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Symbolic Economy and Spatial Design: A Methodological Model for the Design of Competitive Spatial Narratives with Place Branding Strategies

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Abstract

Purpose- The purpose of the paper is to develop a methodological model for the design of competitive spatial narratives. The model aims to enrich place branding strategies with spatial practices. At the same time attempts to control, first the processes of symbolic economy in relation to capital investments and, second the production of cultural meanings.

Design/methodology/approach- Issues that concern place branding strategies and spatial practices related to competitive identity are examined. These issues are organised in four thematic axes: (1) the development of a theoretical framework that approaches relations of the key elements of symbolic economy and competitive place identity, (2) the role of architecture in symbolic economy, (3) the design of The Methodological Model, and 4) the validation of The Methodological Model.

Findings- The model, is structured in four phases. These are: (A) the group of possible directions for action and important assets, (B) the directions for action to be followed (C) the vision of the place and (D) the design of competitive spatial narratives. For that reason, a set of hierarchical criteria for the evaluation of the directions for action is introduced, together with eleven regulatory fields that control the performance of place brand equity of nodes and urban cores to the spatial narrative.

Originality/Value- The originality of this paper lies in developing of a model for the design of competitive spatial narratives, placing architecture and urban design at the forefront of place branding strategies.

Keywords: place branding, urban design, architecture, competitive spatial narratives, competitive place identity

Résumé

Le but de l'article est de cet article vise à développer un modèle méthodologique pour la conception de récits spatiaux compétitifs. Le modèle vise à enrichir les stratégies de place branding avec des pratiques spatiales. Les questions qui concernent les stratégies de place branding et les pratiques spatiales liées à l'identité concurrentielle sont examinées. Ces questions sont organisées en quatre axes thématiques : (1) le développement d'un cadre théorique qui aborde les relations des éléments clés de l'économie symbolique et de l'identité de lieu compétitif, (2) le rôle de l'architecture dans l'économie symbolique, (3) la conception du modèle méthodologique, et 4) la validation du modèle méthodologique.

Le modèle est structuré en quatre phases. Ce sont: (A) le groupe des directions possibles pour l'action et les atouts importants, (B) les directions d'action à suivre (C) la vision du lieu et (D) la conception de récits spatiaux compétitifs. L'originalité de cet article réside dans le développement d'un modèle pour la conception de récits spatiaux compétitifs, plaçant l'architecture et le design urbain à l'avant-garde des stratégies de place branding.

Introduction

In the current intensely globalized urban system, place branding processes form an important social influence with cultural and political interest to attract investors, visitors and special, creative residents to certain places (see for instance, Anholt 2007, 2010; Ashworth 2009; Baker 2012; Dinnie 2008 etc.). In this spatial system, the cultural symbols have the dynamic not only to be associated with places, but to promote urban regeneration, contributing at the same time to the local population's high esteem (Michael et al. 2018). As Govers (2018) aptly remarks:

People want to be part of a community that they can be proud of and-in a world with global and social media-that pride is increasingly influenced by how communities are being talked about outside, as opposed to how they are imagined within. In today's interconnected world, communities that gain respect are those that contribute to humanity and the planet at large [...] (p. 15)

In this context, the paper proposes a Methodological Model to control first, the processes of symbolic economy in relation to capital investments and, second to control the production of cultural meanings in the urban fabric as a means of improving reputation and competitive place identity.

For that reason, issues that concern place branding and spatial practices related to competitive identities are examined. These issues are highly related to the perceived image of a place and are organised in four thematic axes: (1) the development of a theoretical framework that approaches relations of the key elements of symbolic economy and competitive place identity, (2) the role of architecture in symbolic economy, (3) the design of The Methodological Model, 4) the validation of The Methodological Model. Additionally, the model is structured in four phases. These are: (A) the group of possible directions for action and important assets, (B) the directions for action to be followed (C) the vision of the place and (D) the design of competitive spatial narratives. For that reason, a set of hierarchical criteria for the evaluation of the possible directions for action is introduced, together with eleven regulatory fields. These fields control the performance of place brand equity of nodes and urban cores to the spatial narrative. The findings are considered important foundations for designing a place brand equity measurement system for pathways, nodes and urban cores.

Although the intention underlying the dimensions of the perceived image of a place by the key authors of place branding, satisfactorily approach the social, political, economic, cultural content of place branding strategies, the paper enriches their content with sensory, spatial and attained data of psychological and mental response. At the same time, attempts to control the symbolic content of spatial narratives and to offer a tool for architects and planners for the design of competitive place identities. Through this process, the architectural object as a visual trace can easily be transformed into an image, a brand and a spatial good, with the ability to promote the city through various communication channels.

In this framework, the key process and the originality of this paper lies in the development of a model for the design of competitive spatial narratives in urban cultural landscapes, by placing architecture and urban design at the forefront of place branding strategies. The model has been implemented and validated and its results are the subject of another research paper (Michael, 2019).

Existing Models

The need to establish new comprehensive and integrative place branding models of support the development of both practice and research in the field, is expressed by a large number of authors (Hankinson 2004; 2007; Kavartzis 2005; Gaggiotti, Cheng and Yanak 2008; Qian 2010; Lucarelli and Berg 2011; Hudson et al. 2016; Kavartzis, Warnaby and Ashworth, 2015; Acharya and Rahman 2016 etc. in Berrada, 2018). Indicatively, we mention some of the models that have been presented in the literature. Teemu and Rainisto (2009) for instance, introduce a model for place brand within the scope of place management, Govers and Go (2009) have also presented a model with a 3-gap perspective: Three ways in which the strength of a place brand, as experienced in the host-guest encounter, between, most often, culturally diverse groups, might be affected. Jacobsen (2012) also applies a model to establish the effectiveness of place brands from the place customer's (=investor's) point of view while Berrada (2018), highlights by a literature review the key elements essential to the model formation and the place brand success.

Unlike the existing models, this paper proposes a methodological model that concerns the design of competitive spatial narratives that highlights spatial practices on the branding process.

Connecting Perceived Image with Competitive Identity and Spatial Narratives

The communicative ability of a place to project the desired messages (the external process of place branding strategies that forms the desired reputation) is becoming an issue of growing importance for both scholars and professionals (Gospodini 2004; Anholt 2007, 2010; Govers and Go 2009; Hospers 2011; Baker 2012; Govers, 2018 etc.). It seems that nowadays, individuals and symbols move easily between geographical locations or between organisms (Zukin, 1995: 3-15). In these increasingly global urban networks Urry, (1990) asserts that the tourist industry is inevitably competitive since almost every place in the world could well act as an object of the tourist gaze.

In addition to the communicative process of place branding strategies that shapes urban networks and rearranges urban symbols, the Reputation Institute (2011-2018) measures the perceived image which is described as *the reputation* through the following three dimensions: (a) The Advanced Economy, (b) The Attractive Environment, (c) The Efficient Government. These three dimensions are analyzed by Anholt (2007), in six key components that define the City Brand Hexagon: the presence, the place, the potential, the pulse, the people and the prerequisites. These dimensions are clearly relevant with the perceived image as associations and evaluations of individuals for a place. Very

importantly, these associations and evaluations are correlated with personal experiences that are recalled from memory without necessarily these recalls being the desirable.

However, the existing perceived image-reputation is not independent to the place system; on the contrary, it originates from the place itself (internal process) and its identity (Govers and Go 2009; Dinnie 2011 etc). In this context, the strategy of designing the competitive identity, follows an internal process of enhancing the place's assets (Anholt 2007). In this framework, the symbolic economy and the perceived image of places seem to have a central role in the context of place branding strategies (Konecnik and Gartner 2007; Cai 2002 etc.) In this paper, the constructed message, with the intention of creating the desired associations, by projecting the vision of a place and influencing consumer behavior will be called *the imaginary*.

This intense interest in promoting the identity of places through messages and symbols is linked with their ability to influence the selection mechanism of a country, city or region, as a destination for visitors, as places to invest to and for the relocation of individuals (Ashworth and Voogd 1990; Ashworth 2009; Lash and Urry 1994). At the same time, this process has a direct impact on almost every aspect of a city's cooperation with other places, with an important role in its economic upgrading. Thus, place branding strategies attract not only the heightened interest of the scientific and academic community (see for instance Anholt 2004, 2007, 2010; Dinnie 2011; Klingmann 2007; Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005; Middleton 2011) but also of the tourism industry (Gallarza, Saura and Garcia 2002; Tapachai and Waryszak 2000; Vaughan and Edwards 1999; Walmsley and Jenkins 1993 etc.).

All these reviews and processes have contributed to a better understanding of the closely interlinked relationship between the perceived image and competitive identity. This relationship allows us through actions that enhance the one, to be led to the enhancement of the other (Govers and Go 2009; Konecnik and Gartner 2007; Cai 2002; Florida 2002, 2005; Markusen, A. 2006 etc). In this context, Dinnie (2011: 94) acknowledges the importance of actions towards the desirable perceived place image and highlights that the incoherent set of fragmented sub-brands each delivering its own messaging with no conscious and clear city brand, fail according to the place branding objectives. Similarly, Anholt (2007: 3) supports the oriented strategic planning. This approach sets clear goals for the country's economy, its society and its political and cultural relations with other countries.

All the above points of view allow us to suggest that a place strategy that encourages the study of the structure of a place, is the most appropriate for the design of competitive spatial narratives. The one that expresses spatial relations between observer-object and between objects relations, as well as the conceptual content that concerns the observer. For place strategy, Govers and Go, (2009: 49) assert that should include the evaluation, (re)assembling, (re)positioning and (re)formulation of the identity of place, its product offering, and its communication strategies. These elements clearly apply to the exploration of place identity.

As Kerr and Oliver explain (at Kavaratzis, Warnaby and Ashworth 2015: 66), the place brand strategy that is far removed from its place identity will not likely be accepted as true by residents, let alone the external recipients of advertising communications. In this context, the design of a place strategy is relevant to the spatial narrative, as the structure, the form of representation bound with sequence, space and time (Cobley 2001: 3 in Psarra 2009) that enters architecture in many ways. As Psarra claims (2009: 1-2):

«...from the conceptual «messages» it is made to stand for to the illustration of a design through models, drawings and other representational forms. This aspect of architectural expression what the designs speaks of, is relevant to narrative as representation. It concerns the semantic meanings of buildings and places, and the contribution of architecture to the expression of social and cultural messages. But architecture does not only express meaning. It also participates in the construction of meaning through the ordering of spaces and social relationships. Architects respond to this ordering by orchestrating relations independently of a viewers' perception, and visualizing space as a perceptual condition, from the hypothetical viewpoint of a spatially situated observer».

This approach of spatial narrative, is in line with Lynch argument (1960: 8) that the elements of identity, structure and meaning, constitute the characteristics of the perceived image of the city for the observer.

In this context, the Methodological Model examines elements of recognition of the urban environment and their ability to compose mental representations through cognitive maps. This ability Lynch (1960: 2-3) is referred as *legibility, visibility or imageability* and describes recognizable symbols in an organized and compact structure. In the case of cognitive maps spatial issues such as the orientation are studied (Moore 1974; Neisser 1976; Evans 1980; Evans and Pezdek 1980; Spoehr and Lehmkuhle 1982; Kalergis 2016 etc.). This structure forms a "semantic net" with all the nodes corresponding to a concept and all the networks corresponding to relationships integrated into them (Brachman 1979). Thus, the correlations between reference points form a set of nodes in a network with the imaginary integrated into them.

Building on Anholt's and Lynch arguments, it can be asserted that the design of a competitive identity can simultaneously follow both of Anholt's dimensions in relation to reputation and of Lynch's approach of imageability as an organized and compact structure, *the spatial narrative*. In this context, as Ashworth, Kavaratzis and Warnaby (2015), support the unification of assets is the quality that gives *continuity* to the spatial narrative.

Moreover, assets with a visual trace that control the place brand equity have a dominant position in developing the theoretical model and are treated to this process, as "signs" (according to semiotics the "signified" and the "signifier"). The spatial object, at the literal level, refers to the operation or the use, to the objective (literal, denotative) but also to the associative (connotative) (Spiridonidis 1988). Thus, the spatial object as a system with denotative and connotative substance contributes to the

projection of the place's *imaginary* (Downs and Stea 1973; Pocock and Hudson 1978; Walmesley 1988). This is also emphasized by Scott (1997: 327) who asserts that the "signifier" that is attributed to a place as a cultural asset expresses a strong comparative advantage in national and international markets. The more cultural assets are condensed within the landscape, the more places come to enjoy monopoly powers. However, the process of designing competitive environments concerns not only the condensed spatial assets within the urban environment, but the ability of the place to process its spatial symbols (Lash & Urry, 1994). Places that are not able to exert political pressure need to be interesting and attractive. This process establishes a competitive identity of places, while the consumption of symbols from different cultural assets create the symbolic economy (Anholt 2007; Morgan and Pritchard 1998; Govers and Go 2009).

Architecture as The Activator of Symbolic Economy in the Spatial Narrative and the Relationship Between Nodes, Urban Cores and Assets

Several aspects of place branding have dealt with the need of places to correlate their perceived image with architectural symbols in order to assert their political, economic or socio-psychological objectives. The phenomenon is not a new condition. For example in 5th century BC Athens, the proposals of Perikles for the reconstruction of Acropolis, after it was ruined by the invasion of Xerxes in 480 BC, with the conscious attempt to enhance the cultural elements of Athens (Plutarch 2nd A.D) could be considered as a strategic planning to promote the cultural and symbolic content of Athens. The promotion of symbols of prestige, spiritual and cultural superiority by Athens, aimed at stabilizing the Athenian hegemony with other simultaneous political benefits. Specifically, the established Delian League (an Athenian-dominated alliance) was a choice between many city-states in Greece, with Athens having the political control over them, which also brought economic benefits from the annual tax of the League, practically a tax to Athens (Thucydides 4th A.D). Thus, 5th century BC Athens designed its own competitive place identity through cultural symbols and strategic planning, with significant political and economic benefits. The city of Athens in 5th century BC, adopted city branding strategies and eventually placed itself at the highest cultural and economic level among other city-states.

This phenomenon of place competitiveness is also a contemporary global demand. Spatial systems where the urban morphological attributes are able to manage place localities and identities are continuously being developed by architectural and urban design. At the same time, there are many attempts to connect the architectural landmark-symbol with specific target groups as part of those systems (see for instance Klingmann 2007; Jencks 2008; Michael 2016; Michael and Savvides 2019 etc). In this context each node, region or asset with a visual trace is important for the design of the perceived image when the correlations between them incorporate the conceptual content of the city, participating at the same time in a city's branding strategy. This strategy refers to a macro level urban

design process rather than a meso or micro-level on specific location and site as place-making concerns (Evans 2015).

In this paper spatial elements with architectural footprint which have the ability to activate the wider development of a place based on its desired vision will be called *activators*. The term is referred to nodes as architectural objects, urban cores and assets, existing or added to the urban cultural landscape, which have a visual trace and the ability (through architecture, urban design, region, conceptual meanings, operations, services or even attributed experiences) to attract the three target groups of place branding strategies. Thus, activators in the role of moderators, enrich the place with content, relevance and perceptions associated with the imaginary content of the city.

In Barcelona for example, the design of a competitive identity through spatial symbols (especially architectural objects) incorporated in its spatial narrative has activated developmental actions with strong comparative advantages in the European Mediterranean area. Specifically, after 1985 (date of assignment of the Olympic Games to Barcelona), there was an increase in market prices in new and existing homes, by 240% in 1986 and 287% in 1992 (Brunet 1995). In addition, overnight stays in hotels in the city multiplied by 2.4, from 1990-2003 and there was an increased number of visits to cultural sites (Duran, 2005, p.13). Following the above, Barcelona was included in the top twenty cities in the world with the best reputation and the best return from investment, traffic and quality of living (Reputation Institute 2011-2018; Anholt 2007).

In respect to place branding strategies with spatial approaches, the Spanish example of the Guggenheim Museum, an architectural object with unique image, placed Bilbao in the year of 1997 on the tourist map. Considering the direct, indirect and induced effects the activities of the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum it generated wealth, throughout that year, of 211,000,000 euro of the GDP, which means an additional increase for the Basque public funds of 29,000,000 euro. The above-mentioned increase in the wealth, according to the consultancy firm KPMG, implied the maintenance of 3.816 jobs during that first year, which increased during the year 2006 to 4,232 (Areso 2008: 4). These examples attest to how architecture has been used as the driving force for the transformation of both cities Barcelona and Bilbao, through strategic plannings.

The Methodological Model of Designing Competitive Spatial Narratives in Urban Cultural Landscapes with Place Branding Strategies

The following process intends to shape a structure according to which a solid message to be created, *the spatial narrative*. Issues that concern place branding and spatial practices relevant to competitive identities are included. In Table1 we summarize the key terms of the model. The Model is shown diagrammatically is shown in Figure 3.

activators	Spatial elements with the ability to activate the wider development of a place based on the desired vision (author)
regulatory fields of place brand equity of nodes/urban cores	The domains of the spatial narrative that control the two dimensions of place brand equity according to Florek (2015, p.229) oriented to architectural and urban design processes (author)
spatial narrative	The structure, the form of representation bound with sequence, space and time, the semantic meaning of buildings and places and the spatial expression of social and cultural messages (Cobley 2001:3, Psara 2009)

Table 1

Key terms of the methodological model

PHASE A- The Group of Possible directions for action and important assets

In this Phase, assets and comparative advantages of places are identified in the cultural, social, natural, geographical, institutional, political sectors, with the potential to symbolically influence the built environment. The researcher is asked to collect informations through the media, bibliography, on-site research, interviews with stakeholders (bodies, organizations, individuals, etc.), questionnaires (from residents and visitors staying outside and within the country), in order to identify:

- (a) The strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities and the threats within urban cultural landscapes;
- (b) The perceived-existing image (place reputation);
- (c) The existing place strategies;
- (d) The vision of the place.

Here the dimensions of the perceived image of a place as they have introduced by the key authors of place branding are enriched with sensory, spatial and psychological cognitive components of the urban cultural landscape, organized in six thematic axes:

- (1) the visitation;
- (2) the sense of place;
- (3) the attractiveness of the place;
- (4) the pulse of the place;
- (5) the dynamic of the place;
- (6) the presence of the place.

PHASE B- The directions for action to be followed

In Phase B, the group of possible directions for action is examined, in order to reach the maximum positive landscape experience for the three target groups of place branding strategies. Specifically, the directions that could set in motion new investments indicating a spatial narrative that firmly establishes certain place perceptions are identified.

The Methodological Model at this phase, supports decisions through the evaluation of the directions for action which were proposed in phase A. The process follows two stages due to the involvement of both quantitative and qualitative criteria and the usual lack of financial resources for conducting feasibility studies for all direction options.

In the first evaluation stage, selected stakeholders, individuals and groups are asked to participate in the process (i.e. The Mayor, Municipal Secretariat, technical services, group of companies, academics etc.). The possible directions are then evaluated based on a set of hierarchical criteria. These criteria activate new investments and are identified through a) the existing bibliography in the domains of place branding, political science, marketing, architecture and urban design and b) the study of places that architecture and urban design act as activator of symbolic economy in the spatial narrative.

Social/Political	Health & Safety
Economical/Investment	Human Resources
Legislative	Environmentally
Cultural	Developmentally
Conceptual/Sensory	Technical
Qualitative	Responsive to the city's vision
Competitive	

Table 2

The set of hierarchical criteria for directions evaluation

The hierarchy of directions demonstrates their influence on the imaginary content of the place and identifies the dominant ones. This is a simultaneous evaluation of qualitative and quantitative criteria, in accordance with the perception of the decision maker(s), or in accordance with existing feasibility studies, if any. The purpose of the research at this stage is to select and promote to the second evaluation stage a limited number of directions for action, where the necessary economic studies for the dominant directions will be carried out.

In the second evaluation stage, the *Multicriteria Decision-Making Methods* are suggested to be applied (Goletsis 2000; Roubens 1982; Hwang and Lin 1987; Forman 1990, etc.) where, based on the quantitative and qualitative criteria set, the most dominant choices from the first stage are placed hierarchically.

Phase C- The vision of the place

In this Phase, the Methodological Model approaches elements that determine the desired imaginary content of the place. This content, is promoted through a compact and concise message, *the vision*, which communicates to the market groups, to the stakeholders and to the target groups, the directions for action that the place will invest in. At the same time, it informs all the interested parties of the economical, societal, political and cultural benefits of the place branding strategy decided (i.e. if education is the developmental and investment direction of a place, the vision communicates to groups such as investors, Ministry of Education, students, research and innovation foundations etc.)

Phase D-The design of competitive spatial narratives. Identification of elements that activate the imaginary content

In this phase, added or existing nodes, urban cores and assets with spatial visual traces which have the dynamic of promoting the desired imaginary content and activating the wider development, *the activators*, are identified.

These elements have a coordinative role in the internal and the external place branding strategy process while, with clarity and precision, the desired imaginary content of the place is promoted. Their presence in the spatial narrative follows two different approaches. To the first, the activator is located itself as a symbol of the new vision and reference point in the urban space, upon which the structure of the spatial narrative unfolds (eg Guggenheim in Bilbao, is a symbol-activator of the cultural direction chosen by the city and at the same time, projects the desired imaginary content). To the second, promotes developmental actions of the urban fabric, through intermediate reference points. These points act as transmitters of the direction for action chosen for the cultural landscape. For example, the Ferrari factory in Modena activates the cultural landscape, but this action is transmitted through the museum and the Ferrari University (*the transmitters of the technological direction of the automotive industry*). Respectively, in this category of actions, investments whose activity imposes the implementation of compensation projects are included. For example, the legal framework for the

operation of a factory presupposes the introduction of landmarks, which promote the imaginary content of the city.

The model of managing the place brand equity of nodes and urban cores in the spatial narrative

In the literature, according to Florek (2015: 229) the basic sources of brand equity include two dimensions: (A) the ability to influence perception and (B) the ability to challenge the consumer's behavior. The research identifies the following regulatory fields of place brand equity of nodes/urban cores to the spatial narrative through which the two dimensions of brand equity are activated: a) social/political, b) cultural/ symbolic, c) conceptual, d) qualitative, e) environmental, f) developmental, g) responsive to city's vision and targeting specific groups, h) competitive according to architecture and urban design, i) spatially projected in regards to architectural design j) responsive to emotions and unique experiences, k) spatially correlated. These regulatory fields are identified through the literature review, a case study (Michael, 2019) and an empirical research.

In this context, a model of managing spatial elements to the spatial narrative is proposed. This model is mainly addressed towards architects and planners and aims to (a) control the performance of the place brand equity of the spatial elements intended to be introduced in the spatial narrative and (b) estimate the performance of the place brand equity, of an existing node or urban core. Figure 1 depicts the impact of the regulatory fields as *Moderators* of place brand equity to the spatial narrative. Through this process a strong and competitive identity is intended to be promoted.

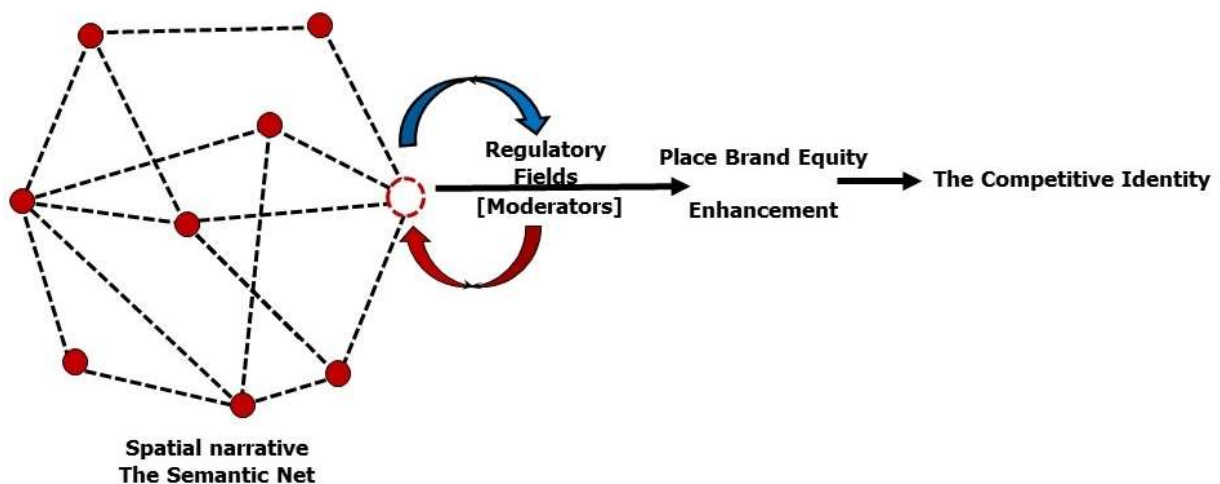


Figure 1

The model of managing the place brand equity of nodes and urban cores in the spatial narrative

Structure and continuity in the spatial narrative

During the process of designing the spatial narrative, nodes, regions and urban cores are incorporated to support and integrate their conceptual meaning, into the developmental actions of the activators. In this process, architectural nodes, urban cores or regions are grouped along networks, with the aim to: a) be spatially projected onto multiple visual levels, b) to be associated with cultural symbols where the conceptual meaning of the vision will be incorporated into them, c) to design a hierarchy of the urban cultural symbols.

The above process follows two parallel systems. The first concerns the subtraction and addition of qualities and assets to the urban cultural landscape and, the second concerns the integration of the transformation into physical reality (Soriano, 2007). This process ensures the design of a spatial network where there is not only a correlation between objects and the observer, but also a correlation between objects themselves. It is therefore a process that gives structure and continuity to the spatial narrative in its totality, by creating correlations both between the physical and the cognitive dimensions of objects.

In this sense, activators, nodes and urban cores are treated as a highly performative urban cores to the spatial narrative, where the distance between them and the distance from the main and the secondary urban channels, is the dominant criterion in the spatial design. In addition, their location in strong perceptual urban areas (such as intersections, entrance gates, core of activities, etc.) is found to be very important.

Overview of the Design Process

An overview of the design process of the methodological model is provided below:

- The dimensions of symbolic economy are identified through the existing bibliography in the domains of place branding, political science, marketing, architecture and urban design.
- The dimensions of the perceived image of a place are enriched with sensory, spatial and attained data of psychological and mental response.
- Architecture as the activator of symbolic economy in the spatial narrative and the relationship between nodes, urban cores and assets are examined. In particular are examined:
 - Examples of spatial «semantic net» with the nodes correspond to a «concept» and the networks correspond to relationships integrated into them.
 - Assets with a visual trace that control the place brand equity and their effect in the spatial narrative.
 - The relations of the key elements of symbolic economy with architecture and urban design.
 - The spatial relations between observer-object and between objects relation.
 - The relations between the perceived image and competitive identity of places.

- A set of hierarchical criteria for the evaluation of the directions for action is introduced, together with eleven regulatory fields that control the performance of place brand equity of nodes and urban cores to the spatial narrative.

The model, is structured in four phases as figure 2 shows.



Figure 2

The phases of the methodological model for the design of competitive spatial narratives with place branding strategies

Validation of The Methodological Model

As part of the research process, the proposed Methodological Model for the Design of Competitive Spatial Narratives in Urban Cultural Landscapes with Place Branding Strategies, has been implemented and validated by a previous research and a case study analysis (Michael, 2019).

The Validation of The Methodological Model		
The Dimensions of Symbolic Economy that Develop a Spatial Narrative	The Process of the Implementation	The Performance in Economic Fields

Figure 3

The validation of The Methodological Model

Benefits and Implications for further research: Towards a Framework for Designing Competitive Place Identities

In the context of the development prospects of architectural and urban design as a means of economic development of places, the methodological model could be conceived as a spatial tool for the design and redesign of space, where the improvement, the development and the change could be operated. In terms of place sustainability could promote local, regional and national identities. In relation to contemporary urban societies could contribute to innovative, design schemes, synchronized in different social/cultural/economic groups and generate new place identities through space. Moreover, the model contributes to largely improve the qualities of built environment while simultaneously promote competitiveness of places and symbolic economy.

Finally, from the point of view of symbolic economy, competitive spatial narratives could change the established urban design practice from episodic, fragmentary and soft interventions towards significant interventions of space. That may enable places to generate/improve competitive identities.

In the framework of high-potential actors towards future competitive environments, the model contributes to recognizing the driving role of architecture and urban design in place branding strategies.

Conclusions

Overall, the proposed and analyzed Methodological Model of designing competitive spatial narratives in urban cultural landscapes with place branding strategies in the context of (a) the developmental prospects of urban cultural landscapes, (b) the potential of architectural and urban design as means of symbolic economy, (c) the spatial assets as wider developmental activators, can be applied as:

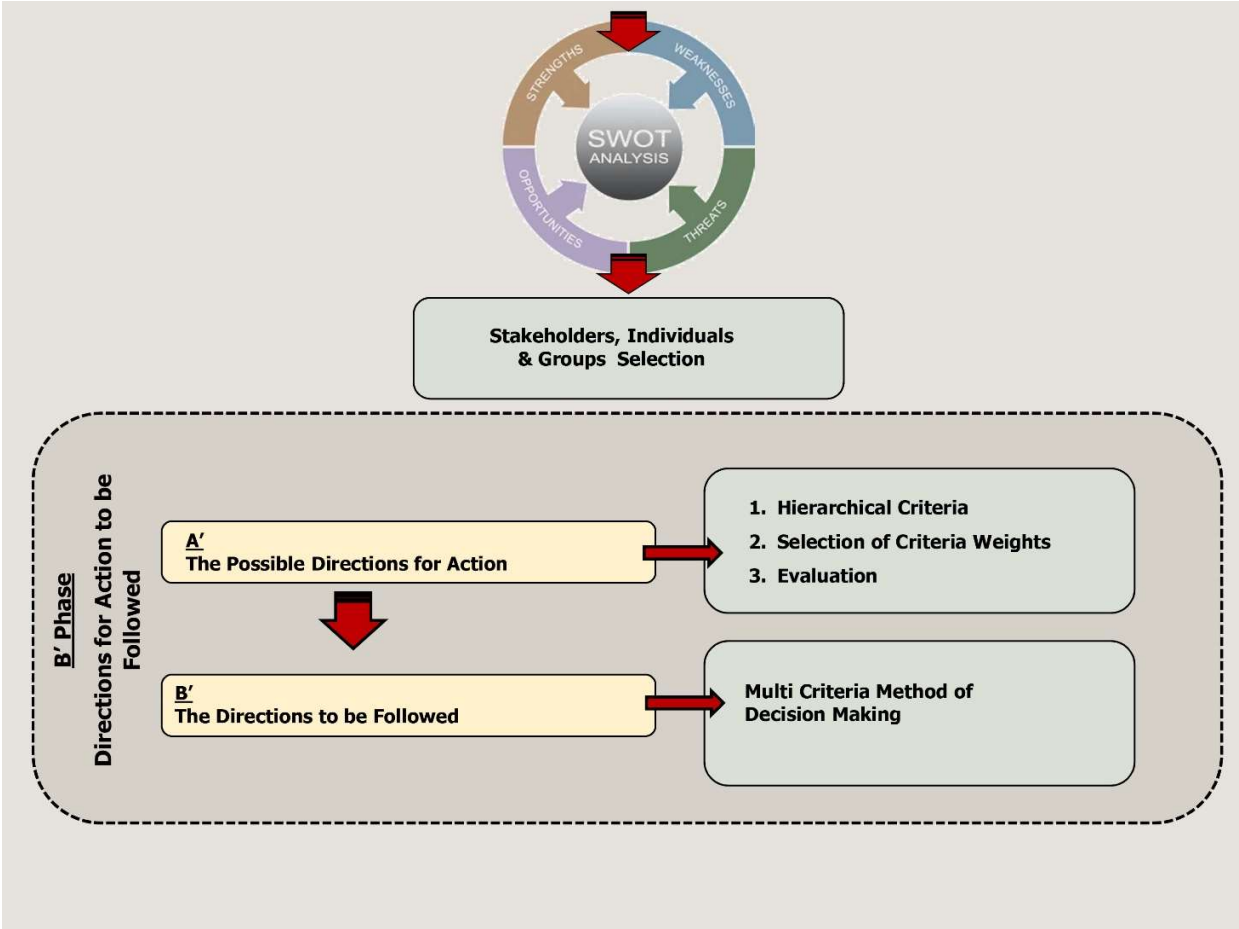
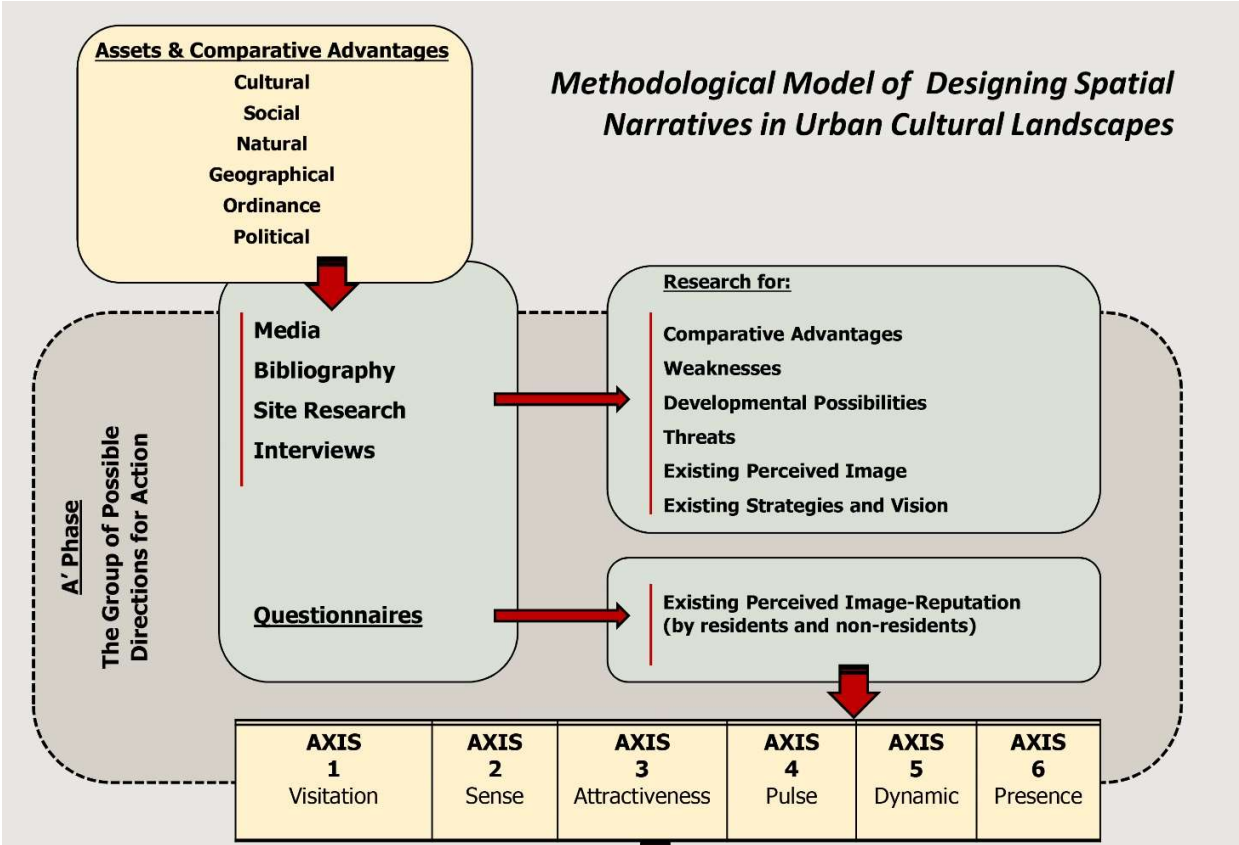
- A tool of improving the competitiveness of urban places through sustainable practices.
- A challenge to largely improve the quality of the built environment through the enhancement of local identities.
- An architect-oriented tool for place branding strategies that promote unique identities to urban places.

Following the Methodological Model proposed, the architectural object as a visual trace is a) spatially projected onto multiple visual levels, b) is associated with cultural symbols where the conceptual meaning of the vision could be incorporated into them and c) follows a hierarchy of cultural symbols. The whole process gives structure and continuity to the spatial narrative in its totality by creating correlations between physical and the cognitive dimension of objects. Furthermore, architects and planners by controlling or estimating the performance of the place brand equity of nodes or urban cores, have active participation in designing competitive spatial narratives. Moreover, the Methodological Model contributes to city branding effectiveness as defined by Florek, Herezniak and Augustyn (2019). This is: "the ability to: (a) achieve the goals articulated in the city brand strategy, (b)

effectively use urban resources, (c) produce a lasting impact on city reality and (d) impact the image (understood as the individual's view of the city) and reputation (understood as the sum of opinions about the city)".

According to the above, the Methodological Model place architecture and urban design at the forefront of place branding strategies. Finally, in relation to spatial policies, the model might lay the foundations for designing a place brand equity measurement system for pathways, nodes and urban cores. Thus, a spatial network could be created with the place brand value measures in reference points and urban channels. That is, a spatial map of a place brand value and a powerful tool for place branding advisors, investors and a design guide for architects and planners.

Methodological Model of Designing Spatial Narratives in Urban Cultural Landscapes



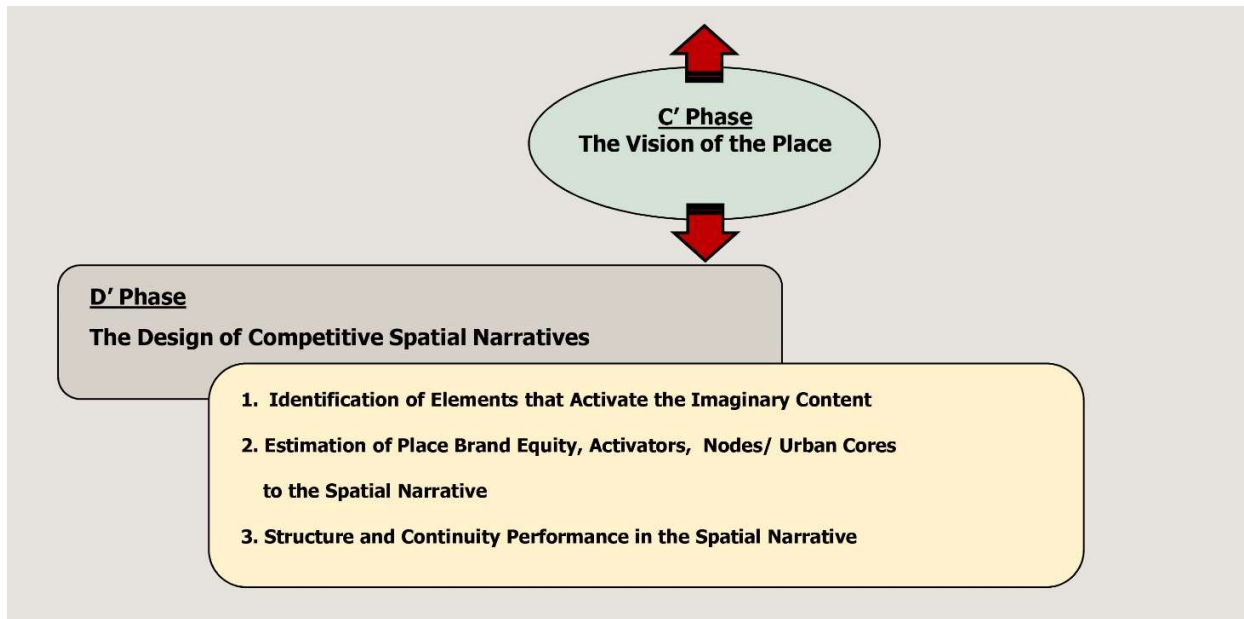


Figure 4

The Methodological Model for the Design of Competitive Spatial Narratives in Urban Cultural Landscapes

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