Instagram as a network for the promotion and hypermediation of rural tourism: the case of *Aldeias Históricas*

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Abstract
Changes in the media ecosystem have led to transformations in communication languages, now in imaginary spaces like Instagram, even strengthening the hypermediation provided by social networks. The article presents a metric research on the use of the Instragram by the Portuguese initiative *Aldeias Históricas* in search of tourism promotion in the region. For the investigation, the InstaBro tool has been adopted, which offered information for a quantitative analysis, but also a qualitative interpretation. The results offer information about the importance of hypermediation in rural tourism promotion processes through digital communication.

Keyword: Communication, media ecology, social media, rural tourism, Instagram, hypermediation.

Content: 1. Introduction. Method. Hypermediation networks in rural tourism. 4. The Instagram as mediator. 5. Results. 5.1. Seasonal analysis of the volume of publications. 5.2. Use of Hashtags in social conversation and most used words. 6. Conclusions. 7. Bibliographical references.

1. Introduction

In the tourism sector, social networks are changing the paradigm of communication, changing the way people access information, plan and share their travels. On the other hand, they allow companies to interact dynamically and directly with the end user, allowing the adaptation of their activity to new realities, the evaluation of the level of satisfaction, the implementation of improvements and the dissemination of their offer. In this context, Instagram stands out as the social network that stimulates dialogue through the exchange of photographs, videos or experiences on a particular tourist destination or product.

However, several studies show that there is still a lack of knowledge about how rural initiatives can use social networks efficiently and effectively (Oliveira, Correia, & Fernandes, 2017; Hays et al., 2013). These social networks (Velázquez et al., 2018) gain strength from specific environments, among them the Instagram (Calderón, Lopez & Peña, 2017), which has the capacity to transfer messages from the image.

This article aims to contribute to a better understanding of the potential of social networks, in particular Instagram, for tourism promoters in rural environments. To ensure a solid basis for analysis, we use Instabro [**1**], a desktop tool for OSX that allows the capture of published images and metadata associated with users, hastahgs or locations in the database of the social network Instagram.

The collection and analysis of this information is important for the identification of initiatives and communication strategies suitable for companies, promoting the use of social networks as a means of support for their marketing activities.

2. Method

In order to find out the hypermediative role of Instagram and its influence, it is proposed to contrast the official and directed use made of a specific rural tourism project and its social perception through the georeferenced publications of each of the agents –localities-- that form part of the project.

Thus, for the development of this work, the case study has been chosen as a research method. This method, common in the social sciences, is considered suitable for exploratory research, especially if it addresses novel topics (Chetty, 1996; Yin, 1989). In this case, the study of the Instagram in the construction of mediation networks around a rural tourism project in Portugal would make it possible to know the dynamics present in this context and, with these, determine the potentialities and weaknesses of this social platform for the promotion of alternative destinations (Martínez Carazo, 2011).

Quantitative methods were used for the case study, such as calculation of interactions or content analysis. The monitoring of *online* presence, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of communication in social networks, can be done through a set of measurable variables that serve as a starting point to analyze the dynamics of the company in social networks (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). As these authors point out (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010), in order to evaluate the scope of social media communication

efforts, it is essential to take into account various metrics such as: number of comments and actions related to a publication, evaluations or recommendations, number of followers or fans, publications made by other users in relation to the entity, number of times a publication is viewed, and participation rates.

In this sense, the procedures indicated by Robert Yin (2010) have been followed for the development of this research:

a) The general definition of the case study project Field procedures (data sources and definition of analysis tools);
b) Well-defined research questions.

Aldeias Históricas de Portugal is a Tourism Development Association created in 2007 under the Community Support Framework II of the Operational Programme for the Central Region. The association aims to promote the tourist development of the Network of Historic Villages of Portugal, made up of twelve historic Portuguese villages located in the interior of the central region of the country, divided into ten municipalities. *Aldeias Históricas de Portugal's* objective is to promote and make profitable the tourist potential of the villages, contributing to the development of the territory where these villages are located.

In this way, the Association arises as an instrument of cooperation and connection, between tourist agents and local communities, which has given the interior of the region center of Portugal a strategy of development and valorization around the History, the Culture and the Patrimony.

This tourism initiative has a strong online presence through the website, which presents information on the network, integrated villages, as well as a wide range of tourism and leisure activities directly related to nature and cultural traditions of the region. The website contains direct links to the project's social media channels such as Facebook [**2**], Instagram [**3**], Twitter [**4**], Pinterest [**5**] and Youtube [**6**].

The twelve places that make up the network of *Historical Villages* are: Almeida, Belmonte, Castelo Mendo, Castelo Novo, Castelo Rodrigo, Idanha A Velha, Linhares da Beira, Marialva, Monsanto, Piódão, Sortelha and Trancoso.

To carry out the study, all the publications in the official Instagram @aldeiashistoricas account have been selected from the beginning of the activity in the account (17 May 2017) until 17 October 2018. A total of 18 months, a period that has been considered adequate for a study of this nature.

To complete the footprint of Aldeias Históricas in this social platform have been taken into account those publications issued with the publications in Instagram of the twelve localities that are part of the project.

The selection of the georeferencing to the detriment of the label of each city (example #sortelha), responds to the reliability of georeferenced data (the photograph must be taken in place to enable this geotag) and because some hashtags of place could lead to misleading results, matching the name of the city with other realities (for example, the village #Monsanto with the company of the same name).

For the data capture process the Instabro tool was used, which allows the extraction of the photographs from the platform, as well as the metadata associated with each of the photographs: time of publication, type and dimensions of the publication, volume of interactions (reproductions of videos, "I like" and comments), and the text (caption) that accompanies each of the publications (Martínez-Rolán, 2018a).

This tool has been successfully tested in previous studies, such as the one carried out by Martínez-Rolán (2018b) for the study of the use of flag emojis in the main tourist destinations.

The following analysis variables have been selected from among the various data provided by the tool:

‒ Timestamp: allows the inclusion (or exclusion) of the publication of the temporary annotation. It also provides data for plotting a temporal evolution.
‒ Volume of interactions: allows to estimate the interactions received in the publications.
‒ Caption: the text that accompanies the image. Contributes to determining the location being promoted/spoken of, as well as the most used hashtags, emojis and words (signifiers) and the language of the publication.

During the study period (17 May 2018 to 10 December 2018), a total of 309 publications have been recovered from the official @aldeashistoricas project account and a total of 32,773 geotagged in each of the twelve villages that are part of the network. Thus, the final study sample consisted of a total of 33,083 publications in Instagram.

Figure 1 - Methodological scheme of the research

Source: Prepared by the authors

For the data processing process, the Google spreadsheet was used, where the precise mathematical formulas were implemented to perform numerical calculation and extraction of specific metadata (*hashtags*, emojis, most used words) or the identification of languages through artificial intelligence resources (Google INC, 2018).

Given the magnitude of the data captured, the following research questions are proposed

- Are all villages promoted equally from the official account? How is official communication compared to the social communication generated in each of this network?
- Does the evolution of the publications show any kind of correlation between the instrumental targeted communication of the project and the social conversation about the different villages?
- To what extent does social conversation emanate from users? Could a relationship be established between the language used by users and the origin of tourist flows to Portugal?
- What kind of speech is made in the two kinds of conversations?

From these questions, we developed the study, taking into account the observation on the case and the tool for collecting platform metrics.

3. Hypermediation networks in rural tourism

Rural landscapes are increasingly valued in terms of tourism due to a number of factors, including identity, memories of the past, silence and the sounds of nature. In this way, they transmit serenity and provide rest, aspects whose demand has been growing in current tourism.

As Antunes (2017) points out, contact with the rural world offers visitors the opportunity to escape to a place where the quiet lifestyle predominates and whose daily life, devoid of noise and confusion, is not found in the big cities. In addition, it offers the possibility of reviving or rediscovering typical rural activities, making this territory attractive for urban populations seeking these spaces for recreational or leisure purposes.

On the other hand, rural tourism contributes to territorial innovation and to the economic development of areas with low population density, promoting job creation and the growth of the income of residents, as well as the growth of different local services, such as restaurants, crafts, recreation and leisure (Antunes, 2017).

The creation of a rural tourism experience involves a number of ingredients, such as hospitality, traditions, the specific physical characteristics of the destination (e.g. landscape), or tourist interaction with the local population (Kastenholz, 2012).

It should be noted that the development of rural tourism is directly related to the local community and, if well managed, tourism can be considered an important tool for social progress, minimizing the impacts of rural exodus and also allowing for significant changes in infrastructure including requalification of sites and housing (Antunes, 2017; Domareski-Ruiz et al., 2015). At the same time,

the creation of new tourist destinations makes it possible to preserve local traditions and customs, promoting the pride of the population in belonging to that place.

In short, the benefits of tourism are closely related to improving the living conditions of the resident population, contributing to the economic growth and development of the community, as well as to the protection and conservation of the tangible and intangible heritage.

Meanwhile, in times of increasing globalization of tourism, many rural destinations face a difficult process of survival, caused by various contemporary factors, such as: i) increasing competition among tourist destinations; ii) the change in the profile of the tourist; iii) the change in the intermediation system; iv) the emergence of networks of agents with innovation capacity; v) the integration of digital technologies as a source of information and the positioning of tourist destinations (Vera *et al*., 2011).

The profile of the current tourist has also changed. As Pinto (2009) points out, he has become more active and demanding in terms of quality; he is interested in nature and ecology; he travels long distances in search of new experiences and cultures. The author points out that today's tourists have a higher level of education and are constantly using digital technologies for research, booking and buying trips, as well as other digital services such as check-in. It should be noted that today's tourist brings with him a wide variety of mobile devices such as mobile phones, smartphones, tablets, netbooks, MP3 and GPS.

In this way, the figure of the traditional tourist vanishes and gives way to a new type of tourist, the social traveler (Minube, 2011), a multi-consumer tourist in constant search of full satisfaction, concerned about the environment, tempted by new tourist products and, above all, eager to discover what is authentic and traditional (Calvo, 2016).

For this social traveler it is not simply a matter of living the experience, but the fact of sharing it in social networks is part of that experience, especially when we are in the era of mobility (Amar, 2011) and that leads us to a sharing in real time. According to Minube (2011, p. 16), "sharing everything that happens to us in real time is part of our social DNA, so for destinations and establishments facilitating this process to the user is equivalent to making him the best ambassador to other potential customers.

In this sense, it is increasingly important that rural tourism destinations correspond to this constant change in habits and preferences on the part of the current tourist, reaching optimum levels of competitiveness and economic sustainability (Domareski-Ruiz *et al*. 2015; Ferreras, 2010).

As mentioned by several authors, rural areas suffer from economic and social disadvantages caused by various factors, such as rural exodus and demographic ageing, problems of distance and remoteness, lack of financial support and technological infrastructure to allow adequate access to the Internet (Antunes, 2017; Ferreras, 2010). In this context, the use of social networks can compensate for scarce resources by providing rural initiatives with borderless promotional communication and enabling them to reach a wider audience faster, cheaper and more effectively. For this reason, social networks are essential, both for the organisation and management of tourism and for its commercialisation (Fortunato & Garcez, 2016). Social networks also enable the creation of information exchange communities and brand awareness through online tools, generating differentiating levels of

information exchange and feeding the various communication supports (Kastenholz *et al*., 2012; Lorenzini *et al.,* 2011). As Marques (2011, p. 149) points out, in the field of tourism, image has an enormous importance and is often decisive for the choice of destination.

Generally, the consumer chooses his destination based on the image he builds in his mind, an image that can be conditioned by the media. However, it is important that the image perceived by the consumer responds to their needs and, above all, satisfies their expectations.

Thus, in the tourism sector, the media work a lot with the imagination and the advantages that tourists can experience (Altamirano, Marín-Gutierrez & Ordóñez, 2018), especially in a given rural destination. In this context, social networks are an excellent vehicle to build and disseminate a particular image of the region, providing a source of motivation to travel and a strong intermediary between the tourist and a rural destination.

4. The Instagram as mediator

In a society where the creation of new media spaces is a routine, it is essential to understand this new mediation, its languages and, obviously, its limits. In the scenario of the contemporary media ecosystem, Instagram emerges intensely as the new social mediator, where people begin to know each other, to communicate and to construct narratives that provide an expansion of reality to the cloud, with characteristics that change according to the user.

However, to develop this Instagram article as a space for mediation, it is necessary to understand what mediation is, a word adopted by contemporary common sense such as the relationship between citizens and the media, the mediated processes promoted by people, or even the processes promoted by entities with the participation of people. However, these definitions seem minimalist to us. For this reason, we have initially extended our observation to the ideas of Jesús Martín-Barbero, who warns us about them. For the author, mediation *"does not mean the dissolution of its objects in those of the social disciplines, but the construction of the articulations --mediations and intertextualities-- that make their specificity"* (Martín-Barbero, 1987, p. 217).

However, these proposals by Martín-Barbero, which date from a different historical and media moment than the current one, seem to us to be inappropriate for the contemporary ecosystem. In the current context, you can get a better understanding of the ideas of Carlos Scolari, for whom:

Even if we work with a narrow definition of the term, we can safely argue that there are many forms of communication. There is an intrapersonal communication with ourselves, just as there is a face-to-face (interpersonal) communication, with or without technological mediation, between two subjects. We have group communications and, perhaps the most studied throughout the twentieth century, we also find mass communications. At the beginning of the 21st century, new post-massive forms of communication are suspected. (Scolari, 2008, p. 32)

Without a doubt, Scolari rescues ideas from Martín-Barbero's proposals, transporting them to a contemporary reality. Faced with this, he proposes the idea of hypermediation, where there is a real mediation process that even comes from the citizen. According to Scolari (2008, pp.114-115):

If the theory of mediations spoke to us of the mass media and their contamination with popular cultures, hypermediations construct their scientific gaze from the new participatory spaces of communication and their irruption into the mass.

Faced with this concept, Instagram can be considered a perfect hypermediator, taking into account what Scolari proposes. However, other authors contribute to this idea. Lev Manovich (2017) has written a work on this social network, which enhances the reading of Joan Fontcuberta (2016) on the fury of images. For Manovich (2017), Instagram represents a transformation in the narratives of the image, bringing together in a single application the functions of recording, editing, treatment, sharing, narrative construction and photo gallery. It is a practically autonomous space with the help of a mobile device and an Internet connection so that there can be hypermediated processes. According to the author:

This unique media platform is a remarkable development in the history of modern media. It allows you to capture, edit and publish photos, view photos of your friends, discover other photos through search, interact with them (such as, comment, forward, post to other networks), engage in conversations with photo authors and others who left comments, create photo collections, change their order, etc., all from a single device. (Manovich, 2017, p.11)

However, this autonomy recognized by Manovich as something positive is observed differently by Fontcuberta (2016, p. 29), for whom "we have seen that both the massification of images and the reuse strategies of the devices with which these images are generated modify our relationship with space". It is an inverse look to that of Manovich, which is understandable from attending to the trajectory of both authorscomprehensible. Joan Fontcuberta is a professional photographer, accustomed to the relationship between photography, a relationship of time, of lifetime in search of the decisive moment. Lev Manovich, for his part, is a digital artist who recognizes in technology -especially in Instagram- its transforming potential although it changes characteristics that traditionally exist in photography.

Although both have opposing opinions, we can say that Instagram is undoubtedly a mediation environment. Or rather, hypermediation. The possibilities of narrative construction and its deployments are diverse, and may even mix narratives, intertwined neural nodes and networks of relationships. Mediation is reinforced not only by channels and networks, but also by the narrative diversity offered by Instagram.

However, it is necessary to investigate Instagram from a perspective present in the concepts of media ecology, specifically in Neil Postman's 1979 proposal. On that occasion, Postman defended media ecology as a theory that "*is concerned with understanding how communication technologies and techniques control form, quantity, speed, distribution, and direction of information*" (Postman, 1979, p.186). But to understand Instagram it is essential to consider what Paul Levinson (2015) proposed, for whom new media, as well as new narratives, complement, overlap and do not destroy each other. Thus, Instagram did not destroy the photograph, but transformed it. In other words, he adopted photography to build processes of hypermediation, where the pictorial narrative is the protagonist of everything.

In this sense the main objective of this study is to understand the role of Instagram in the context of rural tourism, in particular its potential in the expansion and reconfiguration of existing networks and in the creation of new ways of mediating communication and interaction between populations, practices and resources.

5. Results

According to the data analyzed, the first issue to which attention has been paid has been to determine the relevance given to each locality of the network of Historic Villages in terms of the number of publications issued from the official count, as well as how its popularity among the user community of Instagram.

Figure 2 - Number of @historical villages publications linked to each of the twelve networked villages

Promoción de cada aldea (n=309 publicaciones)
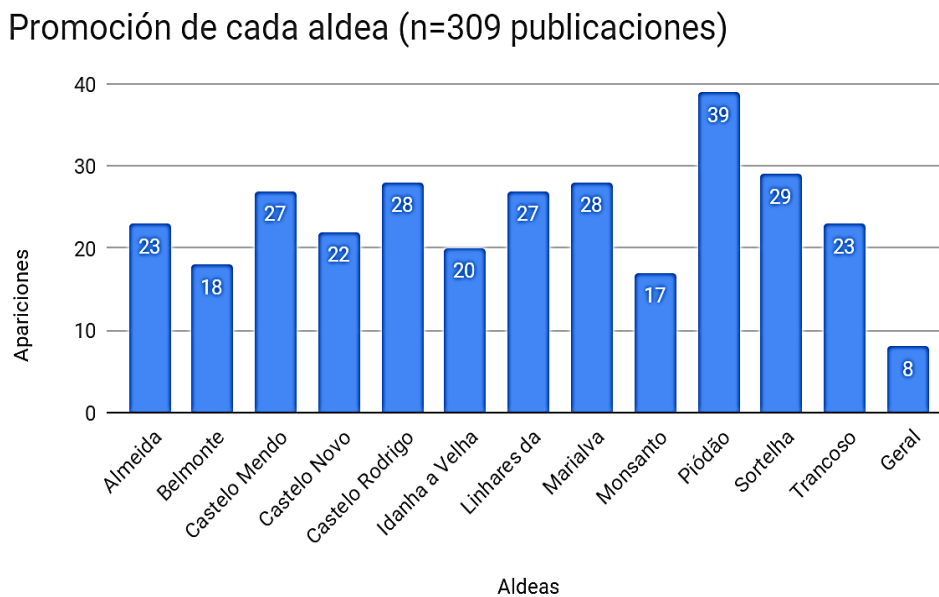
Source: Prepared by the authors

The majority of @aldeashistoricas publications (97%) promote one of the villages that are part of the project. Only 8 of the 309 status updates focus on administrative or global network issues. However, throughout the 18 months analysed, the volume of publications dedicated to each village in the project has not been completely even-handed.

The locality with the most publications was Piodão (12.6% of the state updates), followed by villages such as Sortelha, Linhares, Marialva, Castelo Rodrigo and Castelo Mendo, whose individual promotion concentrated around 9% of the official account publications (between 8.4% of Castelo Mendo and 9.7% of Sortelha). On the other hand, the attention to villages like Idanha a Velha, Belmonte or Monsanto by @aldeiashistoricas was lower holding between 5.5% and 6.5% of publications (Monsanto and Idanha a Velha, respectively).

Despite the fluctuation in the number of publications devoted to each particular village in the project, if one takes as a reference the average number of state updates (25 publications per 12 villages), some homogeneity in the treatment of each locality by the official project account can be noted.

The analysis of the geo-tagged publications reflects the existence of a significant gap in the presence of each village on this social platform. So while localities like

Piodão and Monsanto surpass 6000 publications in the period analyzed (concentrating 23% and 20% of the analyzed publications, respectively), Castelo Mendo, Linhares dey Marialva do not reach 500 user publications (holding 1.3%, 0.9% and 0.4% of geotags).

Figure 3 - Number of georeferenced publications in each of the twelve networked villages of @historic villages


Publicaciones (ubicación) en las Aldeas
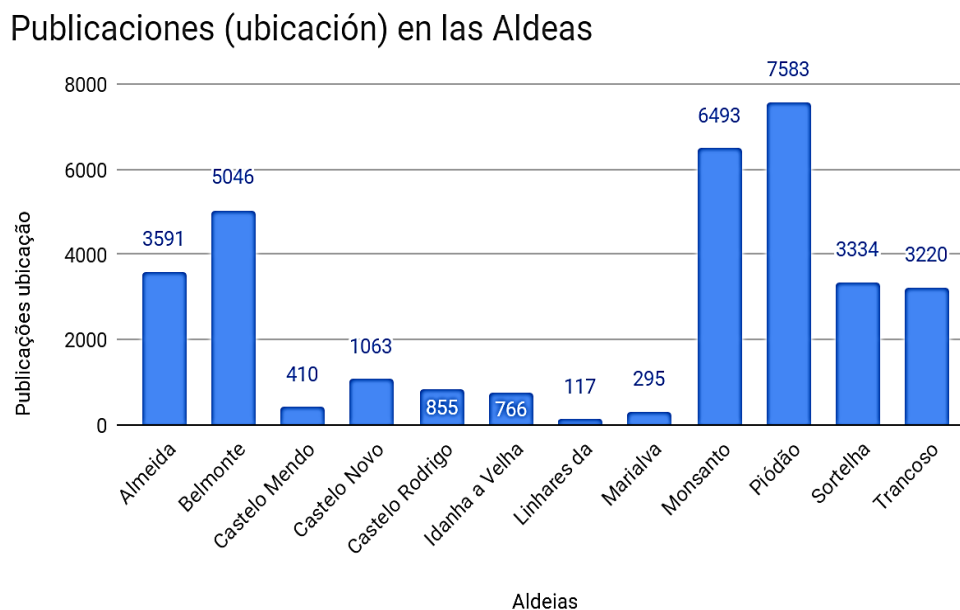
Source: Prepared by the authors

In this sense, divergences can be noted in the attention given to some of the villages by the official project account and the actual popularity among the user community. While villages such as Monsanto or Belmonte enjoy great popularity in Instagram that contrasts with the limited attention received by the official account (especially evident in the case of Monsanto), others such as Castelo Mendo or Castelo Rodrigo are over-represented in the @aldeiashistorias publications. This divergence between the institutional profile and the activity of the user community could suggest the existence of an online strategy for the promotion of lesser-known destinations within the network, a hypothesis that would be ruled out if attention is paid to the correlation in the volume of publications (official-community users) of villages such as Piodão, Almeida, Belmonte, Sortelha or Troncoso.

5.1. Seasonal analysis of the volume of publications

The analysis of the temporal evolution offers substantial data on the mediating role of Instagram. Although the project starts in May 2017, it is in 2018 when an important impulse is given to the use of this tool to promote the twelve villages that are part of the network. While in 2017 the month with greatest activity of the @aldeiashistoricas account was October, with 8 status updates, in 2018 in the period between March-October the number of publications stood around 30 monthly.

Figure 4 - Evolution over time of the volume of publications in the official @aldeiashistoricas account

Evolución de las publicaciones en @AldeiasHistóricas
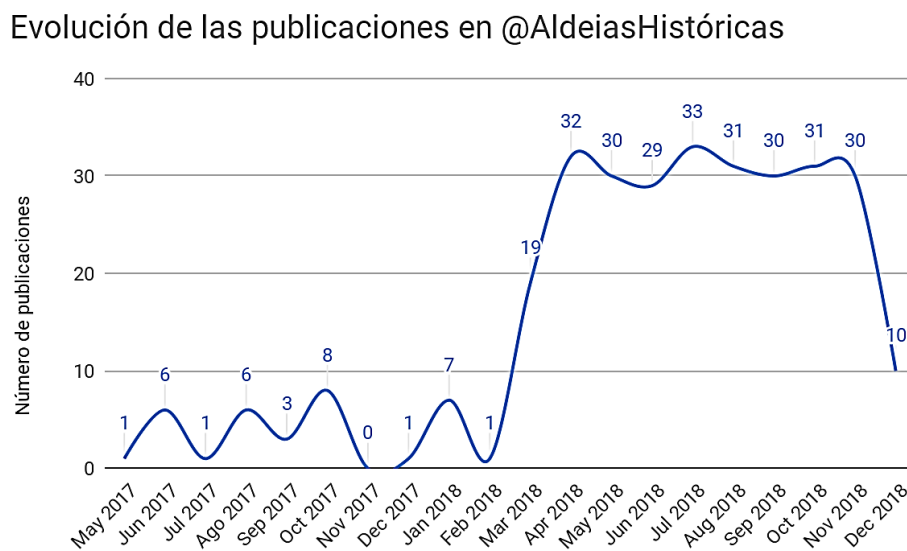
Source: Prepared by the authors

The number of monthly publications reflects the existence of a communication strategy in Instagram while, in addition to increasing the number of publications, have taken into account the periods with greater tourism demand such as Easter and the summer.

If we look at the number of geolocalized publications in general, we can observe a greater volume of publications in 2018, although the difference is not as pronounced in most villages. In this sense, the case of Almeida is noteworthy, a locality that from not having almost a presence in 2017, went on to achieve great notoriety until it became the leader in the number of geotagged publications in August 2018. This increase in the popularity of this village coincides with the greater intensity of publication of the project's parent account.

Regarding the evolution during the study period, it can be observed that fluctuations in the number of geotagged publications can be related to conventional tourism flows. Thus in the summer season (July-September) an increase in the number of geolocalized publications can be observed, especially patent in August 2018, while in January 2017 this falls completely.

If it is assumed that some of the geo-labelled publications are issued by visitors, it can be pointed out that tourism in historic villages has a conventional temporal distribution, with annual maximums in summer. However, the historic villages project is far from the seasonality of other destinations, as can be seen in the continued presence of visitors in other months of the year, coinciding with other holiday periods or holidays (carnivals, Easter, and even Deceased).

This temporary distribution of publications issued from the villages could indicate that this rural tourism project primarily attracts local visitors. A hypothesis that seems to be confirmed of paying attention to the language of publication.

Figure 5 - Temporal evolution of the volume of georeferenced publications in each of the twelve villages in the @historic villages network
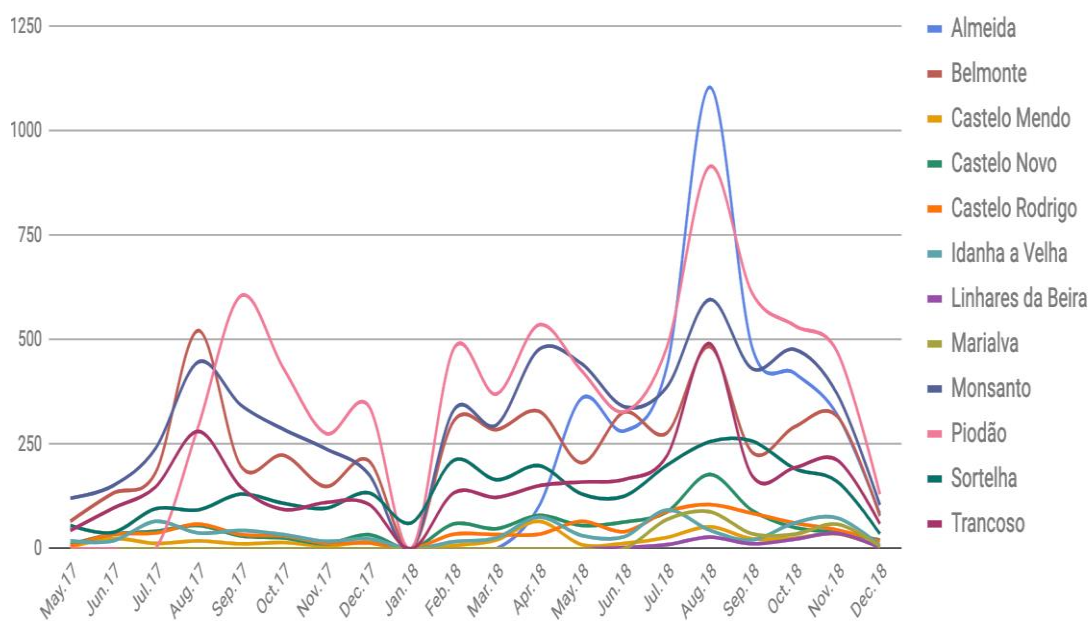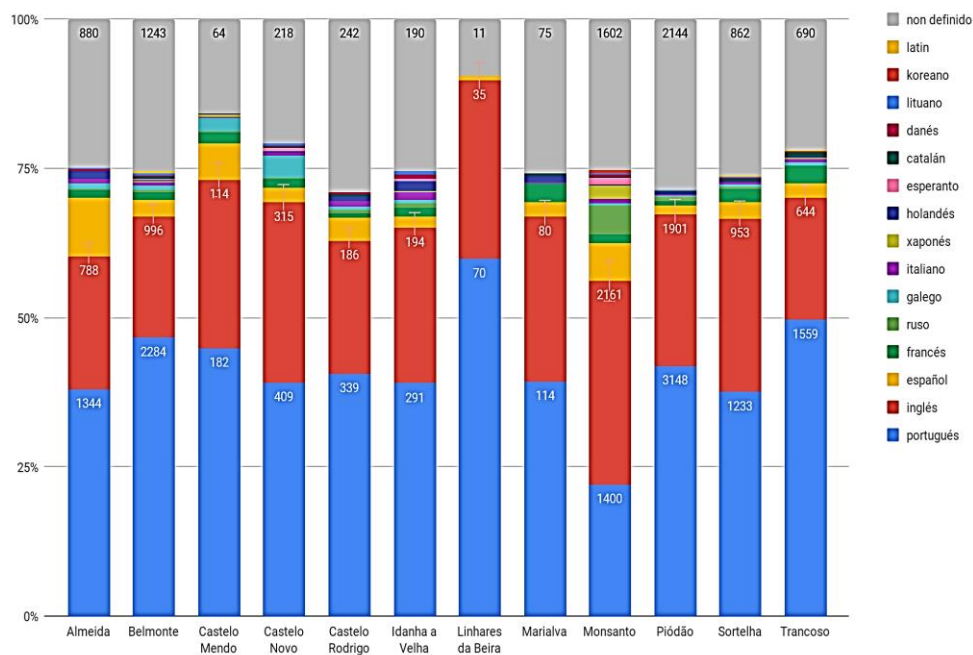

Source: Prepared by the authors

In order to determine the possible tourist impact on the locations of the Historic Villages network and, with this, the origin of the visitors, the language of the publications issued in the different villages of the project was analyzed. As might be expected, Portuguese is the majority language in almost all locations (with the exception of Monsanto) although, except in the case of Linhares da Beira, it does not exceed 50% of georeferenced publications.

The second most widely used language among the sample publications is English, the first in the case of status updates from Monsanto. The use of this language ranges from 20% of publications issued from Trancoso to 34% of Monsanto. The fact that a third of the publications are in English is very significant given that it refers to the existence of foreign tourism as well as to the international vocation of visitors, with the use of the language par excellence of this social platform (both texts and hashtags).

Spanish is the third most used language by publications, although its use fluctuates between 1% and 10% of the state updates according to the village. Thus, the volume of publications in this language is clearly higher in destinations such as Almeida, Monsanto or Castelo Mendo than in places such as Linhares da Beira or Marialva. Significant divergences in the use of Spanish may lead to a greater notoriety and attractiveness of some of the project's villages for/among Spanish tourists. Thus, although the presence of other languages of the Spanish state - such as Galician or Catalan - is practically residual in the sample of publications, this is especially evident in destinations such as Almeida, Castelo Mendo or Castelo Novo (the latter of great interest to Galician speakers).

Figure 6 - Languages identified in the georeferenced publications of the twelve villages in the network of @historic villages

Source: Prepared by the authors

After Spanish, the language with the greatest presence in geo-tagged publications was French, with a more or less similar presence in all the sample destinations. The incidence of French visitors in Portugal, in many cases descendants of emigrants, is evident in the projection of the different historical villages in Instagram both from the perspective of the users and the agents involved in the production and promotion of tourism.

Finally, Russian should be pointed out as the fifth language with the greatest incidence in the publications analysed. Although this language has a very uneven presence, it takes on special relevance in status updates issued from destinations such as Monsanto.

While it has not been possible to define language in one in four publications for reasons as diverse as the absence of a text accompanying the image ("caption" of metadata) or the exclusive use of hashtags, the data collected from the language is consistent with Portugal's tourist registers.

5.2. Use of Hashtags in social conversation and most used words

The hashtag, a fundamental element of social labelling or folksonomy, constitutes a vertebrating element in social networks. Their use in Instagram is normalised and, given their significant and significant character, they have been considered of interest for the analysis and comparison of the official communication of the project -through the @historical villages account- and the publications issued by other agents and users from the different localities (georeferenced publications).

Figure 7 - Hashtags most employed in @aldeiashistoricas publications
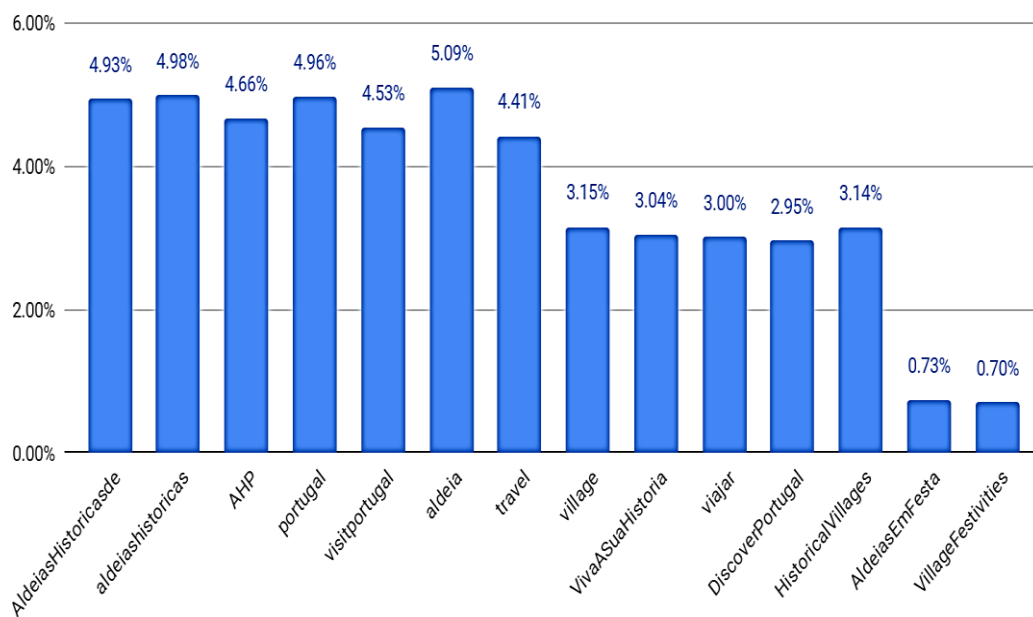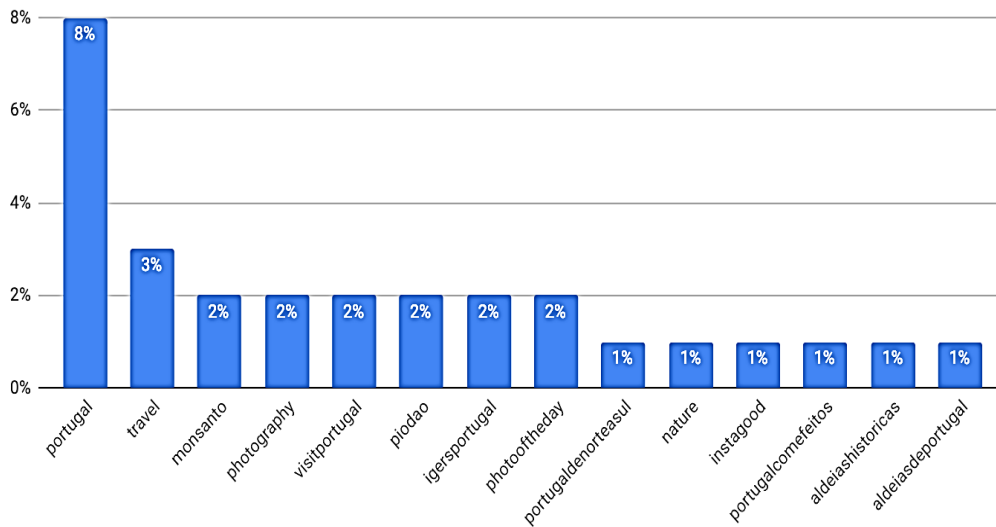

Source: Prepared by the authors

The hashtags most used by the official account @historical villages are related, on the one hand, to the product it offers (historical villages, portugal, aldeia, village, history) and on the other hand to the tourist essence of the project and its external promotion (visitportugal, travel, discoveringportugal).

Regarding the social conversation around the different localities that form part of the project, represented by the georeferenced publications, the most frequent labels refer to tourist aspects (Portugal, travel, visitportugal, portugaldenorteasul), to the project (aldeiashistoricas, aldeiasdeportugal) which reveals certain knowledge on the part of the users, and to the very nature of Instagram (photography, igersportugal, instagood, portugalcomefeitos). The use of habitual *hashtags* in Instagram and the follow-up of internal dynamics of operation of this platform, constitute an indicator of the participation of experienced users in the social conversation.

Figure 8 - Most used Hashtags in the georeferenced publications of the twelve villages in the @aldeiashistoricas network.

Source: Prepared by the authors

In order to complete the information provided by the hashtags, an analysis was carried out of the most used words in the texts of the status updates in Instagram. This quantitative analysis made it possible to determine the focus of the publications issued around the project or the different locations that make it up.

Table 1 - Most used words in @aldeiashistoricas publications

Word	No. of appearances	on sample
aldeia	43	3%
histórica	33	2%
castelo	26	2%
aldeias	18	1%
festa	18	1%
♪♫✂□□🎭□	16	1%
caminhos	14	1%
históricas	13	1%
historical	13	1%
semana	13	1%

história	11	1%
detalhes	11	1%
village	11	1%
history	9	1%
dia	8	1%
castles	8	1%
cores	7	0%
festivities	7	0%
alma	6	0%
aventura	6	0%
portugal	5	0%
gastronomia	5	0%
tarde	4	0%
ruas	4	0%
festas	4	0%
sol	4	0%

Source: prepared by the authors. n=7,704 words

Within the words with more presence in the vertical communication of Historical Villages of Portugal, through its account in Instagram -@historical villages-, those identifying the project (villages, villages, village), its rural and historical character (paths, historical, historical, castles), about its leisure offer (gastronomy, festivities, festivities, festa, sun, cores, ...) and even emojis about the feelings they arouse.

Table 2 - Most used words in the georeferenced publications of the 12 villages of @aldeiashistoricas

WORD	NO. OF APARITIONS	ON SAMPLE
portugal	1674	3%
monsanto	854	1%
castelo	715	1%
aldeia	669	1%
piódão	614	1%
village	522	1%

belmonte	502	1%
PT	474	1%
almeida	472	1%
aldeias	384	1%
sortelha	369	1%
trancoso	258	0%
piodão	249	0%
histórica	248	0%
beautiful	247	0%
históricas	222	0%
serra	194	0%
castle	193	0%
medieval	180	0%
❤☐	176	0%
foto	173	0%
villages	170	0%
xisto	168	0%
vida	166	0%
houses	153	0%
☺	149	0%

Source: own elaboration. n=191.742 words

On the other hand, in georeferenced publications, in addition to their own locations, there are frequent mentions of the location (Portugal, the emoji of its flag "PT"), its rural and historical character (village, aldeias, serra, houses, historical, medieval, castelo), but also the positive aspect of the experience. So are frequent the use of terms such as beautiful or emojis as the heart "❤☐" or the love face "☺".

The analysis of content developed has allowed pointing out a certain confluence between the institutional communication of the project, conveyed through the @aldeiashistoricas account, and the social conversation around the different localities of the project. Although users place special emphasis on the location of their experience -country and/or locality- as opposed to the global nature of the @aldeiashistoricas publications, it is possible to point out the interest of both communication flows in highlighting the distinctive elements of the experience -rural and historical tourism- and its enjoyment. An enjoyment that users usually communicate through emojis, given its ability to condense complex

expressions into a simple visual representation, as well as the uses and customs of writing on social networks.

Figure 9 - Emojis máis empregados in the @aldeiashistoricas account

Source: Prepared by the authors

The important presence of emojis as units of expression within the publications of the exhibition -both the institutional account and other users- added to their relevance in the daily language of Instagram has led to extend the analysis of caption content to these graphic codes.

In the case of the official account publications, the most frequent use of emojis related to the type of tourist and leisure offer in the different villages of the project can be highlighted. Thus, it is possible to observe the use of emojis related to sport activities (cycling), to gastronomy (eating, drinking), to the playful-festive offer (party, music, theatre) or to nature (with different types of flowers).

The use of emojis has been more profuse in georeferenced publications, given the more informal nature of communication, as well as a greater adaptation of users to the platform. In this sense it is possible to point out a greater use of those emojis that make reference to the own experience and enjoyment of the tourist destination, indicating a greater frequency of positive feelings (different types of heart, face with samples of affection), to the own dynamics of the social network (camera, geolocation pin) or to the nature of the experience (historical building, mountain, sun...).

In spite of the divergences in the use of these visual codes between the official account and the social conversation, it is remarkable to point out the use of the emojji "❦" in the publications of the sample. This emoji is very common in the status updates of the official account @aldeiashistoricas, as a separator of the text in Portuguese and English. However, it also appears frequently in georeferenced publications issued by users. The appearance of this emoji in the social conversation reveals not only

the hypermediation of Instagram, but also the symbological and contextual appropriation of its meaning.

Figure 10 - Emojis most used in the georeferenced publications of the 12 networked villages

Emojis máis empregados nas ubicações georreferenciadas
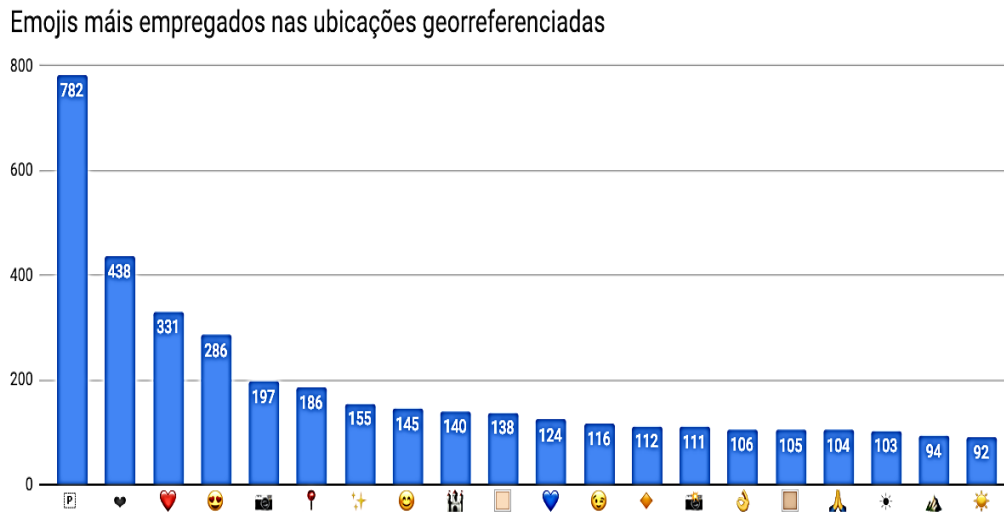
Source: Prepared by the authors

6. Conclusions

A major challenge for rural tourism development is to satisfy different audiences seeking different experiences, to understand the motivations, expectations and individual perceptions associated with this experience. In this context, online presence monitoring is an essential tool to understand demand, evaluate the effectiveness of communication, find the best way to interact with the consumer, encourage discussion and involve it in a collaborative process of exchange of ideas and co-creation of new tourism experiences (Evans, 2010).

The study proposes an analysis between two very different types of communication, but which suggest points of convergence and hypermediation: on the one hand, there is perfectly directed, segmented and professionalized communication on the part of the @historical villages project. It is a top-down communication that contrasts with the horizontal social conversation found in the georeferenced publications of the twelve villages that are part of the project.

The points of convergence appear in the words used, which suggest tourist aspects and activities that can be carried out in the villages, such as the historical aspect, gastronomic activities and quiet sporting activities such as hiking or cycling.

The data seem to indicate a correlation between the promotion of communication through Instagram in the official account and the increase in summer publications in the villages of the project, as well as

the presence of languages other than Portuguese such as English, Spanish, French and, to a lesser extent, Russian, which point to the tourist origin of the users of Instagram in these villages.

The projection of tourist enjoyment on social networks and, especially in Instagram, has led to the codification of the different destinations in a series of texts and images, also emojis, which constitute memes. The exacerbation of positive feelings aroused by a given experience is often common in the expressions of users in Instagram (Coelho, 2016; Manovich, 2016) and can be of interest to the brands and tourist destinations themselves to enrich their online strategy and arouse the interest of their audience through personal and "real" experiences. In the same way, the effort made by users to adapt to the language of Instagram, as well as to its operating dynamics (hashtags and emojis) reflect the interest in being part of a community and sharing its codes, an issue that represents an opportunity for brands both to integrate themselves into the social conversation, adapting their contents, and for the expansion of their message among a user community eager for contents.

Despite being an exploratory study, the use of metadata to identify strategies, actions and tourism analysis in Instagram seems to be a trend that will be repeated and extended in new work. In short, we can say that we observe a commitment by moderators to a consistent and dynamic mediation strategy, which has expanded the number of publications and sought to share visually attractive, relevant and unique content. This strategy has been important to know the interests of users and promote the impact of the initiative on social networks.

However, the level of user involvement with content and user proactivity is still low. In this context, the use of participant incentive strategies could be beneficial in terms of promotion and collaboration from the participants.

Although the results presented here are not generalizable, as there are limitations of the sample, we assume that it constitutes a contribution to the understanding of the practices of the use and modernization of social networks in the process of territorial innovation. We hope that in the future there may be other studies on regional innovation initiatives that allow a collection of data on social networks in order to extract recommendations for the effective creation and consolidation of mediation and networking strategies. However, we can point out that the use of narratives by images is becoming more and more consolidated, especially in the sense of translating localities where visual testimony is of great importance. That is tourism. That is the trip. That is territorial innovation. This is the function of the Instagram in the contemporary media ecosystem.

Notes

1] Available in https://datastills.com/instabro/. Accedido en 10/06/2019.

[2] Available in https://www.facebook.com/ALDEIASHISTORICASDEPORTUGAL. Accedido en 12/06/2019.

[3] Available in https://www.instagram.com/aldeiashistoricas/. Accedido en 12/06/2019.

[4] Available in https://www.instagram.com/aldeiashistoricas/. Accedido en 12/06/2019.

[5] Available in https://pt.pinterest.com/aldeiasportugal/. Accedido en 12/06/2019.

[6] Available in https://www.youtube.com/user/AldeiasHPortugal/. Accedido en 12/06/2019.

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