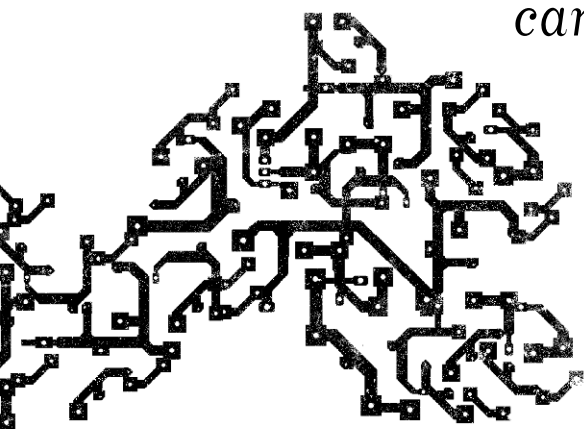


*'No country for old people'
Representations of the rural
in the Portuguese tourism promotional
campaigns*



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'No country for old people'. Representations of the rural in the Portuguese tourism promotional campaigns

Abstract: This paper aims to discuss the ways in which the rural and rurality are represented through the national tourism promotional campaigns in Portugal since the 80s. The background for this debate is the transformation of many rural areas from productive spaces to consumable places, with tourism playing a paramount role in these rural restructuring processes. In promotional materials and campaigns, rural contexts are frequently presented as 'idyllic', 'authentic' and 'genuine' offering a wide range of experiences to the visitor. The empirical evidence produced from the content analysis of 33 posters and 19 promotional videos issued between 1986 and 2012 by the national tourism body, reveals a significant change from a representation of the rural as 'old', 'static', 'unchanged' and 'untouched' to its current representation as 'young', 'active', 'enthusiastic', 'emotional' and 'experiential', much more oriented (since the middle of the 90's) to the commodification and consumption of the countryside.

Keywords: Content analysis, reconfiguration processes, rural areas, rurality, tourism promotional materials.

'Este país no es para viejos'. Representaciones de lo rural en las campañas de promoción turística en Portugal

Resumen: Este trabajo tiene como objetivo discutir las formas en que la población rural y la ruralidad se representan a través de las campañas de promoción del turismo nacional en Portugal desde los años 80. El trasfondo de este debate es la transformación de muchas zonas rurales de espacios productivos en lugares de consumo, con el turismo desempeñando un papel de suma importancia en estos procesos de reestructuración rural. En los materiales de promoción y campañas, los contextos rurales se presentan con frecuencia como idílicos, auténticos y genuinos, ofreciendo una amplia gama de experiencias para el visitante. La evidencia empírica generada a partir del análisis del contenido de 33 carteles y 19 vídeos promocionales realizados entre 1986 y 2012 por el organismo nacional de turismo, revela un cambio significativo respecto a la representación de la población rural como vieja, estática, inmutable e intacta a su representación actual como joven, activa, entusiasta, sensible y experimental, mucho más orientada (a partir de mediados de la década de los 90) a la mercantilización y el consumo del campo.

Palabras clave: Análisis de contenido; procesos de reconfiguración, áreas rurales, ruralidad, materiales de promoción turística.

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Introduction

Like in many other European countries, rural areas in Portugal have undergone significant transformations over the course of recent decades as a consequence of increasingly global socioeconomic dynamics of change. Even if the consequences of these processes of change that have taken place in rural areas may vary, according to countries and regions, one of its most visible sign has been the loss of the monopoly enjoyed by agricultural activities. This loss gave place to a rural no longer seen as a productive space but increasingly portrayed as a consumption and consumable place in which leisure and tourism activities assume a paramount role.

Tourism and related activities are, to a great extent, the main driving forces of rural reconfiguration processes, both in material and in symbolic terms. A central aspect of the way rural areas have been consumed is the touristic promotion of rurality and of the countryside, which is often based in 'global' images and symbols, rather than in local features, apparently inducing an idealization of the rural. The rurality

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- 1• This paper was elaborated within the 3 years research project (started June 2012): *Rural Matters – meanings of the rural in Portugal: between social representations, consumptions and development strategies* (PTDC/CS-GEO/117967/2010), funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and co-funded by COMPETE, QREN and FEDER.

promoted mainly refers to a post-productive rural space in which the environment, landscapes, activities, ways of life and the inhabitants turn into objects of appreciation and are, therefore, constituted as amenities and commodities. Rural contexts are often represented as 'idyllic', 'authentic' and 'genuine' places, offering many opportunities for performing multiple activities and to live different experiences.

Based on the content analysis of the Portuguese tourism promotional campaigns (conducted at the national level) (33 posters and 19 videos from the period between 1986 and 2012) portraying rural contexts, we intend to reveal the main features used to present and promote these territories, as well as to discuss the main transformations in the images conveyed. The empirical evidence shows a significant change in the way the rural has been presented and promoted during the last three decades, passing from a representation of these areas as 'old', 'static', 'unchanged' and 'untouched' (until the middle of the 90's) to its representation as 'young', 'active', 'experiential', 'enthusiastic' and 'emotional', much more oriented to external consumptions than to local features and populations. This difference is in accordance with the main political and policy (both European and national) guidelines and represents, to a certain extent, the turn from 'the old rural' to the 'new rural', therefore also representing the direction of many of the current rural reconfiguration processes.

Rural reconfiguration processes in Portugal and the role of tourism

During the last decades, rural areas in Portugal (like in many other regions of Europe) underwent major transformations (e.g. Oliveira Baptista, 1993, 1996, 2006, 2011; Rolo, 1996; Figueiredo, 2003, 2011), mainly due to the *deruralization* processes of the country (Barreto, 2000). These processes were mainly driven by the changes, both in economic and social terms, of agricultural activities, resulting in their loss of relevance in many remote rural areas of the country, process that has been intensified by the Portuguese accession to the European Union (EU), in 1986 (Oliveira Baptista, 1993, 2006; Figueiredo, 2003, 2008). Particularly from that date, Portuguese rural areas were increasingly detached from agriculture, mainly as a consequence of the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and of the main EU policy orientations for remote rural areas. In fact, in 1988 the European Commission recog-

nized the multifunctional character of many rural regions of Europe and the 'vital' functions, besides food production, for society as a whole that those regions may play (E.C., 1988).

Among the new functions of rural territories, environmental protection (e.g. Ferrão, 2000; Figueiredo, 2003, 2008), tourism and leisure development (e.g. Potter & Burney, 2002; Figueiredo, 2003; Bell, 2006; Halfacree, 2006; Figueiredo & Raschi, 2012), as well as tradition and memories preservation (e.g. Bell, 2006; López-i-Gelats *et al.*, 2009), stand out. These new functions seem to have induced new processes of change and to give a powerful contribution to the restructuring and reconfiguration, both in symbolic and material terms, of rural areas which are increasingly being transformed and represented from places of production to spaces for consumption (e.g. Figueiredo, 2003; Halfacree, 2006). Many rural areas of Europe, and in Portugal, are nowadays "*beyond agriculture*" (e.g. Marsden, 1995, 1998; Oliveira Baptista, 2006) more produced than productive (e.g. Covas, 2011; Figueiredo, 2011). They are part of the 'new rural', a non-agricultural (or a *less agricultural*) world which tends to be reconstructed, as previously mentioned, around its "*re-naturalisation*" and environmental preservation, its "*authenticity*" and its "*commodification*" (Ferrão, 2000: 48). As referred by Woods (2003: 284), for the European context, as agriculture declines, the future of rural economies seems increasingly to be dependent upon the commodification of the rural, as well as on "*the exploitation of its visual and spiritual consumption through tourism*". This commodification of the rural is based on the growing demands on the countryside, mostly by urban populations, in search for a cleaner environment and for a wide range of recreational activities and experiences. The commodification of the rural is based on its increasing perception as a '*global amenity*' (McCarthy, 2008) which in turn, as discussed in the following section, seems to be anchored in the promotion of a relatively standardized and *massified* image of the countryside, based on very similar symbols and images (Figueiredo & Raschi, 2012).

In consequence of these changes, many Portuguese rural areas, particularly remote ones, are nowadays seen, both in social and in institutional terms, as post-agricultural and consumption-oriented spaces. These areas may be qualified as low density places, inhabited by aged, retired and with low levels of literacy populations. Precisely due to their remoteness and backwardness which configure processes of permanence of certain rural and rurality features (traditions, cultural heritages, typical architecture features, landscape maintenance, etc.) that urban populations increasingly value, these areas are nowadays at the centre stage in terms of leisure and tourism activities.

The new demands and consumptions of rural areas and of rurality are based on very positive social representations of the countryside. This is often represented as more 'genuine' and 'authentic' than the urban contexts, in a rather idyllic manner (e.g. Halfacree, 1993, 1995, 2006; Phillips *et al.*, 2001; Bell, 2006), in which 'green', 'pleasant', 'safe', 'healthy', 'clean' and 'enjoyable' are central elements (Perkins, 2006). In the construction of these images, although they may derive from a variety of sources and means (e.g. Figueiredo and Raschi, 2012; Figueiredo, 2013), tourism plays a significant role (e.g. Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994; Macnaghten & Urry, 1998; Perkins, 2006). At the same time, tourism related activities contribute to form new (rural) commodities and recreation and tourism opportunities and experiences (Perkins, 2006), reinforcing what Halfacree (2007: 138) called "*the power of consuming idylls*". This power is fostered by advertising and promotional campaigns and by the "*communicational imagination*" (Covas, 2011: 60), once again based in the images of 'authenticity', of a closer relationship between men and nature (perceived as pure and unchanged), of the maintenance of the memories of the past that urban dwellers can 'observe', 'enjoy' and 'experience' in 'quiet' rural contexts. As Butler and Hall (1998) refer rurality is largely a social construction, a *myth*, more related to urban desires and aspirations than to the *rural reality*. These processes tend to *romanticize* rurality, rural features, and its ways of life (e.g. Figueiredo, 2001) configuring their *patrimonialization* and *touristification* (Figueiredo & Raschi, 2012).

Representations of the rural in promotional materials

In the context of rural tourism, the destination product is the rural scenery, which includes natural landscapes, old churches, local architecture, arts & crafts stores, museums and patrimony, along with festivals, events and unique local flavours. However, due to its intangibility, a destination cannot be subject to a *trial* period or exhibited at a point of purchase. The exposure of a destination to potential tourists is almost entirely dependent on its representations and descriptions (Beldona & Cai, 2006). Therefore, the creation of the image of a destination constitutes a challenge to promoters (as studied by Gunn, 1988), in terms of the type of agents, materials and means used (Phelps, 1986; Mansfeld, 1992; Gartner, 1993; Molina & Esteban, 2006; Choy, Lehto, & Morrisson, 2007).

All the types of agents, materials and means used to promote and to form the image of a destination, also contribute to influence the destination choice by tourists, as abundantly studied in the last few years (e.g. Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside, Crouch, Mazanec, Opperman, & Sakai, 2000; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Molina & Esteban, 2006; Perkins, 2006). However, little research has been conducted until now on the impacts of these promotional materials and means on the reconfiguration processes of a particular destination (e.g. Figueiredo and Raschi, 2012; Figueiredo, 2013). Although the majority of these materials are based on local characteristics, they are frequently designed to be more attractive and assertive, mobilizing tourists' feelings and knowledge to form a destination image and, consequently, possessing little relation with the materiality of a given destination in the tourists' minds. This tends to transform rural territories in a sort of *urban playgrounds* (Figueiredo, 2013) and seems to point out the emergence of a rurality no longer rural, but increasingly urban in its conception and even in its material expressions.

Place promotion is described by Ward and Gold (1994) as "*the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographic localities or areas to a target audience*". Promoters attribute meanings, values, experiences and identities to a place and *sell* them through advertising. It can be argued that a tourist landscape is both a cultural and symbolic landscape; it is idealized, immaterial and built upon representations. It can be organic (art, film, literature, personal stories, television) or induced (e.g. through advertising) (Goss, 1993; Park & Coppack, 1994; Lash & Urry, 1994). In countries with a majority of the population living in cities, the countryside tends to represent a *special* place, a different time, symbolically distant from daily routine. This distance enhances the differences (either real or imagined) between the city and the countryside, and imagination inspires and sustains the construction of the myth of the place (Shields, 1991; Urry, 1995).

Aiming to attract tourists, the tourism industry promotes and emphasizes the differences between the rural and the urban, using images that exalt myths about rurality (e.g. Bell, 2006; Perkins, 2006; Figueiredo and Raschi, 2012; Figueiredo, 2013). The use of metaphors, frequently 'global' (i.e. with no specific connection to a given area) in promotional materials allows the potential tourists to have a sense of acquaintance with a destination by transforming something unknown into something familiar (Dann, 1996). The use of 'strategic' keywords, images and symbols do help to create this sense of familiarity with a destination, as well as a certain atmosphere of enthusiasm, with the objective of corresponding to the needs and demands of tourists looking for an escape from everyday life. Thus, keywords as 'evasion', 'escape', 'dream', 'discover', 'imagination' or 'pleasure' are oftentimes found among the discourses used to promote destinations,

along with words like 'true', 'authentic', 'original' or 'real'. These last symbols are frequently used when presenting a rural destination, as, among others, the works of Butler and Hall (1998), Meethan (2001), Bell (2006), Crouch (2006), Perkins (2006), Figueiredo and Raschi (2012) and Figueiredo (2013) demonstrate. Particularly relevant here is the fact that the majority of promotional materials contribute to the staging process of the destinations, using *pseudo-events* aimed at corresponding to the quest for authenticity.

Along with words and symbols, visual elements are often used in promotional materials, due to their capability of demonstrating 'the reality' (e.g. Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). However, as Jorgensen (2004) refers many pictures used in these materials are digitally manipulated to meet the perceptions of tourists, therefore representing another kind of 'staging' reality or authenticity. Based on previous studies Dann (1996), states that the majority of the pictures showcase landscapes and/or cultural aspects of destinations, especially antique and traditional traits that emphasize a certain type of culture and way of life. Visual *clichés* are also used in promotional materials. They relate with the kind of language employed in the materials, which is often generic, exaggerated and characterized with an intensive usage of superlatives and metaphors referring to the rural *paradise* and idyll. Frequent visual *clichés* include sunset, rustic villages with picturesque streets, and colours like green, blue or white (Dann, 1996).

All these images and symbols describing rural destinations tend to create a *virtual* (Cloke, 2006) and disconnected from reality (McCarthy, 2008) rural or a kind of *McRural* (Figueiredo, 2013), well expressing the staging processes aiming at selling the rural and its features, as well as the reshaping of rurality in order to be appealing to and be desired by tourists. In this sense, as the seminal works by MacCannell (1973, 1976) demonstrate, a new *real reality* might be designed, therefore authenticity becoming not *authentic* but *staged*. As Hillman (2007: 3) expresses a significant aspect in this debate is the extent to which "*any tourist attraction or participation can be deemed authentic once it is assembled and offered*" as a commodity. As Figueiredo and Raschi (2012: 21) ask, based on Pearce (2007), "*does authenticity still matter after being commodified?*"

Tourism promotion in Portugal – a brief portrait

A consistent policy for tourism first appears in Portugal in the 80s, with the development of a National Tourism Programme (*Programa Nacional de Turismo*). After

Portugal's accession to the EU and the foundation of the National Tourism Office (*Instituto de Promoção Turística – IPT*), it was tried to create a generic brand for the country, lately developed by the Portuguese Institute of External Commerce (*Instituto de Comércio Externo Português – ICEP*). Along with a logo created in 1993 (figure 1), especially emphasising the sun and the sea, the strategy involved a textual message ("*Portugal, when the Atlantic meets Europe*", "*Portugal, quando o Atlântico encontra a Europa*"), revealing a clean and sunny green country, proud of its history, of easy access, with a friendly, welcoming people and a great variety of possible activities from which to choose. It was also created a manual for the production of brochures, containing guidelines for their design. Those brochures were meant to be produced within three levels: national (by the ICEP, responsible for the main promotional regions), regional and local levels (by the regional and local tourism agencies respectively, both responsible for the promotion of specific products like religious, cultural and nautical tourism, business and exhibition tourism and rural tourism. In the same period, and in order to promote internal tourism, an advertising campaign was produced called "*Vá para fora cá dentro*" ("*Go out inside*"), aimed at the promotion of short vacation periods inside the country. In this campaign, besides the types of tourism mentioned above, the country is promoted mainly as a destination for sun and sea and sports and golf tourism.

Figure 1.
Logo of the Tourism of Portugal, created in 1993
by the artist José de Guimarães



Source: Tourism of Portugal²

2• <http://www.turismodeportugal.pt>

In 1997, the ICEP, the Council of Tourism Marketing, the agency Roland Berger & Partner and other partners reformed some promotional strategies and constituted five priority products (sun and sea, city break, touring, golf and business tourism) and other secondary products (health, religious and active tourism). The domestic promotional strategy suggests more specific trip destinations, as the 1998 internal promotional campaign "*Escapadinha de 3 dias: a melhor forma de fugir à rotina*" ("*Three-day getaway: the best way to escape from the routine*") shows. Other national campaigns were created during the last 20 years, such as: "*Um mundo para descobrir*" ("*A world to be discovered*", between 2005 and 2006); "*Descubra um Portugal maior*" ("*Discover a larger Portugal*", 2009) and more recently "*Descubra Portugal, um país que vale por mil*" ("*Discover Portugal, a country worth a thousand countries*", 2010/2011), all aiming at promoting internal tourism.

At the international level, since the already mentioned "*Portugal, when the Atlantic meets Europe*" campaign, between 1994 and 1998, the country has been promoted as offering enthusiastic feelings and experiences – "*Portugal, the thrill of discovery*". In 1999 the *thrill* was replaced by the *choice* in the campaign "*Portugal, the choice*" and between 2000 and 2002 *nature* emerges as a central element in the campaign "*Warm by nature*". In 2003 the campaign "*Take a break*" aimed at representing Portugal as a safe country and, in 2004, the campaign "*The extra time is always the best part of the game*" focused on the European football championship, which took place in the country. From 2005 to 2007, the promotion emphasised the 'experience' – "*Portugal. Live deeper*" (2005), "*Portugal. Deeper experience*" (2006) and "*To be continued...*" (2007). The strategic position of Portugal as the west coast of Europe was emphasised in 2008 and 2009, through the campaigns "*Europe's West Coast*" and "*Energy from Europe's West Coast*", the last one stressing the relevance of Portugal as a sustainable destination, given its role in the production of renewable energies (mainly solar and wind). In 2010/2011 the campaigns promote a country that preserves its authenticity and a simple way of life – "*Portugal, the beauty of simplicity*". In the majority of these campaigns, both internally and externally oriented, rural features were present, mainly after the middle of the nineties, together with the more global markers of the country: sun and sea, expressing the relevance of its relatively 'well preserved' rurality. The fact that there is a greater emphasis on rural matters after the mid-90s is related with a major investment (both financial and institutional) on rural tourism, following the European Union guidelines for rural areas and rural tourism.

Methodology

As mentioned before, the empirical evidence presented in this paper derives from a Portuguese research project – *Rural Matters* – in which several types of documents, besides the posters and videos analysed here, were subject to examination³. The period considered in the analysis was the period from 1985 to 2011, taking into account the country's accession to the European Union (in 1986). In this paper we analyse, using the content analysis technique, 33 posters and 19 videos used in national tourism promotional campaigns that conveyed rural tourism destinations. All materials were issued by the Portuguese National Tourism Office. All the videos and the majority of the posters (25) correspond to the period between 1995 and 2011 and to the internal and external campaigns mentioned in the previous section⁴. Prior to 1995, 8 posters were collected and analysed corresponding to the first internal promotional campaign mentioned, i.e., "*Go out inside*". This unbalance between the two periods considered is related to the unavailability of a large part of the materials prior to 1995. Not all the materials issued in these time periods by the Portuguese National Tourism Office were analysed in the context of this paper; we only analysed those made available to us, both online and in the National Tourism Office archives.

The content analysis performed to these and the other materials analysed within the *Rural Matters* project, was based on a comprehensive literature review in order to identify the significant concepts associated with the main representations, images and symbols conveyed on rural territories, rurality and rural development strategies. The main concepts identified were, therefore, *Rural, Environment, Rurality, Countryside, Rural Landscape, Rural Tourism and Rural Development*. All these concepts were operationalized in variables (categories) and indicators (values) in a systematic and detailed manner. In the analysis of the posters and videos only the

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- 3• Namely, the Governments' Programs; the rural development policies and strategies, cinema, news collected from two national newspapers, promotional materials from rural tourism bodies and networks, as well as programs and financial incentives oriented towards rural tourism.
 - 4• Particularly, to the "*Three-day getaway: the best way to escape from the routine*"; "*A world to be discovered*"; "*Discover a larger Portugal*"; "*Discover Portugal, a country worth a thousand countries*" and "*Portugal, the beauty of simplicity*" campaigns.

concept of *Rural Tourism*, as well as the corresponding categories and values were used. As the materials analysed here combine moving and still images and text, two coding frames were built. Table 1 displays the coding frame regarding images and table 2 the coding frame concerning text. The content of the documents was analysed through the use of the software NVivo 10.

*Table 1.
Coding Frame used to analyze images
of the promotional materials*

Variables/Categories Values		
Rural tourism (Images of the Rural)	Nature and landscape	Elements that describe the landscape and the natural aspects in the image, e.g.: rivers and lakes, river beaches, mountains, fields.
	Gastronomy	Elements related with gastronomy, e.g.: local products, wine.
	Heritage and culture	Elements related with heritage and culture. Different monuments and decades, e.g.: museums, churches, pillories.
	Tourist products	Tourist products promoted, e.g.: handicraft.
	Architecture	Elements related with architecture of rural areas. Different types of construction materials and architecture standards, e.g.: schist houses, narrow streets, institutional buildings.
	Inhabitants	Images with inhabitants from rural areas, e.g.: old, young, more people, less people.
	Infrastructures	Infrastructures in rural areas to support the tourist activities, e.g.: living room, garden, pool.
	Tourist activities	Tourist activities proposed in the images, e.g.: outdoor activities, folk festivals, leisure activities.
	Feelings and behaviours	Images that transmit feelings and/or behaviours of tourists in rural areas, e.g.: friendship, amusement, contemplation.
	Formal aspects	Formal aspects of images, e.g.: ahead, at the bottom, information, relation with text and image.

Source and property: Rural Matters project

Table 2.
Coding Frame used to analyze the written parts
of the on the promotional materials

Variables/Categories Values	
Agrotourism	Words used to describe agrotourism activities, e.g.: hospitality, agricultural activities.
Low density tourism	Characterization of landscape elements located in low density tourism areas, e.g.: clean natural environments, landscape qualities, villages.
Tourism in rural tourism spaces	Words used to describe landscape elements in tourism in rural areas, e.g.: familiar character, natural heritage, traditions, local architecture.
Rural tourism impacts	Texts with references about the impacts of rural tourism, e.g.: contributes to sustainable development, conservation.
Tourist activities	Tourist activities practiced in rural spaces, e.g.: events, outdoor activities.
Innovation in rural spaces	Texts with references related to innovation in rural spaces, e.g.: new technologies.
Entrepreneurship in rural spaces	Texts with references related to entrepreneurship in rural spaces, e.g.: new products, new companies.
Networks in rural spaces	Texts with references related to networks in rural spaces, e.g.: collaborative partnerships, cooperation, synergies.
Management of rural spaces	Texts with references related to the management of rural spaces, e.g.: development strategy.
Marketing of rural spaces	Texts with references to the marketing of rural spaces, e.g.: promotion, brands.
Policies for rural tourism	Texts with references related to policies for rural tourism, e.g.: programs, PAC, Natura 2000
Internationalization of tourism in rural spaces	Texts with references related to internationalization of tourism in rural spaces, e.g.: international fairs.
Growth and development of rural spaces	Texts with references related to growth and development of rural spaces, e.g.: economic development, infrastructures.
Cultural tourism in rural spaces	Texts with references related to cultural and natural heritage, and rural lifestyle, e.g.: museums, historical villages, gastronomy and wine.
Ecotourism	Texts with references related to ecotourism, e.g.: geoparks, contact with nature, environmental responsibility.
Health and Wellness tourism	Texts with references related to health and wellness tourism, e.g.: spas, vinotherapy.
Direct investment on countryside capital	Texts with references related to direct investment on countryside capital, e.g.: "developing a mountain biking trail in an area of woodland", "habitat restoration".

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of the Rural)**

Indirect investment on countryside capital	Texts with references related to indirect investment on countryside capital, e.g.: environmental accreditation, conservation funds.
Destination image and identity - functional attributes	Texts with references related to destination image and identity's functional attributes, e.g.: accommodation, activities, services.
Destination image and identity - non-functional attributes	Texts with references related to destination image and identity's non-functional attributes, e.g.: peace, magic, interesting, memorable, unique.

Source and property: Rural Matters project

'No country for old people' – representations of the rural in the Portuguese tourism promotional campaigns

In order to assess the ways in which the rural and rurality are represented and promoted through the campaigns designed by the national tourism bodies, and as explained in the previous section, 33 posters and 19 videos, all were analysed. Regarding the most frequent categories in posters and videos, table 3 shows that the most referenced ones are "Nature and Landscape" and "Architecture" (figure 2). However, while the third category with the biggest number of references on posters is "Patrimony and Culture", in videos the third place is occupied by the category "Infrastructure" (figure 3). Images exposed in videos tend to give more relevance to the tourists' well-being, showing modern and sophisticated amenities capable of meeting all the tourists' demands. Regarding the discourses conveyed in the videos, the most referenced categories were "Non-functional attributes of the image and identity of a rural destination"⁵, "Marketing of Rural Spaces" and "Evaluation of tourism destination", reflecting a clear intention to stimulate the demand for each touristic region of the country.

5• 'Functional attributes' are related to the material aspects of rural tourism, such as accessibilities and infrastructures. On the other hand, 'non-functional attributes' are associated with immaterial features of rural tourism like 'beautiful', 'ancient' and 'exciting'.

It is worthwhile to notice that the most referenced categories display a rural not much associated with agriculture or other rural economic activities, fact that, at the same time, expresses the relative neglect of the rural as a living space (e.g. Figueiredo, 2003, 2013) and reinforces the findings of Ferrão (2000) and Figueiredo (2003) on the re-naturalization of rural areas, aiming at responding to the new consumption needs and to fulfil the demands and desires of the urban tourist. In addition, 'outsiders/non local people' is one of the most referred notion within the majority of the categories analysed, precisely demonstrating the concern with the tourist and the visitor.

*Table 3.
Categories with the largest amount of references, both in images and discourses in the promotional materials, by period*

Variable/ Category Images	Images			Discourses	Variable/ Category Discourses
	Posters		Videos	Videos	
	period 1986-1995	period 1995-2012	period 1995-2012	period 1995-2012	
Nature and Landscape	33	139	249	28	Non-functional attributes of the image and identity of a rural destination
Formal Aspects	7	22	17	21	Marketing of rural areas
Architecture	15	16	26	10	Evaluation of tourism destination
Heritage and Culture	4	14	21	6	Cultural tourism in rural areas
Inhabitants	2	5	6	6	Tourism in Rural Areas
Infrastructures	0	0	22	4	Ecotourism
Tourism Activities	0	3	16	4	Planning travel
Tourism Products	0	4	5	3	Tourism Activities
Feelings and Behaviors	1	0	17	1	Motivation of visitors
Gastronomy	0	0	8	1	Tourism Health and Wellness

Source and property: Rural Matters project

Figure 2.
Images of Nature and Landscape and Architecture in posters (1995-2012)



Figure 3.
Rural tourism infrastructure in videos (1995-2012)



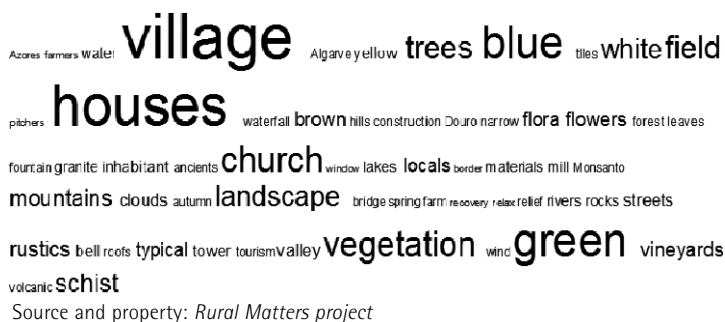
Source: Tourism of Portugal/ Portugal Official Tourism website⁶

As the figures presented above illustrate, elements from nature (rivers, flowers, fields, trees) and from traditional architectural features (types of houses, construction materials) from different regions of the country are actively used in the promotion of the countryside in the national tourism campaigns. These images also convey an ancient, although well preserved rural, while simultaneously appealing to a rural that is capable to offer sophisticated facilities and comforts to tourists, providing exciting, unique, authentic and deeper experiences.

The most frequent symbols and words used in the promotional campaigns to describe rural contexts, both in posters and in videos are displayed on the tag clouds presented in figures 4 and 5 and in table 4. As showed, the most frequent symbols used in posters are 'village', 'houses', 'blue', 'green', 'field', 'church' and 'vegetation'.

6• <http://www.visitportugal.com>

Figure 4.
Tag Cloud featuring the most frequent symbols used
on promotional posters



Those findings corroborate the analysis of the categories presented above, therefore emphasising a rural that is marked by nature and also by typical villages and architectural and patrimonial elements. Almost the same can be said about the symbols used in the promotional videos, in which, apart the word 'Portugal' which is constituted as a kind of general brand, the more frequent symbols used are 'villages', 'landscape', 'water', 'mountains' and 'vegetation'. This calls our attention to the fact that in videos the focus seems to be, to some extent, on natural elements and features.

Figure 5.
Tag Cloud featuring the most frequent symbols used
on promotional videos.



As shown in table 4, once again there are no significant differences regarding the two periods considered, concerning the symbols and words used to describe rural contexts, although 'green', 'vegetation', 'field', 'trees' and 'landscape' are more used after 1995 in the posters and in the videos⁷, reinforcing the conclusions presented before, namely the increasing identification between rural and nature. Before 1995, despite the limitations in terms of the materials analysed, it seems that the emphasis was mainly on tradition and on the rustic character of the villages.

Table 4.
Ten most coded words on promotional materials' images and discourses, by period

Images								Discourses	
Posters				Videos				Videos	
words	1986-2012	words	1986-1995	words	1995-2012	words	1995-2012	words	1995-2012
villages	40	houses	21	village	27	village	32	Portugal	38
houses	35	village	13	green	22	landscape	24	country	19
green	28	schist	9	blue	20	mountains	23	Nature	13
blue	27	blue	7	vegetation	18	vegetation	23	Promotion	13
church	20	rustic	7	field	16	water	23	valley	13
vegetation	19	churches	6	houses	14	houses	22	holidays	9
field	17	green	6	church	14	schist	19	Discover	8
trees	17	landscape	5	trees	13	Azores	16	brand	7
landscape	15	white	4	white	10	fields	16	land	7
white	14	house	4	landscape	10	green	15	landscape	6

Source and property: *Rural Matters project*

When analysing the values associated with each category (table 5), it is clear once again that the most referenced ones are those related to the category "Nature and Landscape", followed by "Architecture". On the posters, the most referenced val-

⁷• Although the videos analysed referred only to the period after 1995.

ues are 'villages', 'green', 'fields' and 'churches', while on the videos the most frequent values mentioned are 'mountains', 'villages' and 'villas'.

Regarding the two periods considered in the analysis, it is visible that while before 1995 most values are identified with the category 'Architecture', and after 1995 the category 'Nature and Landscape' emerges as the most relevant.

Table 5.
Ten most referenced values on promotional materials' images and discourses, by period

values	Images			values	1995–2012	Discourses	
	Posters		Videos			Videos	
	1986–2012	1986–1995	1995–2012			values	1995–2012
villages	40	13	27	mountains	38	promotion	13
green	30	8	22	villages	32	historic	13
blue	27	7	20	villas	26	landscape	8
fields	26	3	23	fields	23	brands	8
churches	23	6	17	sea	20	experience	7
mountains	16	5	11	valleys	19	know and discover	6
white	14	4	10	green	17	diversification	4
villas	13	6	7	water	17	attractions	4
trees	13	4	9	sun	16	beautiful	3
rustic houses	10	7	3	rivers and lakes	16	villages and towns	3

Source and property: Rural Matters project

The temporal variation of values in the most referenced categories on posters can be seen on table 6. The category 'Heritage and Culture' is more featured in the period ranging from 1995 to 2012, being "'churches' its most referenced value. The category 'Architecture' saw a decline, comparing with the former period, in the number of references of its values, especially regarding 'rustic houses', 'schist houses' and 'granite houses'; at the same time, the values 'recreated rural scenes', 'construction materials', 'typical details' and 'manor houses' saw an increase in their

number of references. In the category 'Nature and Landscape', besides 'outsiders', the frequency of all the other values rose in the second period, especially the colours 'brown', 'white' and 'yellow'.

Table 6.
Most referenced values (on posters) for the three most codified categories, by period

		Posters	
Variable / Category Images	values	period 1986-1995	period 1995-2012
Nature and Landscape	brown	3	6
	white	4	10
	yellow	2	4
	farm animals	0	3
	windmills	0	3
	outsiders	2	1
Heritage and Culture	tiles	0	2
	castles and fortresses	0	1
	cruzeiro (calvary)	0	2
	fountains	0	1
	churches	6	14
	bridges	0	2
	utensils	1	1
Architecture	recreated rural scenes	0	1
	construction materials	2	3
	typical details	0	2
	narrow streets	2	2
	villas	6	7
	granite houses	2	1
	schist houses	3	1
	rustic houses	7	3
	manor houses	0	1

Source and property: Rural Matters project

From this analysis we can one more time emphasise the fact that in the period 1995–2012 the category 'Nature and Landscape' raises above all the other categories, which tend to be less expressive over time. The posters displayed on figure 6 reinforce the representation of the rural, prior to 1995, as an aged and *archaic* place, where the traditional agriculture and ancient, humble and typical buildings were dominant. These posters also convey old people, involved in agricultural activities or immobile, looking at the world passing by from their windows. Comparing these posters with the ones from the more recent campaigns (figure 7) it is visible the greater emphasis on the rural represented mainly as natural, with the green and the blue emerging as the main colours of the landscape and with the water, from rivers, lagoons or waterfalls as the dominant element. People represented in these posters are no longer the inhabitants, but the 'outsiders', the ones living the *truly, peaceful and beautiful* experience of the countryside.

The images and discourses conveyed by the videos after 1995 (figure 8) corroborate this representation of the rural as more oriented to the *emotions* and *experiences* of the 'outsider', appealing to a rural able to offer diverse outdoor activities and, definitely to a 'younger' and more 'active' rural, although preserving the *charm* of the old countryside. This is again expressed by the opportunities to observe the sunset and by the *immersion* in the green and vast landscapes (e.g. Figueiredo & Raschi, 2012) and aims to show to tourists a more natural and preserved rural, breaking away from their past as areas shaped by abandonment and neglect.

Figure 6.
Representations of rural areas on posters (1986-1995)



Source: Tourism of Portugal/ Portugal Official Tourism website

Figure 7.
Representations of rural areas on posters (1995-2012)



Source: Tourism of Portugal/ Portugal Official Tourism website

Figure 8.
Representations of rural areas on promotional videos,
period 1995-2012



Source: Tourism of Portugal/ Portugal Official Tourism website

The analysis of the values of the most referenced categories among promotional videos shows that the most coded values are related to the colours of the Portuguese rural landscape ('golden', 'green', 'blue', 'brown', 'white', 'yellow'⁸) as well as to the country's natural elements and environmental features ('wildlife', 'river beaches'), and to the facilities available to fulfil the tourists or the 'outsiders' needs and desires ('accommodation', 'restaurants', 'gardens', 'swimming pools', 'golf courses'). In the discourses con-

- 8• Despite being a small country in terms of its total surface, Portugal possesses a large diversity in terms of landscapes and use of building materials. While in the northern and central part of the country, the landscape is dominated by small and green fields, by mountains and granite and schist villages, in the south there is a predominance of large brown fields (the dominant culture is the wheat), dotted by the yellow from sunflowers and by the white from the houses scattered along the plains. In the islands of Madeira and Azores the blue colour from the sea combines with the green from the fields and with the rough shadows of the mountains.

veyed by the promotional videos the 'diversity' and the 'attractions' of rural Portugal, together with its description as 'unique', 'young', 'beautiful', 'untouched' and 'memorable' stand out, as the following texts from the campaigns illustrate:

*"A country full of contrasts that has diversity as one of its greatest assets."
("Portugal, a world to discover" campaign, 2008)*

*"A thousand wishes, a thousand stares, fixed on colours that are renewed every day, recreated in words that come to life with each new dash. A thousand emotions that spring from a piece of land, a thousand stories multiplied by several voices, memories of a land that pulsates to the rhythm of its peoples' dreams."
("Discover Portugal, a country worth a thousand countries" campaign, 2010)*

*"Spend your holidays in Portugal, discover a larger Portugal."
("Discover a larger Portugal" campaign, 2009)*

*"Portugal's worth for the endless coastline and its blessed historical villages."
("Discover Portugal, a country worth a thousand countries" campaign, 2012)*

Based on these findings, it is possible to outline a paradigm shift in the way Portuguese rural areas and rurality are being promoted: from an old, inhabited by simple people, static and relatively unchanged context (prior to 1995) to a young, active, natural, attractive, exciting and experiential territory (from 1995 onwards). It also becomes evident that the discourses and images are based in metaphors and symbols with a great degree of 'globality', which intend to make tourists familiar with the 'rural Portugal' destination, corresponding to their needs for an alternative to daily routine (Dann, 1996) and, simultaneously, commodifying Portuguese rurality and rural elements, in accordance with what Butler and Hall (1998), Bell (2006), Crouch (2006), Perkins (2006; Figueiredo and Raschi (2012) and Figueiredo (2013) demonstrated for other countries and regions of Europe.

Conclusion

This paper intended to present and to debate the ways in which rural areas and rurality are being represented through the national tourism promotional campaigns in

Portugal since the middle of the 80s. The debate was anchored in the processes of change and reconfiguration many rural areas of Europe and Portugal underwent in the last decades, stressing the shift from a productive to a consumable and produced rural, mainly due to the major transformations agricultural activity experienced in the same period (e.g. Oliveira Baptista, 1993, 1996, 2006, 2011; Rolo, 1996; Figueiredo, 2003, 2011; Halfacree, 2006; Covas, 2011). As discussed in the first section of the paper, tourism activities may be considered as the main driving forces of the rural reconfiguration processes (e.g. Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994; Macnaghten & Urry, 1998; Bell, 2006; Crouch, 2006; Perkins, 2006; McCarthy, 2008; Figueiredo, 2011, 2013; Figueiredo & Raschi, 2012), largely contributing to the *patrimonialization* and commodification of the countryside.

Touristic promotion contributes at the same time, as seen in the second section, to the destination image formation and to shape rural contexts, namely through the use of specific – and often rather 'global' (e.g. Bell, 2006; McCarthy, 2008; Figueiredo and Raschi, 2012; Figueiredo, 2013) – symbols of rurality. In recent years, accompanying the transformations of many rural territories, tourism promotion mainly represents and conveys a post-productivist rural in which the environment, natural elements, landscape, economic and social activities, traditional architecture, ways of life and local inhabitants turn into amenities, providing multiple and exciting experiences to tourists and visitors. As previously seen, rural contexts are often presented as 'idyllic' and 'authentic' places where the tourists can feel a taste of the *real thing*, of the artefacts and memories of the past while enjoying the facilities and the sophistication of the present time. In the Portuguese campaigns, as briefly outlined in the third section, rural areas play a relevant role as part of the country's image and brand.

Based on the content analysis of 33 posters and 19 videos issued between 1986 and 2012, by the national tourism office, the empirical evidence reveals the relevance of promotional agents, means and materials in expressing a certain type of rurality. These means and materials are actively used to create an image of the Portuguese countryside, showing what national tourism agents consider to be interesting for tourists to see and experience. The tourists' landscape is often described as a cultural, symbolic, idealized and immaterial landscape, built upon representations (e.g. Goss, 1993; Park & Coppack, 1994; Lash & Urry, 1994) to which the promotional materials also aim to respond.

The results of the analysis of the promotional materials highlight a prevalence of the category 'Nature and Landscape' with its images allusive to villages, mountains and the colour 'green', which is associated with natural landscapes. In the period 1995-2012 this category tends to override the aspects related to other categories, like 'Architecture'.

In the first period (1986–1995) images exposed on promotional materials tended to focus on the typical architecture of old villages, showing humble, simple 'rustic houses' made out of schist or granite, almost *frozen in time*, with some signs of decay due to the rural exodus. Nowadays, images tend to focus more on manor houses, 'villas' and recreated rural sceneries in which the water, the blue and again the green are almost always represented.

A paradigm shift on the representations of rural areas in promotional materials seems to have occurred between the two periods compared in this analysis; the materials from the period 1995–2012 tend to convey a rural that is distanced from the poor agricultural lifestyle it was once associated with (Ferrão, 2000), hinting to a more *natural* and *preserved* environment through images that showcase nature as *intact* (Figueiredo, 2011). This is a tendency that has been verified since the eighties, also influenced by EU orientations and policies, in which rural areas tend to not be associated to its agricultural character (Covas, 2011) and start to be seen as multifunctional, combining agriculture and forest activities with other functions like nature and landscape preservation and tourism and leisure (Figueiredo, 2003, 2013), therefore especially oriented to consumption.

The materials analysed portray a rural that is increasingly commodified and transformed into an amenity, a rural ever more associated with new consumption patterns related to leisure, sports and local heritage. This is expressed, in the examined posters, by the amount of references in the category 'Infrastructures' and the increase in the number of references in the category 'Heritage and Culture', as well as by the vast range of activities presented. There is a visible concern about exposing places' historical heritage and patrimony – and how well preserved its physical manifestations are – so symbols often associated with rurality, like old churches or ceramic tiles (*azulejos*) are clearly *commodified* (Ferrão, 2000) and take a relevant part in the touristic experience of the country. Furthermore, by highlighting new accommodation units and the variety of services and activities offered by those (e.g. gardens, swimming pools, golf courses, restaurants) frequently presented in a rather sophisticated and modern way, national tourism promoters aim at meeting tourists new demands and presenting a *new* way of experiencing Portuguese rural areas.

The images exposed on promotional videos, besides focusing on the colours 'green', 'white', 'blue' and 'brown', emphasize the presence of 'outsiders' and outdoor recreational activities, at the same time allowing the tourist to feel welcomed and to foresee exciting experiences in the countryside. Rural areas tend to be represented as diverse spaces completely different from the urban places, but designed for urban tourists to escape daily routines. The images appeal to *feelings* and *experiences* on a

rural able to offer a diverse and adapted-to-the-outsider-needs range of activities and emotions. The rural conveyed by the videos (and also by the posters after 1995) is 'young' and 'active', even though maintaining the uniqueness of the 'old' countryside. Is equally a rural immersed in nature and in green, as Figueiredo and Raschi (2012) also demonstrate for Italy. In the analysis of those materials, local dwellers and their *utilitarian*, traditional lifestyles are left out, depreciating the socioeconomic, cultural and environmental aspects of rural areas and their inhabitants. Therefore, after 1995, the rural that is being promoted in Portugal is not a rural for *old people* and their activities and lifestyles.

As mentioned in the previous section, the posters issued before 1995 clearly convey a rural represented as an aged, old, almost *archaic* space, marked by traditional agriculture and antique, humble and typical houses. These posters also emphasise the presence of old people, static or involved in traditional activities. After 1995, both the posters and the videos analysed evidence a rural which is natural, active, and oriented to the (often young) 'outsiders' desires and needs. All in all, national tourism promotional campaigns seem to have undergone a shift from the representation of the rural as *ancient* and *unchanged* to a countryside that is presented no longer as the place for *old people*, but is rather the context for *new people*, activities and experiences. A rural that is no longer rural (despite the features of rurality it encompasses) but increasingly urban in its conception, promotion and experience.

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