

Sport Tourism: Regional Promotion Strategies^{‡F}

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Abstract

The main purposes of this paper are (i) to analyze the regional promotion strategies of the UEFA Euro 2004 and (ii) to contribute for the improvement of planning and implementation strategies of tourism marketing at regional level. Data regarding these strategies were collected and synthesized. We verified if these strategies match some of the theoretical issues of promotion and tourism marketing.

Despite the fact that already many studies have been made, internationally, on the impact of sport events, the present study contains something new as it introduces an *ante* analysis on the regional promotion strategies of major sport events.

Unlikely, the results show that no specific and integrated regional promotion strategy was pursued, and no substantial additional financial effort was made. In what concerns the private regional tourism agents, no promotion could be found. The main tourism promotion competition came from across the border, with dynamic promotion actions of the nearby Spanish regional tourism responsables.

Key-words: UEFA Euro 2004, tourism, promotion, marketing, regional, Minho, Portugal, Spain and major sport events.

JEL-Classification: L83, O18, R11 and R58.

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Introduction

A lot has been said about the hosting of the European Football Championship 2004 in Portugal (UEFA Euro 2004). To lecture on organization costs or profits of the event is easy. The great majority lacks scientific proof. The only *ante* dissertation on the UEFA Euro 2004 was the BDO Binder & Co (1998) study, entitled "European Championship of Soccer 2004: economic and financial impact", esteeming the *stadia* construction costs in approximately 660 million euro, including a 400 million euro public aid (central and local governments).

The present paper contains an innovative approach as it represents an *ante* analysis on the regional promotion strategies using the UEFA Euro 2004. This paper intended to accomplish three main goals:

1. To collect and synthesize data regarding regional promotion strategies;
2. To verify if the chosen strategies were in line with theoretical issues in promotion and tourism marketing;
3. To promote planning and implementation knowledge of tourism marketing strategies at regional level.

The first step was to do field research, in order to research information on existing regional strategies, so we had enough data for empirical data discussion.

Taking advantage of the this research in future approaches, a comparative analysis may be accomplished within a comparative framework between what was planned and what were the Portuguese results in terms of tourists promotion.

Theoretical Framework

When analyzing the regional promotion strategies accompanying the Portuguese UEFA Euro 2004 hosting, firstly it becomes necessary to accomplish a theoretical framework on the potential economic impacts of sport events.

The EXPO 98 event organization was the last major event taking place in Portugal. It was evaluated by an economic impact study (Basílio 2002), intending to “esteem the EXPO 98 effect, in terms of tourism, over the Portuguese economy” (*ibidem*, p. 3). The study bases on expense estimates of tourism consumption without the inhabitant consumption and in data on the foreign visitors, since they allowed the researchers to distinguish national tourism consumption from foreign one.

In the table 1, the numbers of foreign visitors for the years 1995 to 2000 are presented. As it might be seen in the table, the variation rate for the year 1998 was considerably higher than in former years.

Table 1
Evolution of the number of tourists that entered in Portugal

Tourists		
Year	Number	Variation Rate (%)
1995	9628700	
1996	9730200	1.1
1997	10172400	4.5
1998	11295000	11.0
1999	11632000	3.0
2000	12096700	4.0

Source: Basílio, P. (2002, p.6)

Basílio (2002) also refers two positive effects: the external promotion of Portugal and the production of social facilities. In relation to the promotion associated to the event, the author concluded that the occurrence of the EXPO 98 had a positive effect within tourists’ source countries. In terms of the renewal and building of new social facilities, these would be a factor of attraction not only for foreign visitors, but also for nationals.

In the evaluation of non-economic impacts, the scientific literature is scarce and poorly developed. The main cause is related to its main evaluation techniques, e.g. cost-benefit and input-output analyses, as where it refers to the quantification of external effects (externalities), mainly of intangible effects, as they are difficult to catch hold. In

spite of this fact, this type of impacts can be structured in physical, social, political, development and image impacts (Chapin, 2002).

The problem in organizing the evaluation of non-economic impacts was also felt by Huchon et al. (2002) in their image impact studies related to several sport and culture events. These authors refer that "the organization of a great event covered by international media results in the creation, transformation and improved valuation of a city's image", giving the example of the World Football Championship 1998, in France, that, according to these authors, allowed the city of Paris to rejuvenate, linking to cultural values. The same authors commented: "it [EXPO 98] contributed to the prestige of a country [Portugal] that lacks of international projection." They also refer to negative impacts, as they mention the cases of the Olympic Games of 1996 (Atlanta, USA) and of the World Exhibition of 2000 (Hannover, Germany), that worsened the image of these countries. As it stands out of the studies led by Huchon, the correct definition of marketing strategies is critical for the success of an event, chiefly the mean definition in terms of process and promotion.

Malveiro (1995, p. 15) it defines Marketing as "a management philosophy allowing to produce mutual satisfaction among good or service producers and its consumers or users." According to this author, a marketing strategy is composed by four variables: price, product, distribution and promotion. Malveiro considers that a promotion process will have to pass four phases:

1. Identification of the target-public
2. Determination of the communication aims
3. Message planning
4. Communication means selection

Brigs (1999) studied the distinctiveness of the tourism promotion, suggesting that tourism promotion is suitable to be promoted by marketing instruments, meaning a communication process with selected target-markets. Brigs indicates different types of promotional activities: printed material, public relation, advertising, internet, direct mailing, participation in tourism business fairs and joint promotion with other organizations. For the choice of the instruments promotional, Brigs considers the existence of two determinants: target-markets and budgeting – the target-markets

distinguish the pull strategy, consumer driven, and a push strategy, travel agencies industry driven.

Farhangmehr and Sá (2004) researched on (i) the conditions under which the marketing planning can be implemented with success and (ii) the main problems that appear in the implementation of a marketing strategy. The studies detected a gap among planning and what was actually implemented, because there is "a certain predisposition not to implement without a certain amount of improvisation", in other words, to base marketing decisions in site aspects.

Sahittal and Wilemon (1996), quoted by Farhangmehr and Sá (2004), already achieved a identical conclusion, concluding that marketing implementation is more effective when planning responsibilities are undertaken jointly. These conclusions indicate that it is fundamental that organizations dedicate a special attention to the linkages among planning formulations and actual completion. Marketing activities do not comply with "improvisation".

Sahittal and Wilemon (1996) stated that less than 20% of studied companies develop official documents specifying their marketing plan components: market, customer, positioning, product decisions, price, promotion and distribution aims.

According to Hooskin and Wood (1993), only 15% of the plans are actually implemented. Farhangmehr and Sá (2004), indicates several difficulties that put in cause the efficiency of this process:

- i) Fragile executive and top management back up
- ii) Lack of planning plan
- iii) Lack of vertical management support
- iv) Planning terms confusion
- v) Numbers instead of written aims and strategies
- vi) Too many details, being impossible to identify strategic key-subjects
- vii) The plan accomplishment is seen as an command and not as a management tool

- viii) Partition of strategic and operational planning, driving the global management system to collapse
- ix) Failure to integrate marketing planning in the total planning system of the organization

In recent years, marketing strategies of tourism bodies grew into national or regional approaches. Costa and Bernardo (1998, p.22) argued that they developed an "analytic work to positioning the Portuguese tourism at international level, trying to deepen and to clarify concepts to define a new tourism marketing strategy and an organizational model that allows its field implementation." These authors enhance the importance of tourism in the national economy, boosting promotion as one fundamental element in Portuguese tourism competitiveness. The need to articulate promotion policies is also referred to product, price and distribution, in other words, the tourism marketing has to obey to a marketing-mix as any other product too.

The existing supply maximization and competitive re-positioning are considered to be the main promotion aims of tourism production; though, the transformation into practice of these objectives faces the dispersal of decision-agents of the different production aspects and commerce of tourism services. For the resolution of this problem, Costa and Bernardo (1998) suggest a collective action strategy involving all agents of the tourism system.

The marketing strategy shaped by Costa and Bernardo (1998, p.34) brought a new vision for the Portuguese tourism at the international level supported on the capacity to gather and preserve tourist demand. It intended to settle clear "quantitative performance objectives and, through operational programming, guided into solid field action, assembling public and private efforts".

Costa and Bernardo (1998) refer also that the effort put into regional tourism promotion must not only comply with public investments, as private tourism agents also profit with tourism promotion. However, the profit obtained through tourism promotion does not distinguish tourism agents. This fact may stimulate free-riders being. Therefore, it is important to have knowledge about the willing to pay for promotion of private agents.

Farhangmehr and Simões (1998) also identify two main boosting possibilities of tourism development: promotion and marketing. Their empirical research detects development determinants of the Portuguese hotel industry by having accomplished an inquiry to hotel managers. The main results shows that private agents feature the importance of promotion: 86,5% of the inquired state public promotion as important/very important; the collaboration among hotel units in promotional campaigns was considered to be important/very important by 71,5%. These data were replicated Silva (2001).

In the attempt to forecast the UEFA Euro 2004 impacts over regional tourism in *Minho*, Silva (2001) carried through a survey based upon "written inquiries and personal interviewing": 60% of the respondents praise the importance of promotional aspects of regional tourism supply as the main deliverable of UEFA Euro2004 hosting; 70% of the regional agents believed that the event would help to raise their region's popularity.

Ferreira et al. (1994) referred to animation strategies to promote regional sites, trying to value possible impacts of major events organization in Lisbon and *Algarve*, concluding that, despite of the distance to the capital, this later region would have a lot to win with the capital's events.

Methodology

The methodological approach used in this work uses two different empirical research techniques: documental and non-documental techniques. The documental technique includes qualitative content analysis and the non-documental technique includes open face-to-face interview.

Interviewing is the most used research method worldwide, meaning the process of verbal data collection in order to understand a given problem. The interview's advantages may be summarized into the following three points:

- a) the interview is more flexible as the interviewer is able to repeat or explain the questions and so forth assuring better understanding;
- b) it gives us the opportunity to collect new unavailable data that are relevant;
- c) there is the possibility to get more precise information.

The interview's limitations are:

- a) the interviewee's answers may be influenced by the interviewing person;
- b) the interviewee may hold back important information as he fears to be identified as the data source;
- c) the interview takes a long time and has major logistic demands;
- d) there is a difficulty in the statistical data handling.

The universe of this study is represented by all public tourism agencies. Our sample was given by the geographical setting of Northern Portugal, specifically the Minho region, including the *Região de Turismo do Verde Minho* and the *Zona de Turismo de Guimarães*. During field research, it became clear we had to the *Região de Turismo do Alto Minho* as well.

All interviewees had the same “treatment” in terms of interviewing script guidelines. In a first phase, the exploratory interview was carried through (see table 2), followed by content analysis.

Table 2
Accomplished Interviews

Date	Hour	Regional Governing Tourism Body	Interviewee
21/04/2004	10:00	<i>Zona de Turismo de Guimarães</i>	Dra. Sofia Ferreira
04/05/2004	11:00	<i>Região de Turismo do Verde Minho</i>	Dr. Agostinho Peixoto
07/06/2004	11:00	<i>Região de Turismo do Alto Minho</i>	Dr. António Cândido

Results

Framing promotion strategies in the region's marketing plan

The UEFA Euro 2004 promotion strategy in the Minho Region was settled in a global promotion strategy the brand “Oporto & Northern Portugal”. The northern tourism association ADETURN was made responsible for the management and promotion of this brand label, elaborating the Marketing Plan for a time interval from 2004 to 2006, substituting the previous 2001-2003 plan.

The brand “Oporto and Northern Portugal” includes four regional brands: Minho, Oporto, Douro and Trás-os-Montes.

In the ADETURN's marketing plan, four tourist products priorities were defined: touring, city break, congress and meeting events (MI&E) and active tourism, and three types of target markets: strategic, priority and stake markets.

Table 3
Investment by Target Markets

Target Market	Investm. (in Euros)	% of total inv.
Strategic Market	675.000	30%
Spain	675.000	30%
Priority Markets	1.125.000	50%
United Kingdom	337.500	15%
Germany	281.250	12.5%
France	281.250	12.5%
Italy	225.000	10%
Stake Markets	450.000	20%
Netherlands	112.500	5%
Brazil	112.500	5%
Others	225.000	10%
TOTAL	22.500.000	100%

Source: ADETURN

For the year 2004, ADETURN estimated an investment of about 2.225.000 Euro in promotional activities of the Oporto and Northern Portugal brand and its regional

brands. The value distribution was of 40% of the total investment to Oporto Regional Brand, 30% to Minho, 15% to Douro and 15% of the total investment to Trás-os-Montes Regional Brand (Source: ADETURN).

Table 4
Investment by Product Type

Product	Investm. (in Euro)	% of total inv.
Touring	787500	35%
City Break	675000	30%
MI&E	450000	20%
Active Tourism	225000	10%
Several Products	112500	5%
TOTAL	22500000	100%

Source: ADETURN

In this marketing plan, the fundamentals of ADETURN's new communication strategy were consecrated. They base upon the following five main points:

I. New Identity of Oporto and Northern Portugal

A new emblem and merchandising line was created for the Oporto and Northern Portugal brand with an improved design.

II. Advertising

New advertising campaigns were launched in all three types of target markets, for specifically selected target groups and within chosen media.

III. Public Relations

Media were used in order to improve the product image, issuing press reports, conferences, releases and records.

IV. Promotion Materials

All promotion materials had the same design settings, assuring international communication coherence amongst regional brands and the national identity brand system (settled and managed by the Portuguese institute for external commerce, *Instituto de Comércio Externo de Portugal*, ICEP).

The promotional materials were separated into two types:

- the materials driven towards the final consumer:

- thematic brochures by product and
- thematic brochures by regional brands.

- the materials driven the professionals:

- promotional area guide/brand manual,
- product manuals,
- regional pictures data base and
- Cd-rom.

V. Events

Regional events were organized into international, national, regional and local events, and promoted according to their association to the previously defined tourist products.

The ADETURN marketing plan refers to the Euro 2004 as a major event defining four target groups: journalist, team accompaniment, enterprise and family. The promotion was carried through tourism information actions, school visits and a new press office.

UEFA Euro 2004 Promotion Strategies for the Municipality of Braga

The regional tourism board, *Região de Turismo do Verde Minho* (RTVM), was founded in 1984 and includes 12 municipalities of the Minho Region and Sousa Valley:

Amares, Braga, Fafe, Felgueiras, Lousada, Paços de Ferreira, Paredes, Póvoa do Lanhoso, Vieira do Minho, Vila Nova de Famalicão, Vila Verde e Vizela.

The RTVM is responsible for improving the region's value chain by promoting the use and valuation of its artistic, archaeological, historical, natural, thermal and further tourism resources.

The RTVM was the first public agent promoting the UEFA Euro 2004 (in January of 2001), following an autonomous and independent strategy. In this promotion, RTVM was hindered to make use of the UEFA Euro 2004 title. Therefore, the promotional materials had to be changed into *Europeu 2004*, within a specific RTVM emblem (see Illustration 2 in Appendix).

It was only in 2003 that the Portuguese tourism promotion structure was divided into seven areas. RTVM was inserted into ADETURN.

The further RTVM promotion was in line with the general guidelines planned by ADETURN. No additional individual planning existed. Promotional budgets weren't reinforced. Regional tourism boards are obliged by law to affect 50% of their annual budget for promotion actions.

A significant share of the available RTVM budget was spent in the participation in tourism trade fairs of Dutch, Belgian and Italian markets. Attention was paid to the promotion near tourism professionals. ADETURN and ICEP organized guided visits to the RTVM influence territory, mainly for Spanish, Dutch and Italian. This exceptional treatment was a direct consequence of the UEFA Euro 2004 promotional campaign, as this strategy non-existent in the previous years. Despite unconfirmed values, these promotion campaigns were very expensive for RTVM, as all expenses – transportation, accommodation and meals – were entirely supported by RTVM.

For the final consumers two products were created: a RTVM Web Page and the distribution of promotional material in tourism trade fairs. The internet site - www.rtv.m.pt - wasn't ready for the UEFA Euro 2004 tournament.

In the UEFA Euro 2004 promotion, RTVM used existing printed materials and created additional promotion materials, promoting the city of Braga and all other municipalities within the region:

- city pamphlets (only in Portuguese);
- hotel pamphlets (only in Portuguese);
- booklet with a brief presentation of all RTVM municipalities (in Portuguese, Spanish, English and French);
- booklet with a detailed presentation of the city of Braga and the new stadium (in Portuguese, English and Spanish);
- pamphlet of the new stadium (in Portuguese, English, Spanish, French, German, Italian and Dutch).

The used contents did not want to create a new image as they rather preferred to transmit existing values for which this very territory has already distinguished itself: popular traditions, monuments, landscape and gastronomy.

The new tourism attraction within Braga – the new stadium – was promoted by RTVM separately.

UEFA Euro 2004 Promotion Strategies for the Municipality of Guimarães

The city tourism board of Guimarães, *Zona de Turismo de Guimarães* (ZTG), is an autonomous organ within the city of Guimarães and responsible for the management and promotion of the city's tourism activities. It was created when Guimarães' historical centre was officially classified as World Heritage.

ZTG developed its promotional activities in agreement with the marketing plan of ADETURN and reinforced its presence in international tourism trade fairs with new promotion materials and a slight budget increase. For the year 2004, the budget for promotional activities was about 275.000 Euro. However, it is not feasible to determine the exact value ZTG spent, as some promotions were directly affected to the city's budget.

As seen in the table 5, the year 2004 was filled with promotional activities in international tourism trade fairs:

Table 5
International Tourism Trade Fairs visited by ZTG in 2004

EVENT	CITY	DATE
Salon Toulouse	Toulouse	23-25 January
BTL	Lisboa	21-25 January
FITUR	Madrid	28 January-1 February
Feira de Bourdeus	Bordéus	6-8 February
Fira Futebol	Barcelona	17-22 February
Salon Marseille	Marselha	13-15 February
BIT	Milão	14-17 February
Salon Nantes	Nantes	27-29 February
Salon Lyon	Lyon	5-7 March
Op Pad. (Turismo Activo)	Amesterdão	5-7 March
Salão Náutico de Vigo	Vigo	4-7 March
Ovibeja	Beja	20-28 March
SMT	Paris	11-14 March
ITB	Berlim	13-16 March
SITC	Barcelona	22-25 April
Expovacaciones	Bilbau	6-9 May

Source: ZTG

The ZTG tourism trade fairs presence includes the participation in fairs defined by ADETURN (e.g. BTL Lisboa; FITUR Madrid; BIT Milan; ITB Berlin; SMT Paris) and a shared participation with RTVM (e.g. SITC Barcelona; Expovacaciones Bilbao; INTUR Valladolid; Salon Lyon; Salon Nantes).

ZTG also developed promotional activities for the domestic market, participating with an own promotional stand in *Ovibeja*, in March of 2004. The fair registered about 300.000 visitors.

The ZTG's promotional campaign began in 2003. ZTG was also present in the raffle of the final phase of the UEFA Euro 2004 taking place in Lisbon. ZTG was present in the Media Center and inside the *Pavilhão Atlântico* (near the raffle place). The ZTG presence in the Media Center allowed it to establish immediately the first

contacts to the journalists of the several countries playing in Guimarães. Journalists were supplying with a press kit carrying various informations on Guimarães and the new stadium: a promotional multimedia clip, a cd-rom with pictures and insight information as well as a promotional video clip.

National teams representatives of Italy, Denmark and Bulgaria were also instantaneously contacted.

To the similarity of RTVM and following the guidelines of the marketing plan of ADETURN, ZTG promotion was directed towards the target markets Spain, France and Italy. The accomplishment of these visits was promoted by ICEP, in collaboration with ADETURN, and supported by ZTG, intending to establish a value channel ending in Guimarães: Portugal > Northern Portugal > Minho > Guimarães.

One of the major promotional ZTG products was its Web Page – www.guimaraesturismo.com –, established in order to serve final consumers and tourism professionals by allowing restricted access.

ZTG produced several promotion materials:

- practical guide “Guimarães – Euro 2004”;
- promotional DVD Guimarães;
- pictures cd-rom;
- video presentation cd-rom;
- publication monastery gastronomy;
- inventory of the classified architectonic heritage;
- tourism touring;
- pedestrian course guide;
- Guimarães guide (in Portuguese, Spanish, French, English, German and Italian);
- city maps;
- tourism information manuals;
- postal cards of the historical center.

At the promotional material level, the major innovation was the DVD edition. The DVD tries to reinforce the image of Guimarães. With duration of nearly 14 minutes, the DVD presents the most significant attractions within Guimarães, being an integrated synthesis of all other promotion materials.

In the first part of the DVD, the historical centre, the castle, the dukes' residence and the Penha sanctuary are presented, transmitting the idea of a calm city, with past and traditions, being constantly referred to the UNESCO qualification as World Heritage. The first part concludes with the sentence "GUIMARAES here was Portugal born", *GUIMARÃES aqui nasceu Portugal*, and the UNESCO symbol for World Heritage.

The second part of the DVD detaches the recent and modern side of the city by presenting the new stadium, the sports arena and further leisure facilities. This second part seeks the idea that Guimarães is also a place worth to visit by younger visitors.

Further Public and Private Promotion

The remaining public tourism agent promotion, namely the promotion of the tourism board of Minho highlands, *Região de Turismo do Alto Minho* (RTAM), was almost non-existent. Initially RTAM thought about promoting UEFA Euro 2004 because there was a possibility of having a team located in its territory. However, none of the 16 national teams chose any of the presented (sport) tourism facilities, namely the *Hotel de Ofir*, at Esposende and the *Complexo Desportivo de Melgaço*, at Melgaço. RTAM's promotion participation was limited to the united strategies of RTVM and ZTG.

In what refers to the private agent promotion, it did not exist. Private tourist agents did not develop any campaign to promote their products.

The promotional competition came mainly from the Spanish region *Galicia*, showing dynamism and vitality. *Galicia* took active and planned advantage of the UEFA Euro 2004 carried out in Portuguese territory. Galician private and public

entities joined in international promotion and tourism package advertising years before the Portuguese public authorities even thought about it.

Conclusion

The essentials of promotion strategy were verified within the analyzed regional strategies within the Minho region tourism responsables.

The main stages of an ordinary promotion process were accomplished. The fact that the planning and the implementation was not carried through under the same governing body did not ease a uniform action plan.

Also the fact that the regional brands were designated under Oporto and Northern Portugal was quite unhappy, forcing the association of Northern Portugal only to Oporto.

The regional tourism boards tried to take advantage of the UEFA Euro 2004 in order to consolidate the added value of the territories images known by its landscape, past, hospitality and peacefulness. The promotion of Guimarães tried additionally to create an image of future.

Unlikely, there was no specific event promotion taking advantage of the UEFA Euro 2004 as an autonomous mean to promoting the territories. All promotion actions took place within the frame of the existing national strategy managed by the hands of ADETURN, mainly stressing national interests. Only at this time, RTVM is stressing a communication plan to develop a guide for all its actions, including promotional activities.

The regional promotion strategies of Minho responsible bodies were in line with other regional bodies. The regional tourism board of Leiria-Fátima, *Região de Turismo de Leiria-Fátima* (RTLF) and the regional tourism board of Aveiro, *Região de Turismo da Rota da Luz* (RTRL) developed identical promotion strategies. They also oriented

their activities towards journalists and tourism professionals, and they also had only a slight reinforcement of their promotion budgets (RTRL increased its budget by 20.500 Euro).

As an exception of this rule, the regional tourism responsible authorities of Algarve managed greater promotion budgets of nearly four million Euros. The new Portuguese tourism organization favors Algarve, having this region two tourism governing bodies covering the same territory: the *Association of Tourism of Algarve* (corresponding to ADETURN in Northern Portugal) and the *Região de Turismo do Algarve* (corresponding to RTAM and RTVM).

In case Portugal will ever host a major (sport) event again, it would be an excellent opportunity to conveniently improve the less good performance of regional tourism board governing bodies.

For the future, an individual marketing plan should be accomplished and promotion must concentrate on the specific characteristics of each territory, in order to optimize resources, all three public boards – ZTG, RTVM and RTAM – should participate in the definition, planning and implementation of it.

The challenging, in the near future, is the enlargement of traditional promotion materials into high-tech processes and tools, having the internet as the hub of all actions. The internet is by far the cheapest promotion method of all and quite easy to keep updated, reaching enormous amounts of *publica*.

Finally, the ultimate recommendation goes towards updating the existing studies of tourist issuing markets in terms of the specific settings of the northern regions. It is very important to have knowledge about the adaptation of our travel package supplies. Only by knowing empirically the impact of different target groups within the local trade, we are able to control and to (re)adjust the followed strategies, making them match with international tourism demand standards.

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Appendix

Illustration 1

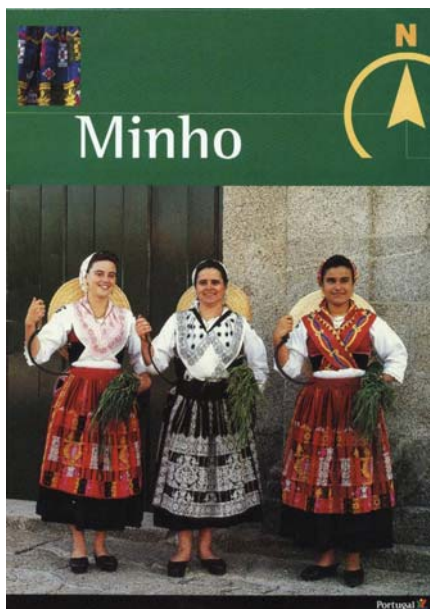


Illustration 2



Illustration 3

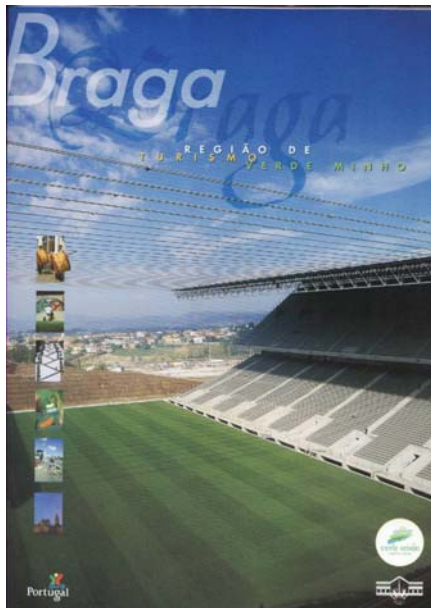


Illustration 4

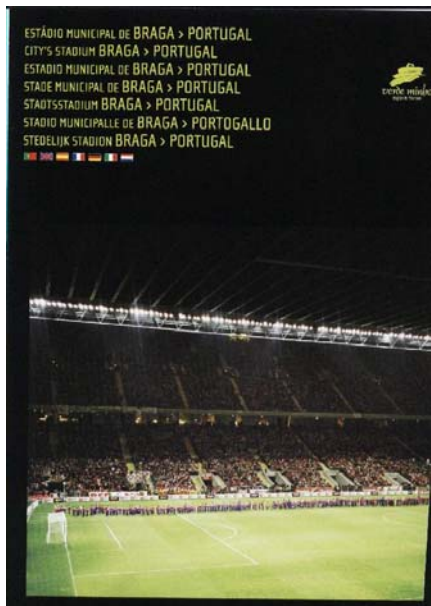


Illustration 5



Illustration 6

