



Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra
Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração de Coimbra

Master's in marketing and International Business

Project

Marketing the downtown of Coimbra/The APBC case

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Coimbra, outubro de 2021

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Project submitted to the Institute of Accounting and Administration of Coimbra to fulfill the requirements necessary for obtaining a master's degree in Marketing and International Business, conducted under the guidance of Professor Madalena Abreu and supervision of Dr^a Assunção Ataíde

Coimbra, outubro de 2021

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I declare that I am the author of this project, that it is an original and unpublished work, which has never been submitted to another Higher Education Institution for obtaining an academic degree or other qualification. I also attest that all quotations are duly identified and that I am aware that plagiarism is a serious breach of ethics that may result in the annulment of the project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Upon completion of this report, I want to thank all the people who supported me in completing this project successfully. I would like to give personal thanks to Professora Madalena Abreu and Dr^a. Assunção Ataíde, who have supported me in all phases of this project since early from its beginning. I want to praise them for the enormous motivation and concern they have always maintained. I also would like to express my special thanks to those who have helped me in carrying out all this project, especially the staff from ISCAC and people that work with APBC, for providing me all support and facility that was required. I am very grateful for my scholarship for Galuste Gulbenkian foundation for support me during my study.

I also want to thank my family and friends for always understanding that to achieve my goals, sacrifice and focus are necessary.

ABSTRACT

For the current project I have chosen to develop research around the marketing strategy for the ‘Agency for the Promotion of the Downtown of Coimbra’ ou ‘Downtown Coimbra Promotion Agency’ (Agência de Promoção da Baixa de Coimbra - APBC). And so, this project aims to provide lines for the marketing strategy which will help APBC to develop their brand image and to grow and expand their notoriety. For this purpose, this project analyses and studies seven portuguese cities using the benchmarking methodology. Having developed this analysis, then the intended output is to enhance and develop the touristic potentialities of APBC and lift further developments according to the official directives. Also, this analysis can provide future direction for the development of a marketing plan for APBC.

Keywords: Benchmarking, Marketing, Coimbra, Medium-sized Cities, UNESCO

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APBC - Agência de Promoção da Baixa de Coimbra

FEDER- European Regional Development Found

HABITAT 2 - Istambul conference

PR - Public relations

SWOT- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

UK – United Kingdom

UN - United Nations

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

USA- United States of America

URBACT - European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development

1. INTRODUCTION

Being a student in Coimbra, I have been dealing with people that have shown me the city problems and dreams, past victories or today threats. This is the context and the beginning for the present work. And so, for this project I have chosen to provide a direction for the development of a marketing plan for the Agency for the Promotion of the Downtown of Coimbra (Agência de Promoção da Baixa de Coimbra - APBC).

The main aim is to provide a marketing strategy which will help APBC to develop its brand image and to enlarge its notoriety, being this the best way to promote Coimbra downtown, in my opinion (and following all most of the people I have been talking to concerning this problem). In fact, I have chosen to work on this subject because it happened that I liked the idea right from the beginning.

In this project I will base my research on the study of seven Portuguese cities using the benchmarking methodology. The idea for this option became obvious after several meetings, discussions, and readings: the idea was to look at similar cities and find out through their examples what could be the best for Coimbra. From all these meetings, one of them has been decisive for this process. The first meeting with the actual president of APBC, Dr^a Assunção Ataíde, my supervisor. At the end, my mission is to put into evidence the touristic potentialities of APBC, to establish the better way to positioning Coimbra into the global market and put forward other sort of developments according to the official directives.

1.1 Contextualization

Marketing the downtown of a city became a vital activity for the most part of the developed cities across the world.

In fact, in the third millennium we are living in, cities need to go through a vast strategic program for their survival, in a truly competitive world, and so each territory, city, village, region, country or a museum, must struggle for its right positioning among several players.

This is the reason why in the last years several cities became working hard trying to show their potential across various stakeholders, being them the citizens, the tourists, the political decision-makers, or the potential investors. And this is also the situation in Coimbra, an old and charming city in Portugal.

All cities are competing for people's attention in several aspects. This means that cities need to engage in a vast and strategic program of territorial branding to promote themselves and stand out among so many others. Several stakeholders of a city are concerned with attracting more visitors to the city, to seduce and appeal people who want to stay permanently promoting a generational renewal and more dynamism within younger generations. Political actors, tourists, inhabitants, and businessmen are all decisive for the success of a place, and all modern cities actively try to seduce and win the preference and the coiche of their target; for this situation, it is necessary that each place becomes attractive to different gender of people, being this a big achievement in this competitive and complex world.

Coimbra, like all the other cities, intends to attract visitors, potential residents, and possible investors and workers. We are facing a city that pulsates youth and dynamism thanks to the university.

Being Coimbra candidate for the European Capital of Culture for 2027, it is even more urgent to address a marketing plan, promoting both cultural and economic aspects of the city, and to develop action plans from different city stakeholders' interests and different points of views, but overall moving in the same direction.

1.2. Aim and objectives of the project

The main aim of this Project is to identify, structure and find new solutions to help the Agency for the Promotion of the Downtown of Coimbra (APBC) enhancing their marketing strategies and organizational performance.

And as already stated, APBC is believed to be one of the main organizations that can effectively marketing the downtown of Coimbra.

APBC is a supportive organization for the promotion of the historical center of the city of Coimbra, its cultural and recreational events, and enhancing the commercial activity and main economic actors. The APBC Agency has a very important role in the management and promotion of services and different commercial spots, making the articulation with local stakeholders and establishing the links also with external stakeholders, like public organisms, cultural foreign agents of associations of the civil society.

Moreover, one should also have in mind is very important to consider all touristic products and services, and each of them must be valued to increase the attractiveness of the city for the visitors, and at the same time contributing for its local development.

Trying to accomplish the general aim of this project one must settle down objectives making it possible to understand the strategical and operational program and finding the best solutions. In other words, the objectives are steps to follow through, i.e., activities for the Agency APBC to accomplish, making this program a journey for the Agency and its stakeholders.

After several meetings with people from APBC, meeting with this project supervisor and several readings, the objectives for the Project are the following:

- To explore the importance of benchmarking and other methods.
- To compare different tourism marketing strategies of 7 different Portuguese cities, while using the benchmarking methodology.
- To identify weak and strong aspects of the studied cities.
- To identify differences and similarities of marketing practices in different cities.
- To find information about historical facts, population, number of visitors per year and per city.
- Find examples of intelligent technological solutions applied in the studied cities.
- Identify some interesting solutions related to public transport.
- Find ways to improve the public transportation system.
- Diagnose and suggest solutions for the improvement of the tourist transportation system.
- Identify some of the best/ good practices within similar agencies like APBC.
- Create a marketing plan for APBC based on a strategic analysis covering social, cultural, urbanistic, demographic, economic and historic areas.

1.3. Justification of the project

Having already explained the reason and aim of this work, I must now explain the final step of this project, i.e., the outcome of the overall project. As an outcome of this Project, I have chosen to develop a marketing plan for APBC. But most of all, why did I choose for this goal and outcome?!

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I said already I truly liked the idea right from the beginning. But this choice can be better understood considering my educational past and also my present learning dimension.

I developed my bachelor's degree in tourism in my home city, Yerevan in Armenia. In Portugal, I am studying a master's degree in Marketing and International Business.

During the year 2016-2017, I experienced for eight months working in tourism. I had the opportunity to do an internship in tourism at the University of Coimbra. I am very Proud of this experience: I have learnt about how to promote the historical heritage of Coimbra and of the University of Coimbra, one of the oldest and the most famous universities of the world. During one of the open lessons I attended last year, I became acquainted with APBC agency. Right away, I felt touched by the passion and the work of these people and I became impressed for the overall activity. Later, I contacted the director of the agency, and, in March of this year, I started to collaborate with them.

It was a great opportunity for me to know more about Coimbra, its downtown, history, drawbacks, and achievements. I have been living in Coimbra for five years now. The experience I have had, what I have learned, the inquiries, the seminars I attend, the network of people I am doing, all this make me believe that this was a project to fight for. I felt, since this early beginning, I had met the right people that could help me to find solutions to go forward with my challenging project.

1.4. Outline of the project

For the project entitled “Marketing the downtown of Coimbra / the APBC case”, I must now briefly explain the proposed structure.

This project will be part of the master's degree, being an academic text.

And so, this present text will be divided into the following chapters.

1. Introduction (including the contextualization, i.e., with a short explanation about the reasons for this investigation and study; aims and objectives of the project)
2. Literature revision (explaining the theoretical framework of the study)
3. APBC within the city of Coimbra
4. Multi case comparison (including the methodology and techniques that were used)

5. Marketing the downtown of Coimbra within APCB (addressing the plan and implementation of the marketing strategy for APBC)
6. Conclusion (addressing the plan and implementation of the marketing strategy for APBC)
7. Bibliography

During the lifetime of the work carried out, the constant improvement of the project and its outcomes will be kept in mind. The extensive bibliographic research may lead to different changes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

During the project different readings, information research and collection was carried out, covering benchmarking methodology and marketing strategies. Extensive research done by accessing books, scientific articles, websites, different publications on the related topics and references on some organizations that stand out for their success in the specific area of marketing strategies. All this data collection was analyzed and used for the previously defined purpose.

2.1. Benchmarking

As I said before, for my project will be about comparison of 7 Portuguese medium sized cities using benchmarking and other methods. Also, I will try to find similar agencies like APBC in other 6 medium sized cities, which have some buildings that included in the UNESCO list.

Having what I just said in mind, I will use benchmarking method to provide some recommendation to APBC. For the beginning, let's understand what Benchmarking is, why and how we need to do it.

To succeed in fulfilling the expected results, the benchmarking method will be used. What Is it benchmarking? "Mechanism of Benchmarking and Its Impact on Organizational

Performance” Mohammed Saleh Alosani et al. (2016) argue that benchmarking is looked from a historical point of view. With the help of different benchmarking techniques and the proposed comparative analysis of 7 different cities, it will be possible to identify some best practices of other similar organizations and later apply and adapt them to APBC. The benchmarking method has been used since the 1800s. It has gone through different developments and was recognized as an effective tool in the 1980s and 1990s by various companies which adopted this method to increase their efficiency and the level of performance. Since then, the method has widely spread and has been used to increase competitiveness and the satisfaction of the customers. One of the common definitions of benchmarking is “the search for the best industry practices which will lead to exceptional performance through the implementation of these best practices” (by Camp, 1989).

In my project benchmarking will be applied to the study of 7 cities. If we look at the classic theories of urbanism and today’s theories, we will find great differences of how the cities grow, move, change, and develop. The contemporary cities are quite complex. With the advance of technology, the phenomena of social media started to have a very relevant role in the diffusion and the construction of a marketing brand. Cities are becoming more and more modernized and digitally efficient. Besides new media there is an “increasing convergence of computing and telecommunications with older media such as photography, cinema and television”. (in: “The Media City Media, Architecture and Urban Space Scott McQuire, 2008) The advance of technology has imposed new ways of how We communicate and receive information. All this implies changes in the way how we promote products and services making them visible and known by the public.

There is no unique system of rules about benchmarking. Each study needs to be adapted to meet the needs of the organization involved in it. First, we need to define our goals, decide with whom we want to benchmark and select the level of performance. Benchmarking is a method by which the knowledge of other individuals or organizations is studied. Benchmarking helps us or a company learn from others. With the help of company benchmarking, in my case, the APBC agency can learn and improve based on what the company learned during benchmarking. In my project, I will try to find an agency like APBC in Portuguese medium-sized cities and with the help of benchmarking, the APBC can improve its strategy in the future and find new ideas and inspirations for improvement through research and benchmarking by other agencies.

There are many reasons why organizations benchmark, and many benefits that they may gain: performance improvement, budgeting, testing ideas technical problem solving and resolving disputes and so on. One of the main attractive factors is that in essence the benchmarking is a short cut to improvement process, as it identifies best practices without necessity to invent them ourselves. So, some organizations use benchmarking as a possible quick improvement tool. They prefer to not expend effort on analysis, re/designing processes, retraining and other costs. Instead, they identify current best practices, adapt, and improve them in relation to their own business and then expend effort on implementing changes with a high degree of certainty that the performance will be at least amongst the best that we have found. Benchmarking has now spread to all five continents. One small benchmarking study, for example includes participants from Australia, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and the USA. Some organizations still refuse to benchmark, sometimes because national regulations prevent them from divulging data, sometimes because they think that they have nothing to learn or for other reason, but perhaps most often because they do not know how to benchmark. But generally, in the last few years benchmarking has no longer made the headlines because it has become an established part of business life. There has been a growth in the types, methods, and the reasons for benchmarking. Benchmarking projects are typically initiated to help organizations improve their processes, resulting in higher quality products or services, reduced costs, and other benefits. It is worth noting that benchmarking is not only improvement methodology available to organizations. Many methods had been developed over the last few decades in the never-ending drive for improvement. Benchmarking has been used as an improvement tool for many years, and the fundamental idea it to be simple in use.

The following listed steps that are very important:

1. Define the project - the area of the business to do better than you can.
2. Find an organization that does what you want to do better than you.
3. Find out what practices the organizations uses that makes them better.
4. Adapt and adopt their practices to your situation.

In case of my project Benchmarking method will help APBC to see other Portuguese

medium sized cities examples to improve city marketing.

In summary, there are many different definitions about of benchmarking, it is a method of measuring and improving our organization by comparing ourselves with the bests. Organizations benchmark for variety of reasons: to enhance improvement culture, to short cut the improvement process, as a driver for improvement, as an aid to planning, budgeting, target setting, to solve specific problems, to justify proposals.

Benchmarking is a useful tool in process improvement and problem solving. Its key uses are to:

1. Help select and prioritize projects.
2. Search for appropriate solutions.
3. Identify appropriate target performance levels.

2.2. Urban Benchmarking

Today, the work of cities and megalopolises can be compared to the work of commercial enterprises, since in the modern, more and more globalizing world they are forced to constantly fight for the conquest of international resources and incomes, to strengthen their own economy. City leaders are faced with the task of creating a unified rating system for large and medium-sized cities, which will allow them to correctly assess the efficiency of cities. Such an assessment will provide an opportunity to conduct a qualitative analysis, as well as a comparison with other cities that are the competitors, and to identify strengths and weaknesses. (see also Cerreta et al., 2010). Below we will briefly review several attempts to outline the relative strengths and weaknesses of several cities. One of the main ones can be found in comparative studies related to the concept of world cities (see Friedman, 1986; Sassen, 1991; Taylor, 2004; Taylor et al., 2011). These studies focus on the position of cities in terms of the global network, in which proximity and interconnection play a central role in defining urban hierarchies based on the connections that advanced service providers share with the rest of the world. In this approach, the ranking based not on the city's position in the local network, but on its investment in the creation of the global world cities network. Later, the data from transnational companies also were included in the statistical analyses of the world city network. Thus, resulting

that in this analysis, the cities hierarchy mainly depend on the composition of the industrial sector, but with special attention to the advanced service providers. Another comparative study on leading cities of the world and their competitive advantages were undertaken by Grosveld (2002). Grosveld analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of cities around the world was based on Porter's work called "The Competitive Advantages of Nations" (1990). The purpose of this study is to identify the key local factors that determine the international competitiveness of cities in a globalizing world, and based on this analysis, create a global ranking system of cities. The data collection for the study of these cities was done based on the opinion of various kinds of experts from these cities, as well as the people involved in the decision-making process. These perceptions are subdivided into integral and functional perceptions and are based on questionnaires. Based on an extensive statistical database, the author offered his ranking of the world's leading cities. Another, more recent study on the comparative performance of cities can be found in Caragliu et al. (2011). The analysis of the efficiency of cities is based on the study of infrastructure, human, and social capital. This analysis is intended mainly for the so-called "smart cities". For the statistics, they used mainly an extensive database from the Urban Audit data source, which contains a lot of information on demographics, social aspects, economic impact, education, environment, culture, and recreation. The authors aim to propose a research basis for ranking cities based on a wide range of basic city characteristics (e.g. accessibility, public transport, etc.). An interesting study on the urban world, by mapping the economic power of cities, can also be found in a research publication of McKinsey Global Institute (2011). This research gives a ranking of the economic performance of 600 cities all over the world, based on their contribution to global economic wealth. The conceptual model which has been created based on the study consists of the following dimensions: governance (related to the leadership and place management), natural and build environment, social and symbolic capital (linked with the community and its social interactions), economic activities, and cultural facilities. According to the authors, one of the most important roles is played by the leadership ability to effectively coordinate relations between different layers and areas of the city, as well as new settlers who create compact settlements in new areas of the city. It is very important to involve people in various creative processes, to organize the exchange of knowledge through personal contact between representatives of different regions of the city. By leadership, the author means not only political leadership, for example, the mayor, but also various non-governmental organizations, companies, residents, or people

from the outside who believe in the development of the territory and are ready to launch projects to improve the lagging areas of activity and most effectively implement them in life. An authentic and unique environment, a healthy lifestyle, culture of cooperation and participation, as well as social closeness, create an atmosphere that attracts more and more highly professional workers and creative people, which in its turn contributes to the well-being and quality of life of people and the community in which they live, work, learn and interact with. An important role is played by the creation of infrastructure for the development of various kinds of art, concert, sports, and scientific clubs, which in turn contributes to the development of creative business attracts and retains creative youth. It is also important to effectively use its unique characteristics: resources, natural landscape, historical places which make possible to develop several cultural and tourism initiatives. For example: in a small town of Serpa, Portugal, there is a local traditional and unique type of music called Cante Alentejano. This symbolic asset, along with other artistic and cultural expressions are a factor in attracting talent and skilled workers associated with the creative industry.

Cities that have a rich industrial past, through the reconstruction of abandoned spaces and the creation of new spaces to live and work are trying to create favorable conditions and infrastructure, mainly to attract and create talent and firms. One can say that this process is gaining more and more development in the world. The factor of accessibility is very important for the development of cities. For this, it is necessary to develop all types of transport networks: such as railways, airports, ports, automobiles, as well as intracity transport. Digital accessibility also plays an important role, although physical accessibility is critical for the local economy and population. In recent years, the concept of 'creative cities' has gained increasing interest among both academics and policymakers. Cities and regions around the world are trying to develop, facilitate, or promote concentrations of creative, innovative, and/ or knowledge- intensive industries to become more competitive. The main interest of all stakeholders is to better understand creative cities – where cultural activities and creative and cultural industries play a crucial role in supporting urban creativity – and their contributions to the new creative economy.

2.3.Creative cities

Creative cities as creative people have existed for quite a long time. As a matter of fact, the ancient Athens with their philosophers can be a classical example of them. Today the

transition to creativity in big cities does not happen evenly. The central parts of the cities and the regions where scientific institutions or large transport hubs are located, show more flexibility in transition to creative cities in a Creative Society.

For a society transformation into a creative one, the following structure must exist: Scientific activity, technological research and development, innovations, new products and production processes, increased exports and imports, economic development restructuring, increased real income and employment in creative regions. Hence, the scientific activity with the following economy, labor market and trade development act as a precondition for creation of creative society. As a rule, creative cities are inhabited by well educated, knowledgeable and diverse population. One more factor is the high concentration of modern industry. Such cities are usually very large, reach, fast growing and unstable. Firstly, the last factor can be as disadvantageous, but, in some cases, they stimulate ideological conflicts and produce a more diverse urban environment. One more factor having influence on the development the creative society is immigration. Some people think that it is not a positive factor. However, it can be stated that a big city with creative society need permanent flow of fresh ideas, that can be imported much better by emigrants than by in-migrants from a city's hinterland. Urban Creativity

Thanks to the research of modern creative cities and regions, such concepts as “creative class”, “creative industries”, “creative environment” and “creative city” were included in our life. The term creative industries were first used in the early 1990s (Cunningham 2002, UNCTAD 2004) and has been expanded in the UK to emphasize the economic contribution of cultural production and activities in the late 1990s. British researchers describe the creative industries as “those activities that have their origins in individual creativity, skills, and talents and that have the potential to create places through the creation and use of intellectual property”. The concept of a creative city was first developed by Charles Landry in the late 1980s, and his study *Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* in 2000 became the main reference document for the creative city. Landry described the creative city as places where people think, plan, and act with imagination. In other words, this place is attractive for creative people from different fields of art, science, technology ... where they can exchange ideas and jointly create new creative projects. Therefore, “urban creativity” refers to all concepts of creativity, including “creative class”, “creative industries”, “creative environment” and “creative

city”, and it is very important to understand what attractive places for creative people should be. The top 10 useful questions are:

1. What is a creative city?
2. What makes a creative city?
3. What are the key assets and infrastructure required to foster the development of creative, competitive and cohesive places?
4. Why are some places (cities and regions) more attractive than others for new and creative activities?
5. What is the interconnection between creativity and (urban) space and how are they mutually constituted?
6. What drives innovation in creative cities?
7. What are the benefits of creative cities?
8. What are the opportunities and barriers to the development of creative cities?
9. How can public policy influence creative cities?
10. What is required to build a creative city? For success in a creative city

The development we should have clear answers to all those questions.

There are indeed several definitions one may find about urban creativity. A creative city should create an opportunity for creative people from a wide variety of fields of activity to meet, spend time together exchange ideas, and look for the right ways to bring these ideas to life. It is easier to create such conditions in large cities where people of various professions, nationalities and estates live and work compactly. It is necessary to create attractive places for such people, organize meetings where they can get acquainted, spend leisure time together, have fun and create interest clubs in which such meetings will become regular, which in its turn will contribute to the birth of new ideas and the dynamic implementation of these ideas into life. The same time city authorities should develop those areas that can make work and living condition more comfortably and the promotion of new projects easier and more effective: such as city transport, shops, internet

communications, different type of media Well-built and natural “places” that foster the creativity of residents and attract other creative people; and new “investments” in urban creativity infrastructure - from the physical environment to social, cultural and institutional organizations. Together, these factors drive innovation in creative cities. The key factors that contribute to the development of creative cities in their totality are called the term creative environment. Creative environment - in turn, is subdivided into infrastructure. The infrastructure includes locations, workforce, comfortable office space, accessible transportation, and telecommunications services. Soft infrastructure includes factors such as attractive living environment, tolerance for alternative lifestyles and diversity and a vibrant cultural life.

The term “creative environment” was first developed by Tornquist in 1983, and he described the key features of the creative environment as: • information transmitted between people; • knowledge or storage of information; • competence in certain types of activities; • creating something new from these three activities.

As a rule, a highly developed infrastructure can be created in those cities where there is human diversity, diversity of cultural heritage, history and long traditions of creativity, innovation, and tendencies for further development. These cities are more attractive for new and creative events. The “place quality” is widely used as one of the main urban marketing. So, as I said above, I will do comparison of six Portuguese medium sized cities for an agency who do promotion downtown of Coimbra, which called APBC. As my work for an agency who located in Coimbra my comparison, I will start with Coimbra city and other cities examples will help agency of promotion downtown of Coimbra for the future improvements.

2.4. Creative Creatures in Cities

Creativity and innovation must serve to improve the socio-economic performance of cities. It's important to realize that there can be found four main directions for defining this concept as a creative city: the center of art and cultural infrastructure, the scene of the creative economy, the location of a strong creative class, and the location that fosters a culture of creativity. In creative cities, most strategies are about strengthening the arts and cultural life. Arts and cultural heritage, media and entertainment, and creative business

services are the driving forces behind the development of a creative city. To attract and develop your own creative class, you need to create all the necessary conditions for this. The complexity of such conditions is usually called the quality of the place. An integrated system of many organizations and a mixture of cultures in the public, private and public sectors is of great importance to achieve a good quality of place a favorable ground for the creation and development of all kinds of clubs of interest, in the field of arts, science, sport ..., and so on.

Modern cities have many negative external factors, such as pollution of the environment, noise, stress, unemployment... But despite this, the city is the center of modern society. Modern cities offer new opportunities for balanced and perhaps even accelerated urban development, provided that the negative factors associated with this must be far less than positive. In today's information economy, knowledge and creativity are increasingly recognized as key strategic assets and powerful engines of economic growth. Cities have become strategic sites as they represent the ideal scale for intense personal interactions that generate new ideas that fuel knowledge-driven innovation. The movement emerged, especially in advanced industrial societies. Cultural Renaissance and Urban Marketing have become the main strategies of cities to create a good image and attractive and high-quality places. The creative economy is not only about creative people and creative industries but also about marketing, consumption, and real estate development. The new economy is pushing cities to seek new spatial organization through urban restructuring, and in the restructuring process, art, and creativity play an important role as key resources for growth. To create visual landmarks and attractive places to consume, urban renewal programs consider the revitalization of the waterfront, museum quarters, and more. The characteristics of creativity in various fields have been proposed by UNCTAD (2008: 9) as "artistic creation" which includes imagination and the ability to create original ideas and new ways of interpreting the world expressed in text, sound and image: "Scientific creativity" which includes curiosity and a willingness to experiment and make new connections in problem-solving; "Economic creativity" is a dynamic The process leading to innovation in technology, business practice, marketing, and more, and is closely related to gaining a competitive advantage in the economy. Thus, "creativity" is defined in an intersectoral and interdisciplinary manner, mixing elements of "artistic creativity", "economic creativity" or "economic innovation", "scientific creativity", as well as "technological creativity" or "technological innovation".

3. APBC Agency within the city of Coimbra

In this part of work, I will provide an explanation about the so called 'Baixa of Coimbra' (the city downtown) and its important place and vital role for the entire city, and the focus of APBC work. Most of the chapter then introduces the reality of the Agency APBC.

In fact, the entire activity of APBC has only one main objective: the promotion of the downtown of Coimbra.

'Baixa' is the historical district of the city. Different people and promotion guides say it is the city's brand. It includes some of the city's economic and cultural spots, small shopping centers, craft workshops and, also very important for the city promotion, areas adjacent to the banks of the Mondego River, the river that runs through the city. The historical main part of Coimbra is situated around the Baixa area. Coimbra has a long history and includes many sites of great interest to tourists. Coimbra gives place to the oldest university in Portugal, and the so-called historical areas of Alta and Sofia Street belong to the UNESCO World Heritage Site (including the University). The beautiful and historic Baixa district attracts tourists to Coimbra from all over Portugal and all over the world.

3.1. APBC Mission

The Agency for the Promotion of Baixa Coimbra (APBC) is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2004 to develop and modernize the Baixa area as an attractive shopping and leisure center. In the next figure we can see the actual logo.



Figure 1. APBC logo.

Source: APBC.

The agency's mission is to promote the commerce and services and to create an area that integrates business, culture, tourism, and leisure. The social goal of the agency is to develop and modernize the city centre, aiming to re-qualify the area and develop a unified system of management of services for a social and common interest. As part of its activities, the agency is planning and implementing joint projects with institutions of a similar nature, and involving fully or partially municipal, regional, domestic, or international partners. The agency may cooperate not only with institutions but also with any legal entity interested in the objectives of APBC and meeting the requirements of the APBC statute. As part of its projects, APBC provides free trainings and advice to its staff and partners.

In summary, and having enquired APBC main decisors, the resulting mission for this agency can be definid like that: Promoting Coimbra city center as an open-air commercial area that combines commerce with culture, and tourism, encouraging trade and services.

3.2. APBC work

There are currently more than 100 enteties cooperating with APBC. Some of them are located in Baixa or are very close to the center of Coimbra. These are well-known shops, restaurants, hairdressing salons and commercial enterprises. For example, one of the associations that cooperate with the APBC is the famous Briosas pastry shop, which is in the heart of the city or downtown. Briosas is located on the Square “Largo da Portagem”, next to the emblematic statue of Mata Frades. The Briosas pastry shop, one of the oldest and most respected in the city, has offered traditional sweets and traditionally made products since 1955. Another pastry shop is called Visconde, which is not as old as the Briosas but has also become popular in a short period of time.

As an exemple of the straight relationship between APBC and the shops located in Baixa, I must tell a short story. During my collaboration with the APBC, we made a short video about Visconde and Briosas, which had successful comments on the official APBC page. The aim of the promotion was to attract more people to Coimbra commerce, to see Coimbra through the eyes of international students and to understand the importance of supporting local commerce.

As said above, the agency works with very prominent restaurants, shops, hotels, and other commercial organizations located mostly in the historic area of Coimbra. APBC organizes events in public spaces, especially in the historic city center, the so called Baixa, which means "city center". The city of Coimbra is divided into two parts: the upper part – “Alta” and the city center "Baixa". The APBC focus its attention on the historic parts of the city, aiming to attract more people to places with historical significance, and nowadays world heritage. Each of these places has its own history and they are very cherished to Coimbra citizens, and also for people who have made their studies at Coimbra's University.

It's important to look at some of the events that have been implemented by the APBC during these last years, nonetheless the drawbacks because of Coronavirus pandemic:

In 2018, the city of Coimbra held a competition for the best cod dish. In this way, it has once again made a bid to promote the regeneration of the historic center through this gastronomic event around cod. Each restaurant prepared and presented their signature cod dish, which was available on the restaurants' menus for lunch and dinner from 14 to 21 April 2018.

Even during the pandemic time, APBC tried to organize small events in restaurants and cafes that were associated with them. Moreover, there were also operations for the promotion of this place, in spite of the pandemic time, with all its problems and interdictions. And so, during my collaboration with APBC, we developed promotional videos in the center of Coimbra. It was a short series of videos whose idea was to attract more people to the city's historical sites. As a foreign student, I tried to show the beauty of Coimbra with its old streets, restaurants, and souvenir shops, through the eyes of tourists. The main video for the promotion was the one recorded in the cafés Viscond and Biosa, and also showing the historic center of Coimbra.

3.3. APBC promotion

During my collaboration with APBC I could see the amount of promotion they do in Facebook and Instagram. The main problem that was discussed was the difficulty to target and fully communicate with Coimbra citizens in general.

Today in the modern world of technologies it is very important to use social media. During my collaboration with APBC I saw that they use social media as a Facebook and Instagram. Further on in my project I will give APBC some advice on how to improve their social media skills and to do publicity more interesting and attractive for consumers. My strategy will be more focused on social media and benchmarking methodology and tourism.

4. THE MULTICASE CITIES FOR COMPARASION WITH COIMBRA

In this chapter I will try to establish a comparison between APBC, Coimbra and 6 portugues cities. And so, this comparison will help APBC agency which located in Coimbra also will give them new ideas how improve their strategies for the future.

For this comparison, I will first describe Coimbra situation and also will deverlop a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). I will the present the mains features of the other 6 cities. For this informatiobm I will use mainly two internet sources: <https://pt.wikipedia.org/> and www.bloom-consulting.com/pt.

Notavly, Wikipedia is a well known and heavily source of information for projects of this type. Also, Bloom Consulting has been a source used in Portugal within Place branding in Portugal. The folling paragraphs do use direct copies from internet pages without mention that fact, being this also a 'How-to-it' manual for APBC whrer this type of methodoly is acceptable.

Other sources of information have been sistematically used, when needed for data gathering or checking, like the following: European Regional Development Fund (FEDER) under the technical supervision of Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the Centre Region of Portugal (CCDRC); the universities webpages from Braga, Coimbra, Guimarães and Évora; the institutional site for the cultural heritage from Portugal (patrimoniocultural.gov.pt); the municipalities sites from the 7 cities; UNESCO World Heritage sites; the webpages form the organizaions being anlysed; different online travel guides; and the Facebook when appropriate.

4.1.The methodology for the city's comparison

In this chapter I will use benchmarking methodology for helping APBC agency (which located in Coimbra) to make a promotion of downtown more effective because the benchmarking will give them new ideas that they can use them in the future. In this chapter I will use comparison of the 6 medium sized cities in Portugal and will try to find similar agencies which doing promotions in other cities which I choose for my project.

I chose these 6 cities because I wanted to study medium sized cities in Portugal, which have a historical significance being included in UNESCO world heritage list. Here below you will see some information about locations of the cities, historical facts, mobility information, some interesting facts about traditions, tourism information and of course the main point of the comparison is finding similar agencies and using benchmarking methodology to help APBC. All these information is very important, and they will help APBC to see which improvement they can promote in their agency's strategy to make *Baixa* a more attractive destination not only for tourists but also for local inhabitants.

As I said in this chapter also will be some information about what means medium sized cities so lets understand better the meaning of medium sized cities.

To be able to analyze the development of cities and compare data from different countries, it is very important to create a unified system for classifying cities by sizes such as small, medium, and metropolitan areas. But unfortunately, due to national definitions of urban areas that differ significantly from one country to another, it is difficult to compare those areas across national borders. Even in Europe, almost every country has its own criteria to define the size of the city. In different languages, the phrase a medium city sounds differently. For example, in the French language, the medium city of terminology sounds like “villes moyennes” or in Portuguese “cidades médias”, in Spanish, “ciudades intermedias”, in Armenia – “michin qaghaq”. Since my project is related to medium-sized cities, below we will try to understand what criteria are used to determine those. The phrase medium-sized city first originated in France. Many international organizations including the United Nations. (UN), consider cities with 100 000 inhabitants as a medium-sized city. In 1996 the international conference took place in Istanbul called “HABITAT 2” and as per results of the above-mentioned conference, cities with a population of 100'000 to 3 million people were considered as medium-sized. The same time at the seventh Ibero-American Congress of Urbanism, which took place in Pamplona in 1996,

all cities with a population of 20,000 to 500,000 people were considered the medium, or in the framework of the CAPI (Intermediate Cities and Global Urbanization), cities were medium cities with a population of fewer than 20 000 people. Large metropolitan areas were considered cities with a population of more than 8 million people (UIA, 1998 p 2) page 106 article. European cities are large cities with an average of 100 to 250,000 inhabitants. (Cheshire et al 1998, Datar 1989, Parkinson et al,). In the EUROPA 2000+ report, the analysis range was increased with medium cities from 20,000 to 500,000 inhabitants EC 1994b) str 106 In Portugal, medium-size cities are defined as cities with population fluctuates from 100'000 to 250'000 inhabitants. Hence we can see that the comparison among cities in different countries is quite complicated.

Having said that, I will try to find 6 medium sized cities the agencies similar like APBC and will show that strategies for APBC to improve their strategy and to look for new inspirations or ideas for the future.

4.2.Coimbra

The city of Coimbra located in the central region of Portugal. The city has a population of around 150,000 people, it is considered a historical area with beautiful architecture, historic buildings, monuments, there is one of the historic gardens, which is called (Botanical Gardens. UrbanGaia)

Coimbra plays a very important role in the history of Portugal as it has many monuments and historical buildings that are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. One such place is the University of Coimbra, which is one of the oldest universities in the world that is still functioning as university. Every year many tourists are Coimbra aiming to see those monuments. The city is known as well for its hospitality, traditions, and gastronomy.

Within this project, and for comparing the other cities with Coimbra, it was important to have in mind the reality of Coimbra This is the reason why a SWOT analysis is important for this project.

The swot analysis for the brand of Baixa highlights the following 4 points: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Marketing the downtown of Coimbra/The APBC case

Strengths • The fact of Baixa is in the place position, the location as being in the city center give a huge advantage within domestic and international visitors. • One other strength is the fact that Baixa is a historic and cultural city in the world Heritage UNESCO list with surrounding by walking distance with the hotel, banking, restaurant, tourist information, and commerce. • Baixa easy access with public transportation, an event they have sightseeing for a tourist area to know more place around it, for example, tuk-tuk or especial bus with a guide include. • Baixa itself has some cultural event regularly for example the seasonal event (springtime, summer, autumn, and winter), this also contribute more local artisan involved. • The other strength that the Baixa gives what people need (as physically and need) in city area as an open-air shopping center, boosting trade and services... also as an area in which commerce, culture, tourism, and leisure. • The final strength that the Baixa has lot's to over by cultural value always keep and maintain their traditions as the example: "Casa Coelho", located in "Rua do Corvo" and with 86 years of history, is one of the most emblematic fabric shops in "Baixa de Coimbra".

Weaknesses • One of the Baixa weaknesses is the fact that the place does not have especial area to park the car for domestic and local people to visit. • The fact that the weakness of the Baixa, the knowledge of visitor only knows competitor side that is on the UNESCO list of world heritage University of Coimbra. • The other problem that minim of schedule on the transport area for the local people come to Baixa, contributing air pollution for the city. • Lack of publicity of cultural activity on the digital platform and lack of communication and information for the tourist visitor. • Lack of diversity of the shop because the tourist area on the front-line souvenir shop takes over and people get interested in comfort inside the building such a mall and the supermarket where the need is available in one building. • The last problem because in Baixa some shop keeps the traditional way only loyal clients will know that place not to gain new clients.

Opportunities • The opportunity here is to interact more with traditional creativity, cultural Festivity and historical event to inviting some interest of local people and some tourist to visit in Baixa area. • The other things we can call as an opportunity is the fact that we aim to participate on tourism area, in the same area of world heritage of UNESCO list Alta and Sofia University of Coimbra that are created by the main brands also give popularity for Baixa. • The opportunity to reach a large market on digital platforms, especially on social media platform. This is related with the fact that we live in a digital

era were everyone as internet access, through mobile phones or computers, making it easy to search for our location area of Baixa. • Finally, as in this pandemic situation... Hospitality industry some of them are all closed in the Baixa now. The owners and executive staff need to come up with better ways to invite tourists and have their rooms full all year 'round, joint promotions, offer great off-season rates, improve the hotel itself. In this case we follow the situation as much as we could improve the business.

Threats • Traditional creativity usually become bored, divide the specific for tourist and for local activity. • The possibility of not much concrete information/ lack information about historical Baixa itself on the tourism area because for international visitor only know student city because of Coimbra University. • The shop doesn't cope or following digital era with this situation does not adapt to any platform digital to generate their business as we identified is the possibility the shop around Baixa close without to many clients and customers to buy. • The final threat that losing more job cut of the number of staff, losing customer and more refund process for some booking in the hospitality sector. Baixa is a historic district of the city of Coimbra, which is in central Portugal. We can say that it is an urban brand. Baixa includes the economic and cultural centers of the city, there are shopping centers, craft workshops and areas adjacent to the banks of the Mondego River that flows through the city. The historical part of Coimbra is located around the Baixa district.

The city of Coimbra has a century of history and includes many sites of great interest for tourists. The oldest university in Coimbra - Alta and Sofia Street are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Very beautiful and full of historical sites, Baixa attracts tourists to Coimbra from all parts of Portugal and from all over the world.

The city of Coimbra has always played an important role in the national context, which is now highlighted by the development of communications and transport infrastructure. Coimbra's education and health sectors, as well as the regional public administration, attract many people from different parts of the country to the city and contribute to its steady growth. Its accessibility is therefore crucial. Unfortunately, the central part of the city faces similar problems to the others described in this paper. Car congestion, lack of parking, vehicle emissions and noise make the city center less attractive to the local

population, which in turn has a negative impact on all other areas of activity. Mobility conditions worsen, urban spaces become less attractive, which negatively affects the quality of life in the city. The city authorities have developed strategies to increase sustainable mobility and reduce car traffic. Efforts have already been made to improve the public transport system and create incentives for greener modes of transport. Some of the measures taken include restricting vehicle access to certain parts of the city center through via traffic lights that can monitor passing traffic in real time, ensure that capacity is never exceeded, and give priority to the most efficient modes of transport. Information services will be improved by the installation of a GPS- based real-time system. Transport that runs on renewable energy sources produced in Coimbra will also be introduced. The drivers will be trained in the use of innovative systems, which will increase the safety of the public transport, reducing accidents. In addition, Coimbra wants to explore the possibility of creating Portugal's first car-sharing service. The city attaches great importance to spreading a culture of sustainable mobility. Information and promotional activities will be aimed at the younger generation.

The Arteria project is an action research project, coordinated artistically by the professional theatre company O Teatrão (Coimbra, PT) and academically by the Centre for Social Studies (Coimbra, PT). It is presently funded by the European Regional Development Fund (FEDER) under the technical supervision of Regional Coordination and Development Commission of the Centre Region of Portugal (CCDRC). The aim of the project is to create a cultural program network of agents from eight cities of the Centro Region of Portugal: Coimbra, Figueira da Foz, Ourém, Viseu, Guarda, Belmonte, Fundão and Ourém. The network will structure the circulation« of cultural products in the region and promote the professionalism of these agents through innovative artistic practices (linking local authorities, knowledge production centers and local cultural agents). The project itself is understood as an innovative practice in the field of culture to work with a set of partners and institutions that represent the radiography of these communities.

4.3. Braga

Braga located in the north of Portugal, on the banks of the rivers Douro and Minho. The area is 183.4 km², the population is 192,494 thousand inhabitants. Braga is the third-largest city of Portugal after Porto and Lisbon, the city is located amidst mountains,

forests, valleys, and verdant fields. Braga, the City Brand that brings history to the future (Bloom Consulting ([bloom- consulting.com](http://bloom-consulting.com)))

Braga provides cultural and entertainment activities such as, museums, theatres, exhibitions, galleries which attract a huge number of tourists. Braga ([uminho. pt](http://uminho.pt))

Braga is one of the most technologically advanced cities in Portugal. Today, many high-tech companies are based in Braga. This has made the hi-tech sector one of the main sources of growth for the local economy. A new generation of artists at the end of the 20th century, was able to successfully combine art with innovations in technology. The creation of the generation centre is one example of the development of technology in Braga. Thanks to regular seminars, the centre is always up to date enable the population to be up to date in the field of innovations and developments in digital technology. In recent years city Braga supporting creative industries, arts, and innovations, we may mention the Semibreve festival. The festival is known all over the world. It is a festival for electronic music and media art. Artists from all around the world participate in this festival; the city has even opened a new residence for media art and start-ups. Braga | Braga is one of Portugal oldest cities and played an important role in the country history. Its history goes back over 2,000 years. Civitas Bacara was founded in 20 BC during the Roman occupation and was dedicated to the Roman Emperor Augustus. The city was also known as Portuguese Rome. During the Roman Empire, it was the most important and largest city. Historic buildings have been preserved in the city. For example, Sé de Braga was built in 1070. A significant amount of local and foreign tourists is visited Braga for its religious significance. The city is known as the city of the archbishops as for centuries it was the most important archbishopric on the Iberian Peninsula. The Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte attracts locals and tourists and since 2019 the monument has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Braga, the City Brand that brings history to the future - Bloom Consulting (bloom-consulting.com)

Minho University was founded in 1973 and the first classes were held in 1975/1976. Today, Minho University is famous for the quality of its teaching, research, competence, and faculty. It offers both undergraduate and graduate courses. It has links with other institutions. The university plays an important role in the region and is a globally recognized partner. The university is located on the north side of Portugal, with campuses in Braga and others in Guimaraes, Lazurem, and Couros. Minho University is a research

university that offers innovation, research, and development. In 2010 and 2011, the university launched distance learning, and evening classes have also expanded the university opportunities for new audiences. (uminho.pt)

One of the most important events in Braga is Holy Week, which plays an important role for the city as many tourists and visitors visit the city to take part in religious activities. During Holy Week, the city of Braga starts religious celebrations such as solemn street processions. One of the most spectacular is the house of procession with composition. Celebrate the passion of Christ. The Sé Cathedral plays a big part in this celebration, with Masses held during the parade. Bom Jesus do Monte. Bom Jesus do Monte is an architecturally designed complex that has been renovated and extended over 600 years. This worldwide known sanctuary is also situated in Braga. It is in the Espinho valley, which leads through chapels with sculptures, fountains, statues, and ceremonial gardens. The complex surrounded by forest that forms a beautiful park. There are also artificial caves, buildings as well as various structures within the complex. The sanctuary and the forest are one, as the mountain was created to house the sanctuary, as they fill each other up and form a single complex. The Holy Mountain is one of the most important sites for the city of Braga, as the mountain informs about the city history in different periods. It is distinguished by its uniqueness, also thanks to the Baroque style and the religious values of the place. One of the main parts is the monumental staircase, which consists of two sections.

The main historical center plays an important role in shopping center organization, and it is seen as an important commercial destination (Guimarães 2016b). It is also Braga's buzzing hotspot for locals to meet, as most famous cafés and their terraces are located there. Consequently, it is the most visited and most important area of the city. Therefore, most urban regeneration projects have targeted the area (Guimarães 2016b). In this comparably small area, sixteen shopping centers can be found. Beside these shopping centers in the city center, similar retail precincts are scattered across the city in their vicinity. Regarding the shopping centers located in the main town center, some profound changes have been occurring. Overall, it seems clear that shopping centers in the city center are in a downward trend. Evolution of old shopping centers in Braga city center, Portugal shows that the decline in shopping center activity seems to be the result of speculative real estate investment. Despite the existing signs of decline, which can be traced back to 1995, private retail developers have decided to open new shopping centers,

further exacerbating the existing problem. The Evolution of Old Shopping Centres in the Town Centre of Braga, Portugal

The municipality of Braga plays an essential part in developing the city, so it can propose various projects related to urban mobility. Therefore, the municipality has developed several projects related to urban mobility. One of these projects is: “I can pass here”.

This project emerged as a response to a proposal from the 2016 participation funding, entitled **Eu Não Passo Aqui!** (I cannot pass here!) The project aims at an in-depth review of the prevailing mobility conditions to remove existing barriers or any other factors that threaten the realization of Mobility for All. The main objective of the project is to make a positive message out of this assumption: **Eu Já Passo Aqui!** (I can already pass here!).

The main objective of this project is to improve the promotion of economic means of transport, it is also very important in the project to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities, the project also deals with improving parking levels, reducing emissions, ensuring traffic safety, all these are included in the main objectives of the project, as the environment is very important for the city population, such projects help improve the lives of both residents and visitors movement to the city. “Control of the pedestrian zone Access to for freight operations” This project aimed to revise urban logistics processes in the pedestrian zone, to avoid unnecessary congestion by cars/vans.

The creation of bike lanes is very important for changing the mentality of city residents, it also influences urban design and helps to lead healthier lifestyles. It is important to create a network of bike lanes in the city to improve safety and to change people mentality. Introducing bicycle lanes is very important for the city as it can affect the environment, as the bicycle is an eco- friendly means of transport, and it can affect the ecological environment of the city. It can also affect people mindset and they may start to use fewer cars as a means of moving around.

Improving pedestrian walkways is a project that focuses on forming a walkway network with a wide range of services using tactile surfacing, the layout of footpaths and walkways, or, if this is not possible, the reduction of curbs with simple slopes.

It is important to address for this project the **ACB Commercial association of Braga**. ACB is an association that organizes projects for sectors such as trade, tourism, services, and these projects playing an important role in developing the local economy.

There are some projects that are in a stage of implementation by ACB: “Buy@Braga” (This project has its slogan which is: “Let your local trade always be at your fingertips”. The Buy Braga project, launched by the Commercial Union of Braga, the Municipality of Braga, and Invest Braga, in partnership with CTT, aims to support Braga traders as they digitalize their business.)

The creation of online shops is linked to the CTT - Local Commerce service. Thanks to this product, which has an interface with the app of the same name, any shop owner in Braga can set up and make their online shop accessible, giving consumers the opportunity, using the CTT - Local Commerce app, to buy products available at participating shops from the comfort, security, and convenience of their own home. The app will also make life easier for merchants and consumers by ensuring that the commercial transaction takes place in a secure environment and that logistics operations are handled flexibly and comprehensively, ensuring orders are received at participating shops and delivered to consumers.

“Activating Braga” is also a very important activity to look at. A collective strategy for the revitalization of 1st generation shopping centers has been defined by a joint initiative of the ACB and the Municipality of Braga, and this work is seen as the basis for future interventions in these developments and retail spaces in the city. The Ativar Braga - Centros Comerciais de 1.^a Geração project diagnostic, co-financed by NORTE 2020, identifies the critical success factors of these spaces and, based on the national and international benchmarking activities promoted during the study, presents innovative and realistic solutions to revitalize these spaces and their respective businesses. Through this innovative and pioneering intervention in Portugal, ACB promotes the identification of viable and sustainable solutions for the revitalization of 1st generation shopping centers, always focusing on the qualification and empowerment of the business structure that makes these spaces dynamic. The active and committed involvement of the mall entrepreneurs, the technical team that conducted the study, and the support of Braga City Hall played a crucial role in achieving the results.

The Dynamics program was aimed at trade and service enterprises with a workforce of at least 100 employees. In the logic of training activities, the project includes activities in specialist areas for employees and entrepreneurs, aimed at improving the skills and organizational efficiency of the small and medium-sized enterprises participating in the project.

Another quite up-to-date point of innovation is the “I shop Braga”, an e-commerce platform designed to strengthen commercial ties and affection between the shops participating in the project and their customers. Created within the scope of the Measure Trade Invests by the initiative of the Braga Trade Association, I SHOP BRAGA is open to new adhesions from Braga companies that wish to offer their current and potential customers the possibility of making purchases from the comfort of home or any other part of the world. ACB also organizes webinars and training-action projects for small and medium-sized enterprises. (Projetos Especiais - Associação Comercial de Braga (acbraga.pt))

Addressing the tourism of the city, despite its average size and a population of no more than 200,000, Braga became the most important city in 2012 and was listed as a UNESCO Creative City for Media Arts in 2018. Braga successfully combine the historic with the modern. The city has a strong focus on tourism, region gastronomy can be an interesting fact for visitors. Attractions such as Portugal first cathedral, which was built in the 12th century, the sanctuary of the Bom Jesus which holds one of the main monuments in religious terms and the 18th century palace which has become a museum All these sightseeing and other interesting places are attracting foreign tourists and local visitors to Braga. Portugal happiest city is in the running for European Best Destination 2019 - Lonely Planet Over the years, tourism in Braga has grown significantly in 2013-2018. Statistics show that tourist growth over these years has increased significantly by about 80 percent. The hot season for tourism in Braga is usually in July - August, majority of visitors are from Spain, France, USA, Italy, and Brazil. It worth noting that the number of Brazilians visiting Portugal has increased since 2017. Visitors to the city are quite satisfied by high level of service.

4.4.Évora

The region of Évora is situated on the southern side of Portugal. It borders the region of Santarém and Portalegre to the north and Spain and the province of Estremadura to the east. The region is 7393 km² long. The landscape is more even in the Alentejo region. It is possible to see valleys with small mountain slopes that are planted with wide reservoirs. In terms of the geological system, non-metallic mineral springs can be seen in the area. Of these resources, marble, granite, etc. play an important economic role. The region is also known for its gastronomy, which helps in the development of tourism, as many tourists visit the region because of its gastronomy, and, therefore, the region is very developed in the field of agriculture and tourism. The region is renowned for its certified cheese, meat, and sausage production (beef, sheep, and black pork). These products make the region gastronomy much more advanced.

In the past, Évora was called Eburones ou Eborá. Eburones is a Celtic word. According to historical documents, the Celts dominated this region twenty centuries ago. Évora's history plays a significant role in the history of Portugal. The city was for a long time under the influence of the Roman Empire and was also considered a military centre. During the reign of Julius Caesar, in 59 BC, it took the name of Liberalitas Julia. Évora was conquered by the Moors, whose domination ended in 1165. The Moors improved the city's defences by adding fortified gates. Their presence is also noted still today in the names of some streets in the Moorish neighbourhood of the historic centre, where we can find some Moorish names. These names also survived the Christian conquests. There are many medieval buildings in the city, and the 13th century cathedral, the Cathedral of Évora is one of the most famous ones. It is also known as Sé Catedral de Évora, but its correct name is Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption (*Basilica Se de Nossa Senhora da Assunção*). The Golden age of Évora began in the 15th century after the Christian reconquest, when the Portuguese kings began to reside there. Monasteries and royal palaces such as the Convent of Santa Clara, São Francisco church, Lóios Convent and the São João Evangelista Church were built during this time. These structures were either built on the ruins of existing buildings or new ones were erected. They were usually built from scratch or on top of old ruins in a Portuguese Manueline style, which continued to be used in the 16th century. Other historic buildings such as the Inquisition Court, the Inquisition Palace of the Dukes of Cadaval, the Church and Convent of Lóios, the Public

Library, and the Évora Museum are all in the city centre. Visitors can see the façade of the São João Evangelista Church with its garden, which offers magnificent views of the Roman aqueduct and the beautiful scenery of the area. It is important to mention the 16th century houses of Cordovil and of Garcia de Resende. There are also other interesting historic buildings to visit in the centre of Évora. Here visitors can see small houses that were built in the 16th and 18th centuries and are mostly painted white so that, on summer days, the tourists could see the yellow beam of the Alentejo skyline. Évora has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1986 and it is considered an open-air museum. The Temple of Diana is one of the most important historic buildings in Portugal. The Roman temple that has been preserved to this day, as well as its 14 columns. The Temple of Diana was dedicated to the Roman hunting goddess Diana. The Roman temple was used as a place of execution during the Inquisition period and as an abattoir in the 19th century. The Temple of Diana is situated in the heart of the historic centre and at the highest point of the city. The Roman temple is still in good condition, and it is one of the most visited places in the city of Évora.

The Chapel of Bones is one of the most important landmarks of the city and is listed by UNESCO. The chapel is part of the São Francisco church, which was built in the 17th century on the initiative of three monarchs. Their aim was to pass on a message of worldliness and the fragility of human life from generation to generation. They wanted people to understand that everything in this life is temporary and all people will eventually become bones. At the entrance to the chapel there is an inscription in Latin “We the bones which are here, for yours await.”. The story of the Chapel is surprising. In the 17th century, there were forty-seven cemeteries in Évora which were full; and because there were so many cemeteries in one town, the three monarchs proposed building a chapel with bones from those cemeteries. The legend has it that there were skeletons of soldiers, people with AIDS, but they were mostly the skeletons of ordinary people. About 5000 skeletons were excavated to build the chapel. The chapel is small and there are hardly any lights. There is another inscription on the ceiling where it is written “The day of death is better than the day of life”. The whole story shows the gloomy disposition of people in Baroque times.

Universities play an important role in medium-sized cities. The University of Évora was founded in the 16th century. According to historical records, Cardinal D. Henrique, who

was the first Archbishop of Évora, after obtaining the approval of King João III, played up the construction for the Eurasian seminarians. In 1553, new buildings were constructed. In 1553, the buildings, such as the convent Botica (Apotheca) and its various facilities were erected, which were administered by the Company of Jesus, and from which the College of the Espírito Santo (Holy Spirit) was originated. The first official opening took place on 28 th August 1553, and, six years later, on 15 th April 1559, Pope Paul IV established a second university. The first opening of the academic year took place in 1559, on 1 st April. In those days, the university could teach almost all subjects except medicine, parts of canon law, and civil law. In the beginning, the university taught Philosophy, Sacred Law, Morals, Speculative theology, Rhetoric, Humanities, and Grammar. After 200 years of operation, the university was closed by the Marquis of Pombal in 1759, on 8 th February. For the next 200 years, the university, unfortunately, remained. closed. The university was reopened in 1973 and already had the status of a public university. Nowadays, the University of Évora is a modern building known for its high-quality professionals. It offers forty-three undergraduate degrees, eighty-five masters, and thirty-four doctoral programs. The University of Évora has always played an important role in the city and is one of the most historic universities in Europe.

Cante Alentejano. Traditionally, it is a two-part polyphonic melody performed in the south of Portugal (in the Alentejo region), usually by amateur groups. This melancholic music is mostly about missing a place, such as home or a mother. In the past, rural workers would sing while working in the fields, and these songs have been passed down through the generations. There are some choirs that are composed only by men, and some that are composed only by women. There are also mixed groups, where men and women sing together. Usually, there are about 30 singers in a group, and then, these big groups can also be divided into smaller groups. Cante Alentejano was included in a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014 as tangible cultural heritage. This fact played an important role not only for the Alentejo region but also, for the whole of Portugal. This project's aim is to compare seven Portuguese medium-sized cities by using the benchmarking methodology. So, it was essential to find like APBC agencies in the Evora District.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites are protected by all the rules concerned. But at the same time, they are part of the smart city, and must serve their historical purpose. New technologies are helping to achieve this. Évora is one example of the use of new technologies in the form of a project related to the impact on the environment, using LED

lights and smart technology. The city has started to use an innovative energy system for lighting historic monuments and streets. The new system makes it possible to use the energy more efficiently. Évora represents the first example of a city in Portugal that has used a smart energy saving system. It has served as an example for other Portuguese cities such as Lamego, Guimaraes, Tocete, Marinha Grande and others. Smart fixtures were used for the project, replacing old fixtures but at the same time retaining the historic spirit, 45 fixtures were supplied but retaining their original look and design, and each fixture has individual control.

In Évora, statistics for 2018 show that there were around 142,587 visitors. Also, according to the data, the flow of tourists in September was about 25,210 visitors, while the lowest number of visitors is January with the lowest attendance of about 3,452 visitors in 2018. In 2018, the main number of tourists was from Spain, England, and Japan. Spaniards accounted for 20.53 percent. about 29,280 of the total number of visitors, also compared to 2017, there was a comparative increase in the number of tourists in Evora in 2018. For example, museum attendance also increased. The number of visitors to Évora increased by about 8.5 percent compared to 2017, and in 2018 the number of visitors was about 348,279. (Posto de Turismo de Évora registou em 2018 mais de 11 mil visitantes por mês – Rádio Campanário (radiocampanario.com))

Since 1968, the Tourist Office has been recording the tourist inflow daily. Over 51 years of operation, more than 6 million visitors (6,085,006) have been recorded. As for 2020, the number of tourists in the city has dropped significantly due to the pandemic situation. Exact figures on the number of tourists visited are not yet known. (Turismo aumenta de “forma lenta” em Évora mas longe dos números antes da pandemia – Observador)

It is a commercial company in the Évora area and, like APBC in Coimbra, ACDE is also, a non-profit association. It was founded in 1890, on 20 th April. Since 1890, ACDE has been working to overcome barriers to trade in the Évora region, as well as contributing to the economic and business development. The Agency mainly focuses on trade, tourism, and services. These areas play an important role in the creation of new jobs. One of the agency’s main objectives is to create a stronger and more competitive region and focus on traditional commerce. One of the main goals of the agency is to promote and implement new projects to facilitate and increase commercial activity.

Menu Km 0 (Km0) was a project organised by ACDE in the Évora region. One of the main aims of this project was to promote initiatives, so that the products used in the food industry had no impact on the environment because these products were produced and processed in the same region. The Institute of Mediterranean Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of Évora and some retailers of the district followed the proposal.

Menu Km 0 is based on local products, demonstrating the special quality of the region's produce. The project was very important for the development of local gastronomy and tourism, as many tourists usually visit places to taste the local gastronomy. This project was free of charge for the participants. However, the participating restaurants had to work under some limitations. At least 80% of ingredients, except for spices, for the Menu Km 0 had to be bought in Évora or, if they were not found, they could be bought in the same municipality of the Évora area. The retailers who wanted to join the project had to follow all the rules as well as indicate the location of the manufacturer of the ingredients they were intended to use. The restaurants which participated in the project had to clearly indicate that the menu was related to the Menu Km 0 project. The main aim of the project was to use environmentally sustainable products, to promote the local economy as well as local businesses by encouraging economic growth within the community and the use of different products, which is very important as they show the specificity of the region. Another important factor was to manage the environmental impact by reducing energy consumption. Biodiversity and conservation of local products were very important and played a great role for the local economy.

4.5.Elvas

Elvas is one of Portugal's most important historic cities, situated on the border with Spain and often referred to as the Queen of Frontiers. The city of Elvas is in the Portalegre region of Alentejo and in the Alto Alentejo sub-district. The town is surrounded on the north by the territory of Arranches, bordered on the north-east by Campo Maior, on the south-east by Olivença, on the east by the Spanish town of Badajoz, on the south by Alandroal, and on the west by Borba and Monforte bordered by Vila Viçosa. Território - Município de Elvas (cm-elvas.pt)

Estratégia de Desenvolvimento de Elvas – Projectos, Governança e Gestão Municipal
Nelson da Rocha Alfaia Trabalho de Projecto de Mestrado em Gestão do Território
Especialização em Planeamento e Ordenamento do Território Outubro, 2015 page 10

As Elvas has historically been under threat, from the Spanish side it is one of the very well protected cities. The city is shaped like a multi-pointed star, and this allows the city to be defended from all points. (Elvas – Portugalist)

Elvas is one of Portugal's most important and beautiful cities, as it is right on the border with the Spanish town of Badajoz. This city was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2012. Elvas is one of the fortified cities because of the conflicts with Spain in the past, so the Elvas is often referred to as a fortress city. Protecting the city was very important as it provided a safe connection to the capital of Portugal. The presence of Celts can be seen in the region, who are considered among the first inhabitants to have settled in the area, after the Celts, the Romans settled in the region around 155 BC. The Visigoths were also in the area, and in the 8th century the Moors settled in Élvás, their influence being particularly important for the region. The first fortified walls of the city were built in this area during the 9th and 12th centuries, during the time when the Moors settled in Elvas. In the 13th century, the town became known as a fortress town during the War of Restoration from 1640 to 1668. Discover Elvas, the biggest fortified city in Portugal and Europe (gotoportugal.eu) Elvas also called City Fortress during the Portuguese Restoration War from 1640 to 1688. One of the historic attractions of Elvas is the castle, which has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The castle was rebuilt in the 13th and 14th centuries but was completed in the 16th century. Elvas Castle is classified as a national monument, which was also included in the UNESCO World

One of the most beautiful places in the city is the Praça da República Elvas. There are various monuments that make the city interesting to visit, such as the Igreja Nossa Senhora da Assunção. The church is in the Manueline style as well as the Baroque style, it was built in the 16th century. Other places of interest in Elvas are the Seminário dos Inglesas, Igreja são Domínguez and other monuments. Along with the historic places, visitors can also see modern museums such as the Photography Museum as well as the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Elvas. Discover Elvas, the biggest fortified city in Portugal and Europe (gotoportugal.eu)

There are many forts in Elvas but I will mention Fort Nossa Senhora da Graça. This fort is situated on an elevated site on Mount da Graça and to the north of the Elvas region. The fort was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1910 and was awarded the status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012. The fort is considered one of the city's fortifications, and there are other forts, as already noted. Since the fort was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site for this reason and for many others, a plan for its preservation and restoration has been developed.

Elvas Castle is one of the city's main attractions. It was built during the reign of Sancho II; The city was conquered from the Moors in 1166 and 1220 and was rebuilt after its conquest in 1228.

Almost every city in Portugal has associations that organize the promotion of the area. In Elvas this association is called AEE which means *Associação Empresarial de Elvas*. What is AEE? It is an association that represents the commercial sector and includes sectors such as services and industry in the Elvas region. This association was founded in 2007 with the motto "Together we are stronger". AEE started from zero and now this association plays a very important role in the development of the local region in terms of economy and overall development. One of the goals of the association is to make the region economically more developed. The association organizes conferences, exhibitions, etc., which can play an important role in the development of the Elvas region and can also contribute to cultural and social development. An important aspect of the association's work is encouraging partner associations that are in difficulty due to the financial crisis or other factors. AEE has companies in various fields such as restaurants, stores, bars, and others. AEE offers its partners the various services. For example, free digital marketing for AEE member associations. Digital marketing is becoming a very important aspect for businesses these days, and for this reason, the company organizes consultancy services for logos, images, websites, and social media. The association also helps to point out their shortcomings and offers help in creating new strategies to improve business, as digital marketing offers many opportunities for development. These services are provided by "Virgula Design and Print". The company assists the Association with time planning and provides AEE with digital marketing services in the Association's territory, in other words, it works with AEE to help its partners. In addition, AEE organizes various projects such as training / actions for those companies that are primarily concerned with management, innovation, etc. For associations that cooperate with AEE, these training /

actions were free of any cost. The Elvas association organised an event to celebrate the Christmas period, which is basically Christmas shopping. To revitalise the local economy, the association had the idea of rewarding its customers by handing out 12 shopping vouchers worth €2,000. Customers who made purchases for a certain amount, ranging from 5 euros to 40 euros, participated in the promotion. The promotion was held from 23 January 2020 to 9 January 2021. More concrete customers who participated in the competition received the following prizes. 500 euros if his/her card amount was 40 euros. 10 prizes of 100 euros each if his or her card amount was 5 euros. The prizes received by the participants were funded by the Association of Business Entrepreneurs of Elvas. The participant received their prize only upon presentation of a citizen's card and could use the card from the moment the prize was received for 30 days after receiving it. Purchases made with the voucher had to have a value of at least 50 euros and the participant could only use one voucher.

In 2020, the Elvas Association organized a contest for partners. The contest was related to the Christmas season. The idea of the contest was that commercial partner companies would decorate their stores with a Christmas theme to attract customers, this would also help the economy of the region, and through this contest it would be possible to raise a Christmas mood for visitors and buyers.

This contest was held in 2020, and the winner was chosen by a lottery system. On the last day, a special draw was held, with the help of which 12 cards were taken out, which the contestants put into a lottery. Everyone was welcome to participate in this contest, as well as normal residents of the region of Elvas.

The city of Elvas invented an information platform that was developed as part of the Start Tourist Destination project, the main objective of this project was to use the platform to evaluate the impact of tourists, promotions, cultural events, as well as investments in resources and infrastructure. The goal of the project was to contribute through the platform to the development of tourism and other industries in the region. Through the platform, the partners were able to gather an analysis of information from Badajoz and Elvas, which included, for example, the places most visited by tourists, progress in the business sectors, the number of cars and other modes of transport, the nationality of customers or tourists, the occupancy of hotels and restaurants, and information about the use of parking lots.

All this information was carefully analyzed and sent to all participants of the system in the form of reports. All this operation allows to see the economic effect of certain events, the number of tourists who visited them, as well as makes it possible to observe the change in trends.

4.6. Guimarães

Guimaraes is a medium-sized city, located in the northern part of Portugal's Braga region, in the sub-area of the river Ave, which is regarded as one of the most developed sub-areas in Portugal. The city is bordered on the north by Póvoa de Lanhoso, Fafe to the east, Vizela and Santo Tirso to the south, to the west Vila Nova de Famalicão and bordered by Braga to the northwest side.

Some historical facts Guimaraes considered to be one of Portugal's most important cities as it has an extensive history. The city center is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site and is also considered to be one of the main tourist centers of the region. Guimaraes was inhabited as early as the 9th century and in the past, it was called Vimaranes in honor of the warrior Vymyr Peres. The city is also called the birthplace of the Portuguese nationality or the cradle city because it is the birthplace of the first Portuguese king Afonso I. A historical factor is the town's role in the Battle of San Mamede, which was fought in 1128 on 24 July. The Battle of San Mamede played an important role in history, as it was of great significance in the formation of Portugal. This battle took place outside the city. The inhabitants of Guimarães are called the vimaranes, they are also called conquistadors due to the historical occurrences that took place in the past. The city became the cultural capital of Europe in 2012. All these facts make the city a very interesting place to visit.

As already mentioned, Guimaraes is a city with a rich history and its center is important because it is a good example of a surviving medieval center that has survived to the present day, as it is in Guimaraes that traditional techniques are used in building construction. Thanks to this and many other factors, the town has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001, on 13 December. The town is very well preserved to this day, and thanks to it we can have an impression of towns from medieval times. In the Guimaraes particularly highlighted is the period between the 15th and 19th centuries.

The city plays a major role in Portugal's History. Guimaraes was the European Capital of Culture in 2012 and the European City of Sport in 2013. Historically, the city center has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2001, on the 13th of December. Established in the 4th century, it was the first capital of Portugal in the 12th century. It is one of the examples of medieval towns, as it has survived to this day because it was built using traditional methods. This method was also exported to the Portuguese colonies. Guimaraes is a birthplace of Afonso Henriques, Portugal's first king, and is called the town of the cradle. The city's inhabitants have been called the conquerors because of historical occurrences that took place in the past ...

The city's cultural development was particularly notable between the 15th and 19th centuries, when they used the traditional method during construction, allowing Guimaraes to retain its historic appearance. The town was considered the seat of the Portuguese princes. Guimaraes is one of the towns considered to be an example of a medieval town that has survived to the present day. [Whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org) Historic Centre of Guimarães - UNESCO World Heritage Centre

The castle was the area that saw attacks from the Moors and Normans in the 10th century and it was necessary to build a fortress to protect and defend the monks and inhabitants of the town. Following the vows of the duchess Mumadona Dias, a monastery was ordered to be built on its grounds and so Guimaraes Castle was built in Vimarões, today called Guimaraes. In the 12th century, great works were carried out in the castle after Count D. Henrique and Countess D. Teresa were grafted into the castle, following the formation of the Condado Portucalensis. Later, several kings contributed, especially during the 13th and 15th centuries, to the restoration of the castle. The castle plays an important role in history as it dates to the founding of Portugal. The castle was declared a National Monument. Restoration work was carried out, and in 2001 the castle was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is a part of the historical center of Guimaraes. The castle has a very simple layout but gives a beautiful visual appearance.

The feira Afonsina Fair has been held for several years as part of Portugal's historical festivities, with the historical center of Guimaraes being a distinctive part of the event. Each year a theme related to Portuguese history is chosen. Thanks to events the number of visitors increased, and this can have an impact on the growth of the regional economy. The fair normally takes place over four days from the 21st to the 24th of June. It is typically

seeing the resurrection of the historical atmosphere associated with Portuguese history. This historical atmosphere is helped by the actors, who are usually dressed in traditional costumes and decorations, and the music creates a historical Christmas atmosphere. During these fairs, visitors learn more about history, tradition, gastronomy, and local crafts. Normally this event was celebrated each year and every year the municipality chose a historic theme during a medieval event because medieval events are very popular in Portugal and attract many tourists in the regions where such events are organized. They celebrate it 9 years and each year choose a different historic episode. In 2019 the fair was hosted by Guimaraes City Council and the theme of the pitchfork was chosen by the history and legends of Egas Moniz and it was the 9th production of this project. Such fairs are very important for the region, as they showcase the culture of the region and revive memories of the past. Unfortunately for 2020, this event was canceled because of Covid situation but I hope they will continue for the next year.

Smart Cities try to show in real life the modern solutions in the field of information and communication technologies, infrastructure optimization, mobility, and energy-saving, with the single goal of enhancing the quality of life of the population. Despite being a medieval city, Guimaraes is also one of the most technologically advanced and smart cities. In 2020, the city applied for a project called the Dream Project, which aims to promote the development and production of innovative urban solutions as part of the EU's Horizon program. Which are more concentrated in smart and sustainable development foreseeing transformative projects in the areas of Energy, Space, Water, Climate, Lighting, Knowledge, Mobility, Employment, Housing, Waste and People.

The municipality of Guimarães, together with the Guimaraes trade associations, has launched a new platform.

The platform is free, and it creates a possibility for residents to shop any time and from any location, thus supporting the commercial area of Camara Guimaraes and to show that its city is not only a medieval city that has survived to this day, but also it is a modern and technologically advanced city. It is also helps shopping much faster, more modern, and makes shopping easier. So, the program wants to support local commerce: shops, restaurants, and other services to advertise their business online and move to a digital platform as well. This can improve competitiveness as well as stimulate the local economy.

As already mentioned, the platform is free and can also be used from mobile devices, which helps and simplifies the process of buying goods and services. This platform is called Proximcity. Through it is possible to get information about various products and services selected from the local offer and for all app views for free. Shoppers and users may shop, order with security and convenience, because they can use mobile devices

What offers this platform? The municipality of Guimaraes wants to support local traditional trade through this platform. The platform helps local commerce not only to spread within Guimaraes but can also reach beyond its borders. The platform includes products ranging from catering to clothing, textiles, bookstores, grocery stores and other shops that engage in local and traditional trade. It helps market local commerce, helping local commerce become more popular not only with the local community but also beyond. The municipality wants to help traders move to an online platform. This way, it can help the traders sell more products without spending a lot of resources on it. Sellers who register and open an online platform can perform the following functions: they will be able to set up their account, shop settings, make payments and deliver goods, manage goods and orders using the app. Also, thanks to a dashboard with shop data analysis, buyers will be able to see which products or items have been sold the most, which will enable sellers to better guide future sales and be more attentive to customers' tastes, which will help in future product selection. With this platform traders will be able to coordinate and group products by section, discount, gallery, and with other compartments, making the shopping process for the shopper easier, much faster, and more convenient. Proximity | A melhor oferta local. To open an online shop, businessmen need to register in advance, after which the seller can start creating an account for his shop and then he can start adding products and start selling.

One other interesting solution that gives a Guimaraes city for visitors or for locals is another platform, called - Guimaraes goes hitchhiking. It is an online platform for vehicles. This platform helps locals and tourists to get from one place to another. Like Proximcity, is a free platform for public use of cars in Guimarães and outside the municipality. This platform is the first in Portugal to offer the possibility to share your car with other passengers. It helps local people to share their vehicle with other travelers, which gives the following benefits: save money on travel, safe environment, meeting interesting people when travelling. Statistic showed that in Portugal, 43 % of Portuguese citizens would agree to share their vehicles, as for driver the more passengers he will take,

the cheaper it will be for him, as the costs will be shared with everyone on the journey. As far as passengers are involved, joint travel costs will be much more economical and cheaper than if passengers take the same trip alone. Thus, in general the cars will be used much more effectively, consequently the amount of CO₂ in the air will be reduced, meaning that through this system you can have an impact on the environment. To use this app, you need to enter it and find drivers who are doing the same route as the passenger needs and then contact the driver. Assessing profiles is also considered a good way to find a good travel companion.

The historic center encompasses an area of 121 hectares, which is only 5.3% of the total area of the city. Unfortunately, the historic center cannot keep up with modern life and loses some of its population every year. Since 1940, the city center has lost more than 20% of its population. Due to the recent dynamic development of the city and the rehabilitation process, the city center is in a situation where a significant proportion of residential buildings remain empty (18%), and the trend seems to indicate that this phenomenon is intensifying. The rehabilitation works are not covered all buildings, and recent calculations stated that 35% of the existing buildings are still in need of restoration. Like other cities with historic centers, the center of Guimaraes is used less and less for housing and commerce. Two government programs (PROCOM and URBCOM) have focused on the development of commerce in the city center. At present, the historical center of Guimaraes does not represent a dominant center for services and accommodation in the city. Deterioration of residential buildings and excessive noise associated with existing nightclubs have been the main reasons for this situation.

4.7. Tomar

Tomar is not a big but growing city. People living in the center of town be able to walk to most places. But the people living in the outskirts of Tomar must use your own cars or public buses known as TutoTomar (Urban Transport of Tomar). Tuto Tomar has been founded in 2005. It is a red color buses running towards remote destinations. Tuto Tomar: Urban Transport of Tomar, Portugal « City of Tomar (city-of- tomar.com) Tuto Tomar began operating on 19 September 2005 and until today, t is operated continuously with a 20-minute frequency, transporting an average of more than 500 passengers a day. With Tuto Tomar Municipality intends to ensure the community and visitors to Tomar a public

transport service adapted to the different mobility needs and which allows the connection between the historical center and the northern part of the city, namely to schools, health units, and hypermarkets. Worth to mention, that Municipality pays a great attention to the quality of the service provided, as well as to the quality of food in a view of ecological aspects.

The small tourist green train is a popular attraction in the City of Tomar. It was launched in the year 2000 which makes it more than a decade old. The organization that decided to carry out this tourist project was the Commercial and Industrial Association of Tomar, called ACITOFEB, with the support of the Town Council of Tomar. This train which you can see below at Rua Marquês de Pombal and Rua Serpa Pinto has two established itineraries. One of them takes tourists for a ride around the city and the other goes to the Convent of Christ (Convento de Cristo) and Pegões Aqueduct (Aqueduto dos Pegões). Vehicles in Tomar « City of Tomar (city-of-tomar.com)

In the past, trade functioned by exchanging one product for another (known as bartering) since money did not yet exist. Therefore, no one knew for sure the value of one commodity or another, each one having to value their product. Even today, the concept of trade exists as the exchange of goods only now a product is exchanged for money. There are several classes of trade. For example, retail trade (or retailing) is the buying and selling of goods where the buyer is the final consumer (i.e. the person who uses or consumes the goods in question). With the arrival of the Internet, trade has seen many changes in the way products are bought and sold. Today it is possible to trade very quickly, without the need for a large team or space and with less bureaucracy. And one of these changes has been the arrival of electronic commerce (e-commerce). The term e-commerce or e-commerce comes from electronic commerce and is exactly that: an online business that works through devices such as mobile phones and computers, allowing users to buy products and services from anywhere in the world and receive in the comfort of their home.

On 17 February there was an online meeting between the municipality, KTT, and local commerce led by Mayor Anabela Freitas and Councilwoman Filipa Fernandez to make the KTT app known. This decision was the result of a partnership between the CTT, the municipality, and the traders involved. It aims to provide a new sales channel for small local traders, accelerating their transition to digital technology to overcome the

difficulties we face in the current situation. During the first year, the municipality will cover all the costs associated with setting up and registering the online shops. It will also provide free home delivery via CTT for all orders placed through this application. This technological solution will bring together merchants and their products, potential buyers, electronic means of payment and delivery service on the same day, on the same platform, all supported by the municipality. With this application, consumers can avoid queues in shops and access quality and diverse local products from the comfort of their own homes. Apoio para o comércio local através de parceria com os CTT e o Município de Tomar - Jornal Cidade de Tomar (cidadetomar.pt)

The CTT Local Commerce app aims to support small local traders by accelerating their digital transformation as a way of overcoming the challenges of the current situation in which we live.

The idea of the Orange Fair deserves a special attention. The idea originated from the existence of a 17th century orange grove, where the medina of the Monastery of Christ once stood. The first fair was held in March 2013 at the former Christ Monastery Military Hospital. The fair has since become an annual event. The orange fair consisted of the sale of sweets, cakes, chocolates, and liqueurs made from oranges from the monastery, and relied solely on the participation of schools and parents' associations, non-profit institutions, and cultural and entertainment associations. Tourists visiting the church are often amazed at how much can be made from oranges. Also, in Tomar is an opera and singing festival organized by the municipality of Ferreira do Zêzere, in partnership with the Convent of Christ. During the first half of August, this festival attracts singers from different European countries - Ireland, England, Holland, and Germany.

Statistics for 2019 on tourism traffic in Tomar show an increase in the flow of visitors. Christ Church Monastery welcomed 365,379 visitors, about 5% more than in 2018, when 348,510 visitors were recorded. Among foreign tourists are dominated people from France, then Spaniards and Brazilians. The synagogue is visited more by foreigners than Portuguese, with the majority of visitors coming from Israel, more than 9,000. A total of 46,758 people visited the Jewish monument.

4.8. Angra do Heroísmo

Before European discovery, the Azores were uninhabited. In the 15th century the islands were colonized by Portugal. Later, in 1976, the Azores were granted autonomous status as part of Portugal. However, in terms of their geographical, economic, social, and environmental situation, they differ considerably from other European and Portuguese territories. The Azores consist of nine volcanic islands that lie in the middle of the North Atlantic. These nine islands are also divided into three parts, these parts are called the western, central, and eastern parts. In short, the Azores can be described as the tip of the earth, with vast expanses of green fields, dense forests, volcanoes, beautiful landscapes, small towns and surrounded by a warm (thanks to the Gulf Stream) ocean. The Azores are one of the purest inhabited places on the planet, as there is not a single harmful industry within 1000 kilometres around. Rich in biodiversity and of scientific interest, the Azores are also of socio-economic importance and have historical monuments that are a UNESCO heritage site. In this article, we will get acquainted with a town called Angra do Heroísmo, located on the third largest island of Terceira. Throughout its history, Angra do Heroísmo has been the capital of Portugal twice. The city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is also considered to be the first Portuguese city to be listed as a World Heritage Site. (Sustentabilidade Urbana: Aplicação da Metodologia Q em Cinco Cidades do Arquipélago dos Açores)

The archipelago transitioned 30 years ago from whale hunting to conservation-oriented tourism. Azores makes efficient use of renewable geothermal energy and the main industries here are agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, and tourism. The quality of life, landscapes and other characteristics of the town helped the city to be included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1983. From the 15th to the 18th century, for example, the area was considered one of the most important commercial centres in the world. It linked many of the trade routes established at this time by the European empires.

The municipality of Angra do Heroísmo plays an important role in promoting economic development. As Angra has many natural resources, the area is classified as a nature reserve, i.e., it is considered a protected area. The island is 2.5 hours from the Portuguese mainland and 5 hours from the Americas.

Addressing mobility; the road infrastructure is generally well developed on Terceira. The island has established road connections between commercial and trade areas. For

example, one of the companies is engaged in passenger shuttle service on the island of Terceira.

Education is highly developed in Angra do Heroísmo, 13.2 percent of the population has completed higher education. The city has educational institutions with professional degrees and Angra has two internationally renowned research centres that focus more on biotechnology and agricultural technology. Some of the educational institutions located in Angra: University of Azores Training Centre for Core Staff and Non-teaching Staff School of Tourism and Hospitality, etc. (Guide). The Angra has a population of about 35,065 people, has an area of 239.88 km² and occupies about 60% of the archipelago (islands) of Terceira. It is in the central zone of the Azores archipelago. Angra was the military naval port of the Azores, where Indian armies landed and commercial vessels from other areas arrived for trade. Since 1474, Angra was considered a village, and the development of the place quickly declined due to trade. Angra was also twice the capital of Portugal in critical circumstances and times. The first time Angra was the capital of Portugal on August 5, 1580, and the second time was on March 15, in 1830.

Angra is the first settlement on the archipelago which became a city, and it was the city that was first listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983.

While addressing historical facts, the island was settled in 1460. Angra was also divided into two parts, named Angra and Praia. These two parts were assigned to João Vaz Corte and Alvaro Martínez in 1474. Angra especially grew during the reign of King Manuel from 1495 to 1521, and in 1543 during the reign of King João III. The city, despite having a small territory, is considered an urban organization. It contains all the urban structures pertaining to the urban system. In 1980, on January 1, the region was struck by a major earthquake of magnitude 7, 2 on the scale. The earthquake caused tremendous damage as there was destruction of architectural heritage, causing damage to many paintings, gilded canvases, and sculptures. After the earthquake, many items were restored and most of them can already be seen in some houses in the city. Angra do Heroísmo nos Açores – Património Mundial em Portugal - Proteger o nosso património e promover a criatividade - Temas - Comissão

In Angra it was decided to set up an association because many traders, comercants wished to set up or create a trade association to promote their private interests.,

One of the projects organized by the association was the Azores Sale, in cooperation with the Azores government, the Azores Business Development Society and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Azores. The project plays a very important role in the region, as its main goal is to promote and increase the sale of local products and help make local producers better known. Recent years have seen the holding of events such as the Azores Agricultural Show and Wine Fair, the Azores White Party and other festivals and events that help develop local products and local business owners.

In 2009, a new project was announced to promote restaurants and healthy eating or dieting. This festival was called (Flavors of Innovation - awards for the best products). The festival was held in the form of events that took place in restaurants, seminars, and special consultations. for the restaurants that took part in the festival. The festival usually takes place in different seasons in aiming to increase sales growth. The main aim of the Gastronomic festivals is to promote local products as well as local restaurants and to promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyles to the local population of the Azores.

In addition to projects, the Chamber of Commerce of Angra do Heroismo also runs many interesting events and activities, such as one of them (Mar a Vista), this event usually takes place from 22 April to 2 May on the Azores, island of Terceira.

5. Marketing the downtown of Coimbra within APBC work

In this paper, we analyzed 7 medium-sized cities of Portugal.

The purpose of the analysis was to determine the economic condition of the central part of above-mentioned cities. The analysis was carried out by comparing the situation of urban centers, the state of trade, transport, tourism, and entertainment. In the course of the work, we have seen that there are many similarities in the Portuguese medium-sized cities. Since these cities have an ancient history, the streets in the urban centers are very narrow and not adapted to the modern life conditions. The presence of many buildings of historical value, the restoration of which is very difficult because of strict rules and, accordingly, very expensive. The emergence of large shopping malls presses small businesses. These reasons lead to the deterioration of the central parts of cities, which in turn negatively affects the development of tourism.

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In order to try to solve the main problems identified by APBC in Coimbra, while comparing this situation with the one in the other 6 places, the cities in question have set up agencies whose purpose is to promote trade, tourism, and entertainment in urban centers in every possible way.

In the city of Coimbra these functions are performed by the APBC agency. It is a very important factor for the development of the city center. APBC regularly organizes a variety of events aimed at promoting local and international tourism. These activities and events attract not only tourists but also the local population. All these activities are important not only for the historical part of the city but also for Coimbra as a whole, as they increase the local economy.

Using benchmarking theory, this project tried to find agencies that promote historic centers in the network of medium-sized cities in Portugal. The analysis carried out so far will help the agency APBC in the future, because the aim of benchmarking is to learn from the best, and the activities that have already been organized in other medium-sized cities can serve as an idea for the APBC.

The opening of shopping malls in Coimbra has affected the historic center of the city, as it has led to the closure of many stores in the historic part, which contributes to a decrease in tourist traffic to the city center. For this reason, the APBC agency is doing its best to attract the attention of the local population to the historic center of Baixa through promotions and events that the agency organizes not only in the historic center, but also in restaurants, cafes and stores that cooperate with them

This problem exists in other medium-sized cities in Portugal and the other agencies already mentioned also aim to organize events to regain the interest of the local population in the historical centers, as shopping centers attract more people, but historical centers are also important for the local economy and for the development of tourism in these cities. As a conclusion it is reasonable to argue that APBC played a very important role not only for historical centers but also for all cities because they improve the local economy and tourism.

What are the main lessons that could be learnt from the other cities? There are in fact some directions in which the above-mentioned agencies operate.

Having analysed the other cities improvements and strategic marketing decisions, the main lines of progress that Coimbra needs to observe are the following:

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1. To manage the traffic flow in historic city centers. To create additional parking spaces and bicycle sharing systems; to introduce and promote bike sharing systems creation of bicycle lanes in the city in cooperation with the local municipality; to initiate the promotion of the different ways of car sharing systems; to show the environmental benefits of using private cars less; to intensify and promoting the use of electric cars, creating special parking for electric cars with charging devices; using tuk-tuks for sightseeing tours and getting around the city center.
2. Top promote advanced education for small business owners, located in the city center and staff training through various seminars: these seminars are usually arranged for employees, shopkeepers, restaurant owners and cafes, who usually work with agencies to improve staff qualifications organization of themed events in restaurants and cafés.
3. Creating an online platform to promote small businesses: Attracting restaurants, cafés, and shops to register on these platforms on very advantageous terms and promoting this system to the public with media dominance. Attraction of tourists and the local population to historic centers, enhancing events that are organized in the historic part of the city. Thus, thanks to the agencies, the historic centers can be gaining an attraction to the population in general. Within these programs agencies are responsible for promoting the historic centers.

All this activity, and its dynamics, is very important not only for tourism but also for the local economy. Attracting local people means creating new events; and a very important fact is supporting local businesses, a work that in being already done by APBC.

Thanks to APBC and a more strategic ation, the local business will continue to grow, new business will follow, and all this hectic work and operations will help to promote a historic center of a ciy, being this the case of Coimbra.

6. CONCLUSION

Cities downtowns have been under heavy variation during the last years.

This is the case in Coimbra, Portugal, that has decayed in everyone's eyes the last 40 years.

One of the most attemptively civil society organizations leading this problem has been the so-called APBC (Agency for the Promotion of Downtown of Coimbra). APBC has

been promoting Coimbra downtown as an open-air shopping area that combines commerce with culture, and tourism, encouraging trade and services.

Moreover, Coimbra has a long history and includes many sites of great interest to tourists. The University, one of the oldest in Europe, Alta and Sofia Street are on the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

As APBC has been striving for the downtown improvement, and different academics of the city became more aware, new projects have been developed university applying scientific methods to support the downtown changing.

And so, this work demonstrates a project to discover a better way to improve the downtown life in general, under APBC surveillance.

Raising this question to the APBC decision makers, it appeared to be reasonable to see what other cities are doing. And when trying to find the right examples to learn with, the cities that raised up were the ones that were also part of the UNESCO heritage. Moreover, it turned out to be important to look at similar cities with similar characteristic like the size and the UNESCO title. Using these criteria and applying it to the Portuguese's cities, a list of seven cities erased. Then, this project had to look for these cases in a systematic way and to find out the important issues to look at, using thus benchmarking as a management tool.

At the end, several strategies have erased guiding APBC changing and innovating in its management of the downtown of Coimbra, having been discussed with APBC members during the development of the present project.

A lot of situations it's possible to see people spending a lot of money on communication and marketing, but do not get the expected results from their efforts and investments. The problem can be a lack of clarity about the brand, as well as online and social media sites strategically developed. Being this the situation of APBC, I strongly advised to discuss this situation and engage in a new social media time. This new state of things must articulate all the social media messages and build a platform to establish a clearly articulated brand and message. Different times of communication must be coordinate, like

writing a regular email newsletter. All the communication strategy is another future work for APBC.

Another final word is that, and despite all the research and practical contributions present in this project, it is necessary to reflect on some limitations that should be considered for future investigations and for the APBC work.

At the end of this journey, I must thank again APBC for trusting and embracing this challenge.

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