões.

Todas as respostas são anónimas e serão apenas usadas para fins académicos.

Email *

Valid email address

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1. Dados sociodemográficos



Description (optional)

1.1 Idade *

- <25
- 25-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- >55

1.2 Género *

- Masculino
- Feminino
- Prefiro não dizer

1.3 Região de residência *

- Douro
- Alentejo
- Other...

1.4 Nível de instrução *

- Ensino Básico
- Ensino Secundário
- Licenciatura
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento

2. Mercado de Luxo no Douro



Description (optional)

2.1. Quão familiarizado está com o mercado de produtos de luxo na região do Douro? *

- Muito familiarizado
- Moderadamente familiarizado
- Pouco familiarizado
- Não estou familiarizado

2.2. Participa regularmente em eventos ou compra produtos considerados de luxo no Douro? *

- Sim
- Não

2.3. Que tipo de produtos de luxo você considera mais representativos do Douro? *

- Vinho
- Artesanato
- Turismo de luxo (hotéis, restaurantes, etc.)
- Moda
- Other...

2.4. Como avalia a evolução do mercado de luxo na região do Douro nos últimos 10 anos? *

- Crescimento significativo
- Crescimento moderado
- Estagnado
- Em declínio

2.5. Na sua opinião, o mercado de luxo no Douro é impulsionado por: *

- Turismo
- Exportação de produtos (ex.: vinho)
- Mercado Interno
- Enoturismo
- Other...

3. Valor Cultural no Douro



Description (optional)

3.1. Qual é a sua opinião sobre a importância do valor cultural no crescimento económico do Douro? *

- Muito importante
- Moderadamente importante
- Pouco importante
- Não é importante

3.2. Na sua opinião, os produtos de luxo do Douro estão conectados às tradições e ao património cultural local? *

- Sim, estão fortemente conectados
- Moderadamente conectados
- Pouco conectados
- Não estão conectados

3.3. Na sua opinião, os produtos de luxo do Douro preservam e promovem o valor cultural da região? *

- Sim, fortemente
- Sim, mas de forma limitada
- Pouco
- Não

3.4. Considera que o valor cultural do Douro é um fator importante na promoção e diferenciação dos produtos de luxo da região?

*

- Sim
- Não
- Não tenho a certeza

4. Desenvolvimento Regional no Douro



Description (optional)

4.1. Acredita que o mercado de luxo pode ser um motor de desenvolvimento regional no Douro? *

- Sim, totalmente
- Sim, em parte
- Não tenho a certeza
- Não

4.2. Que impacto considera que o desenvolvimento do mercado de luxo tem na comunidade local do Douro? *

- Positivo (ex.: gera empregos, atrai investimentos, etc.)
- Neutro
- Negativo (ex.: aumenta os preços, exclusão social, etc.)
- Other...

4.3. Em que medida o mercado de luxo no Douro contribui para o desenvolvimento socioeconómico da região? *

- Contribui significativamente
- Contribui moderadamente
- Contribui pouco
- Não contribui

4.4. Considera que o mercado de luxo no Douro promove a inclusão e a participação das comunidades locais no seu desenvolvimento? *

- Sim
 - Parcialmente
 - Não
 - Não tenho a certeza
-

4.5. Acha que o mercado de luxo no Douro está alinhado com práticas de desenvolvimento sustentável? *

- Sim, completamente
 - Sim, em parte
 - Não
 - Não tenho a certeza
-

4.6. Quais são os principais desafios que identifica no desenvolvimento do mercado de luxo no Douro? *

- Falta de infraestrutura adequada
- Ausência de políticas de apoio ao mercado de luxo
- Falta de valorização da cultura local
- Other...

5. Mercado de Luxo no Alentejo



Description (optional)

5.1. Quão familiarizado está com o mercado de produtos de luxo na região do Alentejo? *

- Muito familiarizado
- Moderadamente familiarizado
- Pouco familiarizado
- Não estou familiarizado

5.2. Participa regularmente em eventos ou compra produtos considerados de luxo no Alentejo? *

- Sim
- Não

5.3. Que tipo de produtos de luxo considera mais representativos do Alentejo? *

- Vinhos
- Artesanato
- Turismo de luxo (hotéis, restaurantes, etc.)
- Moda
- Other...

5.4. Como avalia o potencial de crescimento do mercado de luxo no Alentejo nos próximos 10 *
anos?

- Crescimento significativo
- Crescimento Moderado
- Estagnado
- Em declínio

5.5. Na sua opinião, o mercado de luxo no Alentejo é mais impulsionado por: *

- Turismo
- Exportação de produtos (ex.: vinhos)
- Mercado interno
- Enoturismo
- Other...

6. Valor Cultural no Alentejo



Description (optional)

6.1. Qual é a sua opinião sobre a importância do valor cultural no crescimento económico do Alentejo? *

- Muito importante
- Moderadamente importante
- Pouco importante
- Não é importante

6.2. Considera que os produtos de luxo do Alentejo estão conectados às tradições e ao património cultural local? *

- Sim, estão fortemente conectados
- Moderadamente conectados
- Pouco conectados
- Não estão conectados

6.3. Na sua opinião, considera que os produtos de luxo do Alentejo refletem e promovem o valor cultural da região? *

- Sim, fortemente
- Sim, mas de forma limitada
- Pouco
- Não

6.4. O valor cultural do Alentejo contribui para a competitividade dos produtos de luxo da região no mercado global? *

- Sim
- Não
- Não tenho a certeza

7. Desenvolvimento Regional no Alentejo



Description (optional)

7.1. Acredita que o mercado de luxo pode ser um motor de desenvolvimento regional no Alentejo? *

- Sim, totalmente
- Sim, em parte
- Não tenho a certeza
- Não

7.2. Que impacto acredita que o desenvolvimento do mercado de luxo tem na comunidade local do Alentejo? *

- Positivo (gera empregos, atrai investimentos, etc.)
- Neutro
- Negativo (aumenta os preços, exclusão social, etc.)
- Other...

7.3. Em que medida o mercado de luxo no Alentejo pode contribuir para o desenvolvimento socioeconómico da região? *

- Contribui significativamente
- Contribui moderadamente
- Contribui pouco
- Não contribui

7.4. O mercado de luxo no Alentejo está a integrar as comunidades locais em seu desenvolvimento? *

- Sim
- Parcialmente
- Não
- Não tenho a certeza

7.5. O mercado de luxo no Alentejo está alinhado com práticas de desenvolvimento sustentável? *

- Sim, completamente
- Sim, em parte
- Não
- Não tenho a certeza

7.6. Quais os principais desafios que identifica no desenvolvimento do mercado de luxo no Alentejo? *

- Falta de infraestrutura adequada
- Ausência de políticas de apoio ao mercado de luxo
- Falta de valorização da cultura local
- Other...

8. Comparação entre Douro e Alentejo



Description (optional)

8.1. Na sua opinião, quais são as principais semelhanças entre o mercado de luxo no Douro e no Alentejo? *

Long-answer text

8.2. Quais são as principais diferenças entre as duas regiões em termos de mercado de luxo? *

Long-answer text

8.3. Em que áreas acredita que o Alentejo pode aprender com o Douro em termos de desenvolvimento do mercado de luxo? *

- Turismo de luxo
- Exportação de vinhos
- Artesanato e produtos locais
- Marketing e promoção cultural
- Other...

8.4. Acredita que o mercado de luxo no Alentejo pode atingir o mesmo nível de desenvolvimento que o Douro nos próximos anos? *

- Sim
- Não
- Não tenho a certeza

8.5. Na sua opinião, que adaptações específicas as estratégias de desenvolvimento do Douro *
precisam sofrer para serem eficazes no Alentejo?

Long-answer text

8.6. Como acredita que o mercado de luxo pode fortalecer ainda mais o valor cultural nas *
regiões do Douro e Alentejo?

Long-answer text

8.7. Na sua opinião, que políticas ou estratégias específicas podem ser implementadas para *
melhorar a interconexão entre o mercado de luxo e o desenvolvimento regional nessas
regiões?

Long-answer text
