Innovative place brand management

Re-learning city branding

Miguel Rivas, Grupo TASO

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Cover photo by Paulo Magalhães, representing *Queima das Fitas*, one of the largest student festivals in all of Europe, courtesy of Coimbra City Council.

Content

Preface

Very few transnational projects have addressed systematically the topic of place-branding to date, even though the communication dimension is getting growing importance in the strategic management of cities. Indeed, more and more cities in Europe are involved in one way or another in processes of branding and re-branding. That is, in processes of positioning and re-positioning the city, through specific communication strategies, trying to gain visibility in an international scenario in constant change.

However, such kinds of initiatives are often addressed without method or merely **approached as matter of "logo and motto",** with little empathy with the feeling of local communities. Many of them end up with circumstantial or inconsistent results. In addition, the reducing public spending environment or the profound impact of the digital shift are pushing to re-thinking how cities are promoting and marketing themselves.

So, bringing together the background, ongoing experiences and plans for the future from a number of European cities, was certainly a precious opportunity for trying to move the state-of-the-art in place branding forward. As the main EU lab for innovative urban policies, the URBACT programme has been the best framework for that, promoting and co-financing a work at two levels: locally, as each of the participating cities have produced a local action plan in close collaboration with dedicated local support groups; at network level, organizing a number transnational activities, including thematic workshops, study visits, peer-reviews and reports.

The present final report describes the specific thematic roadmap that has guided this ambitious cross-learning itinerary. It ranges the whole cycle of what it is commonly known as city branding, in particular its four pillars, namely:

- Urban narratives and politics of city representation;

- City brand governance or how to shape the collaboration model;

- City´s target groups and the articulation to the different sector-oriented city marketing practices;

- And the new ecology of communication channels and actions for the city.

A roadmap that has been largely enriched by a wide range of ongoing experiences, inputs by experts and lots of discussions. The association with the Eurocities Working Group on City Attractiveness, which shared the aforementioned thematic roadmap, allowed to triple the URBACT-CityLogo partnership of ten cities and widen the peer-learning.

Therefore, the acknowledgement list is long. First, a special word of thanks to both Haye Folkertsma as project coordinator representing Utrecht as lead partner, who provided overall support during all the CityLogo project timeline, and Cesare Torre, head of the promotion, tourism and city branding department in the city of Genoa and chair of the Eurocities Working Group on City Attractiveness.

Thanks also to the following practitioners from the CityLogo partner cities: Hans Sakkers, head of department of city

marketing, international and subsidy, City of **Utrecht**, Ank Hendriks, coordinator city marketing Utrecht, Nuning Hikmah, Citylogo financial manager, Margriet de Kruijf, senior communication advisor Utrecht, Ward Rennen, Utrecht Museum Association, Laura Arends, Tourism Utrecht, Marieke Lauwrier, University of the Arts Utrecht (HKU), Nicolaie Moldovan, city manager **Alba Iulia**, Maria Elena Seemann, Alba Iulia Municipality, Line Gerstrand Knive, **Aarhus** citybranding team, Stinne Bille, Aarhus citybranding team, Elisabeth Mygind Reinholdt, Aarhus citybranding team, Jan Beyer Schmidt-Sørensen, director of business development, City of Aarhus, Søren Boel, City of Aarhus, Caspar Sørensen, Aarhus University, Carina Gomes, City Councillor for Culture and Tourism, **Coimbra** City Council, Fernando Zeferino, Coimbra City Council, Jorge Brito, investor support office, Coimbra City Council, Penousal Machado, University of Coimbra, Jennifer Caswell, coordinator for Dundee's brand, City Development Department, **Dundee** City Council, Diane Milne, City Development department, Dundee City Council, Tara Wainwright, chief of marketing V&A at Dundee, Gillian Easson, Creative Dundee, Kristina Johansen-Seznec, head of marketing Dundee Contemporary Arts, Jennie Patterson, Patter PR, Gianluca Saba, head of international affairs office, City of **Genoa**, Marisa Gardella, head of communications office, City of Genoa, Raffaella Cecconi, communications office, City of Genoa, Chiara Martorana, communications office, City of Genoa, Silvio Ferrando, marketing director Genoa Port Authority, Alberto Cappato, general director of Porto Antico S.p.a. and director of tourism sector at Confindustria Genova, Sergio di Paolo, City of Genoa, Liss Steinbakk, Business Development and Cultural Affairs, City of **Oslo**, Jan Fredrik Lockert, Business Development and Cultural Affairs, City of Oslo, Malin Gjellestad, Business Development and Cultural Affairs, City of Oslo, Marthe Hoddevik, Office of the Governing Mayor City of Oslo, Bjarne Haslund, Office of the Governing Mayor City

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Miguel Rivas is partner of Grupo TASO and has a long background at the frontline in spatial economic development and innovative urban policies, from a variety of positions. In the last years, Miguel has been appointed as principal consultant to several large-scale projects on integrated city branding, through which he is supporting over fifteen European cities such as Oslo, Warsaw, Dublin, Liverpool, Genoa, Utrecht, Zaragoza or Vilnius. As former CEO of Sevilla Global, he designed the city brand strategy as business place, including storytelling and visual communication, *avant-garde* visitor centre and a range of PR activities. In 2013 Miguel chaired the jury of the Territorio & Marketing Awards, the most prestigious event in Spain on place branding.

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Summary as strategic policy statement

ON THE REAL MEANING AND FUTURE PATH OF CITY BRANDING

CityLogo has been an unusual experience for ten European cities who have interacted intensively over a period of three years to improve how they brand and market themselves in an integrated manner. Moreover, that cross-learning journey, comprised of thematic workshops, study visits, peer-reviews and reports, as well as action planning at local level, has been shared to a large extent with the Eurocities Working Group on City Attractiveness, resulting in over thirty cities being directly or indirectly involved in the experience.

Once this process has been finalized, the undersigned city representatives, along with the lead expert appointed for this large-scale initiative, are in a unique position to share with other cities our vision on the real meaning and scope of the so-called city brand strategies, as well as the value of strategic communication to those cities dealing, or aspiring to deal, with issues like positioning, attractiveness, reputation and global image. To that aim, we have unpacked the knowledge and experience accumulated into the following ten key findings and principles.

The need to re-learning city branding. For many place-branding is still about logos and campaigning, when actually it´s about building and marketing smartly local competitive identities, through long-term initiatives and strategies. To some extent, the prevailing role of branding and advertising agencies helps to keep that incorrect focus, resulting in short-sighted practices, which automatically adopt concepts and techniques from commercial branding, ending only in circumstantial results and low appropriation by citizens and local stakeholders.

Narrative is the first and most fundamental. From a content perspective, city branding is about building up a unifying, comprehensive and updated narrative of the city. That is in essence the concept of brand when applied to cities and places. To do that, cities cannot rely only on branding and creative agencies. City development departments or the connection to local strategic planning are fundamental to conduct and facilitate this task, which in turn demands in-depth understanding of the urban question and the role of cities in today´s world.

Cultivating uniqueness to avoid the lack of differentiation in today´s city branding. Lack of differentiation often has to do with an uncritical adoption of what supposedly the "standard modern city" should be: smart, creative, lively streets everywhere etc. On the contrary, distinctiveness emerges from the singular combination of different city assets and approaching the city narrative as an honest introspection, projected with healthy optimism into the future. This has much to do with local strategic planning.

Crowdsourcing the city story. Making the most of the local audience is definitely a new frontier in city branding. It increases authenticity, since it´s more credible when third parties talk about the city rather than just official storytelling delivered by dedicated agencies and teams. Furthermore, this

approach offers new solutions to keep the range of city stories updated and fresh on a permanent basis. There is certainly a growing active citizenship, digitally educated, able to personalize and share city experiences and visions, which is opening new exciting opportunities in many aspects of urban development. For the simple reason that social media is an effective channel to increase engagement and co-creation with the city´s diverse target groups, notably its own residents and stakeholders, it will play a major role in tomorrow's place branding.

Logos & mottos can play a role, but not always, and never the main role. Logos & mottos attract the spotlight so powerfully that the more strategic side of city branding often remains overshadowed and underestimated. From a strictly visual communication point of view, the real challenge is to go beyond logos and promote more outstanding city imagery, a better visual culture when representing our cities, engaging audiences and local creatives in the challenge.

City branding is basically an organisational challenge. From a governance perspective, city branding is about creating a shared working area for the diverse entities in the city targeting and interacting with the different audiences. It should provide one single "control centre" for the city´s interaction with the outside world, as a way to properly manage cross-sector issues like city image, global positioning and reputation. It is a response to the need for more strategic communication of the city.

There is no one single formula but some drivers to institutionalize such collaborative models. It may not be necessary to found new constituted bodies to deliver collaboration. What is relevant is to organise specific platforms, alliances or agreements involving the range of key stakeholders (including private ones if timely), provide some leadership from the

local government, at least in earlier stages (within a more relational, horizontal style of performing political power at local level), organize highly professionalized dedicated teams to run the day to day activities, and design new funding models.

City branding does not come to replace the different sector-focused city marketing practices. On the contrary, its reason for being is to give support to the operations carried out by the entities working in destination marketing, cultural events, **inward investment... but** also the political entities, local private companies open to the world, universities, airports, technology parks, etc. Those specialized marketing teams focused on concrete target groups should actively collaborate in the process of coordination and alignment. They certainly keep a vital role, within a new win-win context, where synergies can be now fully exploited and the range of city messages and stories will gain in consistency.

Branding the city might not be something disconnected to the local population. Branding can be a question of internal marketing too. Place-branding techniques can be used to socialize flagship projects and emerging processes in the city that need to be installed in the collective imagination, and increasingly can be seen as the toolkit for urban regeneration projects. If we address the field as a cohesive force and no longer as a matter of just logos and tag lines, then the resident´s voice is fairly important as well as the voice from the local entities, firms and visitors.

Cities need to expand the concept of what communication action is. This is as a way to overcome an approach dominated by a campaign logic and to learn to promote cities with small budgets, if necessary. The impact of the digital shift has been profound and today urban identities must also be constructed at the digital level, and the experience of place often starts in a digital

environment. However, the question of what mix of communication channels and actions to use in the city is not as simple as migrating to digital-based tools. Older formulas, duly revisited, still have a role to play undoubtedly: advertising and PR, ambassador networks, big events, new generation visitor centers, newsletters... The challenge for cities is to make a revised choice on their particular mix of communication tools in today´s world.

We firmly believe that such conception of what city brand management means, will be central, if it is not already to urban policies in the years to come. Efficiency in the way core European cities brand and communicate themselves internationally will have a direct impact in the positioning of Europe and the European Union worldwide. Consequently,

we should expect wider backing from the European Commission (through the diverse programmes focused on urban issues, territorial cooperation and competitiveness) to those strategies following the way of innovative city brand management, as conscious urban policies nowadays.

Miguel Rivas, partner of Grupo TASO and lead expert for URBACT-CityLogo, Haye Folkertsma, city of Utrecht, Maria Elena Seemann, city of Alba Iulia, Camilla Fabricius, city of Aarhus, Carina Gomes, city of Coimbra, Jennifer Caswell, city of Dundee, Gianluca Saba, city of Genoa, Liss Steinbakk, city of Oslo, Rasa Razgaitis, city of Vilnius, **Małgorzata Bukowska**-*Siegel, city of Warsaw and Lorena Calvo, city of Zaragoza.*

Utrecht, March 2015

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URBACT-CityLogo as unique cross-learning experience

Baseline study

This transnational adventure on theory and policies around city branding & marketing, or city strategic communications, was initiated with a 6-month preparatory phase. The objectives were to complete the initial partnership of five cities up to a final number of ten participating cities, and produce a baseline study as well as a working plan for a implementation period of 30 months, covering activities at both network level (the international cross-learning itinerary) and local level (production of a Local Action Plan in each of the participating cities in close collaboration with a Local Support Group involving main stakeholders).

To that aim, study visits by the project lead expert were organized to all the partner cities during the preparatory phase, pursuing two main objectives: i) checking local background, ongoing developments and future expectations, related to city branding and marketing; ii) and supporting in setting up and launching the work of the local support groups.

Those study visits, along with the analysis of policy papers at local level, concluded in the production of **partner´s profiles**. They were an important step in order to determine the state of play in each of the participating cities - summarizing strengths and gaps-, map real and potential stakeholders at local level, draft preliminary policy recommendations, and matchmaking among the participating cities in terms of knowledge transfer. In addition, the baseline study was completed with the project rationale and thematic roadmap, which took as starting point the state-of-the-art in city branding at the time, and overall the most common gaps and failures in the way cities used to brand and market themselves.
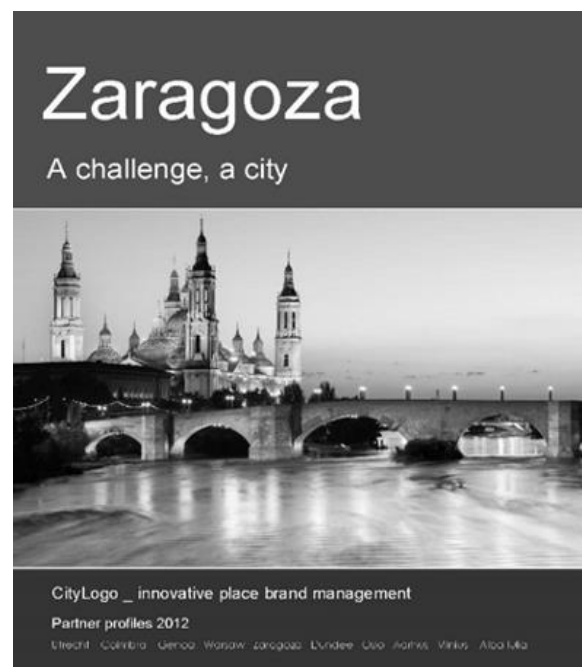
Project rationale and series of city profiles as part of the baseline study, 2012.

Alba Iulia
The other capital

CityLogo _ innovative place brand management
Partner profiles 2012
Utrecht Coimbra Genoa Warsaw Zaragoza Dundee Oslo Aarhus Vilnius Alba Iulia

Aarhus
Danish for progress

CityLogo _ innovative place brand management
Partner profiles 2012
Utrecht Coimbra Genoa Warsaw Zaragoza Dundee Oslo Aarhus Vilnius Alba Iulia

Coimbra
Smart and creative city

CityLogo _ innovative place brand management
Partner profiles 2012
Utrecht Coimbra Genoa Warsaw Zaragoza Dundee Oslo Aarhus Vilnius Alba Iulia

Dundee
One city many discoveries

CityLogo _ innovative place brand management
Partner profiles 2012
Utrecht Coimbra Genoa Warsaw Zaragoza Dundee Oslo Aarhus Vilnius Alba Iulia

Genoa
Genova urban lab

CityLogo _ innovative place brand management
Partner profiles 2012
Utrecht Coimbra Genoa Warsaw Zaragoza Dundee Oslo Aarhus Vilnius Alba Iulia

Oslo
Powered by nature

CityLogo _ innovative place brand management
Partner profiles 2012
Utrecht Coimbra Genoa Warsaw Zaragoza Dundee Oslo Aarhus Vilnius Alba Iulia

Utrecht
City of knowledge and culture

CityLogo _ innovative place brand management
Partner profiles 2012
Utrecht Coimbra Genoa Warsaw Zaragoza Dundee Oslo Aarhus Vilnius Alba Iulia

Vilnius
Selling Lithuania smartly

CityLogo _ innovative place brand management
Partner profiles 2012
Utrecht Coimbra Genoa Warsaw Zaragoza Dundee Oslo Aarhus Vilnius Alba Iulia

Warsaw
Fall in love with Warsaw

CityLogo _ innovative place brand management
Partner profiles 2012
Utrecht Coimbra Genoa Warsaw Zaragoza Dundee Oslo Aarhus Vilnius Alba Iulia

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Thematic roadmap

The thematic roadmap designed by TASO to overcome conventional or superficial practices in city branding is articulated by five key-words: Narrative, Messaging-Imagery, Collaboration, Targets and Communications. Each of them refers to one of the pillars of city branding & marketing´s whole cycle:

- City narrative, as first and most fundamental part of the process.

- The need to turn such narrative into workable communication pieces, basically throughout core messages, stories and related powerful images – much more useful than just one single logo & motto.

- Collaboration model or brand partnership as governing system.

- As we are also in marketing, segmentation is fundamental – identification and prioritization of city´s target groups.

- And finally communication channels and actions.

This comprehensive model has proved to be extremely useful in bringing together theory and practice, and overall in providing guidance to large-scale peer-learning, in a way that it has attracted the Eurocities Working Group on City Attractiveness to share most of the URBACT-CityLogo transnational activities, with the result of over thirty cities from fifteen different European countries involved.

Significantly, it´s a model that does not come from the branding/marketing field, but basically from the experience in urban management and urban issues, which is somewhat unusual.
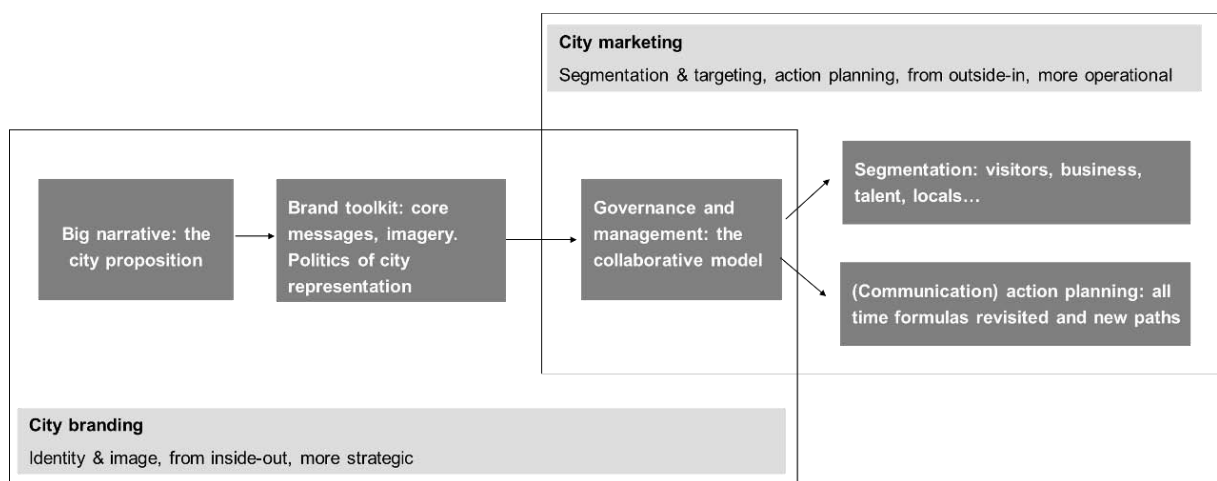
Figure 1. City branding: concise roadmap. Source: M.Rivas, Grupo TASO
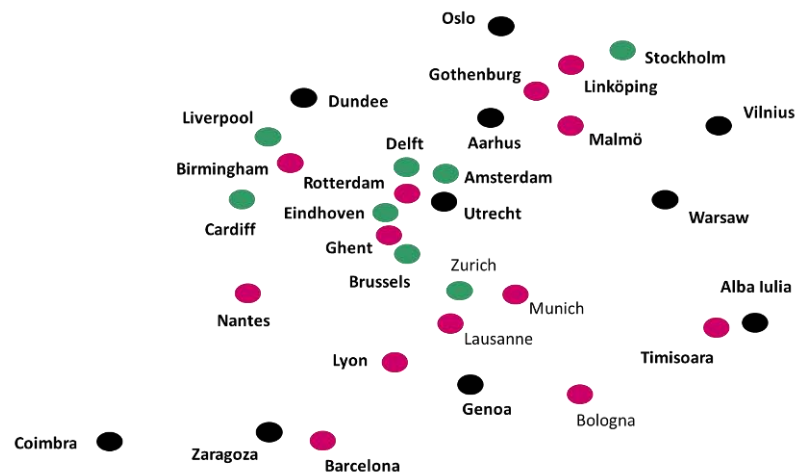
URBACT-CityLogo as framework for peer-learning: participating cities

Thematic workshops and key study visits

The international cross-learning in city branding was organized in four thematic workshops, two key study visits and a peer-review exercise. The series of workshops was initiated tackling first the two fundamental issues in city branding: governance and management models (Oslo, April 2013) and brand building and politics of city representation (Utrecht, October 2013). Then, with the topic of communication channels & actions for the city (Dundee, June 2014), the series entered a more tactical ground, more closely related to marketing than to branding and identity. The fourth workshop followed this trail as it was aimed at bridging between integrated city branding and the different sector-focused city marketing practices (Zaragoza, October 2014).

Thematic workshops revealed themselves as the cornerstone of the transnational cross-learning, as they were shaped by the following features:

- Thematically focused. It allowed in-depth discussion on a very concrete and different range of topics each time.

- Intensive agenda. The principal day fully dedicated to the workshop´s theme, throughout a diversity of sessions, e.g. case study presentations, pitches, panel discussions, interactive sessions. And the day after usually devoted to learn and discuss about what´s going on in the host city.

- Interaction prior to the workshop date, in order to fine tune contributions with both workshop format and thematic focus.

- Discussion time at the core. All the case study presentations were addressed as inputs for further critical discussion. Speakers were encouraged to tell not just about lights and

achievements but also on shades and gaps. To facilitate the debates, the workshops were generally limited to 50 seats.

- <u>Horizontal events</u>. No keynote speakers and no boundaries between speakers and the audience. Contributors that make a presentation and then leave were not welcome. No passive attendance.

- <u>Quality of the city delegations</u>. The workshops were clearly perceived as events organized by practitioners for practitioners, engaging decision makers and also stakeholders from the partner cities, many times from the private sector.

Thematic workshop "Communication Channels for the City, Old Formulas Revisited and New Paths", Dundee, June 2014

In addition to the workshops, two key study visits were organized. The first one to Barcelona (January 2014), which is a magnet for tourists from all over the world and has also climbed up to the top world position in the meeting industry. We wanted to check to what extent a conscious integrated city brand strategy is behind this capacity for attracting.

The other study visit was in Zurich (January 2015), a medium-sized urban agglomeration with the status of a global city. Over there, the aim was to know more on Zurich´s long efforts to create a brand platform bringing together stakeholders marketing the city region as business location and those targeting tourists and visitors.

Key study visit Barcelona
Programme_February 6th_2014

Key study visit Zürich
Programme_January 22_2015

Peer review

An in-depth peer-review was conceived as ex-ante evaluation of the different Local Action Plans produced by the participating cities. The exercise gave many practitioners the opportunity to adopt for a while a coach/consultant profile in the field of city branding. Moreover, the comparative analysis was an occasion for the reviewers to think about their cities´ own weaknesses and strengths.

The peer review was organized around a Dropbox folder, where all participants could find their peers´ information, notably the LAP preliminary drafts and other complementary information like the partner´s profiles that were produced by the Lead Expert for the CityLogo baseline study. The Dropbox-based hub was also the point where the reviews had to be left. A template was provided, as flexible guidance to make comments, observations and remarks.

Furthermore, every partner had the opportunity to introduce its Action Plan via videoconference, by using Skype as free platform for the group calls, and organize Q&A and discussion with their interested peers. Everyone joining the CityLogo community (including Local Support Group members) was invited to participate in the group video-calls, but being free to choose which presentation they wanted to attend. The videoconferences proved to be a very useful tool to energize the partnership.

> *"Thank you very much for a very good peer review –* we found your comments highly relevant and will be implemented in the final LAP" Liss Kristin Steinbakk (Oslo)

> *"Thank you for the feedback last week* -it was most helpful and great inspiration to move forward with the project" Stinne Bille (Aarhus)
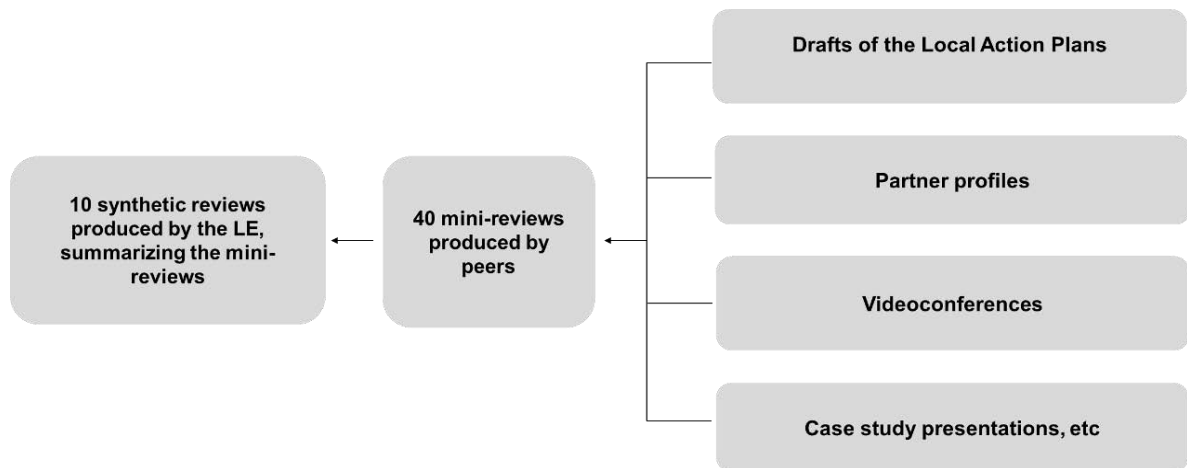
Figure 2. Peer-review exercise.

Sergio di Paolo, Genoa. Group video call on Genoa´s Local Action Plan. September 1st 2014

	Utrecht	Zaragoza	Coimbra	Genoa	Dundee	Aarhus	Oslo	Warsaw	Vilnius	Alba	Total
Utrecht				X	X		X	X			4
Zaragoza			X	X	X		X		X		5
Coimbra		X			X	X		X			4
Genoa		X				X	X				3
Dundee		X									1
Aarhus			X	X			X		X		4
Oslo	X	X		X				X	X		5
Warsaw	X		X			X			X		4
Vilnius	X				X	X	X	X			5
Alba		X	X		X	X		X			5
Total	3	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	0	40

Written peer-reviews. Reviewers in vertical column, subjects of reviews in horizontal column

02

The need to re-learning city branding

De-brandization of city branding?

City branding has deserved poor attention from the academia so far, especially from urban studies and other disciplines with a major focus on the city, although the issue is extremely dynamic from **the practitioner side. A reason for such a lack of "intellectual stimulus" is** because the field has been, and still is to some extent, under the influence of a too much conventional marketing approach [1]. So, re-thinking city branding through a better understanding of "the urban question" can be a driver, at least to promote more consistent policies of city representation. In a way, it´s like revising the field by means of a spatialized ontology, being relevant at this point getting also perspectives from the wide research community on territorial and urban issues, semiologists, visual artists, etc.

Cities are not perceived as brands, nor do they compete with commercial brands in the consumer´s mind [2]. A city does not have to be sold, what it needs is a strategy for representation and communication. That is why taking branding and marketing, as they come from business management and business schools, as dominant methods to approach issues like urban identities, city narratives or global positioning, is not the right focus.

> **Re-thinking city branding through a better understanding of "the urban question" can be a driver, at least to promote more consistent policies of city representation**

In this sense we agree with Go and Govers when they say place branding is a strongly cross-disciplinary field, but still needed for **a unifying "paradigm" in the Kuhn´s sense. That is, a "shared constellations of beliefs, values, techniques... models and examples"** [3]. To our view, such common ground should be fed not only by marketers, brand specialists, creative agencies and the thematically heterogeneous community of practitioners and policy decision-makers, but also by the disciplines with an extensive background in thinking about the city, from urban geography to architecture and urban planning. That simply means our claim to re-spatialize place branding, and it might be helpful for better positioning city branding within urban policies and urban management.

We cannot or shouldn´t manage our urban identities just like brands, or with the same techniques than commercial branding. In fact, brand is a metaphor when applied to cities and places, as Simon Anholt said some years ago. So, City managers, practitioners and experts who mainly do not come from a marketing background, but equally appreciate the contribution of marketing to the city, are trying to counterbalance the simplistic way in which not few cities are adopting the brand concept and other marketing techniques.

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[1] "Even today, many governments, most consultants and even some scholars persist in a naïve and superficial notion of place branding that is nothing more than ordinary marketing and corporate identity" Anholt, S. (2010) A Political Perspective on Place Branding. In Go, F. and Govers, R. Editors. International Place Branding Yearbook. Place Branding in the New Age of Innovation. Palgrave Macmillan. 2010.

[2] I am aware that many sustain just the opposite as basic assumption when "branding" and marketing the city.

[3] Go, F. and Govers, R. Editors. International Place Branding Yearbook. Place Branding in the New Age of Innovation. Palgrave Macmillan. 2010, quoting the influential T.S. Kuhn "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions", 1970.

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Of course, brand and branding are useful terms, as jargon to synthesize the increasingly relevant working field of city strategic communication. Even so, some practitioners working in promoting the city to diverse audiences do not feel much comfortable with the term Branding, reflecting somewhat fatigue to see how business logic and business language invade every aspect of life nowadays [4]. Little by little, other terms such as strategic communication or urban internationalization are being used.

Furthermore, outside the professional circles dealing with marketing and urban policies, ordinary people frequently dislike when their cities and countries are approached in terms of brand [5]. Even an incipient **type of "do not brand my city" reaction** [6] is already emerging.

That is why the thematic roadmap designed to give support the URBACT-CityLogo project was **conceived as a kind of "de**-brandization of **city branding"**. An attempt to re-learning this field of work, in order to overcome its most common gaps.

Conventional place branding sometimes work homogenizing cities instead of differentiating them and promoting distinctive positioning

For years, place branding has been strongly associated to logotypes, more or less brilliant slogans and subsequent campaigns. With no doubt, this **sort of "original sin", has** conditioned (restricted I would say) the practice of city branding in the last 15 years. **Certainly, such "original sin" may have** produced excellent results in terms of positioning and visibility in not a few cases, but also confusion and wrong focus on the real goals of this working field, resulting in useless logos and expensive ad campaigns, with very little impact and lack of affinity with citizens and other stakeholders. If cities liberate themselves from the corset of such a conventional

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[4] Now, the ultimate trend is about "personal branding". Possibly, Michael Sandel and his discussion on the moral limits to markets is capturing better than anyone the expansion of a business logic (and of a business rhetoric) to every single aspect in society nowadays - "from a market economy to a market society". See SANDEL, M, J. What Money Can´t Buy: the Moral Limits to Markets. Penguin.

[5] It´s like the "new branded world" described by Naomi Klein had reached urban management. More than an anti-brand manifesto, Klein´s influential book "No Logo" claimed against the worst face of the growing global capitalism. Brands themselves are not the target of Klein but somewhat over brandization and corporatization of today´s world.

[6] Ruedi Baur and Sébastien Thiery, editors (2013). Please Don't Brand My Public Space. Lars Müller Publishers.

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branding/marketing approach, then the real potential of strategic communication in modern urban management would be unlocked.

First assumption is that place branding is not only and primarily connected to attractiveness but also to **place identification** (identity, or much better competitive local identity), even as necessary condition.

It opens a precious opportunity to re-think urban identities as a coherent (and optimistic) articulation in time between internal factors and external framework conditions. Under this perspective, city branding has even the potential to take over the role of **local strategic planning** of years ago. Actually, conventional strategic planning as tree of objectives, actions, measures, duly budgeted and prioritized in time, is losing its functionality in extremely volatile and changing scenarios as the current. A number of factors can fuel this vision:

- City strategic communication (city branding in other words) is based, or should be based, on an updated narrative of our city model, projected into the future with optimism and intelligence. Hence the idea of "competitive identity". To attract, we must first shape our character, define or re-define our personality.

- Such a narrative (duly translated into core messages with impact, detailed stories, etc) has more power of seduction, of attracting willingness and collusion from different groups, than the traditional way of long-term strategic planning. That is, objectives, actions, measures, budget, calendars...

- And it is more effective as roadmap to action since city branding also holds a politics of city representation. That is, a visual communication strategy, which is important in a visual world, as the world we live in [7].

- Moreover, city branding offers greater effectiveness in comparison to conventional strategic planning because it includes a segmentation exercise. A clear and detailed definition of target groups, within and outside the city, shaping messages and interaction channels to each of them. Today, our city project depends, more and more, on how we attract and interact with visitors, investors and foreign talent and knowledge.

- Finally, like strategic planning, city branding heavily relies, more and more, on active participation and engagement of the local stakeholders, public and private ones.

Most common gaps in placebranding

It´s true that almost everybody working in the field agree on city branding is much more than simply logos & mottos. Nonetheless and generally speaking, in reality, the field is still under the influence of a too conventional marketing approach and campaign logic. The prevailing role of branding and advertising agencies still pushes in that direction. As a result, one can see many short-sighted city brand practices, which adopt automatically concepts and techniques from

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[7] Therefore, to some extent, those working in urban policies might learn to handle some communication codes, in particular visual communication. And vice-versa, our partners in the field of communications should understand that communicating a city is not the same as communicating a shower gel or a pack of cigarettes.

commercial branding, ending only in circumstantial results, low appropriation by the citizens and local stakeholders and no impact in the long term.

We have identified the seven most common gaps in place branding:

- **The strategy gap**. Place branding as a matter of just logo & motto & campaigns, when actually it should be about building up competitive local identities and aligning all the communication efforts in the city around it.

- **The community gap**. Weak involvement of civil society and related stakeholders in both city brand building and management.

- **The timing gap**. The question of circumstantial brands, just related to specific big events or the political cycle. Lack of durability.

- **The performance gap**. City experience does not match with the expectations created by the "brand". Lack of credibility and authenticity.

- **The differentiation gap**. Cities in Europe seem to brand themselves on the same topics and qualifications – knowledge, creativity… distinctiveness between them is therefore limited.

- **The visual gap.** Many local governments, even those from big cities, still handle poor sets of images. More quality-oriented politics of city representation are needed.

- **The budget gap**. As many cities are now re-thinking their way of marketing themselves in a context of less public spending.

However, it´s fair to say that, besides short-sighted views dominated by both the rhetoric of commercial branding and the urgency of the short term, more and more there are a growing number of strategies across Europe with a sound vision of what the city brand concept is. That is, a matter of being focused on building up a unifying narrative of the city, and creating a shared working platform for the diverse entities in the city targeting and interacting with different audiences.

Of course, in-between different aims and circumstances can be recognized. For instance, Genoa´s recent seeking for a city logo reached its peak with a campaign targeting citizens and local stakeholders. However, such momentum was also envisaged by the City Council to raise awareness on the need to more strategic communication for the Italian city.

What means city branding? Content and governance perspectives

At this point we have already unveiled that for us place branding is basically about building up competitive local identities (content) and aligning more efficiently all the communication efforts in the city (governance).

Cities change and their identities must be rethought accordingly. In fact, the contemporary rise of city branding was associated to big-scale changes in the UK´s core cities, aimed at shaping the

new post-industrial economic pattern. Dundee, in Scotland, still see itself as a "competent, underestimated city in transition", and since 2010 is embarked in a systematic attempt for re-branding and re-positioning. In the Netherlands, Eindhoven´s impressive transition from a company-town to a knowledge and creative economy has been accompanied from the beginning by a relevant communication strategy. During transition periods the communication dimension is of a special importance.

But otherwise there are cities, like Oslo for instance, that have joined prosperity for long time and host a good handful of assets and unique values, but feel their capacity to "buzz" this is still low. For example, only a few know that Utrecht used to rank as the most competitive region in Europe, ahead of the London area, Ile de France or Stockholm, according to the EU Regional Competitiveness Index. In both cases, re-positioning and getting more visibility, to build a comprehensive and compelling city narrative is a need.

> **"Rather than having businesses and individuals tell their own individual story, everybody should have their personal version of a common narrative"**
>
> **Aarhus´ city branding team**

However, urban identities and narratives are something that one cannot fabricate in the brand laboratory. That would be artificial and lacks of consistency. A competitive identity should be fed by the best of the local backgrounds along with city´s assets and ongoing flagship projects. Furthermore, since a city brand is not only a portrait but also a path into the future, we should also put in the cocktail shaker emerging´s processes in the city and expectations and desire from stakeholders and, if possible, from the ordinary people as well.

From a governance perspective, city branding is about creating a shared working area for the diverse entities in the city targeting different groups - visitors, investors, knowledge... residents. It´s a response to the need for more strategic communication, inside and outside the city. It comes to provide one single "control centre" to the city´s interaction with the outside world, what in turn allows to manage purely cross-cutting issues like city image, positioning or attractiveness.

Therefore, city branding is an organizational challenge, to which there is often no need for new constituted bodies and structures. For instance, the city of Utrecht is now addressing urban branding as a coalition-based process, very horizontal, involving a small group of key entities. In Zurich, the cooperation around integrated city branding is by now a formal agreement between the City and the Canton of Zurich, Zurich Tourism and the Greater Zurich Area, which is the body in charge of inward investment attraction.

Eindhoven
Placebranding as accompanying strategy of big socio-economic transformations

Traditional headquarter of big corporation Philips, Eindhoven was the prototype of company-town that hit rock bottom during the decade of nineties, for then growing till present time when the city-region ranks at the top of the EU indexes related to innovation. So, while accounting 4.5% of the country population, the city-region hosts 52% of the patents in Holland, which means 4 patents per day.

This impressive productive and even societal change, from *Fordist* industrialism to a knowledge and creative economy, has been conducted under the concept of **Eindhoven Brainport**. The transition has also been accompanied by a relevant communication strategy, carried out from a dedicated agency, Eindhoven365, which was promoted by the municipality of Eindhoven, Brainport Development agency, province of Brabant, the campus cities of Best, Helmond and Veldhoven and neighbouring cities of Nuenen, Waalre, Oirschot, Geldrop-Mierlo, Son & Breugel. According to Peter Kentie, EHV365´s director, their place marketing strategy is basically an "acceleration strategy" for the new development model designed for Eindhoven and based in an unique combination of technology, creativity and knowledge, as in cities like San Francisco or Helsinki - Eindhoven is headquarter of Design Academy, the most renowned design school in Netherlands today. This gives a clear idea on the strategic role assigned to city branding and marketing in the Dutch city.

Promoting new visuality for Eindhoven´s post Philips era, © Eindhoven EHV365

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Building up competitive local identities: narrative as first and most fundamental

As said above, city branding is about building up a unifying and updated narrative of the contemporary city. A narrative then filtered through communication codes in order to produce a coherent set of core messages and stories (textual pieces holding the **narrative power**) together with a related imagery (visual pieces having the **symbolic power**).

In Tim Manson´s words, from Marketing Birmingham, "this is not about big launches and big campaigns, this is simply about changing behaviours and creating unity in the way stakeholders talk about the city when promoting the benefits to residents, visitors and businesses alike". In this sense, London´s brand platform London & Partners defines its mission just as "to tell London's story brilliantly".

Of course, place marketers working at the operational level, over the ground, will continue producing more precise storytelling adapted to specific target groups, but preserving a common core, a sort of "big narrative" of the city.

To Roger Pride, managing partner at Heavenly and former CEO of Cardiff & Co[8], city branding is about "the identification, nurturing and marketing of a city's competitive identity". Therefore, a sort of collective place-making should always be a first stage, resulting in a **big narrative** with capability of: i) expressing city´s distinctiveness and concrete path for the future; ii) engendering support and capturing the pride, increasing sense of place and igniting ambition; iii) and being relevant (add value) to all the sectors in the city.

Such a city proposition, manifesto or big narrative, also capturing city´s point of view and core values, will have then to be detailed into **specific propositions** for key sectors and projects, and consequently linking to diverse target groups. Moreover, according to Roger Pride, both high-quality related imagery and "powerful motivating campaign idea to which everyone can get behind" will be helpful for the process.

> **"This is not about big launches and big campaigns, this is simply about changing behaviours and creating unity in the way stakeholders talk about the city when promoting the benefits to residents, visitors and businesses alike"**
>
> **Tim Manson, Marketing Birmingham**

From city narrative to the city brand

According to Egbert Wolf, from City of Amsterdam´s communication department, they first "defined where they were in Amsterdam already strong (cultural city, canal city, meeting place) and what they had to strengthen (business city, knowledge city, residential city), in order to distil city´s core values (creativity, innovation, spirit of commerce) and DNA (open and tolerant; averse to authority, self-willed; a city apart, in Amsterdam everything is slightly different; informal and cooperative).

More recently, in Utrecht, they have also agreed on three core values as drivers to produce a more cohesive narrative of the city - Bright, Inspiring and Welcoming. It´s a usual approach, generally posed by brand agencies and creative ateliers, and it works. However, it´s worth recalling city

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[8] R. Pride is co-editor of <u>Destination Brands, Managing Place Reputation</u>, Oxford: Elsevier, 2011, 3rd edition.

narrative is much more than DNA and core values. It should be also fed by facts and findings that come out from both internal and external analysis. The latest gives positioning. The internal analysis combines realities (local backgrounds, assets and both emerging and declining processes) with possible utopias (urban projects, institutional expectations, people´s desires).

Finding city´s DNA in Bologna

In 2013 Bologna addressed integrated city branding for the first time, and 5-month initial stage was devoted to extensive research aimed at unveiling city´s core values [9]. Two studies were carried out on the perceived image of the city by different audiences. The first one through a questionnaire to a sample of foreign/Italian citizens who have visited and/or stayed in Bologna in recent years, which obtained 400 valid responses. The second through a "reputational and sentiment analysis" of the Bologna´s presence on the net, which examined 20,000 texts during the period December 2012–February 2013: posts and comments made available on the internet - forums, blogs, micro-blogs, social networks, etc.

According to Roberto Grandi, professor of communication at the University of Bologna and coordinator of the Bologna City Brand Project, results of quantitative research provided a large frame to identify the characteristic features about the perception of the city´s identity; and the answers to these questions were helpful in detecting some clusters on the perception of Bologna by crossing answers to closed questions with answers to open questions - quantitative research and qualitative research. As for the reputational and sentiment analysis [10] of Bologna on the Internet, they used a Crawler (programmes that visit web sites and read their pages and other information in order to create entries for a search engine index) and semantic search engine for automatic linguistic analysis of the textual documents.

A third study used the technique of focus groups to analyse the characteristics of the "desired identity" of **Bologna by 90 significant "witnesses" from the city, representing the** economic, cultural, social and institutional world. In addition, the #Caroamicotiinvito project was set up – online contest to gather stories about the city in the words and pictures of its citizens. The Metropolitan Strategic Plan was also taken into account.

By combining the outputs of these three processes, a set of city´s core values were defined. Among other applications, this seminal finding was used as main guideline for an open competition for getting a new visual identity for Bologna.

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[9] When re-thinking urban identities, it seems more suitable to speak about unveiling city´s DNA, values or unifying narratives better than (arrogantly) producing them.

[10] According to Wikipedia, sentiment analysis (also known as opinion mining) "refers to the use of natural language processing, text analysis and computational linguistics to identify and extract subjective information in source materials". The basic method in sentiment analysis is classifying the polarity of a given text - whether the expressed opinion in a document is positive, negative, or neutral.

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However**, only when such a city narrative is "filtered" through communication codes** and drivers like uniqueness (city´s DNA and core values) or fascination [11], or through a conscious policy of city representation (where visual components are equally relevant), we can consider we are fully entering the city branding field. Then, the result will be duly organized and delivered by means of place-brand toolkits - values, messages, imagery, facts, stories, signs (see figure 3).

The building up of a city narrative is actually, or should be, a kind of honest introspection projected into the future with healthy optimism. That is why it should be closely connected to local strategic planning.
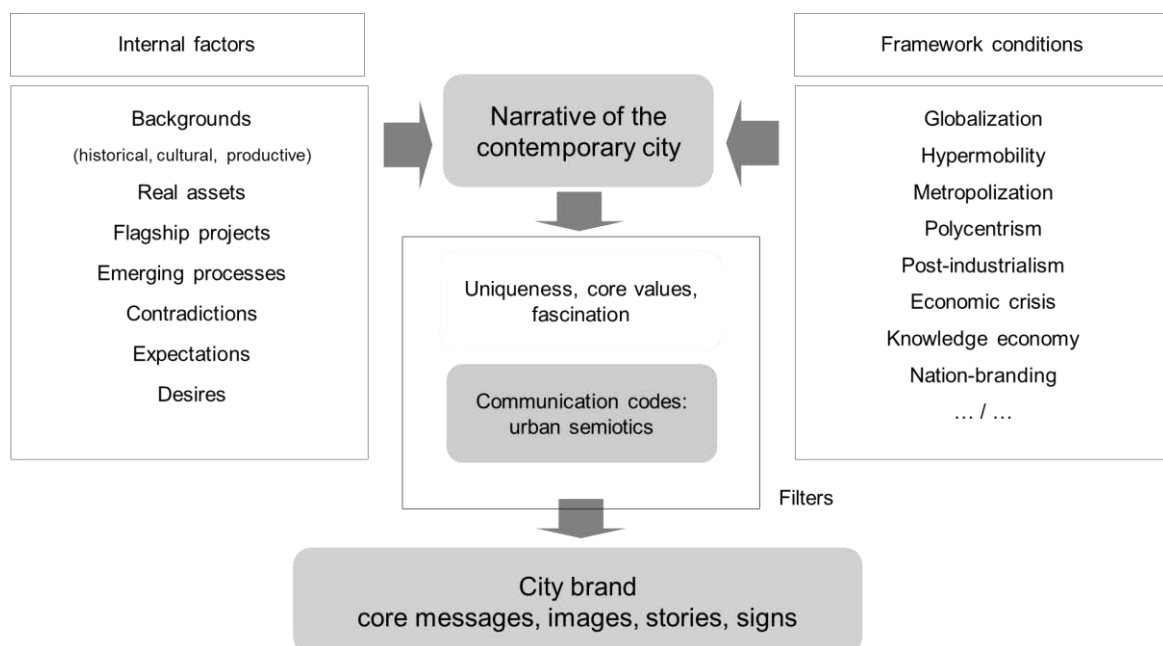
Figure 3. From city narrative to the city brand. Source: M. Rivas, Grupo TASO

Even so, **lack of differentiation is one of the most common gaps in today´s city branding**, which has often to do with an uncritical adoption of what supposedly the "standard modern city" should be - smart, creative, lively streets everywhere, etc. An effect of leaving the city storyline basically in the hands of creative and brand agencies, which often seems to work homogenizing cities instead of differentiating them.

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[11] Cultural geographers and urban sociologists have recently identified the concept of fascination as "emotional multiplier" of the local real assets in building up the city image. At this point, a challenge would be how to properly use that kind of multiplier without falling into mere propaganda, fetishism or simple "postmodern aesthetization" of the urban landscape. See Schmid, H. et al. Editors (2011). Cities and Fascination: Beyond the Surplus of Meaning. Ashgate.

On the contrary, distinctiveness used to emerge by the singular combination of different city assets. For instance, Rotterdam is producing storylines connecting its condition as leading world port to avant-garde architecture by the renowned studios located in the city (OMA-Rem Koolhaas, **MVRDV...).** That particular ecology of different assets and values, linked by specific crossovers, is what makes a city more distinctive.

Fascination as "emotional multiplier" of local real assets. Left: theatrical scenography for the new Hamburg © Herzog & de Meuron Architects. Right: Coimbra, soul of an entire Country, photo by Paulo Magalhães

More powerful images of the city, better aligned to core values. Politics of city representation more focused on ideas than in facts. New visual culture

Reality

Image → **C I T Y** ← **Concept**

Utopia

City brand proposition: big narrative articulated in detailed storytelling, showing a clear and unique path. Textual components of the city brand
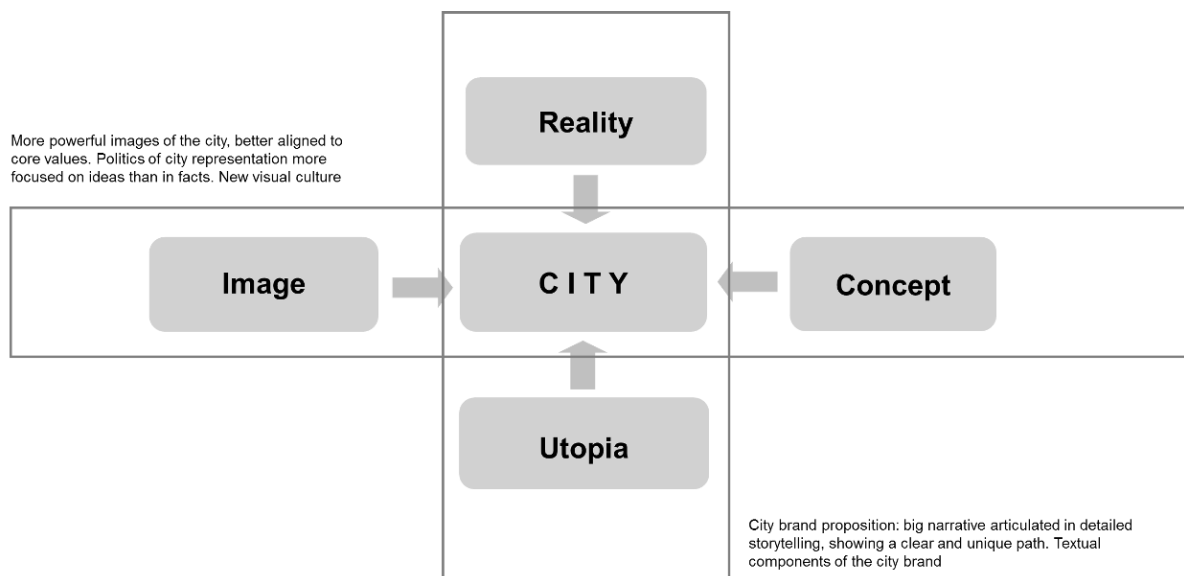
Figure 4. What city when branding the city? Source: M.Rivas, Grupo TASO

From big narrative to detailed storytelling: 25 stories about Aarhus

Elevated to the status of priority area in the Business Development Plan for Aarhus (**Denmark's** second largest city with 315,000 inhabitants), city branding was founded upon the analysis of the **city's strengths,** through focus groups with business clusters and a survey amongst the citizens. More precisely, 41 focus groups and meetings and a survey fed by 1,500 citizens were undertaken during spring 2011, to find **"**Aarhus´s **DNA".**

In addition, city brand strategy was closely connected to the ci**ty's long**-term strategic goals at the time, what makes easier bringing an overall city proposition (i.e. big narrative) down to a more detailed storytelling able to capture the attention of specific groups. One of the results of this **"operational storytelling"** was **the booklet "25 stories about Aarhus", where concrete stories** were drafted combining mini case studies, **core messages, testimonials, facts and figures, powerful images, contact information, etc.** The different stories were organized around three main clusters: city development and sustainability; arts and culture; and business clusters.

25 STORIES FROM AARHUS		
CITY DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY	**ARTS AND CULTURE**	**BUSINESS STRENGTHS AND CLUSTERS**
Historic building boom Run-down commercial part replaced by world-class architecture Aarhus to have one of Northern Europe´s top hospitals Leading position in sustainable energy Ingenious refuse solution – concealing the city´s refuse underground Aarhus safeguarding against torrential rain-storms Aarhus Cycle city – innovation and creative solutions	The Old Town – a three-star Michelin Guide attraction Aarhus – festival – a cultural beacon in Scandinavia Urban media center – world-class library of the future The Rainbow above Aarhus Spot the new music trends Aarhus rethinks itself to become European Capital of Culture in 2007 Successful Danish crime fiction becomes TV series in Aarhus Aarhus to host Scandinavia´s biggest food festival Aarhus city hall - world-class architecture and design by Arne Jacobsen	Unique concentration of architectural and design companies Aarhus a world-leader on the energy front A knowledge powerhouse for foods International IT environment Denmark´s undiscovered gastronomic gem Port of Aarhus - one of the most efficient ports in Europe International beacon in Aarhus Denmark´s best education city An international research and educational environment

Aarhus´s city brand coordinator Line Gerstrand Knive extracts the following lessons when moving from big narrative to more detailed storytelling:

- Stories with facts are outdated quiet fast. So, the initiatives should be dynamic. Some wiki method for spontaneous feeding of a more systematic collection of stories could be also considered.

- It works well as shortlist of projects/items or interface for moving from big narrative or city proposition to a more detailed storytelling with capacity to catch the attention of specific target groups.

- Stories do not sell themselves – you have to target a story and choose a relevant angle. Stories should express a point of view to make an impact.

- More targeted stories are needed.

- Press effort has to be continuous and prioritized.

Promoting more powerful imagery of the European city. Are we extracting the best of our cities?

The visual side of the city´ strategic communication is equally important than narrative, since it provides the symbolic strength to the whole. In this respect, both public bodies and private agents frequently fail in taking full advantage of the iconographic possibilities that the city may offer. Often, nobody pays enough attention to renew outdated and too much conventional images of the city. In other cases, emerging realities or new assets, still out of city´s prevailing imaginery, lack visibility simply because they have not emerged as images.

To deliver outstanding images in the context of city branding, a kind of **urban semiotics** can be used as set of elements that make full sense when combined among them and around specific stories (movement) and motives taken from the city narrative. Those elements could be the following:

- **People**, since it is disappointing to still see official image banks comprised mainly of buildings and empty city landscapes.

- **Architecture and built environment**, as the city is also sum of "architectural artefacts" in Aldo Rossi´s words.

- **City landscape**, as precious source for distinctiveness [12], beauty (the poetics of cityscapes) and dynamism (aesthetics of the urban transformation and growth).

- **City icons,** both old and new icons are source of uniqueness as well.

> **"Nowadays images already express more ideas than facts"**
>
> **Joan Fontcuberta, photographer**

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[12] For instance, some urban textures can be used as source of uniqueness, like Dublin´s red-coloured brick facades or Bologna´s yellow-orange.
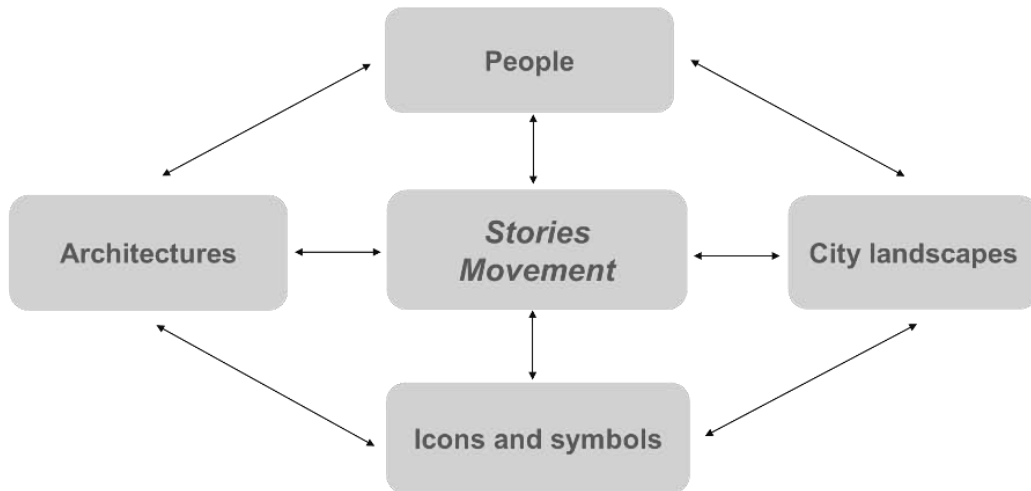
Figure 5. An urban semiotics for city branding: set of elements to be connected around specific stories (movement). Source: M.Rivas, Grupo TASO
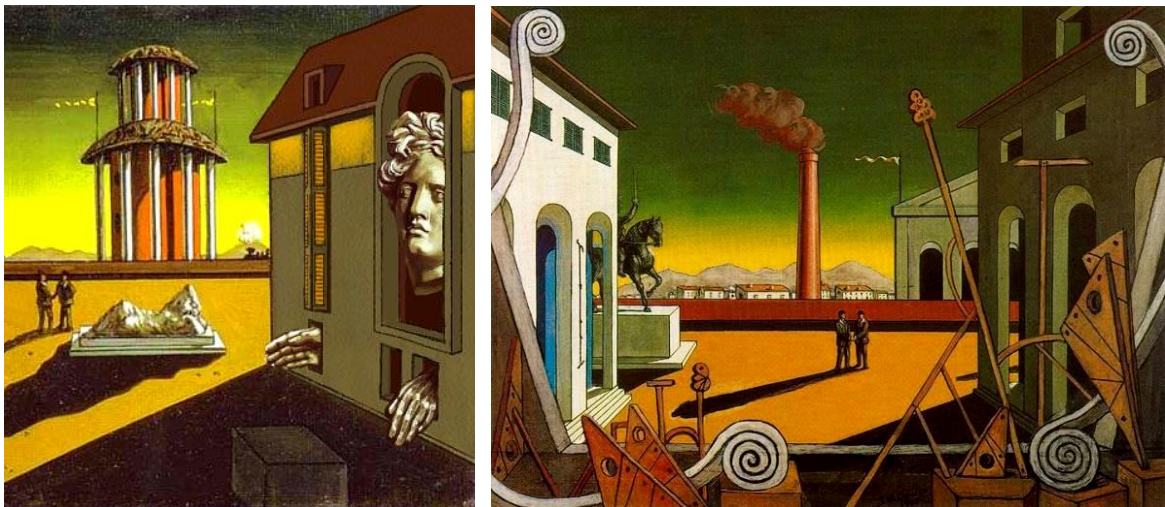
Taking inspiration from De Chirico´s urban scenes

A look into the catalogue of the exhibition that was organised by Dublin in 2008 to commemorate the 48th general assembly of the Union of Capitals of the European Union[13] gives the opportunity to check the **"visual gap"** in city branding. That is, many local governments, even from big cities,

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[13] Dublin City Council, editor (2008). The Many Faces of Europe´s Capitals. Catalogue of the exhibition to commemorate the 48th general assembly of the Union of Capitals of the European Union

still handle poor sets of images and therefore more quality-oriented politics of city representation are needed.

For that exhibition, country capitals from EU-27 were asked for sending a selection of six images along with related short comments to each of the images. A critical gaze raises different assessments. So, Dublin, London, Copenhagen or Helsinki, for instance, are remarkable for making good use of storytelling connecting the set of images to a clear narrative of the city. Athens, Berlin or Brussels offer excellent balance between their most recognizable icons on the one hand, and the ordinary city and its people on the other hand. As for Paris, themes of selected images coherently support different city propositions (green spaces, culture & leisure, sustainable mobility, business), but better visual quality could be expected from a global city.

Bucharest still falls into the former communist countries´ typical style of representing the city with no people, basically through monuments and the building environment. Luxemburg is just the opposite, but equally in an unbalanced manner as the portrayed citizens seem to be in a non-place where city landmarks are not easy to recognize. Lisbon´s selection is a mere collection of panoramic views with total absence of city narrative connected to them.

Left: Bucharest, a city with no people, represented only by the building environment. Right: Luxemburg is just the opposite, but equally in an unbalanced manner as the portrayed citizens seem to be in a non-place where city landmarks are not easily recognizable. Images taken from the catalogue of the exhibition "The Many Faces of Europe´s Capitals", Dublin, 2008.

One could say that two thirds of the textual material supporting city brand strategies in Europe lay upon the same arguments, e.g. knowledge, creativity, sustainability, competitive clusters. In this context **visual aspects can make a difference**. Actually city brand building is about aligning detailed storytelling and core messages to powerful images towards specific target groups.

The following could work as check-list to test the text-image matchmaking in place branding:

- Are the sets of images really making the most of the architecture, city landscape, icons and people of the cities they represent?

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- Are they raising feelings like fascination, attractiveness, uniqueness?

- Are they clearly connected to specific messages?

- What about the distinctiveness and clarity of those messages? Are they coherently aligned to a main city proposition (big narrative)?
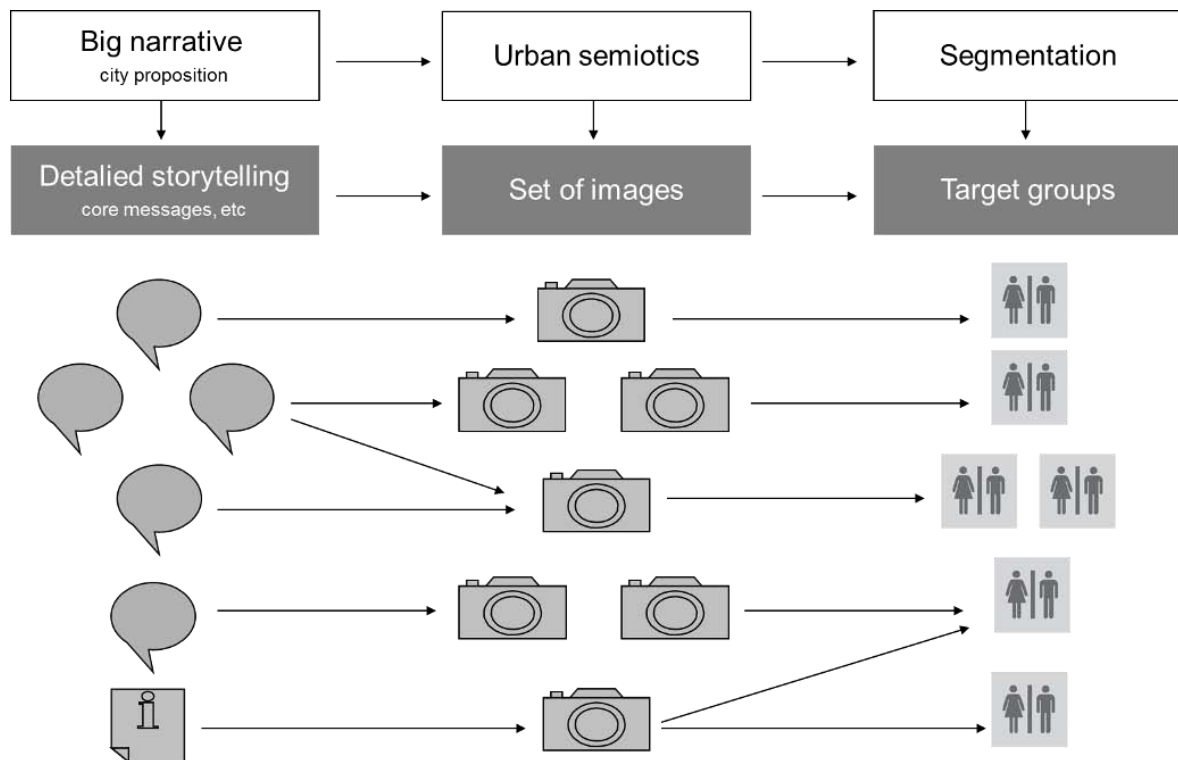
Figure 6. Alignment of textual and visual components of the city brand. Source, M.Rivas, Grupo TASO

In Dundee, great effort has been made in the last years promoting a new visuality of the Scottish city, far from the extended image of a declining working-class, midsized town impacted by old industrialism. They commissioned new image bank to translate their updated city storytelling into visual pieces, also in order to feed subsequent PR campaign, poster series, etc.

This conscious top-down attempt for a new visual culture of the city might lead to more spontaneous and crowd-sourced ways of delivering energetic images of contemporary Dundee - for instance, the Apex City Quay Hotel in Dundee commissioned an art-photo booklet of the city, available to all the hotel guests. Anyhow, today, strategies of city representation everywhere should be revisited in the current scenario of massive production and circulation of images.
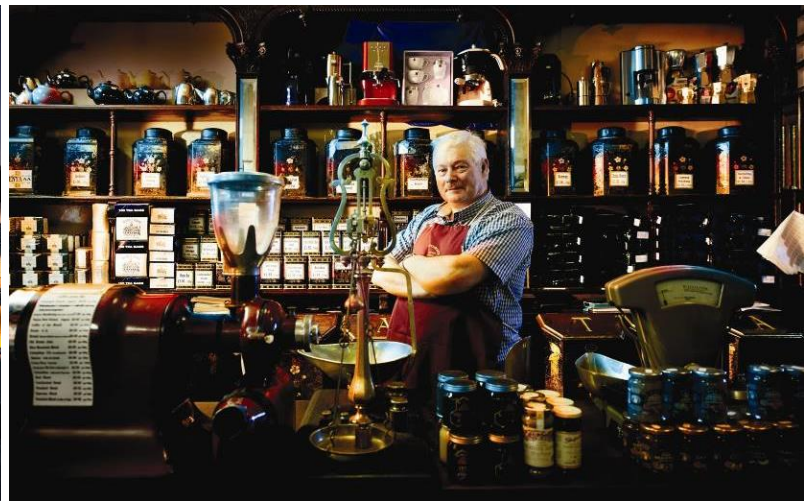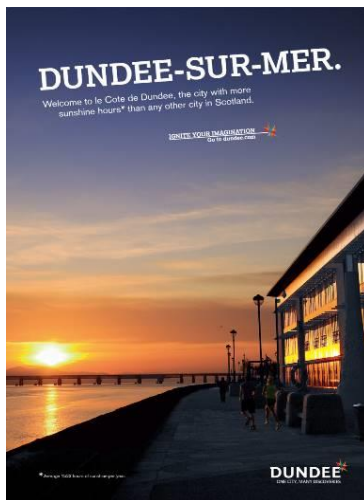
Promoting new visuality for Dundee

Brand toolkits

For Tim Manson, operations & policy director in Marketing Birmingham, a PPP targeting both visitors and business, city branding is basically about creating unity amongst diversity. To that aim, the set of textual and visual pieces comprising the city brand, which describes, summarizes and illustrates Birmingham´s competitive local identity, should be available at a wide extent. It might be socialized as much as possible, inside and outside the city. That is the function of the so-called **brand toolkits** and the [Birminghakm brand toolkit](#) is a good example of it.

They have developed a mix of storytelling, stats, images, videos, facts, case studies and other communication-oriented pieces, coherently assembled into a web platform, serving the second largest city in the UK´s big narrative under the claim "The home of the new industrial revolution".

"Imagine how powerful it would be if everyone across the city was saying not only the right things but also the same things. We want to help everyone response consistently and with confidence to this simple request to talk about the city. One voice, one message – one in demand city. This is the reason behind the Birmingham Brand Toolkit" (T. Manson).

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Logos & mottos: angel or devil?

When promoting visual communication strategies for our cities, logos and visual identities can play a role, but not always and never the main role. Some towns and cities may be needed for a unifying sign, with the result of a reasonable level of **appropriation**. Other ones embarked in city brand strategies have consciously refused creating any logo or synthetic claim. They simply feel there is no need of it. In any case, logos & claims are a risky issue and reality is plenty of big successes and big failures. Even brilliant logos are exposed to rapid imitation, e.g. red & black colour combination, I´m formulas, cities that you must love it, inspiring capitals.

Sometimes, the launch of new logos & mottos can be approached as **"big bang"** in order to draw the attention of stakeholders and citizens on the need for more strategic communication and compelling storytelling of the city. The city of Genoa has proceed in that way.

Halfway there can be found new **"open-source models"** for visual identities, which offer high level of adaptation and flexibility in design or regarding the accompanying claim, without losing unifying character. The aim here is to facilitate logo´s usability as much as possible. Aarhus and more recently Bologna are using this approach. In Aarhus they launched the claim **"with Aarhus, Danish for Progress", with no logo, that local users can freely customize and adapt to their own** messages and visual identities. To that aim, a web-based DIY logo generator was provided at the place brand toolkit http://www.citybrandaarhus.dk.

Open-source visual identity/claim

After having conducted systematic research on the perceived and desired image of the city, Bologna City Council promoted an international competition for ideas to create a common visual identity for the city. The competition was organised by Urban Center Bologna and the Italian Association of visual communication design. The winner idea posed not just one specific logo but as many as stakeholders, projects and even residents in the city by means of a specific **visual alphabet**, which translates letters into pictograms and colours. The result is brilliant, very powerful from the visual point of view and unifying.

The process to get a visual identity for the city matters too. Public agency Eindhoven365 promoted a crowdsourcing process that involved a panel of around 80 local professionals mainly from graphic design but also from other related areas like branding, web-design, computer...., aimed at working together for Eindhoven´s new visual identity. The result was quite satisfactory, a logo plus typeface, no claim, that reminds the "energy" and "electricity" which is part of the city´s DNA, but at the same time its dynamism and willingness for change. The direct engagement of the local community of designers resulted in high acceptance and appropriation of the new visual identity.
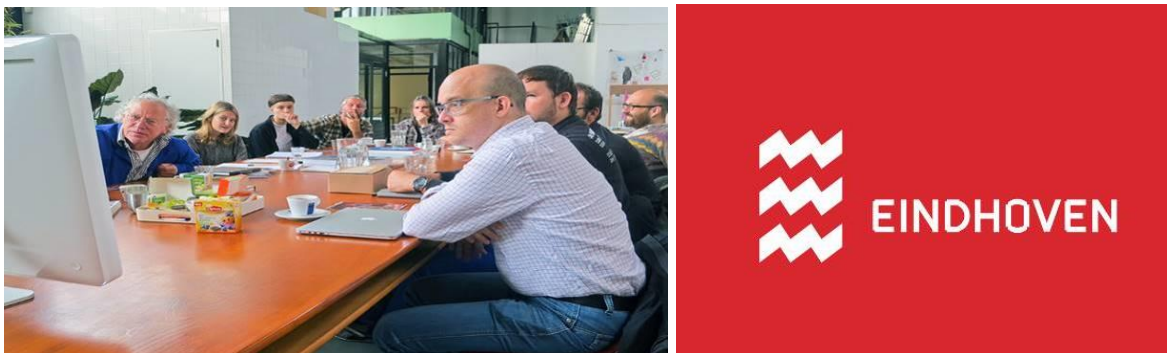
Engaging local creatives to enhance city visuality: pool of local designers producing Eindhoven´s new visual identity http://www.merkeindhoven.nl/

Images are powerful tool to "stamp a collective identity"[14]. So, programmes aimed at getting and disseminating images and other forms of representations, aligned to the city narrative, are more relevant than simply producing logos & mottos. As we live in a visual world, promoting appealing **imageries** is much more effective and durable than logos.

The way to do that may comprise a variety of top-down and bottom-up initiatives. Some non-obvious initiatives related to this can be highlighted:

▪ Years ago, Seville´s perceived image was too dominated by the tourism-leisure dimension. However, the city also hosted some competitive business clusters, in aeronautics and logistics for instance, some of them with a 70-year background, which remained "hidden" even for many locals, simply because they did not flourish through images. It was necessary a poster campaign, within the city, to increase the visibility of those consolidated and also emerging productive realities.

▪ Refreshing city merchandising by means of design and the involvement of local creative firms is a way to give new life to most recognizable city´s icons, as well as disseminate a better visual culture of the city. Lisbon is probably one of the most active cities of Europe in this respect.

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[14] Zukin, S. (1995). The Cultures of Cities. Blackwell.

Unveiling productive Seville through images – poster series, 2006.

- Artists and the local creative talent, duly incentivized, have much to say in promoting new visuality of the contemporary city. For example, **"Lima-Peru" is a photo book edited by** renowned Peruvian photographer Mario Testino. It can be found in most of the bookshops around the world. On the motivation for this book Testino says "I wanted to capture Lima's positive chaos... I wanted to find a book which conveyed this -the way Lima's artists and photographers have captured their city's colour and complexity, its art, its people and its buildings, its street life and its interiors. But no such book existed, and so I decided to edit one myself".

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City brand governance:
shaping the collaborative model

City branding as organizational challenge

The rise of integrated place branding in modern urban policies, as opposed to the usual divorce between strategies targeting tourists & visitors on the one hand, and business & investors on the other, is demanding new organizational models.

The adaptation to a lower public-spending environment and the subsequent social demand for radical innovations and effectiveness in the public sector, are major driving forces as well. This *momentum* is also an opportunity to set up more effective patterns for stakeholder involvement – business community, tourist promotion boards, University and the local knowledge system, main urban facilities... – which should aim to both co-produce city brand´s content and co-deliver the associated communications and marketing initiatives, also in terms of financial co-responsibility.

Management is the answer to the need for keeping the city brand strategy fresh and current, after the initial impact of the starting phase

Anyhow, as already said, from a governance perspective integrated city branding is about creating a shared working area for the diverse entities in the city targeting and interacting with different audiences. And that is a big organizational challenge, since that common working area should lay upon a collaboration model, involving at least those local stakeholders with more relevant role in the international dimension of the city. There is no other way.

However, that articulation with the existing stakeholders that promotes the city, which is actually linking the overarching strategy (city branding) to implementation (the different sector-oriented city marketing practices), is not an easy question in many local contexts. Sometimes due to lack of trust and the belief that the new integrated approach may put in risk the status-quo of the existing marketing organizations and departments. Other times, it is simply a wrong focus about the meaning and added-value of city branding by its own promoters – branding as a matter of logos & campaigns. It explains why initiatives trying to brand the city under a more unifying perspective fail in such attempt, or at best take longer time than desirable.

In what respect the collaboration model in city branding, Rotterdam Partners CEO Robbert Nesselaar underlines three principles:

- Everybody can play a role. **So, a major objective should be to "organize enthusiasm and give inspiration to partners in the city", with the result that parties involved "should do and feel responsibility for the city brand".**

- Investing in partnerships. It requires little or no budget, which suits to the current lower public spending environment. In this sense, it is much better to prospect new ways for strategic communication than compulsively spending in campaigns and advertising.

- Clear responsibilities at different levels**.** Numerous organisations play a role, but the real change is to promote more clear assignments (who should do what), based on accountability, avoiding overlapping and creating synergies and more cohesion.

Utrecht: a coalition-based approach to city branding & marketing

A change in the strategic process

Utrecht has recently moved away from a city marketing process that was directed by the municipality and only consulted the city's stakeholders towards a coalition-based approach. The municipality is no longer leading the process. Instead a broad coalition of marketers from organizations, such as Utrecht Science Park, a local bank, Utrecht's museums, Utrecht Tourist Board, a major convention center, a retail real estate corporation and Utrecht City Centre Management work together to enhance the city brand. The municipality facilitates this process, but is no longer leading it.

New brand values

In the last years Utrecht positioned itself as a city of Knowledge and Culture. While providing a strategic framework for policy-making, this does not strengthen Utrecht's capacity to bind target groups to the city on an emotional level. Therefore new brand values were defined by the coalition of marketers in collaboration with a large number of stakeholders. The choice was made not to define brand values based on the assets of Utrecht, but to take the feel of Utrecht as a starting point. While adhering to the focus on knowledge and culture for strategic policy-making, Utrecht is now branded as a **Bright**, **Inspiring** and **Welcoming** personality. Consequently, how Utrecht feels and how it is experienced forms the core of the city's brand strategy in order to emotionally bind target groups.

An organic approach to define city´s target groups

How does this affect segmentation of target groups? Since funding for an overall city branding campaign is limited, the coalition of marketers concluded that the total marketing capacity of Utrecht could not be determined by a central marketing budget. It should be the result of the collaborative marketing and communication of a wide range of stakeholders adopting the Utrecht city brand values for their own marketing and communication purposes. They will only do so when the Utrecht brand adds value to their own brand. Target groups are therefore not segmented on the basis of a consciously and centrally directed decision-making process. Instead, segmentation is driven by the needs of stakeholders

Ward Rennen

Director of the Utrecht Museum Association

First creating internal conditions within the Local Government

Addressing both sides of city branding, content and governance, is a collective work that, to some extent, has to be promoted by the Municipality as democratic expression of the community too, at least in earlier stages. However, a mix of maturity and innovation in local governance is needed for taking the lead on this matter. In this sense, not every city is ready for effective city branding, and some internal conditions might be promoted in some way.

First condition is to remove, as far as possible, most **common misunderstandings** on the meaning and scope of city branding, especially between politicians and key policy-decision makers. Adopting the brand concept directly as it comes from the business and marketing schools is heavily damaging the field, and it wrongly places the production of logos and claims and PR campaigns at the peak of the process. This often explains the lack of smooth integration of place branding within urban governance, even the total absence of city branding & marketing as an explicit local policy.

Another condition is **leadership** from the local government to promote the collaboration model. That is, flexible collaboration with flexible partners. The city branding team within the municipality must be legitimated enough to take the lead, at least at the initial phase of the process, and it means precise assignment of responsibilities and clear political backing. At this point, it is usual to find contradictions between public declarations on the relevance of city branding and the real institutional weigh of the units in charge of it.

A third facilitating factor would be a better alignment of energies and efforts through **effective inter-department cooperation** within the local government, since integrated city branding has a strong cross-sector profile. In this sense, the Utrecht´s way of synchronizing different working agendas at department level into a common city branding roadmap can be a benchmark. In any case, it can be helpful some dose of awareness and capacity building between city officers about the role of strategic communication and marketing for the city.

In fact, it would be good to set some of the city officers in the different city departments (environment, urban development, business, housing, tourism**, youth, research & education...) in a** sort of communication mode, in order to produce core messages and fact-driven stories to the different city´s audiences on a regular basis. It might result in a matrix of different facts and stories that can be helpful to keep the city narrative fresh and updated. This is what Gothenburg´s communications manager Anton César calls **"branding from** inside-**out".**

City departments	Environment	Urban develpment	Business	Youth	Tourism	... /...
Citizens	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages
Visitors	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages
Business	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages
... /...	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages	Messages

Figure 7. City branding from inside-out: city officers in a communication mode.
Adapted from Anton César, Gothenburg International Office

Institutionalizing city branding: one direction, many formulas

There is no one single formula to success in organizing and managing city branding [15], but dedicated marketing-oriented agencies, shaped as public-private partnerships and covering several target groups, seemingly used to work in big cities, while more flexible ways of stakeholder engagement, that is, with no need of constituted bodies, runs more frequently in medium-sized urban agglomerations.

In Aarhus, Denmark, a small team within **the Mayor's** Office has the main responsibility for the city brand strategy, which is a guarantee of political backing. O**ne of the team's tasks is to support the** work of the **Aarhus Marketing Alliance**, a platform with no legal form, created to engage the range of related local stakeholders. Nevertheless, further to participation, it is being not easy to convert the Alliance in an effective platform for co-decision making, with a precise agenda. It is the recurrent question of how to better articulate integrated place branding to the diversity marketing initiatives and entities targeting specific groups.

Dundee (142,000 inhabitants in the city and just 100 Km North of Edinburgh) was embarked in 2010 in a systematic re-branding process aimed at producing a new narrative under the t**ag "one city, many discoveries"** http://www.dundee.com/. At the same time, a collaboration model started to be woven trying to involve as much local stakeholders as possible. In such a "Dundee way" of city brand management several elements can be highlighted:

- A **strategic advisory board for the city brand** was established as non-constituted group, taking advantage of the local tradition of flexible partnering, like the "Dundee Partnership", which is not based on any legal body or specific staff, but enough to ensure some consultation from a number of relevant stakeholders. Representatives in the advisory board are top decision-makers in their respective organizations. However, the challenge now is to get deeper engagement and articulation from/with relevant local partners, beyond consultation. That is, in terms of co-management of concrete work plans.

- Use of **ambassadors** and **local innovators** to spread city´s core messages. According to Diane Milne, "Dundee's ambassadors are inspirational individuals who represent Dundee's many faces**, and who share a passion and a pride in the city",** while innovators are people that have or continue "to pioneer extraordinary developments".

- **Multi-level governance**. In the field of city branding & marketing, articulation with the national level is made through Visit Scotland, Scottish Enterprise and the so called Seven Cities Alliance, an initiative launched by the Scottish Government to reinforce the role of cites.

- **Articulation with communication strategies of flagship projects**. Like V&A at Dundee (first venue outside London of Victoria & Albert museum) and Dundee

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[15] See Braun, E. (2008) City marketing: Towards an Integrated Approach. ERIM PhD Series in Research and Management, 142, Erasmus Research Institute of Management, Rotterdam. It is a very interesting (and rare exercise of comparative policy analysis in the field of city brand management.
http://repub.eur.nl/res/pub/13694/EPS2008142ORG9058921802Braun.pdf

Waterfront Redevelopment, whose specific communication policy "Discover Dundee waterfront" and web-based communication resources are perfectly assembled to the overall city-brand toolkit.

- **Family of brands**. Creating cohesion and permanent link between overall city brand and other sectoral ones already existing, but useful and functional when targeting specific groups, e,g. Dunde Renewables, with a key focus on offshore wind and marine developments, Bio-Dundee branding its cluster on bio-technologies, or Dundee Waterfront targeting real estate investors.

At the core of that relational system it is a small unit, within the City Development Department, with a clear mandate for conducting an integrated branding and marketing strategy for the whole city. Dundee has articulated a strategic communication policy by weaving a web of relationships, sometimes in a formal way, sometimes informally, that is working well in the sense they are

Figure 8. City branding at Dundee: flexible collaboration model. Source: Miguel Rivas

Promoted by the City Council and embedded into the British tradition of public-private partnerships, Marketing Birmingham is a company limited by guarantee that was founded in 2002, searching for a more pro-active and result-oriented activity than its predecessor, the Birmingham Marketing Partnership created in 1982. The company has a staff of 60 FTE's (full-time employee equivalency) and £8.7 million budget in 2012/13, of which 4.4m come from the Birmingham City Council through specific service level agreement, a significant 2.8 m come from EU-ERDF and 1.5m from commercial incomes.

Marketing Birmingham

Visitor Economy | Inward Investment | Strategic Marketing

meet Birmingham | Visit Birmingham | BUSINESS Birmingham | Regional Observatory Marketing Birmingham

Birmingham's Economic Performance

Marketing Birmingham´s board of directors reveals the kind of stakeholder involvement that is needed in city branding. Out of its 14 members, only one represents the City Council, while the chairman is the international airport´s CEO. The rest include representatives from the University, the private sector and three executive members. A formal agreement with Birmingham City Council guarantees a high degree of ind**ependence from the city's government, an aspect considered as a** key condition for success by partners. Partnership´s major task was to build up an integrated city brand for contemporary Birmingham as a single, updated narrative, which is now the main driver for a more effective marketing policy.

MB targets three main groups: tourists and visitors through **"Visit Birmingham", the M**ICE sector via **"Meet Birmingham"** and **"Business Birmingham" for investment and** business. It is the kind of agency created to work on commonalities and synergies among those targeting and interacting with specific groups. Moreover, that ambition for aligning efforts to a more effective communication of Birmingham has been recently extended to the city region.

Main drivers when addressing the collaboration model

Although there is no one single formula to institutionalize city branding, a number of key elements should be taken into account in any case.

- **Partnership.** More important than the type of brand platform or partnership, which can range from a dedicated agency to simple formal agreements, it is the level of commitment of the stakeholders involved to go ahead in effective co-management. In this sense, it is important to avoid another platform driven by the must-invite organizations from the local establishment or just constrained to information interchange and little more. The challenge

is moving from participation to co-management, promoting clearer assignments for those that interact regularly with international targets (who should do what), based on accountability. Consequently, regarding brand platforms, a pro-active attitude of the board members is important, further to a mere role as controllers. Those Boards should be properly led and facilitated by a highly motivating chief executive as well.

As a matter of fact, many place-brand platforms start working only as mechanism for participation and networking. Concerning co-management, it is difficult to engage local stakeholders only with discussion at the strategic level, being necessary involving through specific projects and initiatives. That is a lesson from the Aarhus Marketing Alliance experience, a brand platform which is still undergoing a difficult transition from a participation mechanism to a platform for co-management.

- **Leadership**, which is crucial for moving into action. In this respect, if we assume the collaboration model might be not only hearing the different voices and perspectives but co-managing as well, such model has to be negotiated (negotiation to clarify roles but also to minimize the potential conflict that is inherent to all process of city brand building and governance) and it requires roadmap and leadership. Moreover, city branding is for many a cohesive force, an accelerator. It´s about increasing efficiency and changing behaviours and old ways of doing things if necessary. And that needs leadership and clear model for strategic decision-making.

- **Articulation to sector-focused city marketing**. Besides targeting the local population (that is, city branding as "internal communications" or "internal marketing" in business management terms), integrated city branding´s reason of being is just to give support the operations carried out by the teams and entities in the city interacting with tourists and visitors, investors, international talent, students and so on. Therefore, existing partnerships and specialized marketing organizations focused on concrete groups (Invest in X or Visit X type of agencies) might certainly keep a vital role. But now promoting and negotiating new action plans with the stakeholders related to their sectors, if they are not doing so yet, on the one hand, and on the other hand with the new platform/unit conducting the city brand strategy.

- **Dedicated team**. Launching, monitoring and keeping current a city brand strategy need for full-time professionals with the right profile. A small team with a clear mandate can be enough, even for big cities, for giving full support to a brand platform. A kind of double profile characterizes those teams:

    - as brand manager, leading and conducting commonalities, building up a unifying content/narrative to the integrated/umbrella brand, creating synergies between the different sector-focused marketing strategies and addressing directly the local population as target group;

    - as brand facilitator, supporting and interacting to/with those partners and entities with a responsibility in marketing the city over the ground to specific target groups, and more broadly promoting the city-brand toolkit´s usability between a wide range of stakeholders and potential users.

- **Funding model**, including learning on how to promote the city with small budgets and so breaking the vicious circle of "no money no action" in which some local governments are now trapped. For instance, expanding the concept of communication action, beyond

advertising and campaigns. Furthermore, working on urban competitive identities and profiling the city are substantial parts of the job, especially at the initial stage, which do not require many resources.
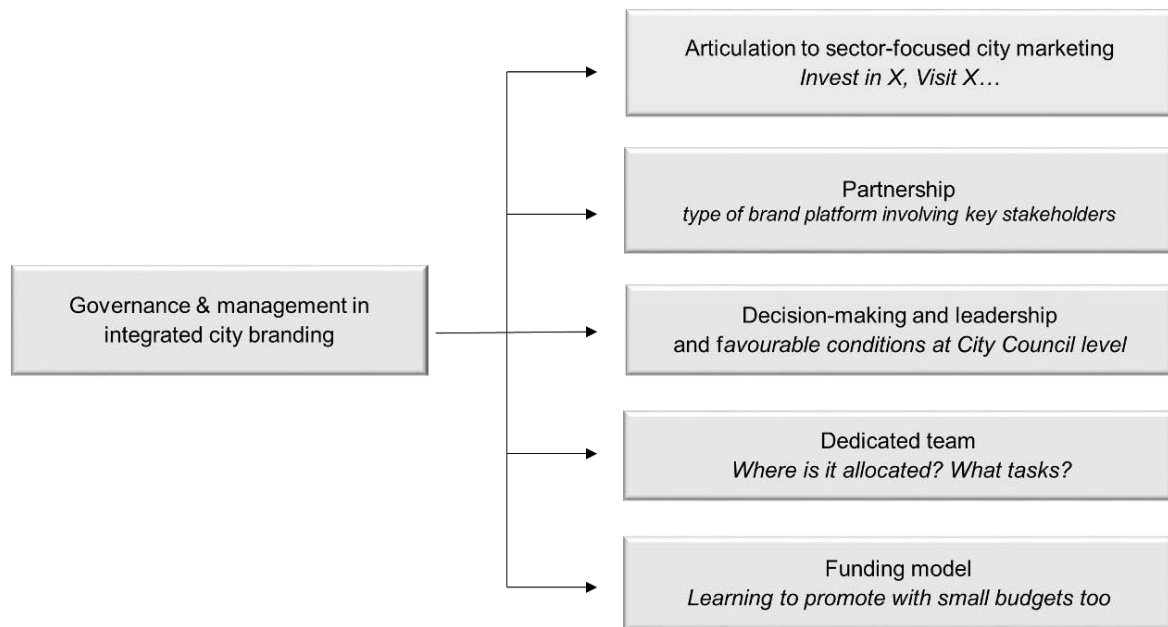
Figure 9. City brand governance: main drivers. Source: M. Rivas, Grupo TASO

OnlyLyon http://www.onlylyon.org is a robust strategy in city branding and marketing dealing with international targets in business and the visitor economy, which offers precise responses to the aforementioned aspects. It lays upon significant annual budget and an efficient management model at metropolitan level given by four pillars: i) extensive partnership around the OnlyLyon brand platform that also includes relevant local industrial firms; ii) clear system for decision making; iii) dedicated team of seven full-time positions to the following tasks: communication, networks management, press and public relations, relations with the partnerships and community engagement; iv) and smart institutionalization, since OnlyLyon brand platform is placed within ADERLY, the Invest-in-Lyon organization http://www.aderly.com, which in turn is co-founded by **Greater Lyon, Lyon's Chamber of Commerce, the Rhône Council and the Lyon**-Rhône employers' association, and employs approximately 50 members.

Cities should not wait for the optimal model to start organizing the city brand management. It is important to address the collaboration model from the very beginning at not leave it to later stages, since place **branding is to some extent about introducing a "behavioural change" to those** with a responsibility in the international dimension of cities. Certainly, in some environments, it is really difficult to arrange in the short term one single collaborative platform embracing partners of different nature and interest. At this point the Utrecht´s way can be an inspiration. They first organized and consolidated two networks for collaboration, one in the culture/tourism area and the other on the knowledge/productive side of its city brand, to then trying to matchmaking between both.

ONLYLYON: 3 TYPE OF FOUNDING PARTNERS PLUS 8 SUPPORTING PRIVATE FIRMS

Local authorities
Greater Lyon
City of Lyon
Rhône County

Tourism
Lyon Tourism and Conventions
Eurexpo Exhibition Centre
Lyon Convention Centre
Lyon Airports

Economic Organizations
Invest in Lyon (ADERLY)
Lyon Chamber of Commerce &
Industry (CCI)
University of Lyon
CGPME Rhône
MEDEF Rhône
Rhône Chamber of Skilled Trade

As city branding is about pooling assets and resources to improve visibility and capacity for interaction at a global scale, the question of **metropolitan coordination** is particularly relevant. Today, most significant city brand strategies are working at metropolitan or city-region scale and it doesn´t matter whether overall metropolitan governance systems do not exist. That´s the case in Lyon, Nantes and many other French cities, in Amsterdam, Stockholm, Oslo, etc. Even in the UK, with no tradition in horizontal multi-level governance at local level, cities like Manchester and Birmingham are re-scaling their city brand strategies up to the city region level.

Transnational alliances for co-branding is another issue. For instance, further to the Oresund overall cooperation, Copenhagen is now actively trying to present the whole Swedish region around Malmö as part of its hinterland for international city marketing purposes. Cities are in a special position for co-branding, and in fact recent experiences of cross-border co-branding have been mostly undertaken by cities. That is the case of the **ONE BSR project**, by which a number of capitals such as Helsinki, Hamburg, Riga, Stockholm, Warsaw and St. Petersburg have explored how to pool resources for jointly branding and marketing the Baltic Sea Region.
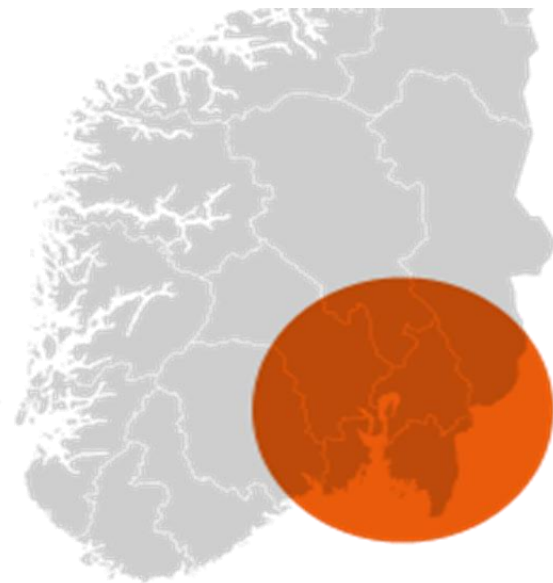
Scaling city branding up to the metropolitan level: Stockholm, 53 municipalities, 3,7 million inhabitants; Oslo, 57 municipalities, 2 million.

City branding in Zurich: a work in progress

Zurich is the largest city of a relatively small country. Around 400,000 inhabitants live within the municipality and 1.8 million in the Greater Zurich area . Besides its strong specialisation in global financial services, Zurich hosts a diversity of high-tech manufacturing sectors and tourism is likewise a growing industry. The business environment is unique, fuelled by one of the smallest taxation of developed countries and a bunch of leading research institutes and universities such as the University of Zürich UZH , the Zürich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW or the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich ETH . Furthermore, the city used to rank at the highest positions in many world- and Europe-wide indexes regarding quality of life, wealth and innovation. As a result the city-region is a magnet for skilled workers from all over the world, and at present one third of the population are resident foreigners. Cosmopolitan, multilingual and hyperconnected, despite its modest size, Zurich has quickly developed a strongly globalised profile.

In this context, a number of entities were promoting the city internationally as a business place on the one hand and as a destination for visitors on the other. A range of key stakeholders were also marketing the city to specific audiences and segments such as the international airport and universities, etc. First initiatives to unlocking some commonalities between those sector-focussed city marketing practices to increase coordination and promote a more unifying city narrative were initiated a decade ago. After several failed attempts, the final result in 2011, was the realisation of today´s cooperation between the City and the Canton of Zurich, Zurich Tourism and the Greater Zurich Area (the body in charge of inward investment attraction).

It is what they call the Agreement for an Integrated Destination Marketing, which has led to a common visual identity under the claim "Zurich World Class, Swiss Made" as well as an interchange of information and a few of common projects and events. However, this is still a work in progress, since to some extent the cooperation would need to be extended to other relevant stakeholders and be more clearly institutionalised in terms of a common platform for co-decision-making, a funding model and dedicated team, among other issues.

Furthermore, smoother articulation of the different efforts related to attractiveness and territorial marketing between the local and canton level on one side and the state level on the other, especially in a small country like Switzerland (8.2 million of inhabitants) is a hot topic too. Indeed, there is a range of agencies belonging to the federal government promoting the Country worldwide, e.g. Switzerland Tourism , Pro Helvetia (culture), Switzerland Global Enterprise (export and inward investment), Swissnex (science and innovation), Presence Switzerland (participation in big global events).

To summarize, as regards to integrated city branding, and after a long period trying, Zurich cannot exhibit a consolidated experience yet. They have got first significant achievements in the last years and are facing a number of pending challenges, most of them concerning the building of a stronger collaboration model, horizontally (further alignment of the stakeholders operating within the city-region) and vertically (better articulation among the three main working scales in the country, local-canton-federal government).

This would be the basic aim of integrated city branding everywhere, if the field is addressed not just as a matter of logos and overall campaigns, but as a cohesive force in the city. From this perspective it is a very political issue, and as such political awareness is a necessary condition to pave the way to a more integrated approach in the way cities brand and market themselves.

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Scope of the stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder alignment to brand and market the city more efficiently does not only embrace **"Invest in X" or "Visit X" type of agencies, but also other key urban facilities, like universities, business** incubators, main museums and cultural facilities, technology parks, airports and seaports, etc. Those who intensively communicate the city to international audiences on a day to day basis. In this respect, Genoa Port Authority marketing director Silvio Ferrando revealed profound synergies, still to be exploited, in the way both the port and the city communicate internationally.

Genoa hosts one of the biggest ports in the Mediterranean, which is the "open door to the world" for the city and the reason why Genoa is known almost all over the world. Due to its location, even the airport of Genoa is controlled by the Port Authority, which is at the core of a world-class marine/shipping cluster. On the other hand, Genoa is now a leading west med home port for the cruise sector, with a direct impact on the city in terms of visitors, and it is also playing a main role in the growing yachting niche market, along with Barcelona.

As main city asset, strongly embedded into the city narrative and imagery, and with an outstanding marketing know-how, the Port of Genoa is simply claiming a joint port-city marketing approach. In other words, a collaboration model bringing together all the key stakeholders with a significant role in shaping and implementing a strategic communication policy to post-**industrial Genoa. "As port** we do our best to promote the city, but we badly miss an organic approach, since all the attempts to try and set up a governance for multi-target tourism have failed or have produced confused roles, institutional overlapping and tremendous bureaucracy: this is scaring for private companies willing to co-**invest". In looking for responsibilities for such an organizational weakness,** the Port of Genoa does not only point the City Council but also other relevant intermediary bodies like the Chamber of Commerce and Business Associations, who (especially in Southern European countries) usually seem to be more concentrated in their representational role than in directly tackling questions related to competitiveness.

In **mobilizing the private sector**, the case of Barcelona Global is illuminating. Barcelona ranks at top positions for many global indicators related to both business and visitor attraction. The city is a magnet for 35,000 foreign students each year and is one of the most preferred destinations for expatriates. Despite economic stagnation, which is hitting hard its regional hinterland, the city keeps its renowned vitality alive. In this context, a civic association called Barcelona Global http://www.barcelonaglobal.com/, comprised of business leaders and professionals, has emerged with the idea of playing an active role communicating the city as business place. Although its impulse is to be found in the public-led initiative of Barcelona´s strategic metropolitan plan of 2010, the association lays on a model of individual/corporate fee-based membership. Being a member of Barcelona Global (currently around 250 between individuals and firms) is considered a gesture of commitment to the city and of corporate social responsibility.

The organization is governed by a general assembly, a board of 40 members which delegates to an executive committee and a CEO. A working agenda is defined every year. Another particularity is that actions of Barcelona Global are not carried out by a specific staff, but by the very members of the association. For each initiative, a member is assigned to manage it (usually through collaboration with other members) and responds to the assembly. Among the on-going initiatives it is worth mentioning the project to develop a network of Barcelona-native executives established abroad, with the mission to act as Barcelona´s promoters as well as observers of their locations´ business climate. Barcelona Global can be seen a new way to engage the private sector and the civil society in city branding, as well as invigorating the ambassador formula by means of more effective commitments.

05

What audiences for the city? Articulation with sector-oriented city marketing

City branding only makes sense when connects to the different sector-oriented marketing practices, and such articulation poses a double challenge: on governance and content. For both perspectives, **governance** and **content**, the concept of segmentation is particularly relevant, as main criterion to organize the work across the operational ground.

The concept of segmentation is particularly relevant, as main criterion to organize the work across the operational ground

Furthermore, learning from the teams that everyday are marketing the city to a variety of different target groups (tourists and visitors, congresses and events, business and investment, students and academic community, etc), each of them making use of ad-hoc storytelling, imagery and communications, is undoubtedly useful for all those involved in city brand management [16].

Envisioning new clouds of city´s targets: the need for an integrated perspective

Years ago conventional city marketing covered two main target groups: tourists/visitors on one side and business/investors on the other. Now this basic segmentation has evolved considerably, leading to a wide range of groups that can be addressed in different clusters with fuzzy limits and frequent overlap among them, e.g. Visitors, Investment, Business, Knowledge, Creativity & Culture, Residents and other city´s users. In this context, every city has to make a choice as regards its particular mix of target groups within those clouds of possibilities.
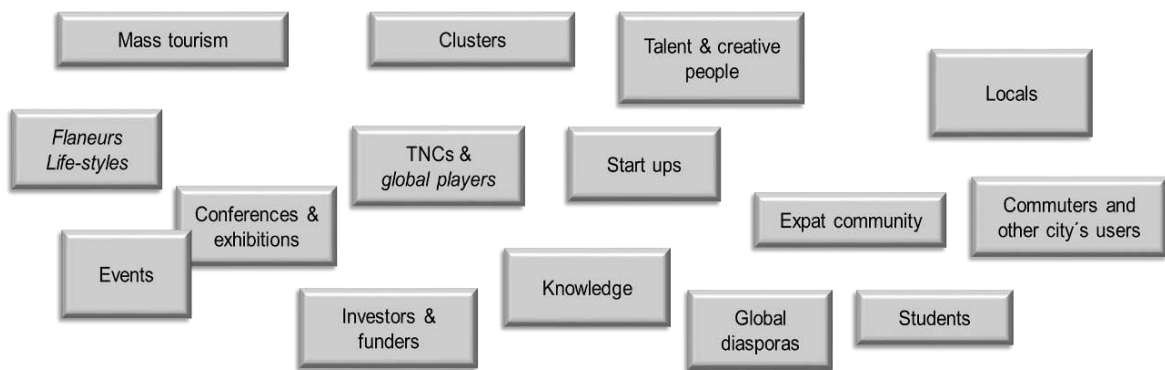
Figure 10. Mapping potential targets groups for the city. Source: M. Rivas, Grupo TASO

[16] In the Nordic countries and in Holland integrated city branding used to be more inclined to inward investment and strengthening the local business climate, including talent attraction. In Southern EU, countries, regions and cities used to join extensive know-how in branding and marketing themselves as destination for tourists and visitors. Evidence seems to show stepping towards integrated city branding from a tradition in marketing the business place is smoother than from backgrounds focused on tourists and visitors.

Most of cities make use of a standard segmentation - Visit, Live and Invest & Innovate (Tampere); Visit, Live, Set up (a business) and Study (Lyon); Visitors, Residents, Business, Students (Liverpool). But there might be broader room to more unconventional ways of clustering the different city´ stories into big categories. Even if it is simply a matter of headlines and labeling it would make a difference. For instance, Urban Innovation (facts and stories ranging from good governance to smart city and sustainable mobility), Lifestyle (what could embrace culture, leisure, **heritage, nature...),** Knowledge (including all the assets concerning universities, technology centers,

> **There might be broader room to more unconventional ways of clustering the different city´ stories into big segments**

business innovation... local businesses meeting main global challenges), etc. In this sense, it is worth mention the ongoing Barcelona´ strategy "A capital that inspires" http://inspira.barcelona.cat/en, which is segmented into six main strands: Creativity, Innovation, Research & knowledge, Business, Quality of life and Responsible & Sustainable Tourism.

Tampere´s way of aggregating its target groups http://www.tampereallbright.fi/

To navigate properly across such a diversity of today´s potential target groups, cities demand new drivers, as new criteria for segmentation, which in turn are promoting new clouds of target groups. For instance, the Anglo-Saxon concept of **visitor economy** to embrace more properly the scope of the city as destination; or the concept of **smart specialization strategies**, that was born in the European Commission, to better shape target groups in promoting inward investment.

Talent is also a rising driver, which is re-formulating the way many cities and regions are marketing themselves as business location. Likewise, concepts like **creative economy** and creative local ecosystem are giving new directions to cultural branding. The need to more **participatory democracy** and inclusive urban development are paving the way to address residents as new target group when branding & marketing the city. Even the Municipality of Oslo is considering now other cities from abroad as conscious target category, with the aim to ease partner selection for its international cooperation and transnational projects.

> **To navigate across a diversity of today´s potential target groups, cities demand new drivers, as new segmentation criteria, which in turn are shaping new clouds of target groups**

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Besides those drivers, there are a number tools still to be fully applied to city marketing, such as business intelligence or big data, which might increase the capacity to zoom over priority groups (micro-segmentation). Other well-known tools, like newslettering or social-media based tools, work well promoting interaction and thematically-adapted dialogues with specific audiences.

The benefits of an effective articulation between the different sector-focused city marketing on one side and integrated city branding on the other side, are quite clear. From a governance view, that articulation provides one single "control centre" to the city´s national and international interaction. From a content perspective, it is already pretty well assumed the benefits of a unifying city narrative, in the sense of providing both overarching and side additional arguments to be picked up by sector-focused marketers, like people working in destination marketing, cultural events, **inward investment... b**ut also in the Mayor´s cabinet, local private companies open to the world and entities like universities, airports, technology parks, etc. Therefore, giving more consistency to the variety of thematically oriented storytelling about the city.

In this context **synergies** can be better exploited, and not only those related to the set of communication channels and initiatives. For instance, emerging hybrid sectors like industrial tourism, demand the combination of different storytelling and marketing approaches, in this case by bringing together both destination marketing and cluster branding backgrounds.

Indeed, smooth articulation with the different sector-oriented city marketing practices is one of the key features when promoting ad-hoc governance and management in city branding, along with partnership (type of brand platform to involve selected stakeholders), decision-making (and leadership), dedicated team and financial model (see chapter 4 in this report).

The concept of **family of brands** [17] can be helpful for that articulation. Most of CityLogo partners have undertaken or are still dealing with huge waterfront re-development projects, new avant-garde cultural facilities or big-scale events like European capital of Culture, each of them with their own communication strategy.
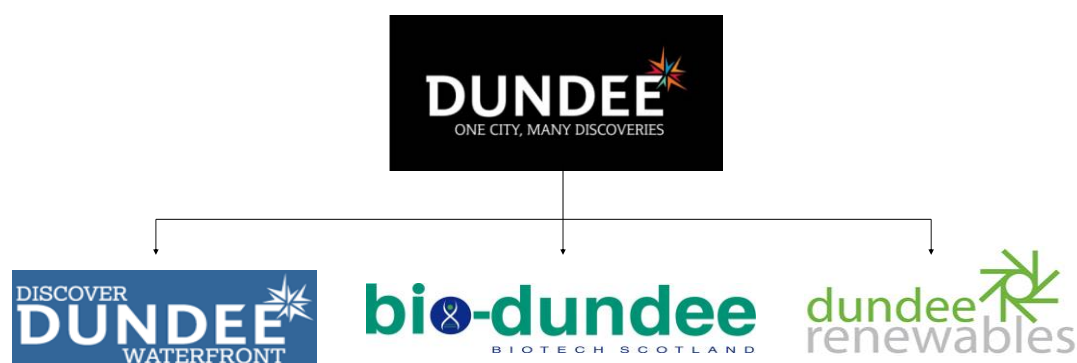
Dundee´s family of brands

Family of brands.
Articulation with sectoral branding is crucial: integrated citybranding called for keeping alive and improving target-focused strategies.

The challenge here is not only to find equilibrium between the specific communication strategies in progress at city level, but also mutually reinforce them. Even more, a challenge is just avoiding the risk that long-term city brand strategy can be cannibalized by the big resources to communication, concentrated in a short period of time, devoted to concrete flagship urban projects and events.

An organic approach to segmentation in city marketing

In this report we have advocated the potential of sound city branding as concise local strategic planning, particularly in small and medium-sized urban agglomerations, taking over the role of conventional strategic planning as tree of objectives, actions, measures, duly budgeted and prioritized in time. A format which is losing functionality indeed.

One of the reasons explaining that potential is because effective city branding includes a segmentation exercise. That is, a clear and if possible detailed definition of target groups, within and outside the city, shaping messages and interaction channels to each of them. That´s an added value to conventional local strategic planning, since today, the city, as collective project, depends more and more on how she attracts and interacts with visitors, investors and foreign talent and knowledge.

There are a number tools, still to be fully applied to city marketing, such as business intelligence or big data, which could increase the capacity to zoom over priority groups. That is micro-segmentation

Nonetheless, it is not clear what method might be followed to segment city´s communication by target groups. How a process of this kind should be conducted? From the upper level of city branding or, by contrary, from the more tactical base-ground represented by the variety of different sector-oriented marketing performances in the city? Ongoing experiences in Oslo and Utrecht may give some light to these questions.

With no background in city branding so far, Oslo joins an impressive array of assets and unique values - at present it is the fastest growing capital city economy in Europe. But its capacity to **"buzz" this, particularly thinking of selected audiences, is low, and** to some extent the Norwegian capital remains unknown to many, compared to nearby Copenhagen or Stockholm. To fill the gap, Oslo city-region is now embarked, for the first time, in systematic city brand building, including the setting up of a governing model (and subsequent funding system) and the definition of the different city´s audiences and target groups.

As regards the definition of the city´s international target groups, they are tackling this by gathering the stakeholders´ respective target groups through interviews and focus groups with them, and then processing this information with research and deskwork to also give overall consistency to the exercise. From time to time, they will intend to revise and update this. In fact, it comes to target prioritization at brand Oslo level, more than identification, since every stakeholder in the city keeps its own room to map their target groups in their respective working areas. About this method, Øyvind Såtvedt, managing director of Oslo Region Alliance, stressed its legitimacy and relevance as pros, and high cost and time consuming as cons.

Like in Oslo, for the city of Utrecht stakeholder involvement and target segmentation are both part of the same process

To the city of Utrecht, which is now addressing urban

branding as a coalition-based process, identification and prioritization of target groups is part of the main themes to be discussed individually and collectively with the diverse sector-focused entities of the coalition. Like in Oslo, in Utrecht, stakeholder involvement and target segmentation are both part of the same process. That is, targeting by stakeholder involvement or segmentation **by stakeholder targeting. In any way, an "organic approach" to segmentation.**

Marketing the business place

In a recent report by London-based Centre for Cities [18], Paul Swinney and Rachel Smith underlined the important role that external investment has for urban economies. It seems so obvious, but certainly those cities that have larger number of branch businesses are better placed to import innovations from elsewhere. So, many cities are working hard to encourage external investment into their economies.

As in every working area within place branding and territorial marketing, a key issue when promoting the city as business location is to align as closely as possible all the stakeholders involved, e.g. technology & science parks, airports and seaports, universities, local leading firms, local incubation system. Other must-do is activating a dedicated team or agency, speaking the business language, with the capacity to undertake the following activities:

- building up a compelling narrative of the city as business location and providing fact-based accurate information on the local business climate;

- marketing the city internationally throughout different PR and communication channels;

- Providing welcoming services and soft-landing pads, including assistance to site selection and permitting;

- Retention-oriented activities aimed at socializing firms, expats and the foreign talent, even transforming them into new city´s ambassadors.

Entities like Berlin Business Location Center http://www.businesslocationcenter.de/en or Greater Zurich Area AG http://www.greaterzuricharea.com/en/ are benchmarks branding and marketing the city as business place. Locate-Dundee www.locate-dundee.co.uk is not a constituted body, just an effective city service offering one single entrance gate to anyone interested in the Scottish city as business location, serving as umbrella to other sector-focused place brand strategies like Dundee Renewables, Bio-Dundee or Dundee Waterfront.

Concerning the business/investment category, some trends can be highlighted:

- Cluster policies that boomed a decade ago and current encouragement for **"smart** speci**alizations", have led to a must**-do cluster type of segmentation when branding and marketing urban economies.

- From time to time, some growing economies may display large-scale campaigns targeting skilled workforce worldwide, as Finland or Australia did in the recent past. But also, public debt crisis in Ireland and Southern European Countries which peaked some years ago, rose

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[18] Swinney. P, and Smith, R. Open for Business: The shape of business, enterprise and entrepreneurship across UK cities. Centre for Cities. London. 2012.

sovereign funds and other significant funders up to the front row of target groups, particularly for nation-branding strategies, and still it is on.

- In promoting inward investment, practitioners increasingly say they now target talent and talented people more than directly firms and organizations. Likewise, many cities and regions are not so interested in the never ending **"war for jobs and dollars"** [19] but in the fight for knowledge. In this context, Universities and other research-driven facilities are called to play much wider role in city branding & marketing than so far.

Cluster-based segmentations: organizing business marketing in Amsterdam and Stockholm

Amsterdam Economic Board (AEB) is a triple helix organization covering 36 municipalities of the Amsterdam metropolitan area. It is focused on stimulating triple helix cooperation (public sector, private sector and knowledge institutions) between existing organisations in Amsterdam [20]. According to AEB Marketing & Communications Manager Anouk Bikkel, it is organized in eight business clusters (ICT/eScience, financial & business services, logistics, tourism & conferences, high-tech materials, horticulture & agrofood, creative industries, life sciences & health) plus four cross-cutting teams (human capital, knowledge & innovation, international connectivity and peripheral conditions) which in turn are city´s main target groups when marketing herself as business place.

But in Amsterdam, the body in charge of economic internationalization and inward investment attraction is Amsterdam in Business, which makes use of the same cluster segmentation of AEB. Besides those organizations it is Amsterdam Marketing, in charge of the integrated city brand strategy, traditionally focused on visitors and residents but since 2014 also embarked in a new, robust strategy promoting Amsterdam as global business hub, also supported by the I Amsterdam tagline. As the other business-led organizations, Amsterdam Marketing embraces the whole metropolitan area.

Cluster policies that boomed a decade ago and current encouragement for "smart specializations", have led to a must-do cluster type of segmentation when branding and marketing urban economies

The articulation between Amsterdam in Business and Amsterdam Marketing is a relevant issue. While Amsterdam Marketing focuses on **"**awareness and re**putation" (that is, more branding)**. Amsterdam in business it is on **"**purchase and loyalty**"** within priority countries and segments (that is, in operational marketing and two-way interaction). Amsterdam Economic Board has an indirect role as **"**connector and innovator**".** In this context, the heading role of Amsterdam Marketing is growing rapidly, but keeping clear linkages to the other organizations i.e. wages and salaries of

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[19] The expression comes from the influential article by Robert Goodman, The Last Entrepreneur: America´s Regional War for Jobs and Dollars. New York, Simon & Schuster, 1979.

[20] AEB format derives from the Dutch model of city-based economic development Boards, e.g. Economic Development Board Rotterdam, Economic Board Utrecht. The model used to include an international advisory board, reinforcing the interaction with the international level.

Amsterdam Marketing´s communication executives targeting business & investment are jointly funded by the three organizations.

In branding the city as world-class business place, Amsterdam Marketing manages three core values – Innovative, Entrepreneurship and Creativity- which are enriched by four unique selling points – taxation, liveability, connectivity and headquarter attraction. Altogether they shape the Amsterdam´s narrative as business location.

As regards communication actions to market the city, the three organizations involved give priority in engaging scientists, entrepreneurs, CEOs and small-scale innovators as "brand advocates" through testimonials and a number of PR activities. Other communication actions are related to delivery one-single business toolkit (relevant business facts, movies, pitches, brochures...), new social media approach, PR (internationally and local), business magazine (AMS), red carpet events and trade missions (content and brand wise as I amsterdam missions).

Amsterdam marketers underline two key aspects from this model. First, in a context with multiple stakeholders operating, all is based on trust –"give up some of your own identity for the greater cause". **Transparency and trust** are the keys to manage the conflicts of interest that frequently may arise at the beginning. Second aspect is about **effective execution and accountability**, by defining clear KPI's (key performance indicators) for all the partners with a stake in the programme.

Left: eight clusters, eight target groups for marketing Amsterdam as global business hub, Source: AEB. Right: AMS Amsterdam business magazine, jointly produced one a year by Amsterdam Marketing and Amsterdam in Business.

Stockholm Business Region Development AB is the official investment promotion agency of Stockholm, www.investstockholm.com, serving not only the central city but a city-region of 53 municipalities and a total population of 3.7 million. Its sister agency is Stockholm Visitor Board AB and both are integrated in Stockholm Business Region AB, a company wholly owned by the City of Stockholm as part of the Stockholm Stadshus AB Corporation, which has a coordinating role over 16 subsidiaries in a range of different sectors.

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Stockholm Business Region AB manages the **brand "Stockholm, The Capital of Scandinavia".** Therefore closely articulation between city branding and sector-oriented city marketing is well ensured, yet local stakeholders do not have a seat at the boards of those organizations, neither those related to the business/knowledge side nor those dealing with the visitor economy.

Monica Ewert, Director of Communications at Stockholm Business Region AB, insists in the importance of a clear cluster-based segmentation when promoting the city to business and investors. A choice that in Stockholm has led to ICT, Life Sciences, Cleantech, Automation, Hospitality, Logistics, Metals and Mining. Recently they have also adopted Talent and talented individuals as core target, along with the enterprise.

The organization in the second city of Sweden, Gothenburg, shows similarities but also differences with the Stockholm´s way. Business Region Göteborg AB targets business and investors with a focus on five clusters -urban future, the marine environment and the maritime sector, transport solutions, green chemistry and bio-based products and life science **–** and serves thirteen municipalities that form the Gothenburg region, yet the agency is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Göteborg´s Kommunala Förvaltnings AB, which in turn is wholly-owned by the City of Gothenburg. At the top, the Municipality promotes an umbrella brand, **"Sustainable City – Open to the World".** On the visitor side it is operating Göteborg & Co as PPP with the participation of the following entities: City of Gothenburg, Gothenburg Region, West Sweden Chamber of Commerce, Liseberg, Got Event, Stena AB, Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre, the Association of Large Hotels, the Association of Gothenburg Hotels, City Association and Gothenburg Restaurant Association.

Cluster branding

At this point, it´s clear that cluster-based segmentation is mainstream when promoting the city as business place. Even functional charts of most of the agencies and bodies with the mission to promote the city as business location used to be organized in business clusters. Furthermore, those heads of department dealing with the international promotion of specific priority industries, also work as cluster managers, which is more efficient indeed.

This makes sense. Since the cluster concept started booming in industrial and SMEs policies twelve years ago approximately, its communication dimension was underlined as fundamental, as it is aimed to increase the international visibility of the business systems [21] . Therefore, having excellent communication skills is rather important for cluster organizations and their managers. Branding, marketing and networking are tools aimed at strengthening clusters´ positioning in global value chains.

Having excellent communication skills is rather important for cluster organizations. Branding, marketing and matchmaking are tools aimed at strengthening clusters´ positioning in global value chains

The Scandinavia-based consultancy firm Tendensor AB, one of the leading teams in cluster branding, has found that **different stages of the cluster life cycle demand specific styles of branding and marketing**. Paradoxically, both embryonic and declining stages in cluster

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[21] According to the Cluster Initiative Greenbook 2.0 (2013), identity and brand used to be the top priority for most of the cluster managers, ahead of innovation and R&D, export promotion or value chain development.

development are coupled by the same communication style, characterized by a focus on visibility and identification, place-based, cluster-focus – that is, more oriented to collective values of the local business system instead of in specific companies-, project-oriented and pushing style. Those are the stages where synergies and alignment with the city brand are more necessary.

On the other hand, what it comes to stages of consolidation and maturity, clusters need to focus on attractiveness and differentiation and more placeless strategy enhancing connections to global value chains. Both well-established and mature phases of a cluster timeline require more selective communication style, pulling instead of pushing attitude, business-oriented instead of project-driven, and supported in specific leading firms and global players and not so much in collective values [22].

Firms and sense of place

What is the territoriality of firms and their sense of place [23] in a globalized world? Many place-brand management units and city marketing organizations wanting to engage more deeply renowned firms and global players that were born or simply operates in their local environs (through testimonials, PR events, ambassadors), often face contradictory reactions. More research is needed on this topic.

Some firms are afraid of being too much associated to a specific location, because it may counteract its strategy in other local markets where they equally want to be perceived as local companies, following the saying Think Global Act Local – for instance that´s the case of HSBC and in general of the whole banking business.

On the contrary, others seek to closely associate their brands to the reputation and lifestyle of certain cities and places, which is very common in the fashion industry and luxury business, e.g. firms like Ralph Lauren or Gant underline their links to the US Eastern Coast lifestyle. Even sometimes, countries and flagship commercial brands co-evolve in time in a sort of symbiotic relation, like Nokia-Finland or Ikea-Sweden. One can also find cynical attitudes, like Apple´s campaign "Designed in California", which has to do more with a guilt complex for manufacturing its whole production in China than a sudden feeling to proclaim its proud of being Californian.

Sense of place is "the consciousness that people themselves – firms in this case- have of places that possess a particular significance for them, either personal or shared"

Dictionary of Human Geography, edited by Johnston, Gregory and Smith (Blackwell, 2nd edition of 1986)

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[22] See Andersson, M. et al, Cluster Branding and Marketing, a Handbook on Cluster Brand Management. TENDENSOR AB, 2011.

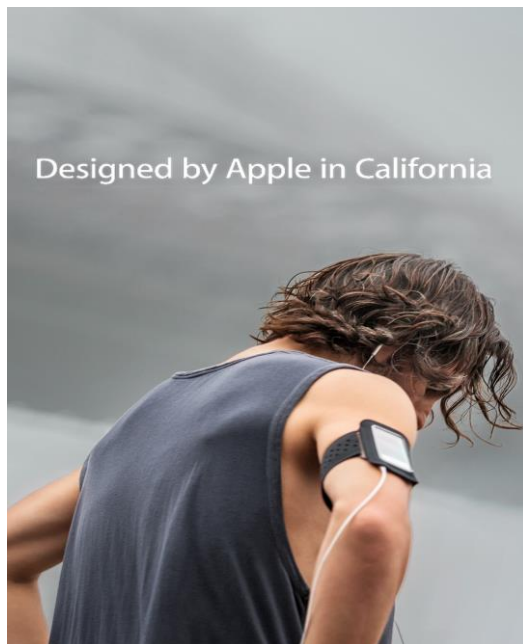[23] According to the Dictionary of Human Geography edited by Johnston, Gregory and Smith (Blackwell, 2nd edition of 1986) sense of place is "the consciousness that people themselves – firms in this case- have of places that possess a particular significance for them, either personal or shared".

Barcelona sets to regulate the use of its name by firms

In July 2012, Barcelona was about to become the first city in the world to officially register its name as a brand, specifically through a registration in the Spanish Patents and Trade Marks Office. The action, taken by the city government, is intended to a greater control on the use of the name Barcelona for commercial purposes. There will be no charges for this, except a fee for the administrative procedure for authorization. **Companies only will be able to use the city name as "a secondary or accessory sign" in the presentation or** advertising of products or services.

With this initiative, the Barcelona municipality seeks to avoid that the city name should be associated with products or services which promote bad ethics or discredit the city, for instance with low-quality items. Municipality services will deal with authorization and monitoring activities, including the possibility to suspend the rights to use of the name, in the case of authorized agents fail to comply with conditions. Licenses will be given for a three-year period, with possibility of renewing.

Talent attraction and retention as emerging working area

Many cities, regions and nations are losing interest in attracting indiscriminately investment and businesses. Instead, well segmented strategies, generally cluster-based, are prevailing. Furthermore, in the new economy, knowledge attraction (corporate knowledge and research capacity) is even more strategic than job-intensive investment, particularly to the Western economies. In this context, the concept of talent, especially the entrepreneurial talent, is getting a core position at a point that, more and more, cities are targeting talent and individuals instead of just keeping the focus on firms and organizations.

Thus, the battle for international talent, a resource extremely mobile, has commenced, and in this new global arena different trajectories are converging around talent as target group:

- well-established advanced economies, like the Nordic countries;

- cities and regions coming from industrial decline and deeply focused on transforming their economic profile, re-branding themselves as knowledge and creative economies, many times quite successfully as in Eindhoven [24], Ruhr Metropolis [25], Wallonia and a long etcetera;

- leapfrogging strategies from peripheral countries seeking in imported talent a way to fill gaps in higher education, innovation capacity or start-up development, as Chile with its successful initiative Start-Up Chile, which boasts of being "the largest & most diverse startup community in the world" http://www.startupchile.org

Indeed, agencies from all around the world devoted to inward investment and business location are being re-configured to also focus on individual and creative entrepreneurial talent, as this target requires a **new (promotional) language**.

To seduce the entrepreneurial creative class in the knowledge economy the arguments are different than the ones from overall inward investment attraction, including career opportunities and lifestyle more than strictly arguments related to corporate investment opportunities, labour costs, corporate taxation, etc. The city has now to be communicated simultaneously as functional business place and unique urban experience (cultural agenda, amenities...), which unavoidably leads

The concept of talent, especially entrepreneurial talent, is getting a core position at a point that more and more cities are targeting talent and individuals instead of just keeping the focus on firms and organizations

to a more integrated approach in the way cities marketing themselves. Two-way communication is particularly expected, a kind of conversational style, what in turn makes the question of attraction is naturally linked to retention as well.

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[24] Eindhoven has branded itself as Brainport in its transition from a company-town to a knowledge and creative city.

[25] The brand Ruhr Metropolis embraces eleven metropolitan cities, including Essen and Dortmund, and four administrative districts in the heart of North Rhine-Westphalia region, representing about 5.2 million inhabitants. The brand is connected to an image of successful change from a steel and coal-mining based economy to a post-industrial economy based on technology, knowledge and creativity.

Consequently, **Talent Management** is rapidly emerging as new working area for cities, encompassing activities and services at three stages: talent attraction; talent reception – welcoming packages and soft landing services; and talent integration – monitoring and initiatives of socialization also aimed at retaining.

Regarding reception and integration, some cities and countries already count with permanent service units for professional expatriates, e.g. Brno Expat Centre http://www.brnoexpatcentre.eu, Expat in Denmark http://expatindenmark.com/Pages/Home.aspx.

Aarhus is Denmark's second largest city and the fastest growing in the country. They are focusing a lot on local, national and international talent as main target group, in close cooperation with a dedicated and vigorous strategy at country level [26]. Aarhus city brand team compares its approach of talent management to a dinner party:

- Attract - send out invitations and create interest. In Aarhus talent attraction is primarily up to employer and educational institutions, to whom the city brand team support with tools like adapted city narrative, promotional material, testimonials, etc.

- Welcome at the door. The city provides one stop shop service and welcome package to new foreign residents.

- Entertain – make sure the guests have a great time and meet the right people, needs are meet. There are special activities and events for the expat community such as free courses of Danish, Sunday brunch, brainstorming sessions and other social activities [27].

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- Goodbye – thanks' for a lovely evening, hope to see you soon, moving on. Aarhus and Denmark make an extensive use of the ambassador formula to keep the international talent engaged, even when they leave the country, and with a particular focus on the academic community – se**e** **"**Youth Goodwill Ambassador of Denmark**"** http://ygadenmark.org/.

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[26] http://www.talentattractiondenmark.dk
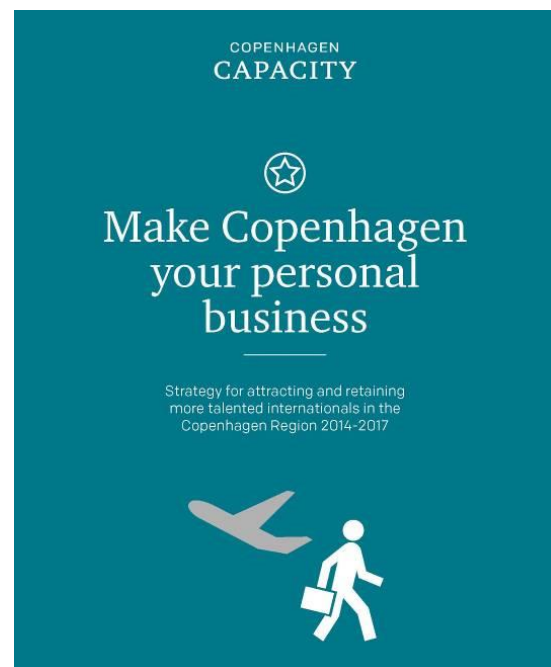
[27] In this respect there is some risk of ghettoization. That is, events where expats only meet other expats. To avoid this, just bringing up one of the activities carried out by Barcelona Global (a non for profit private platform of professionals and firms aimed at promoting internationally Barcelona as entrepreneurial city) consisting of local professionals who host dinners at home inviting other professional expatriates.

The role of University in placebranding

In the global fight for knowledge described above, universities and other research-driven facilities are called on to play much wider role than now when it comes to city branding and marketing. Indeed, many of them are very active marketing themselves nationally and internationally, but the bridge with city brand strategies is still weak, in terms of sharing a common city narrative and creating synergies with other stakeholders marketing the city. So, yet universities used to interact widely nationally and internationally, they are not always well represented in city brand partnerships.

First question is, what kind of city narrative is needed when marketing the University town? It leads to a range of different target groups that can be identified, namely: graduates, Erasmus, students in Master degrees, PhD applicants, research **community... probably each of them intere**sted in different blends of attractiveness factors and city´ stories related to amenities, cost of living, cultural agenda, multilingual environment, job & career opportunities, life standards, R&D policies, etc.

Yet universities used to interact widely nationally and internationally, they are not always well represented in city brand partnerships

Second idea is that it is the city who should take a first step in clarifying what might be expected from the University in relation to city´ strategic communication. For instance, in Aarhus, its University, which is by far the most important asset in the city and used to rank within the top 100 world´s best universities, seems to be waiting precise guidelines on how they could contribute to the city brand more actively, after a period where that strategy came to a bit of a standstill. In the Danish city, such common grounds might have to do with the student community engagement in feeding part of the city narrative from a bottom-up approach, and also with turning international students into brand advocates when coming back to their home countries see the Youth Goodwill Ambassador of Denmark).
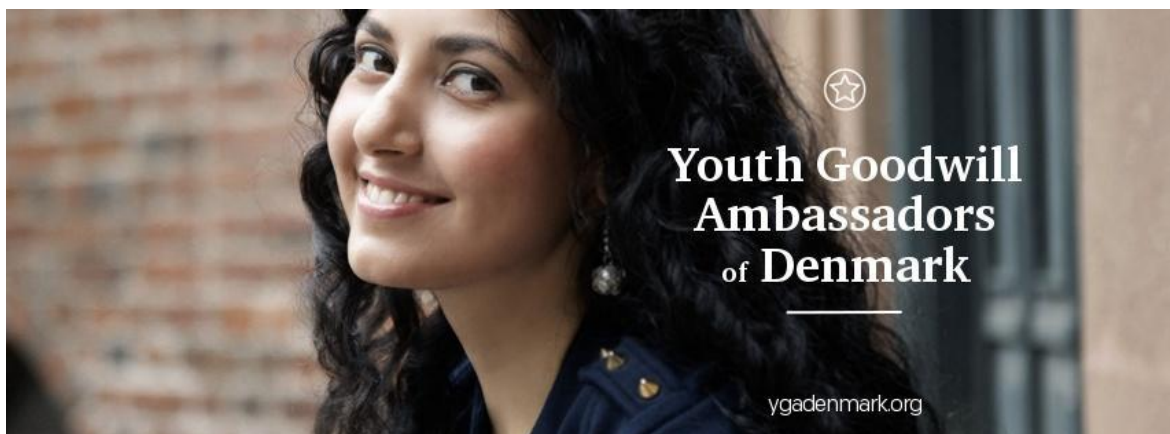
In this respect, Aarhus University manages the student recruiting concept Yourniversity http://yourniversity.au.dk/. It is a user-generated content platform across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Vine to provide potential students a real look at life as a student at Aarhus University. The user generated stories and images are used in student guidance material and in campaign

material such as print, billboards and digital ads. Today 7,000 pictures, movie clips and tweets have been shared on Instagram and Twitter by more than 1,000 students.

Third remark comes obviously to activating the different research and technical backgrounds in our local universities that can best to contribute to the city brand, in terms of content and strategy. Contributions from urban studies, urban sociology, public diplomacy, branding and marketing, IT, communication sciences, visual arts, etc.

Destination marketing: what´s new?

Destination marketing and destination management is still like the older brother in placebranding as it serves tourism, to a large degree one of the biggest, if not the biggest, industry in the world. It embraces different clouds of targets and orientations, from tourist marketing [28] and the MICE sector [29] to cultural branding and the marketing of big events [30].

Roughly speaking, a number of non-obvious trends can be recognized in the field of destination marketing. First, its own coexistence along with other place-based marketing practices (those targeting business, talent...) within integrated city branding schemes [31]. Secondly, by means of the **visitor economy** concept, to some extent tourist marketing practitioners, at least those more engaged with strategic issues, are called to evolve towards **cluster manager** type of profile, embracing now **the whole "triple helix" connected to** tourism, and therefore going far beyond marketing issues.

After huge renewal started at the end of the eighties, driven by Renzo Piano, Genoa´s old port basin turned into a hotspot of 117,000 square meters devoted to recreational and cultural activities, representing a major landmark not only for Genoa´s visitor economy but also to the city´s new economic landscape. Thus, in attracting people, visitors and business, Porto Antico, the entity that manages the area, felt the need to target first the local population, for then addressing other national and international audiences. This implies that marketing strategies and even communication channels targeting visitors and locals tend to converge more and more.

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[28] On this field it is worth mention the European Cities Marketing Association, headquartered in Dijon, which yearly publishes the ECM Benchmarking Report. According to them, ECM's Unique Selling Proposition is that it is the only organization to work with both the leisure and meetings industry and city marketing.
www.europeancitiesmarketing.com

[29] Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions. Also known as the Meetings Industry.

[30] The big event remains unbeatable for helping the city to positioning internationally, especially when the event content is aligned or can be transformed to/into a city value –and reasonable return of investment can be assured. For instance, the Expo 2008 in Zaragoza was the catalyst of big changes with no precedent in the city: Ebro riverfront redevelopment, high-speed train, public spaces and new urban facilities, the "digital mile" project, the tram… even the boost of a city brand strategy.

[31] As well-established working field in many cities, organizations marketing the city as destination for visitors are often reluctant to share brand platforms with other teams marketing the city to other types of audiences.

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Likewise, this trend is also taking place in cultural branding and in branding the creative city, where new cultural-driven urban facilities, that were born with a higly international profile, find feasibility and even reason of being, in the combination of both local and international users and audiences.

The above connects to other trend which comes from the fact that many visitors (do not call them tourists!) wish to experience the city as locals. They are more interested in the ultimate painting exhibition in the city or the music weekend agenda than in conventional tourist circuit and attractions.

On the other hand, around 40% of the followers of VisitOslo´s Facebook page are residents, who are constantly feeding Oslo destination-brand with their tips and contributions. It means dichotomy between the host and the guest is not so clear now than in the past, and some communication initiatives targeting visitors also work for residents and vice-versa. Therefore, practitioners in place branding can make the most of this trend as "fast track" to consider the local population as target group.

Dichotomy between the host and the guest is blurring, and some communication initiatives targeting visitors also work for residents and vice-versa

A last remarkable trend comes to the conflicts that some cities, which are magnets for global tourism, are facing due to a massive flow of visitors, at point of disturbing their **unique urban experience** and even clashing with the daily life of some neighbourhoods.

For instance, "drunken tourism" in Barcelona reached to a peak in the summer of 2014, when tension with the local residents exploded in the traditional neighbourhood of La Barceloneta sparkling protests. The city is now taking seriously the challenge of de-concentrating mass visiting in the city, spreading the tourist flow beyond the city limits up to the province and regional levels, and implementing a more target-oriented strategy to visitor attraction. Amsterdam, which at some extent is also affected by the same of problem of saturation, is actively promoting other destinations out of the city limits: historic Haarlem, the sea-shore as the "Amsterdam beach", castles and gardens from the outskirts, the flower fields of Amsterdam, etc.

What kind of attractiveness in the era of hypermobility? Attractiveness is not the key question but the city model we want for our cities. Barcelona, summer 2014: tension explodes due to "drunken tourism" in the city, sparking local protests.

Targeting and involving the citizens

The wish to consider local populations as third macro target group in today´s city branding has to do with the emergence of a more relational style of governance at local level. Certainly, this makes sense if we approach the field also as a matter of re-thinking local identities (and subsequently unveiling local competitive identities in Anholt´s words), which unavoidably should be approached as a collective process [32].

In this sense, a city brand and its associated narrative is not only a photo but a path into the future. Therefore, in some way, it should also embrace expectations and desires of the ordinary people. For it there are many collective **placemaking techniques** to get relevant inputs from the crowd (from face-to-face formats to social media-based tools and serious gaming), which in turn can also be used as channel to socialize flagship urban projects or emerging dynamics still lacking of the right visibility. So, the local population is both stakeholder and target. In business terms it is internal communications or internal marketing, but it might be addressed also as an attempt to re-build the concept of citizenship.

Until now, **citizenship** is an institution that links the individual to the State (national or local state) in terms of duties (basically contribution to taxation) and benefits (the social welfare state). But now that the welfare state is going back, other dimensions of citizenship need to be cultivated in order to keep the concept alive and current [33]. More participatory democracy would be a path, not in the sense of replacing representative democracy, but improving the quality of the policy decision-making process. In city branding, this could be translated as more crowd engagement in the politics of city representation.

The local population is both stakeholder and target. In business terms it is about internal marketing, but it might be addressed also as an attempt to re-build the concept of citizenship

Further to this, increasingly place branding techniques are being used as one of the tools in urban regeneration projects, given its capacity to rise dwellers´ sense of place in deprived neighbourhoods [34], i.e. given its usefulness to work over the identity/communication dimension in any integrated urban development scheme. That is why place branding

Place branding techniques are growing as part of the urban regeneration's toolbox, and it shows new paths for the field in the context of urban management

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[32]   We have been advocating city branding as cohesive force, not only in relation to the different sector-focused city marketing and key stakeholders, but also concerning the city as community. In this respect, city branding perspective can be an useful tool to those cities with a high proportion of foreign residents .

[33]   On the meaning of citizenship in the globalization I have taken inspiration from Saskia Sassen (2006), Territory, Authority, Rights. From Medieval to Global Assemblages. Princeton University Press.

[34]   The "Image Project", an Interreg III-B project, was pioneering in addressing placebranding as accompanying tool for neighbourhood regeneration, bringing together experiences in deprived areas from Antwerp, Bristol, Delft, Dublin and Zurich.

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has a promising role to play in urban projects supported by the EU-"Integrated Territorial Investment" new financial instrument.

Alba Iulia, Romania. Left: rising se of place by targeting the local population. Right: appropriation of the visual identity by the residents

Branding with/for locals. Photo Kanal 2010 street exhibition "Je suis le plus beau du quartier" organized by Brussels Development Agency ADT-ATO in the frame of its Urban Marketing Project for the Canal area.

Place branding at the toolbox for urban regeneration projects. Canal area in Brussels

Besides the well-known "Be.Brussels" logo and related campaign, there is a much more interesting use of the branding and marketing approach to spatial development in Brussels. Thus, the Development Agency for the Brussels-Capital Region ADT-ATO, has been actively using place branding techniques within a large-scale integrated urban regeneration project for the deprived, old-industrial neighbourhoods along the canal, which has attracted a total public investment of 160 million Euros for the period 2007-2013. That "priority intervention zone" (PIZ) is a huge area in the heart of the city, with a population of 160,000 inhabitants and heavily affected by high unemployment rates and bad image and reputation.

In this context, the Agency promoted the Urban Marketing Project, a four-member team and ERFD-funded budget of 3.2 million Euros, with the mission of contributing to change image of the area, mainly by increasing residents´ pride and sense of place. They first conducted a bottom-up identity study of the area by using different placemaking methods, which led to a communication strategy targeting different groups: i) inhabitants of the canal area as top priority, particularly the youngsters; ii) users and commuters, since 400,000 people commute daily between central Brussels and the surroundings, mostly arriving through main railway stations located in the area; iii) inhabitants of Brussels and Belgium, via the media; iv) and investors and visitors from Belgium and abroad.

As for the communication channels and actions, besides website BRU+, Facebook, monthly newsletter, videos and poster campaigns, it is noteworthy the organization of two monumental street exhibitions and a photo book, enhancing a new visuality of the neighbourhoods by means of big snapshots of the residents. Brochures, time-lapse and participation in international real-estate big shows were used when targeting business and investors.

Communication of the whole area, branded as "Territoire du Canal" (Space Canal), was based on core messages for each target group, without producing any logo or synthetic claim. A common platform was also created, involving all the agents with a stake in the process, aimed at to co-producing and supervising the implementation of the marketing initiatives.

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Communication channels for the city: all time formulas revisited and new paths

An ecology of different tools: impact of the digital shift

Although narrative is the first and most fundamental, there is no city marketing without effective communications, targeting specific target groups. But, which mix of communication actions in today´s city marketing? Five drivers can be identified when approaching this question:

- High awareness on the impact of the digital shift in the way cities promote themselves.

- Conventional tools still host great potential, but re-thinking about them is necessary.

- Priority to social media and crowdsourced methods in order to increase authenticity, place-brand appropriation and even rising sense of place.

- Experimenting new ways of represent**ing the place (data visualization…) and interacting with target groups (gaming…) can make a difference** in a future.

- As marketing is interaction, do not just touch the audience but try to **open a "personal dialogue" to each of them, promoting** a kind of two-way or return communication. [35]

Thus, first outcome is that addressing the question of communication channels and actions for the city is not as simple as evolving to more digital-based initiatives. The challenge for cities is to make a choice on their particular new ecology of different tools, including old but still functional formulas duly revisited, together with new paths (see figure 11). Therefore, such a new ecology of tools demands capability to tell the city story in a variety of environments. A kind of transmedia storytelling, well adapted to a range of different communication channels and platforms, and this is a technological and creative challenge indeed. [36]

As marketing is interaction, do not just touch the audience but open a "personal dialogue" to each of them, promoting a two-way communication

As in most aspects of contemporary life, the impact of the digital shift is being crucial for setting up a new mix of specific communications and initiatives supporting a city brand strategy. Maybe websites and the PDF format have killed the printed brochure [37], and now the experience of cities

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[35] "Markets are conversations", this the first statement of the so-called "Cluetrain Manifesto" http://www.cluetrain.com that was launched in 1999 - "a powerful global conversation has begun. Through the Internet, people are discovering and inventing new ways to share relevant knowledge with blinding speed. As a direct result, markets are getting smarter— and getting smarter faster than most companies".

[36] The following quote, extracted from the so-called The New York Times´s Innovation Report (2014), illustrates the challenge faced by all who are interacting with vast audiences: "Previous newsroom leaders have had the luxury of being able to focus almost entirely on the newspaper. Today, running the New York Times newsroom means not just overseeing the newspaper but also a vast web operation, a growing array of mobile products, newsletters, news alerts and social media accounts, as well as an international edition, a video unit and a range of new standalone products".

[37] I say maybe because in a last workshop conducted by practitionres from Dundee and Vilnius it was said print is not defunct. "It is still sometimes the best media for certain activities. People like maps they can hold and

and places increasingly starts in front of the computer or tablet. But, what else? Thus, second key outcome is the importance of a **right understanding of the digital driver and its effects** to make the most of it in the practice of city branding and marketing:

- At present, there is no way to differentiate between city´s positioning strategies off-line and on-line, as both are intertwined. Urban identities must be equally constructed at the digital level.

- New digital media facilitate enormously reaching very specific target groups (micro-segmentation), far located, and interacting with them in a two-way type of communication.

- Thanks to the digital shift new tools have emerged adding new dimension and enriching the experience of place in real time by visitors and locals.

- It provides a framework to channel the growing demand for a more inclusive and authentic place branding, from crowdsourced brand content to wiki-methods for keeping current the city´storytelling.

- Digital media enable much better cost-efficiency ratio and refined tools for accountability, e.g. social media activity (how effective we are interacting with both our brand community at local level and city´s target groups world-wide) can be easily and exhaustively monitored through a wide range of "social media listening tools".
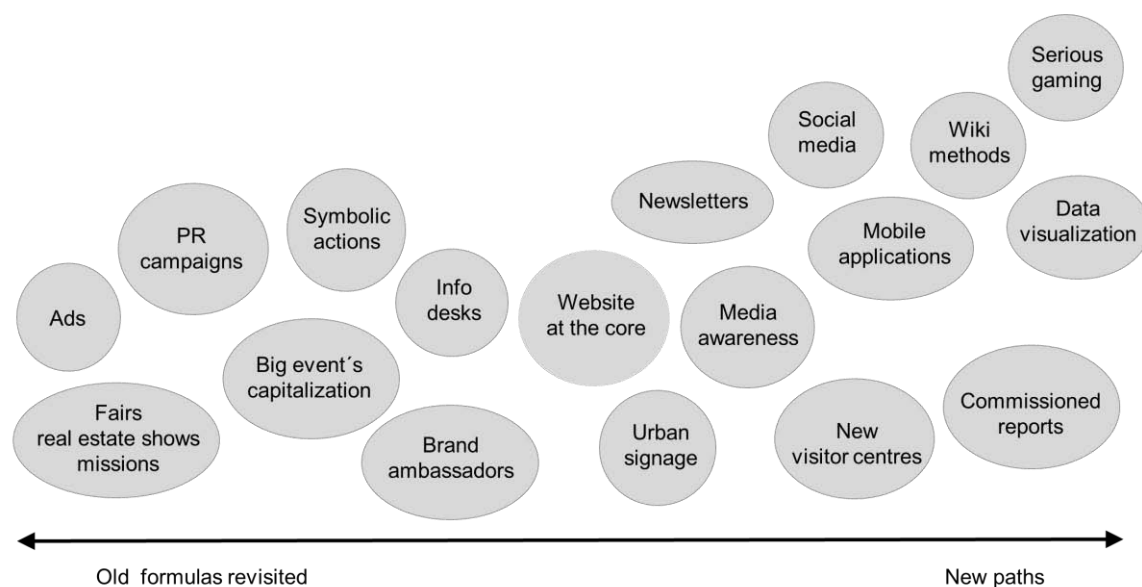
Figure 11. New ecology of communication tools for the city. Source: M. Rivas, Grupo TASO

scribble on! Good quality printed materials appropriately distributed might help get your city noticed as others are fore-going print. With everyone getting so much information through their inbox, an alternative approach might be a winner" (Jennifer Caswell and Diane Milne).

Re-thinking advertising

The close association of city branding to big, expensive PR campaigns, only affordable to a few, has damaged the reputation of the field, particularly at the light of the financial and economic crisis which is hardly affecting many local administrations. Conventional marketing approach along with the dominant role of branding and advertising agencies in the field of place branding, still push in that direction. Unavoidably, even many good brand consultants working for cities cannot resist welcoming enthusiastically the idea to launch and spread their works as wide as possible through big (and expensive) PR campaigns.

Therefore, it is timely to think about the role of advertising and campaigning in the set of communication actions for the city nowadays. Because both have a role to play. Thus, **advertising**, its creative side at least, can be seen as synthesizing effort to produce and combine core messages and powerful images of the city. It´s like the ultimate test tube where the unifying city proposition is distilled.

City advertising: the ultimate test tube where the city proposition is distilled, successfully or unsuccessfully.
Left: Dubai, coherence between ad and a city model that is just the opposite of the inclusive approach normally claimed in urban development. But here there is no intention to unmask such a city model. In that sense, the ad is credible and coherent, and visually powerful. Glamour as place value: selling the city as an expensive perfume or luxury car, a pleasure not for everybody. Right: Madrid, a failed attempt? No distinctive argument; the text is a little tricky (all the foreign residents have chosen the Spanish capital due to career opportunities and lifestyle) and they haven´t been able of getting any groundbreaking image of Madrid? Both ads were published in The Economist.

Lyon is one of the few in continental Europe with the capacity to display massive ad and PR campaigns, at this time under the "Addicted to Lyon" tag. Thanks to both great institutional and funding backing, the brand OnlyLyon displays a wide range of communication actions: off-line and on-line ad campaigns [38], international promotional events and missions abroad, ambassadors, social media, international media awareness, merchandising, etc. But the largest proportion of the "Addicted to Lyon" budget is for digital billboards advertising in main airports, since they have defined business & leisure travellers over 4 times/year as their core target.

Campaign "Dundee's more street than you think!" targeting big Scottish cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow (2011). Such illuminated media over building facades, less invasive than conventional outdoor billboards, reminds in the form American artist Jenny Holtzer´s projections

Fairly different it´s the recent campaign of Genoa (Italy) aimed at introducing city´s new visual identity to citizens. The core element was a teaser campaign through billboards and newspapers, three months ahead of the visual identity´s public presentation. It powerfully drew the attention of local media, stakeholders and citizenship. Even some "outsider initiatives" came up as a reaction to the official campaign, mixing critical voice and fun, like the online logo generator, which was welcome by the City Council anyway.

Meanwhile, Genoa´s Instagramer community, @IgersGenova, was challenged to a photo contest. Competitors had to take one or more photos of the city, mark them with hashtag #genovamorethanthis and share them on Instagram. All photos with that hashtag were automatically displayed on the Genova Turismo´s Facebook page and could be voted by all Facebook users. The winner was the photo that obtained the most "likes". The initiative was helpful to increase sense of place among local creatives and promoted new gazes to the city.

In parallel to that **socialization campaign**, the city promotion team at the local Council began to take first steps towards co-marketing actions with longer active stakeholders and open conversations on a collaborative platform for integrated city branding.

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[38] Regarding online campaigns, OnlyLyon´s communication plan for 2014 included 3-month digital campaign in TripAdvisor (targeting the visitor macro-group) and 2-month campaign in Linkedin (targeting the business/professional macro-group). In both cases only focused on Lyon´ specific geographical areas of interest.

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In conclusion, Genoa´s successful pursuit for a new visual identity reached its peak with a campaign targeting the local audience. However, such *momentum* was addressed by the City Council not only for getting acceptance and appropriation around the new logo, but also to raise awareness on the need for more strategic communication for the city. That seminal campaign was smartly used by the city promotion team as **"big bang"** to set the basis of integrated city branding.

It conceded something tangible at the very beginning (new visual identity, which should not be a core part in city branding indeed) for then igniting city´s collective ambitions and creating favorable conditions, including clear political backing, to address truly relevant issues such as a Genoa´s narrative, collaborative model involving selected stakeholders and more ambitious action planning related to city´s promotion.
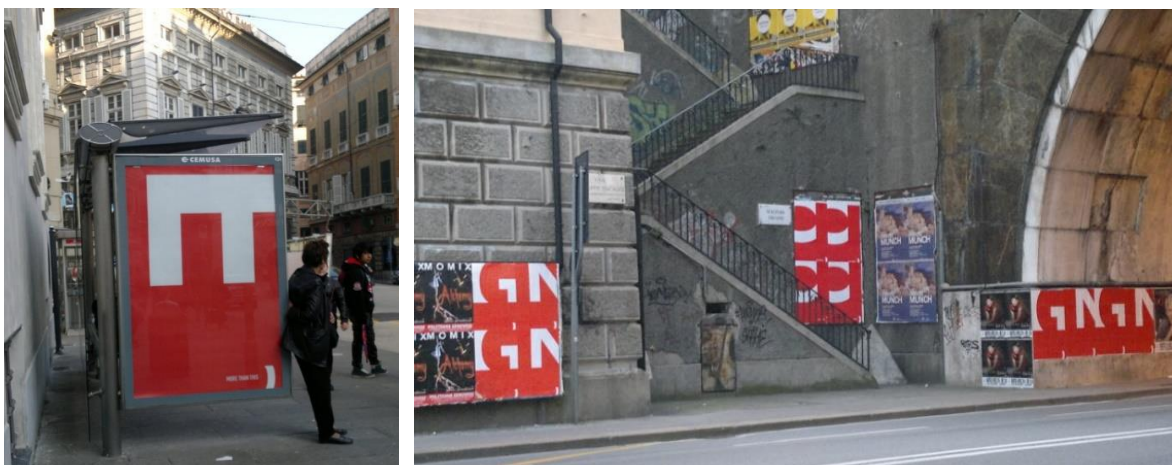
Teaser campaign introducing Genoa´s new visual identity (2014). That seminal campaign, focused to an internal audience, was also addressed as "big bang" to set the basis of integrated city branding.

Brand ambassadors. What work plan for them?

Ambassador networks are common formula in the mix of channels to deliver brand´s messages. It also has great potential to socialize and create commitment around the city brand. Nevertheless, such potential is not always fully exploited beyond putting faces and testimonials to PR campaigns. A reason for that is lack of both concrete work plans for all the people, local innovators and firms appointed, and capacity building on how to communicate the city´ strengths.

The **Youth Goodwill Ambassador Corps of Denmark** http://ygadenmark.org is a reference on how to use effectively the ambassador formula, this time focusing on talented students and foreign students as force for messaging cities and country´s narrative. The Programme is run by an innovative partnership led by the main Universities (Copenhagen, Aarhus, Aalborg and Technical University of Denmark) and it´s a unique experience of large-scale University engagement in place branding. Actually, programme´s mission is not only rising awareness on Denmark's strengths worldwide, but also providing soft landing for international students seeking to study in Denmark and developing a platform for career opportunities between those international students and Danish companies.

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According to Aarhus´ city brand team, three messages can be highlighted from this experience:

- It takes great effort and personal commitment to grow and retain an ambassador network. The Youth Goodwill Ambassador Corps of Denmark was founded in 2010 and is growing at 150 new ambassadors per year.

- With a little help, student ambassadors can create a remarkable PR for the country/city. This ambassador programme develops PR in 30 markets, and 40 promotional initiatives have been carried out in 20 countries until mid-2014.

- Remember to give the ambassadors something interesting and relevant to talk and write about - again narrative is the core in anything related to place branding. The programme invests time and resources in coaching members on how to brand Denmark.

New ambassador strategies are emerging in different contexts round Europe, now more oriented to concrete action planning. In 2013, OnlyLyon launched the **1 Ambassador = 1 Action** concept in order to implement a more result-oriented approach to the ambassador formula. **Connect Ireland[39]** is a disruptive approach by the Irish Government, with more than 23,000 "connectors" from the Irish global diaspora introducing over 1,100 companies with a real willingness to invest in the Country. It´s like moving the ambassador concept to somewhat brokerage logic.

Ambassador networks have great potential to socialize and create commitment around the city brand. Nevertheless, such potential is not always fully exploited beyond putting faces and testimonials to PR campaigns

Rising media awareness

Rising local media awareness on the need for city branding is not certainly easy task. So, one can imagine the challenge of capturing the attention of international media towards your city. That is normally a long run, closely associated to the expansion of city´s reputation, that can be accelerated through big events from time to time and symbolic actions. Most of the communication initiatives aligned to a city brand strategy, from ads to ambassador networks, aspire to have an impact in the media anyway.

Moreover, some cities try to influence the newsroom directly by catching up renowned media or specialized journalists, e.g. OnlyLyon reported 150 new international journalists invited to Lyon only in 2013. As usual it is also a matter of budget, but often with uncertain results.

In 2012, Vilnius tried a kind of fast track in getting the attention of international media when Vilnius Mayor crushed an illegally parked Mercedes with a tank. The video [40] went viral on the Internet, with over seven million Youtube hits around the globe and was picked up by broadcasts

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[39] https://www.connectireland.com

[40] http://youtu.be/V-fWN0FmcIU

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globally, including Good Morning America, BBC World, CNN, China Nightly News, The New York Times, The Guardian, Washington Post, Huffpost World, etc. Irma Juskenaite, head of public relations and city spokeperson at the time, presented the famous tank campaign as an innovative initiative to be different in the crowd. A creative, low-budget tool to getting the attention. An invitation to be brave enough for saying your messages in an unusual way – "sometimes you need a tank to be your message heard".

In rising international media awareness, the Vilnus´ initiaitive is valuable as accelerator and much more cost-effective than investing in inward missions for journalists. Nevertheless, it deserves two comments from a place branding perspective:

- This fast-track way looks not to have a durable effect if the action operates in an isolated manner, at point that the city, any city, would need of similar kind of impacts from time to time. Reputation can hardly be built upon one single event, but in a number of them properly linked withing a strategy.

- Other consideration is about the need to differentiate between place marketing and political marketing. Sustainable city branding have to be embedded into city narrative, more than into specifc styles of doing politics. Albeit the latest may be one of the inputs or outputs of a city narrative, also undertood as specific way of doing.

Capitalizing big events and flagship projects for city´s communication

Big events host great potential for helping city´s positioning, particularly whether its content can be aligned or transformed to/into a city value, and reasonable return of investment can be assured or course. Perhaps it would be better talking about unique (big) events, since many small and medium-sized cities have leapfrogged in their international visibility thanks to high-quality singular cultural events, initially spread throughout word-of-mouth, e.g. Montreaux-popular music, Basel-contemporary art, Avignon-theatre, Glastonbury-rock music, etc. In this respect, a challenge is mutually reinforcing both the particular communication policies related to the event and the comprehensive strategy on city branding, avoiding the risk of "cannibalization" among them.

Expanding the big event for new value creation to the city, or consciously addressing the event for keeping fresh and alive existing city values

The idea is to consciously address the event for keeping fresh and alive existing city values, as for instance Liverpool is doing with music and music festivals; or expanding the scope of the big event in order to create new value for city, like Barcelona has masterfully done hosting the World Mobile Congress.

After winning in 2011 the yearly organization of the most relevant world business fair in the mobile phone industry, the city of Barcelona has been intensively working promoting an ecology of different initiatives around the mobility concept related to research, living lab, entrepreneurship, cluster development, visitor centre (the so called Mobile World Center, a showroom in partnership

with Telefonica), existing events [41] and citizenship (Mobile Ready initiative, a catalogue of cutting-edge mobile experiences in the city open to locals and visitors).

This evolution in a short period of time, from a unique big event to a cross-cutting theme expanded through a variety of activities in the city, it has finally resulted in a new attribute or value **for the city brand, "Barcelona as** Mobile World C**apital"** http://mobileworldcapital.com/. Such strategy has been promoted and conducted by a specific entity established for that mission, the Mobile World Capital Foundation, which includes the three levels of administration (local, regional, national) along with Fira de Barcelona and GSMA, the promoter of the Mobile World Congress.

Many of the assets and values of contemporary Zaragoza emerged thanks to the International Exhibition in 2008. Even the decision to initiate a conscious city brand strategy. Aarhus is a city where almost every event, big or small, is intended to be approached as delivery channel of the city brand. That´s the case of the Aarhus Festival, one of the largest cultural events in Scandinavia, which hosts over 1000 events across 10 days in August, most of them free street shows. From the event concept and website to hand programmes and speeches by organizers and city officials are seen as opportunities for linking to city´s core values and messages.

Expanding the concept of communication action

Other minor, and not so minor, but effective actions should be also understood as conscious communication tools. A kind of soft actions aimed to promote **without "selling the city", which can** make a difference whether they are suitably articulated to more obvious initiatives, within an integrated communication strategy for the city. We could now mention a number of them:

- **New kinds of visitor centres** and **info-desks** are emerging, different to the ones on "what to see-where to sleep". This time with a focus on showcasing the contemporary city, including flagship urban projects, information on relevant business clusters, etc. The Italian model of "urban centres" can show a path in this sense (see below).

- **Refreshing visitor information and city merchandising**. For instance, in Vienna, city authorities organized an international design contest on the 21st Century souvenir called "European Home Run". Selected projects, chosen by a jury of international experts of

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[41] Like in SONAR, a world-class festival in electronic music. The idea is to consider in every key event/festival in the city, whatever the theme, an approach or initiative related to mobility.

design and tourism, were presented during the 2012 Vienna Design Week. Awarded items **were produced to be sold exclusively by the city's tourist information centres.** The contest also included a popular jury, through social media, who were been able to choose their winner as well. As said before, in Lisbon, Council´s units in charge of tourism and culture attract regularly local creative firms to fabricate and commercialize new tourist merchandising with the challenge of revisiting traditional city´s icons under codes of contemporary design.

- **Urban signage as setting for city´s core messages.** Moreover, city´s new visual identities might be applied, if necessary, to upgrade signage´s visual quality. In some contexts, this sort of initiative may induct brand appropriation and even raise sense of place.
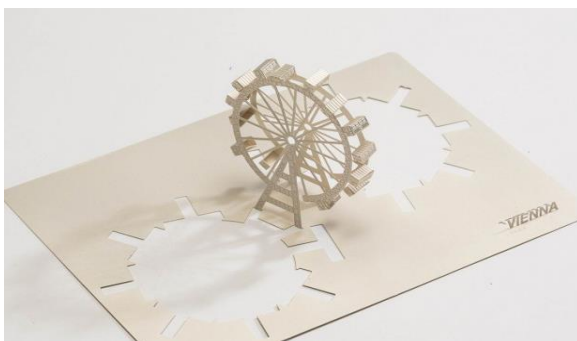
Left: "Pop-up Vienna" by the Spanish designer Héctor Serrano, produced for the international contest on the design of the XXI century souvenir "European Home Run" (2012). Right: City merchandising of Lisbon.
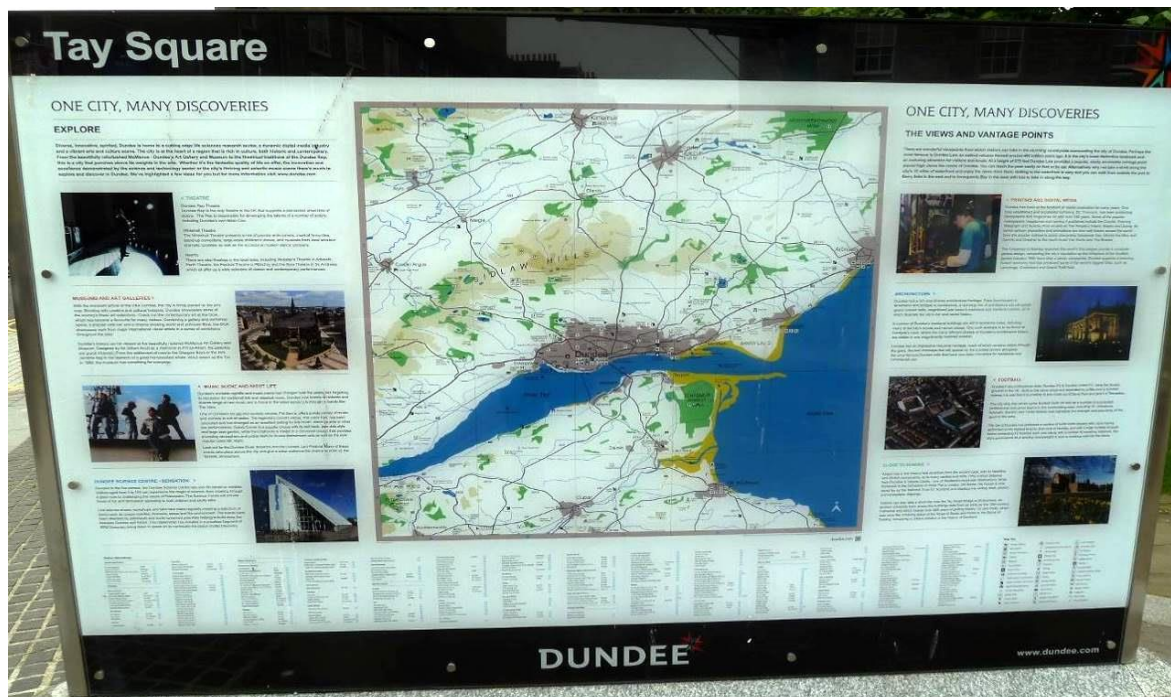
Urban signage in Dundee as setting for city´s core messages

- **Commissioned reports**. For sure, City Council, dedicated agencies, brand platforms… can tell their own city´s story through booklets, reports, web contents and so on. But, what if others tell it too? Wouldn´t it increase credibility? For example, reputable organizations, experts or scholars can also report a successful urban transformation process. In a way, that is the case of OECD´s "Urban Renaissance" series, through which the international entity organized reviews upon request of the interested cities, which had to pay for the consultancy process.

- **Symbolic actions**. They are initiatives not necessarily designed for promotional purposes, but can have **great impact on the city's visibility and reputation.** Symbolic actions can be singular events, urban projects like Victoria & Albert at Dundee or even political decisions. Thus, the decision of the conservative-nationalist party, now in power in Catalonia, to raise the question of the national sovereignty at the top of the political agenda can be seen as symbolic action from a place branding perspective, at a time when Spain´s reputation was hurt by the economic crisis.

Showcasing the contemporary city: new generation of visitor centres

Some of the biggest cities in Central and Northern Italy joins a sort of new urban facility called **"urban centres", which were promoted to facilitate both technical and civic participation on** urban issues, including permanent exhibition.

For instance, in Turin, the Urban Centre Metropolitano, which is significantly managed by Torino **Internazionale, the agency in charge of city branding & marketing, "aims above all to act as a** bridge between the complex matrix of transformation and citizens, in the widest sense of the term, with the intention of promoting communication which raises awareness of what is happening and **what will happen".**

The Urban Centre Bologna (UCB) http://www.urbancenterbologna.it was primarily aimed to both increase awareness on the urban changes and promote forms of citizens' participation on urban development. From its central located venue, the centre showcases those urban changes through data, images, **models… in a very attractive permanent exhibition, free entrance. The centre** organizes workshops and public debates also using its website and social media. Due to this double function, as centre for participation and visitor centre, UCB was commissioned by end of 2012 to set up an integrated city brand strategy that was firstly focused on a unifying visual identity for Bologna.

As communication-oriented facilities, UCB and in general the Italian model of Urban Centres, show a path to a new generation of visitor centres, this time focused on physically showcasing the city brand content, instead of conventional tourist information on what to see and where to sleep & eat. Moreover, they are able to target both the local population (in this case more focused on participation and discussion as well as narrative building & continuous updating) and visitors (more focused on showcasing and exhibition). This idea has great potential in a context of innovative city branding.

Urban Center Bologna - piazza Nettuno 3, Bologna. From Tuesday to Friday from 10.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Saturdays from 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. Free admission.

The new frontier: crowding together the city story

The profound impact of the digital shift over destination marketing is well known and still expands very rapidly. According to Laura Arends, from Utrecht Tourism, in The Netherlands people with smartphones have grown 50% in four years (2010-2013) and tablets 43%. Also in The Netherlands, 63% of internet users used a mobile device while travelling in 2012. The penetration of social media in Europe reached 40% as average in February 2014.

In this context, **social media** [42] is called to play a growing role in place branding for the simple reason it´s a rapid channel to increase **engagement**, **interaction** and **co-creation** with the city´s diverse target groups, which is a key issue in this field nowadays. Making the most of the crowd is definitively the new frontier in effective place branding, mainly for two reasons:

- It increases **authenticity**, since it´s more credible whether third parties also talk about the city than just "official storytelling" delivered by dedicated agencies and teams. We mean spontaneous talks, not just testimonials within official promotional materials. [43]

- It may be very helpful in keeping the **city narrative updated** on a permanent basis.

Promoting this is not easy at all. It demands clear strategy, time and resources. VisitOslo is a good case placing digital media at the core. The organization is radically improving its competence in digital communications and is aware of any innovation in the field, just in order to increase "Oslo´s digital footprint", and its mission has been re-formulated as "influencing the visitor's experience in

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[42] Quoted by the Wikipedia, Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content".

[43] Anyhow, city brand contents might take care of a kind of storytelling too much unpolluted (for instance, that´s a common characteristic in the British way of city branding). About too "unpolluted storytelling" and subsequent lack of credibility see the funny parody by P. Asbaek Eurovision Song Contest 2014: Wonderful Copenhagen by Pilou Asbæk

Oslo bef**ore, during and after visiting". O**n this trend, VisitOslo head of digital development Katrine Mosfjeld highlights three elements [44]**.**

- ▪ Digital media is not another communication channel to be considered. Both overarching strategy and the organization itself have to be re-formulated around the digital driver (see figure below), and it has a direct impact in every communication channel, from the visitor centre to PR and campaigning [45].

- ▪ The bet for mobile social media rises the question of wi-fi/**roaming costs**, particularly for international guests.

- ▪ In this context, **website** remains at the core of the system. It is still the key information hub. The homepage is far to be dead as someone may think.

- ▪ Social media and digital marketing is not free. **Budget** is an unavoidable issue when facing seriously the digital shift in place branding.
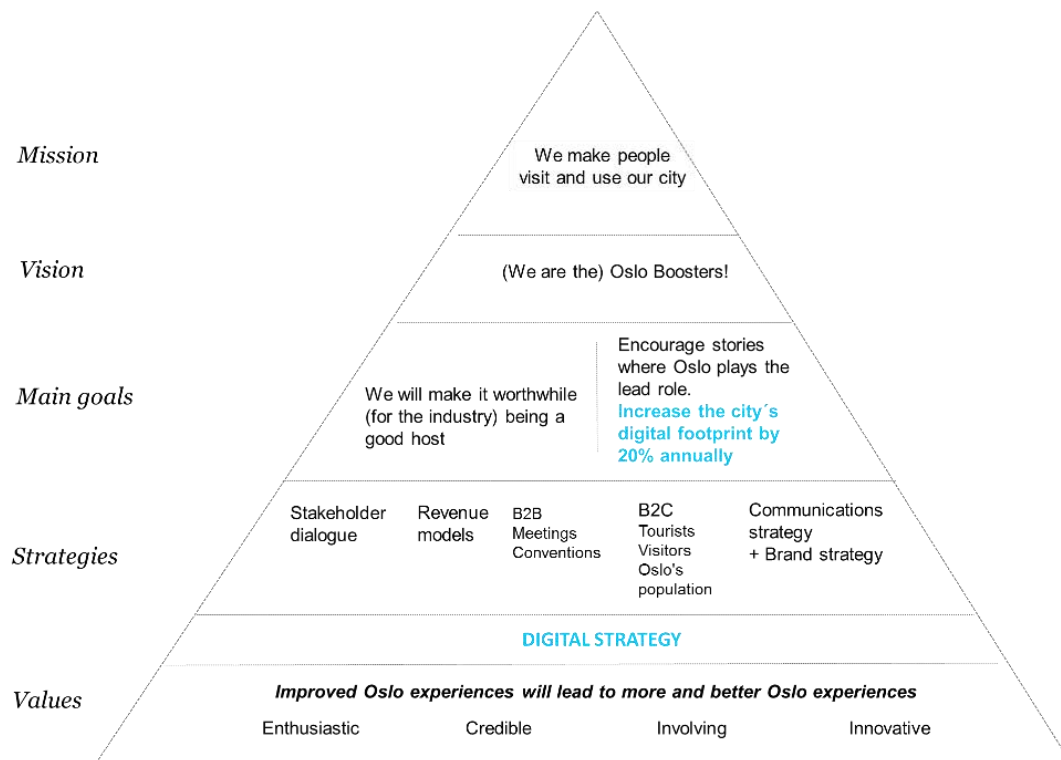
Figure 12. The digital driver at VisitOlso´s overall strategy. Source: VisitOslo.

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[44] Two examples of that ambition: i) the organization and its network have willingness to open their data to any application developer exploring innovative solutions for the visitor economy and the way Oslo can be experienced; ii) they have involved Oslo people in the creation of VisitOslo´ s new logo under the #diggeroslo tag in the social media.

[45] According to Florence Guédas, responsible for digital communication at former Nantes Saint-Nazaire International Agency, in Nantes bloggers are now at the heart of the tourism office's digital strategy.

Both Tourism Utrecht and Utrecht Municipality are also active on social media. The former focuses on tourists from Holland and abroad and the municipality has more focus on the residents. Common goals are information, stimulating ambassadorship and increasing hospitality skills. Both parties use different channels for it, e.g. website, Twitter (#inUtrecht), Instagram, Pinterest, Youtube, online gaming (see below the point on gaming). The municipality has a Facebook page called 'Gezicht van U' (freely translated into the face of U), where people who live in Utrecht can become page´s administrator for a week and let other followers see Utrecht through their eye's.

Mike Moffo is a marketing and digital PR consultant specialized in social engagement who spent almost a decade as field director, new media director and manager in many political campaigns in the USA, including both Obama presidential campaigns. He was engaged in some CityLogo international activities. **Moffo defines this new frontier in place branding as "strategic social engagement" and social media as the communication channel for moving forward** in that direction. For taking full advantage of social media, he gives four simple recommendations:

▪ "Don't broadcast, tell stories". In other words, "move beyond the press release". When asking the crowd for contents you firstly have to provide contents as well. Paradoxically, when making use of social media, **the effort in building up a powerful narrative for the city is even bigger**. This is quite consistent with the claim that narrative is the first and most fundamental in place branding.

When making use of social media, the effort in building up a consistent narrative for the city should be even bigger

▪ "Respect the platform". Each social media platform (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest...) has its own "grammar" that should be respected when using it to deliver our messages and interact with our community of targets. That is why, such a new ecology of communication tools in city branding requires the necessary **skills to tell the city´s story in a variety of environments and platforms**. A kind of transmedia storytelling.

▪ "Your people are already out there. Find out how to find them. Then, get to know them by talking TO them, not AT them" [46]. As said above, now the goal in place branding & marketing is **not only touch the audience, but open a "conversation" to each of them**. Provision of micro-contents well adapted to each of the city´s target groups is relevant. That is why well articulation between city´s big narrative and detailed storytelling is so important.

▪ Managing resources. As aforementioned, activation and management of **social media-based communication is not free**. It requires time and resources.[47]

WE Dundee started as content community for local creatives and then has been used as social networking campaign to promote Dundee´s bid as City of Culture 2017. The project was financed

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[46] As The Huffington Post columnist Simon Tam says "treat social media more like a telephone and less like a megaphone".

[47] At this point, the budget question in integrated city branding could be best approached whether this field is truly considered as crosscutting issue in urban management, directly involving a range of city departments and local stakeholders.

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by Dundee City Council and developed by Creative Dundee, a platform devoted to engagement and networking around the creative industries http://www.wedundee.com. Creative Dundee director Gillian Easson highlighted the following points from the experience:

- We Dundee is a standalone crowd platform as not everyone uses Facebook/Twitter. It offered a safe, trusted space to submit ideas for the future of Dundee and share pride in the city.

- The campaign included physical pop-up consultations in shopping centres, at festivals and community centres to ensure non-digital citizens could contribute.

- Digital screens within cultural organisations in the city were useful direct calls to action for people to visit We Dundee and submit their ideas on the spot.

- Key to the campaign was the clever use of social media to engage and direct the community to the site - equally important was the high quality of designers and digital developers who worked on the web, most of them freelancers.

- A feeling of ownership by the community and not by the local authority was critical to people being engaged.

- **In crowdsourcing there are no "experts". Everyone's contributions are equally valid and** valuable.

Certainly, the We Dundee experience is a model for co-curation cultural activities – contributors were asked what they would like for the year celebrating the City of Culture event, and this returned over 1,000 of ideas. But, in city branding, the key question is: **how to curate content from the crowd?** Where is the balance between the plurality and dispersion of bottom-up storytelling and the more focused institutional narrative?
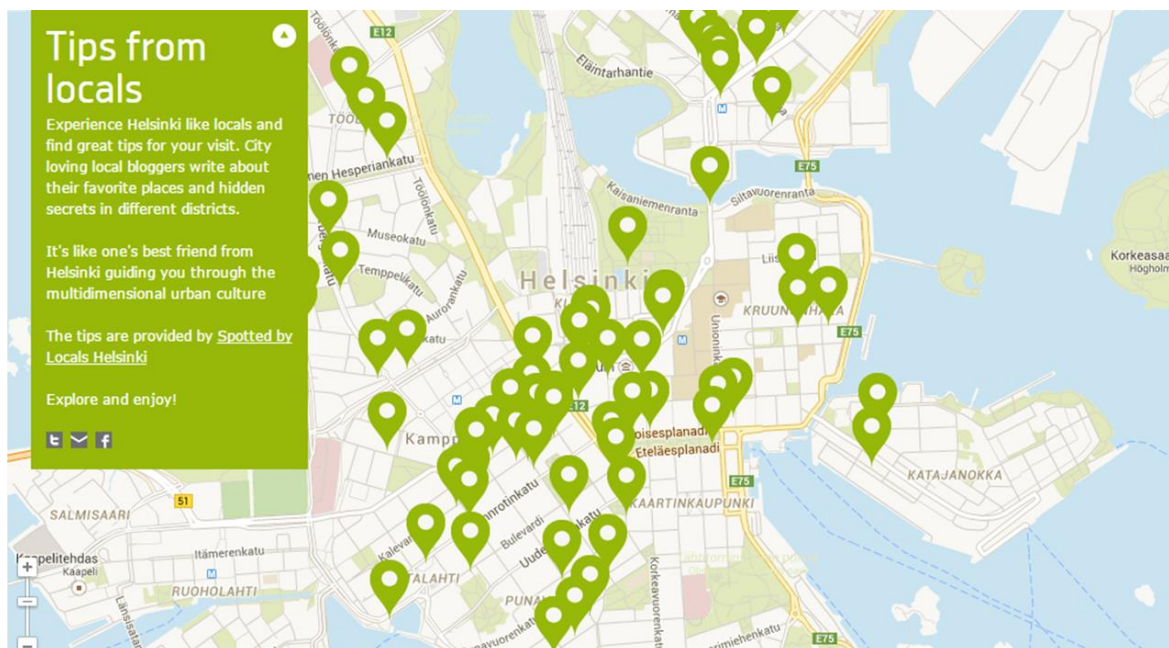
http://www.visithelsinki.fi/en. Information provided by Visit Helsinki which in turn has been taken from Spotted by Locals, city guides with insider tips now available in 61 cities

In any case, the rise of digital smart citizens and their ability to personalise and share city experiences is opening exciting opportunities in urban development - **"**that is something much broader than citymarketing, it is more about citymaking**" (Ank Hendriks, Utrecht´s** coordinator for city marketing).

Experimenting on place representation and interaction with target groups

If branding and marketing is about differentiation, more stunning ways and styles to represent our cities and places might be explored, further to classical maps and tables of figures. We mean architectural info-graphics, computer simulations applied to urban planning and other hybrid ways bringing together geographers, urbanists, GIS peoples, visual artists, etc. Actually, the challenge is about promoting cross-innovation in city branding by involving the creative-digital sector.

That´s the case of **data visualization** as a way to give life to facts and figures. Even though data visualization can hardly be coined as a new activity, the rapid progress in recent years, in terms of computer generated images and big data processing, has opened new possibilities which have only started to be harnessed. Very few cities are making use of this field of expertise so far. The main obstacle in delivering relevant data visualization artifacts isn't financing them, but rather, gaining access to interesting data sets which enable compelling storytelling.
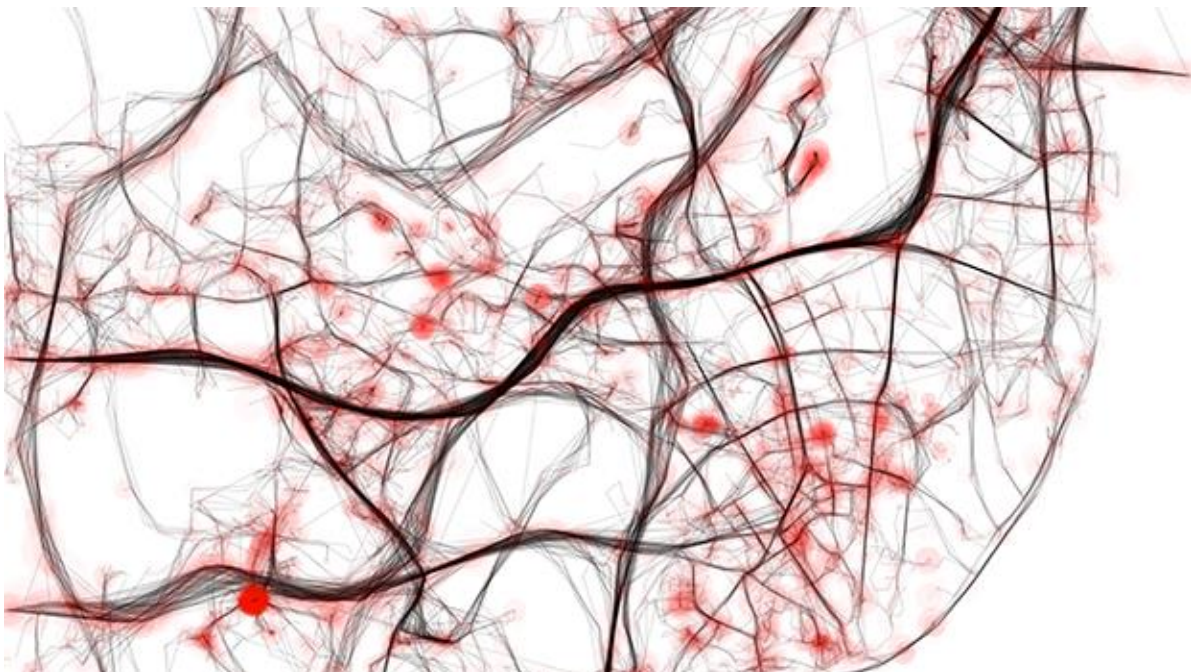
Lisbon's blood vessels. The traffic of Lisbon is portrayed exploring metaphors of living organisms. Produced by the Computational Design and Visualization Lab of the University of Coimbra http://cdv.dei.uc.pt

Games and serious gaming are also offering potential application to destination management and place branding. Utrecht Living Lab is a triple helix formed by HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, which has a well-known game-department, Dutch Game Garden (a cluster platform for the games industry in The Netherlands) and the City of Utrecht. By using that open-innovation framework and its specialization in the game industry, Utrecht has been exploring, through a number of pilots, the application of games to fields like heritage, retail and tourism [48]. Just a couple of examples:

▪ U-Spy. It was a kind of spy game for smartphones to explore the historic city centre with the player involved in several mysterious assignments across different city landmarks.

▪ Guest Quest. It is an educational online game for the hospitality industry. Entrepreneurs of bars and restaurants can create an account wherein they can add their staff. Thereafter the staff can compete with each other in order to improve their hospitality in a variety of aspects like welcoming, record orders and serve guests, empathizing with clients or handling complaints.

U-Spy, pilot by Monobanda, game for smartphones to explore Utrecht´s historic city centre. Guest Quest, pilot by Shapers, educational game for Utrecht´s hospitality industry.

[48] In HKU they prefer the term applied games instead of serious games. "We prefer the term applied games for both categories, because 'serious' suggests the game is less 'fun' to play. While that definitely does not have to be the case". "The term "applied game" refers to games that are developed with aims in mind that are external to the game itself". See Smart Experience Actuator: applied games in retail, heritage and tourism, a publication from Task Force Innovation Utrecht region, Economic Board Utrecht, 2014.

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Cities on the move

Aarhus, Alba Iulia, Coimbra, Dundee, Genoa, Oslo, Utrecht
Vilnius, Warsaw, Zaragoza

All the partner cities participating in the project were committed to produce a Local Action Plan, taking as input the international cross-learning itinerary. And all of them tackled the **action planning** closely with specific Local Support Groups that brought together a significant number of relevant stakeholders in each of the cities. It´s fair to say the ambition at the beginning of the project has been achieved, in the sense of promoting a sounder approach on the real meaning and scope of place branding and its normalization as urban policy, far from usual short-sighted views and campaign-oriented logic.

The unconventional methodological framework described in this report proved to be very pragmatic in guiding some **partners' initial** steps into integrated city branding. That was the case of Oslo, where a big-scale process for branding and marketing the whole city-region was initiated just two years ago, including ad-hoc governing system. Or the launching of Genoa´s new visual identity, taken as precious opportunity to raise awareness among stakeholders and citizens on the need for more strategic communication.

To other more experimented partner cities, our methodological model has been helpful providing new insights towards the excellence in city branding or just opening new paths in the field. In Aarhus, for instance, they innovated four years ago with an open-sourced type of city brand. But at this time, the Danish city still stands at the knowledge **frontier with its "humble city branding"** approach. It is about the practice of place branding conceived out of the spotlights, just as a cohesive force focused on providing a unifying city narrative and promoting alignment among all the different communication efforts in the city. Similar to the Utrecht´s concept of Smart Coalitions, as flexible but effective way to involve the necessary stakeholders


CityLogo partner videos showcasing the work done at local level, in particular stakeholder mobilization through specific Local Support Groups

Internationalise with Aarhus

With a population of 315,000, Aarhus is Denmark's second largest city and the fastest growing in the country. A strong University makes Aarhus a driver for growth to the entire region, with 50,000 students. The University, along with the waterfront and the Latin Quarter, gives the city a young and vibrant feel. The city is home to strong clusters covering cleantech, food, ICT, healthcare and architecture & design. According to the city brand team, Aarhus has 4 key differentiators:

- A city that takes on big challenges.

- A city that works together.

- A city that is hungry to experiment and rethink conventional ways of doing things.

- A city with pragmatic determination to do things better.

In the last years, Aarhus has made an excellent job on integrated city branding, with little resources in terms of manpower and budget, Resulting in a powerful, comprehensive city narrative, along with an **open-source approach** to solve the question of synthetic claims and visual identities http://www.withaarhus.com. It´s the Aarhus **"**Danish for Progress**"** brand strategy that was initiated in 2011. In many aspects, what was made at that time, was a brilliant exercise of strategic communication - open-source way of addressing visual identity and synthetic claim, compelling storytelling, good brand toolkit and brand-related material.
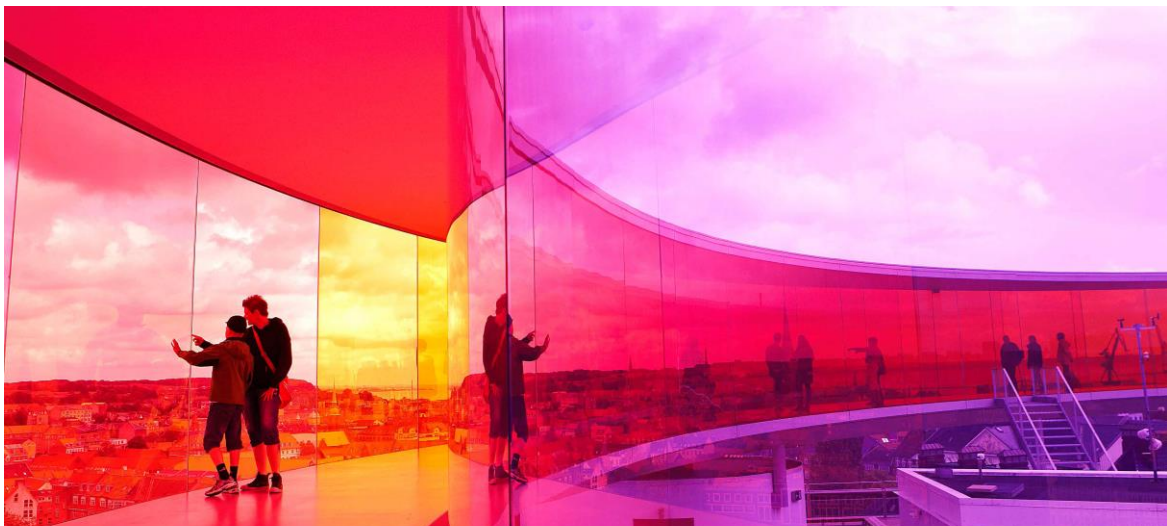
Aarhus´s video www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ap0yuYwFbM&feature=youtu.be

Upon this background, the Aarhus Local Action Plan (LAP) intends to focus now on a range of still pending gaps and new challenges, such as the reinforcement of the actual collaboration model involving local stakeholders, citizenship awareness on city´ strategic communication issues, talent

attraction and retention and making the most of the European Capital of Culture-2017 in terms of city´s visibility and positioning.

More than ever, Aarhus envisions placebranding as accelerator of the city´s ambitions, closely connected to local strategic planning. An approach that is far from mainstream and conventional ways of branding and marketing the city, placing Aarhus´s citybranding team at the knowledge frontier in the field.

Thus, at this time, the overall ambition in the Danish city is moving the practice of city branding towards a sounding path, more related to building up cohesion and appealing competitive local identity than displaying a mix of déjà vu **conventional marketing initiatives. A kind of "humble city branding", out of the spotlights, basically understood as** cohesive force in the city, focused on providing a unifying city narrative and promoting better alignment among all the different communication efforts in the city - **"The brand is** not in the front row, the specific events, buildings, projects **are"** as they say.

> **"Our action plan focuses on target groups' interaction with the city. This means focusing on reasons to move, reasons to invest, reasons to relocate your business or job, and reasons to go"**

In Aarhus, they have used the CityLogo framework as opportunity to re-envigorate the dialogue with different players in the city, and in particular with the existing Aarhus Marketing Alliance, whose challenge after somewhat stagnation was moving from just a plenary for participation to a plaftorm for co-desision making. That transition is not easy and demands top-level negotiation and concrete working agenda [49].

Aarhus LAP has also promoted the organic approach in identifying city´s target groups and priority segments. That is, stakeholder involvement and identification of target groups for the city are both **part of the same process. As a result, this means focusing "on reasons to": reasons to move,** reasons to invest, reasons to relocate your business or job, and reasons to go. For example, Aarhus University, via University College and the other educational institutions are the main reason why people choose to move to Aarhus. Therefore, a close collaboration with these institutions on talent attraction is vital part for branding and marketing the city.

Other distinctive feature on how Aarhus is moving in the field of city branding is its willingness to make the most of the digital shift. They are now working systematically on its online presence, trying to create a more consistent image across the most used web channels. A greater focus on students is part of that effort. In 2015 they are creating a practitioner network for HR and communication staff from the educational institutions in order to create a more consistent and powerful branding towards this target group.

Challenges & Objectives

- Aligning the 3 different brand narratives of the city.

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[49] The Aarhus Marketing Alliance, which was conceived as the founding and driving organisation in implementing and activating the Aarhus brand, is comprised of key stakeholders and organisations, including educational institutions, tourism and business organizations, businesses and local attractions. All members are brand ambassadors and promote Aarhus internationally as part of their own organisational strategies.

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- Assuring maximum impact of being the European Cultural Capital in 2017.

- Measuring the effects of citybranding/creating legitimacy.

- Coordinating the efforts of key stakeholders.

Actions

- Creating a state of the art plug and play branding tool box.

- Building up stronger collaboration model to govern and manage the city brand.

- Undertaking **measurements of Aarhus' image once p**er year, both in general and for relevant target groups.

- Creating practitioners networks for selected target groups.

Alba Iulia, the other capital

Alba Iulia is one of the oldest settlements in Romania and now a county capital of 61,000 inhabitants in the heart of the Transylvania region. It joins a significant symbolic value as home of the largest Vauban-style citadel in Romania and the second largest well preserved in Europe, the place where on 1918 Transylvania announced its unification with Romania and where in 1922 Prince Ferdinand was crowned King of Romania.

With 12-kilometer long walls located in the heart of the city, the iconic citadel, and what it means in terms of symbolic value, inspired Alba Iulia´s new visual identity and synthetic claim that were launched in 2010. It was certainly a brilliant solution, rapidly socialized and appropriated by the whole town.

Then, leveraging upon a rich heritage and the massive rehabilitation of its unique 18th century citadel, the local government is actively using an innovative city brand approach to address both its medium & long term development agenda and its positioning in the country and abroad. Thus, the Local Action Plan the Romanian town has produced within the URBACT-CityLogo framework is really a kind of **concise strategic planning**, where communication is a key driver. In this sense, Alba Iulia is one of the most advanced practitioners of city branding in Romania and Eastern Europe.

Alba Iulia´s plan **is comprised of 20 actions grouped into "seven pillars for growth", which can also** be understood as seven core values of the city, namely: heritage (linked to tourism), education, ecumenism (the town is crossroads for Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish traditions), central place for public services (including the town´s aim to be the juridical capital of Romania), participatory democracy (e-democracy) and creativity (linked to entrepreneurship).

In fact, that range of core values and concrete actions are telling stories about the city. They are directly building up a narrative of today´s Alba Iulia,

"The very essence of our positioning had to be disruptive ('the other capital'), probably the most daring statement possible for a town 30x smaller than the actual capital"

which is valid for tomorrow likewise.

That is Alba Iulia´s Action Plan for the next five years. A city brand strategy which is really a true overall strategic plan for the city. The way Alba Iulia is using city branding illustrates perfectly the **strategic value of communication in urban management**, no matter the town´s rank-size. Definitively, it is an innovative way to approach the meaning and scope of placebranding, far beyond a question of logo & motto. As Alba Iulia´s head of the city marketing team Nicolaie Moldovan says "we designed a logo that represents our citadel; the new identity was presented and applied everywhere; but beyond all the shiny *bling bling*, what matters is the strategic foundation".

Besides clear political leadership and backing, one of the reasons that explain the strength of the Alba Iulia´s approach to place branding is the application of the **archetypal approach**, in order to firstly unveil the real character and "personality" of the town, to then addressing local action planning and even decision-making accordingly – and not just action planning related to communication and marketing. As well as the visual identity design, the application of the archetype approach was masterfully conducted by Heraldist agency and resulted in identifying Alba Iulia with the "Outlaw" archetype. Therefore, all the communications created for the city need to be disruptive and challenging. Not only because disruptive communication is more visible, but because it is in the very nature of Alba Iulia doing things in that way [50].

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[50] The archetypal approach, which originally comes from psychologist Carl Jung, is simple and intuitive, bringing more consistency and coherence to those commercial brands that have adopted it. Moreover, archetypes provides a concrete framework for decision-making and future actions, since every step to take should be coherent with a concrete personality or way of doing things that is given by a specific character or archetype.

Some critical views see the archetypal approach as another automatic translation from commercial branding & marketing to cities and places. Thanks to the work by marketing teams, corporate brands can easily be shaped along the years as archetypes. Even small villages and towns might do that. But a large city, as a community comprised of different perspectives and feelings and even contradictory backgrounds, can hardly be approached as one single archetype. In that context, such exercise of reductionism may work just as first approach trying to unveil city´ DNA and core values, but it may result vacuous as method for going further in what respect building up place brand´s content.

Further to the aforementioned local action plan, a future challenge in Alba Iulia is nurturing its civil society, still relatively weak, in order to stablish a more relational and horizontal style of branding and communicating the city, with the active concourse of a number or seemingly relevant stakeholders like the university, the hospitality sector, etc.

Other issue to be considered sooner rather than later is the need to trace more collaborative strategy between the main cities of Western Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Timisoara, Alba Iulia and Sibiu), in order to counterbalance Bucharest´s weight and increase the visibility and reputation of **the region. It seems more effective that fighting "separate battles". It could go beyond co**-branding and co-marketing and sharing a working agenda in a number of issues related to urban development [51]

Challenges & Objectives

- Maintaining the consistency of brand identity in time and across different media.

- Building more than just a plan of actions: a coherent marketing strategy covering several years.

- Generate buzz in the national media in order to generate free PR.

Actions

- Creating events that have a symbolic value and that build the core positioning of our brand.

- Getting local businesses to support the brand and understand the practical mutual benefits.

- Get ready for the next touristic season with a customized welcome kit for foreign tourists.

Reasserting Coimbra by means of place branding

As third urban centre of Portugal, Coimbra (150,000 residents in the city and 300,000 within the municipal limits) works as central place for a vast area comprising over 2 million people. It hosts a good number of assets and emerging dynamics, e.g. heart of lusophony, Unesco World Heritage, renowned University, healthcare and ICT clusters, Mondego riverfront redevelopment, smart city project, state-of-the-art congress facility. However, those features need to be duly linked among them and reasserted into a new, renovated global image of the city. It is about re-thinking Coimbra, giving more cohesion to its assets and challenges by means of city branding.

Anyhow, what is most appreciated from that approach is the message on the need for cities to create and keep alive a specific (and recognizable) style of doing things when interacting at national and international levels.

[51] Something similar to the Scottish Cities Alliance that was launched in 2012. A collaboration of seven cities in Scotland, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry, tasked with the aim of attracting external investment and stimulating economic activity http://scottishcities.wordpress.com.

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When implementing city brand management or simply organizing all the communication efforts in the city more effectively, the first steps are the most difficult - rising awareness, identification of gaps, first stakeholder involvement and clear guidance on what to do and how. Coimbra is now in this juncture.

Coimbra local support group meeting, October 2014

The work done in the last months by the Municipality (*Camara Municipal*), along with a small group of local stakeholders (basically professionals from local private firms plus the University), has paved Coimbra´s way to the three key aspects in today´s city branding:

- First, on the urgent need to build up an updated, unifying and compelling narrative of Coimbra, with the capacity to equally seduce different audiences, from residents and students to visitors and businesses. Then, the idea is linking that comprehensive narrative to the different big urban projects, city assets and main challenges, throughout a number of sector-oriented actions, as communication-based bridges [52].

- Second, addressing a collaboration model for stakeholder involvement. In-depth discussions have been undertaken on questions like, what kind of brand platform for Coimbra? What mission and tasks? What stakeholders will be involved? Any full-time dedicated team? Which funding model? It was also tackled the articulation to the country level and the regional level, both relevant on promotional issues related to tourism and investment.

- Citizen engagement. It is not as critical at a first stage as narrative and collaboration model, but relevant anyway whether city branding is approached as cohesive glue.

[52] For instance, communication-based connectors related to the ongoing regeneration project in the Baixa area, a central, iconic space heavily affected by the decline of the traditional retail sector.

This understanding of city branding is innovative, in comparison to other mainstream practices more focused on logos & claims and subsequent large-scale campaigns, which in turn are hardly workable in a context of austerity like Portugal´s.
It is a good start.

Further to these assumptions on the model to follow, the Local Support Group that was set up for the URBACT-CityLogo assignments, has designed 14 initiatives as boosters in the areas of Narrative/Visuality, Collaboration model, Culture/visitors, Knowledge/Business and Citizen engagement.

> **"CityLogo and the work developed by the LAP expanded the debate about Coimbra positioning and promotion in the regional, national and international panorama"**
>
> **Manuel Machado, Mayor of Coimbra**

Challenges & Objectives

- Create a sustainable and inclusive framework to assert Coimbra based on its historic heritage, Knowledge, ICT and Healthcare clusters.

- Refine the image of Coimbra using place branding as a tool to involve major stakeholders and citizens.

Actions

- **A lively historic city centre as our 'guest room'**.

- A new visuality, strongly anchored on the web and social media.

- Place branding as a cohesive force in the city.

Dundee discovered

In the last decades, Dundee (150,000 inhabitants, the forth city in Scotland) is experimenting a huge transformation due to the dismantlement of its traditional industrial base, resumed in the **three J's "jute, jam & journalism". That transition has been accelerated in the last years thanks to** the activity of two universities, remarkable business clusters in renewables and gaming, the massive waterfront re-development project, being the 3rd most active regeneration project in the UK, and the V&A Museum of Design Dundee, which is the first location of V&A outside London.

As accompanying strategy to that urban transformation, Dundee has made an extensive use of city branding, in particular since 2010, when a new communication strategy was launched under the **tagline "One City Many Discoveries". As part of this work, a more updated and compelling city** narrative was set and placed at the heart of the promotional activity, including new imagery; as well as a flexible collaboration model for stakeholder involvement that was rooted into the local tradition of flexible PPPs i.e. partnerships with no need to be developed through formal constituted bodies, like the Dundee Partnership.

At this time, after a period more driven by a campaign logic [53], Dundee´s citybranding team looks at the future with great maturity and clarity of ideas. So, the Local Action Plan produced in the frame of URBACT-CityLogo, covers a range of innovative challenges, such as:

- A step forward in institutionalizing a brand platform, now rather focused on co-management than in just participation. The aim is getting more alignment from all the different communication efforts in the city by bring together all the relevant stakeholders, e.g. University of Dundee, Abertay University, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Waterfront Re-development, V&A, business clusters, the hospitality industry, National Theatre.

> **"What do we want the impression of our city to be to these visitors, how do we want to be recognised in the world? Our city's marketing activity is crucial in helping us define and then project these"**
>
> **Councillor Will Dawson Convenor of City Development, Dundee City Council**

And in connection to this, better articulation to nation branding & marketing, especially thorough the Scottish Cities Alliance that was founded by the Scottish Government to enable the seven Scottish Cities to work more collaboratively.

- Improving the current ambassadors system. New ambassadors are selected on the basis of their connections to Dundee and their PR value in terms of promoting key Dundee messages. However, the key issue will be arranging precise working plans for/with them.

- Keeping the city narrative fresh and current, particularly its visual side. In the last years Dundee has made a brilliant job renovating city´s imagery. Now they are considering the idea **to appoint a "photographer in residence",** as a way to expand their image bank whilst ensuring the images retain the same tone throughout. In addition to this, they intend to promote a new visual culture in the city by using media such as Pinterest, Flickr and Instagram to enable the sharing of quality images from the city.

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[53] It makes full sense Dundee started in 2010 with a campaign-oriented process, giving a "blow on the table" to be heard inside and outside Dundee, especially when launching a new visual identity connected to a re-positioning strategy.

- In this new phase, Dundee wishes to overcome the visitor/investment binomial and also target more systematically the local population, as well as exploring new ways of improving community engagement in telling and representing the city.

- **"Doing better with less" is other key statement from Dundee´s city branding tem. It deals with** learning to promote with smaller budgets through a broader understanding of the concept of communication action. Making the most of social media and the digital driver will be fundamental to shape new-generation communication tools for the city.

- Finally, Dundee will keep its efforts in measuring the impact of city branding & marketing activities, and will continue to undertake an image and perception study every 2 years.

Challenges & Objectives

- Whose Brand is it anyway? - How do we get all stakeholders engaged?

- Are you talking to me? - Who are our key audiences and how do we prioritise in order to keep messages targeted and strong?

- Doing better with less - **Unleashing our brand's digital potential**.

Actions

- Development of the Dundee Brand Marketing Alliance - formalising the Local Support Group into a permanent group of stakeholders to advise on the brand at the operational and development level.

- Definition of target audience and how this fits with other market segmentation.

- Rebuild of Dundee.com to meet new priority audience and alignment of this to new social media and digital strategy.

Genoa´s new visual identity for new perspectives

Spread along 34 km along the Ligurian coast, Genoa has historically been a crossroads for trade and cultural exchanges. In the 1960s, Genoa, together with Milan and Turin, was part of the Italian industrial triangle, thanks to the development of the steel industry and the activities linked to its **port, which remains Italy's key commercial port, and one of the most important in the** Mediterranean.

However, the crisis of the Fordist industrial model in Northern Italy led to heavy loss of jobs and population (from 800,000 to 600,000 in the case of Genoa). The steel industry plants were dismantled along with the shipbuilding industry. As many other cities from industrial Europe, Genoa was forced to re-think its local economic base. Now, the city is successfully completing a non-easy transition towards a knowledge-driven model, where, for instance, tourism is a growing pillar in the local economy, based on an impressive cultural heritage, central position in the Italian Riviera and its leading position in the cruise business. This transformation, which physically can be

represented by the Porto Antico re-development project designed by Renzo Piano, needs for a new city narrative and related communications strategy, outward and inward.

As said before in this report, Genoa´s new visual identity, which was successfully launched in 2014, has been smartly addressed by the City Council as *momentum* to raise awareness on the importance of strategic communication [54]. But it is just a beginning. Besides the range of materials and promotional activities related to the launching and usability of the new city logo and claim, the Comune di Genova is aware of two real challenges the Italian city will face from now onwards (both even relevant to keep alive the enthusiasm risen by the new visual identity), namely:

- A fresh, cohesive and compelling **narrative of post-industrial Genoa**, which can reflect not only the big changes occurred in the city in the past decade, but overall the city model for the next ten years. It will demand closely connection to local strategic planning or the departments in charge on economic development.

- A specific **collaboration model** (brand platform) aimed at consolidating and deepening the good job done by the City Council in the last two years on stakeholder involvement, notably with the Port Authority, Porto Antico, local media and the University. Over 120 local entities are now using the new logo on a regular basis, which is good response. The challenge now is keeping such engagement to further stages throughout a permanent brand platform.

The Local Support Group (LSG) created in the context of URBACT-CityLogo widened the functions of **the existing "Board for City Promotion", created in 2002 to exchange information among the city** government, the Chamber of Commerce and the Province of Genoa, and inviting from time to time other stakeholders like Porto Antico, the Foundation for Culture at Palazzo Ducale and the Association of Hoteliers. The URBACT framework has allowed not only greater efficiency on the part of the LSG, but also a constant broadening to the main stakeholders and citywide opinion groups through an extended format of that Group.

Geona´s video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iE6J90BYesk&list=UUfiBOZoTRfbj487W72aYbjg

Merlofotografia.com

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[54] Launching of Genoa´s new visual identity ran in parallel to its participation in CityLogo. In particular, the Local Support Group created in the context of this project was very helpful for the new logo´s ownership and usability at local level.

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However, the Local Action Plan that Genoa has produced in the context of CityLogo is more tactical and focused on the short term. It includes 8 types of actions:

- The aforementioned new visual identity: the process which led the city to the creation of a new logo and payoff and to a renovated visual identity.

- Standard promotion: the tourism promotion and press office activities that the Municipality activates every year.

- Unique events: the main events in town which have been identified as relevant for branding the city.

- Expo Milano 2015: a set of extraordinary communication and promotion activities on the occasion of this world event.

- Socialization of the new visual identity: dissemination activities to spread the new visual identity

- Emergency communication, which was promoted after the flood events of Autumn 2014 to revert the damages over the city image.

- Creation of the Social Media Team Genova: the working group created to boost and optimize communications opportunities offered by the social media channels, including the social media managers of all the main stakeholders in culture, tourism and events.

- International projects: Genoa takes part to international projects connected to city branding, marketing and communication, to keep on learning by matching and sharing experiences with other cities and experts.

In addition, the emerging metropolitan governance model that is being promoted by the last reform of the Italian administrative space, can be an opportunity to scale placebranding from the municipal limits up to the urban agglomeration level, which is main trend now in city brand management (see Oslo, Manchester, many French cities...). This is something to be tackled sooner than later.

Launching of Genoa´s new visual identity in 2014 was used to raise city´s awareness on the importance of strategic communication

Finally, it is worth mentioning the foundation in Italy, during the Citylogo process, of a network of main cities working in city branding & marketing (Genoa, Bologna, Milan, Florence), which might be an opportunity to improve the articulation and synergies between existing or potential nation branding activities and the different communication efforts at city level. Maybe, as way to re-invigorate, from the urban perspective the "Made in Italy" or the Italian unique urban experience, far from mass tourism clichés. Anyway, an attempt, from a city-based perspective, to re-build the Country´s attractiveness and reputation that have been certainly hurt in the last years.

Challenges & Objectives

- Increasing Genoa's ability to attract
- Developing a coherent marketing strategy

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- Involving citizens in conveying their creative energies to welcoming strategies

- Renovating the brand visibility through the definition of a new visual identity

Actions

- A new and effective visual identity for the city

- A shared strategy for city promotion

- A renovated cooperation with the main stakeholders

- The creation of the Social Media Team Genova

Oslo: pioneering, enriching, real

There is common agreement on the Norwegian capital joins an impressive bunch of strengths and positive dynamics. The bay area hosts not just one but two simultaneous waterfront redevelopment projects: Tjuvholmen in the west side, with the Astrup Fearnley museum of Modern Art as new icon; and the Bjørvika district in the East side, with a double vocation as new central business district (the so-called barcode area) and cultural area, including the opera house and the new Munch´s museum designed by Juan Herreros.

Oslo is a growing economy that is largely based on five clusters, maritime and bio-marine industries, energy and environment (comprising oil and gas industry and renewables, mainly hydropower), telecom and ICT, life sciences and creative industries.

Oslo is among the world's most eco-friendly cities. It is a tolerant and egalitarian society, playing a world-class role in the peace work. As the whole country, the capital ranks very high at many international indexes related to education, innovation, wealth and quality of living.

However, local authorities felt Oslo´s capacity to "buzz" its strengths and great *momentum* and perspectives is low. In consequence those achievements remain unknown to many from abroad, and the city´s USPs are not clearly defined yet. Actions are carried out on many different levels and by different entities, albeit without sufficient coordination and overarching conduction. In this respect and roughly speaking, the collaboration model has been running well in what concern the destination brand, around the excellent work by Visit Oslo, but it has not been organized in an effective way for the business-knowledge side.

> **"For us, city branding is about uniting stakeholders behind a limited number of values and concepts than can be used to tell the stories about the Oslo region"**
>
> **Øyvind Såtvedt, Oslo Region Alliance**

Therefore, the impact of a sound and integrated communication strategy could be rather significant. To that aim, Oslo initiated at the end of 2012 a large-scale process of city brand

building called **#Project Oslo Region** [55]. In part thanks to Oslo´s participation in URBACT-CityLogo, the initiative has been carefully designed to avoid the most common gaps in place branding. In this sense, four aspects can be highlighted:

- Metropolitan scale. Yet Oslo City Council provides undisputed leadership, the whole process is conducted from The Oslo Region Alliance, which includes all the 57 municipalities of the city region -2 million people, 600,000 in the city of Oslo.

- Emphasis on the need to more cohesive narrative, as central issue in the process, where values, assets, emerging realities and expectations can be smartly aligned. In Oslo, this aspect will embrace four types of tasks:

  Big narrative **–** as common ground for the variety of storytelling aimed at students, visitors, inhabitants and businesses.

  Brand filter **– as sort of "on**-brand/off-**brand" checklis**t based on the city´s core values and big narrative.

  Brand toolkit **–** a library of stories to underpin the Oslo brand in the form of text, photos, videos, testimonials, infographics, etc.

  Detailed storytelling **–** also as a dashboard to keep track of sub-goals and sector-focused developments.

- The local population as third macro target group, together with visitors and business. Indeed, place branding can be a useful tool to enhance social cohesion in a city with almost one third of foreign residents.

- And overall, setting up of a dedicated governing system from the very beginning, which is certainly unusual [56]. Thus, a steering group named **The Oslo Brand Alliance** has already been set up. It´s formed by three partners:

  The Oslo Region Alliance, in charge of building regional pride and cooperation with regional organisations in urban development;

  Oslo Business Region, in charge of promoting Oslo as business place and city of knowledge;

  Visit Oslo as DMO - Destination Management Organization.

  This steering group will take over the following roles: On-brand/off-brand evaluation of projects, back-**office for keeping updated the brand toolbox, establish "central hub" for** new events to the region, interface for stakeholder involvement, and briefing new activities and projects.

The ad-hoc management system for the Oslo brand will be completed with the following figures:

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[55] http://www.projectosloregion.no

[56] A common weakness in many city brand bulding processes comes from leaving to a later stage the organization of a dedicated governing platform embracing a number of key stakeholders.

- Oslo Brand Partners. It´s the group of second-tier key stakeholders, public and private ones, behind Oslo Business Region and Visit Oslo. The concrete engagement of them will be negotiated on a project-by-project basis. For the region´s municipalities, the payment of an annual fee depending on the number of residents, like in Stockholm, is now under discussion.

- Oslo Brand Leadership Arena. It´s a space for 10-12 key opinion leaders in the region to give the Brand Alliance advice on the development of permanent functions and strategic projects.

- Oslo Brand Ambassadors. Appointed highly visible citizens in the arts, sport, business, creative industry, science and diplomacy.

Oslo´s video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPB1EVs1ZHo&feature=youtu.be

All these features have been gathered into a Strategic Roadmap called "The Oslo Region Brand Management Strategy", delivered in 2015. From now onwards, it will be the time for effective implementation, according to the following plan:

Establish ambition level, KPIs and budget.

Put in place a budget, fees and a funding model.

Develop a detailed communications strategy in cooperation with all the stakeholders.

Build digital-based tools.

Build a shared learning/best practice arena.

Coordinate Oslo's story to the international press.

Establish an "on-brand/off-brand advice service".

Challenges & Objectives

- Increase business attractiveness.

- Increase perception of culture.

- Increase hospitality performance.

- Build on quality of life and governance.

Actions

- Establish brand alliance and Oslo Brand Leadership Arena

- Establish intelligence: a shared knowledge center

- Develop narratives and toolbox

- Establish on-brand / off brand advise service

Branding Utrecht through smart coalitions

Utrecht is the Netherlands' fourth city, is located at the heart of the country and has 330,000 inhabitants. Utrecht is The Netherlands' fastest-growing city in terms of population and is expected to reach 400,000 inhabitants in the coming years.

However, the city is not capitalizing yet, in terms of global image and positioning, its impressive array of assets and growth dynamics. For instance, Lonely Planet recently ranked Utrecht as one of top ten unsung places in the world for visitors, and only a few know Utrecht used to rank as the most competitive region in Europe, ahead of the London area, Ile de France, Amsterdam or Stockholm, according to the EU Regional Competitiveness Index.

From 2000 onwards tourism promotion became a topic on the policy agenda but only from 2008 there was a political wish to further intensify integrated city promotion as a whole, resulting in the creation of the City Promotion Office. But strategies, dedicated budgets and even staff were re-organized in 2012, partially due to heavy spending cuts affecting many local governments in The Netherlands at that time. The City Promotion Office was dismantled, and since then a small team, within the Municipality, has been actively working on the two strategic dimensions of place branding, namely: collaboration model and unifying city narrative. Nothing to do with pursing brilliant logotypes and claims.

Concerning organization and management, the aim was to strengthen a **flexible collaboration model** as overall system to govern the brand Utrecht and provide central coordination to the different marketing efforts from the range of local stakeholders. In this sense, a basic assumption is that "the promotion of the city is not the exclusive preserve of the municipality, but is the job of

the city as a whole; the main job of the municipality is to create the right conditions, while various marketing organizations take care of marketing and promotion to the various target groups". Specifically, the city branding team has been working on three aspects:

- Re-starting the work with the already existing network stakeholders focused on the visitor economy, also known as the Utrecht Marketing Task Force, including Utrecht Tourism as main player[57], Utrecht Museums Network, Culture Promotion Foundation Utrecht, Centrum Management Utrecht, Corío (real estate developer), Utrechts Festival Overleg, Jaarbeurs exhibition centre, Utrecht University, Utrechts Verbond, the Municipality of Utrecht and others.

- Setting up a network to work jointly over the business/knowledge side of Utrecht, with partners such as Utrecht University, University Medical Center Utrecht, Utrecht Investment Agency, Utrecht Science Park, Economic Board Utrecht, Utrecht Tourism, HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, HU University of Applied Sciences, Invest Utrecht, the Municipality of Utrecht, ROC Midden Nederland (regional training centres) and Nyenrode Business University.

- And reorganizing within the Municipality the coordination between all the departments and units with a stake in communications, including economic affairs, culture, sport, tourism, events, property, the area around the station, the Leidsche Rijn district (the largest housing and industrial development site now in The Netherlands), research, communications, sport, the Tour de France project organization as special even, accessibility, strategy and international affairs.

They have named this overall, flexible system as **Smart Coalitions**, "an ecosystem made up of partners who are willing to cooperate (in terms of money and effort) in strengthening the Utrecht brand".

In what respect city narrative, the aim was to bridge between the city of culture/heritage and the city of knowledge/business. Moreover, adding the city of the residents. To tackle that challenge a Utrecht Brand Network was created, assembling 11 marketing partners from the city on a voluntary basis. They are the first points of contact for Utrecht's target groups: visitors, businesses, and includes private entities like Corio (owner of the largest shopping centre in Utrecht), Rabobank Utrecht or Utrechts Verbond (a civic movement of people and organizations claiming for more room to creativity and experimentation in the city).

The Smart Coalitions concept is an ecosystem made up of partners who are willing to cooperate (in terms of money and effort) in strengthening the Utrecht brand

They all agreed on three core values as driver to produce a more cohesive narrative of the city, Bright, Inspiring and Welcoming, which should be handled as crossovers to produce unique and compelling stories of contemporary Utrecht.

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[57] Tourism Utrecht is a platform involving more than one hundred private operators in the local visitor economy. In 2012 it managed a budget of around five million per year, 50% coming from income services and one million coming directly from the 50% of the tourist tax paid by visitors.

Utrecht City Hall as new urban icon. The picture by Ramon Mosterd tells a story of growing economy and new style of city governence

Utrecht´s video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9kHSapB-lo&feature=youtu.be

In summary, Utrecht is undertaking now and in the coming years a number of innovative initiatives promoting integrated city branding, according to the following local action plan:

- Strengthening the commitment and effort of existing and potential partners, through smart coalitions and cooperation in city marketing.

- Joining forces with partners to create a shared Utrecht Story, shared proposition and shared brand values.

- Developing this further into subsidiary propositions for Utrecht´s different target groups, starting with international economic branding, because it offers numerous opportunities at present time. The points of departure will be the Economic Board Utrecht's internationalization agenda and the Utrecht brand.

- Gathering new stories and imagery through the Utrecht brand toolkit, which has already been launched in 2015 with the aim to supports stakeholders in presenting the city more effectively.

- Engaging the residents in those place branding initiatives as much as possible, through the use of social media tools and by involving the local media.

- Linking up the city brand approach to Utrecht's strategic agenda now called Panorama 2030.

Challenges & Objectives

- Facing the challenges due to our growing city.

- Becoming more aware of the competitive qualities of Utrecht and promote them

- Making choices and getting more focus

- Putting stakeholders in the middle of our city branding strategy

Actions

- Develop a collaboration strategy and start new coalitions on marketing and branding

- Strengthen the Utrecht brand and Utrecht narrative

- Launch the Utrecht Toolkit

Vilnius logic

Several attempts were done in the past to develop a coherent national marketing policy for Lithuania as well as a city brand policy for the capital. Those approaches were done separately, resulting in very little impact. As far as the national level is concerned, a nation branding strategy was produced in 2008 [58]. However, the appearance of the economic crisis in 2009 led authorities to curtail it, without having reached any substantial results.

In 2014, simultaneously to its participation in URBACT-CityLogo, Vilnius held an international competition with the goal of trying to take a definitive step to have a city brand strategy as well as a fresh, new visual identity. During the course of that competition, a number of analyses were conducted:

- **A situational analysis of the city's image to determine the views and attitudes of different** target groups (residents, entrepreneurs, tourists, and investors) and markets (city, state, and foreign markets).

- A literature review on research and studies related to the image of Lithuania and Vilnius.

- An opportunity analysis for the positioning of Vilnius - meeting tourism, cinema-friendly city, smart city, creative city.

At the same time the City Council, following the CityLogo model in innovative city brand management, undertook consultation to main stakeholders which were clustered into three main categories:

- Tourism: Vilnius City Department of Tourism, National Department of Tourism, Vilnius **Tourism Information Center, Independent Guides, Mayor's Advisor on Tourism, Mayor's** Advisor on Public Relations and **Mayor's Advisor on Foreign Relations**.

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[58] One of the outcomes was the report "Selling Lithuania smartly", by Saffron Consultants.

- Business: International Chamber of Commerce in Lithuania, Association of Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, Lithuanian Restaurant and Hotel Association, Invest in Lithuania, Vilnius City Urban Planning Department, Vilnius Investment Department, Investors Forum, Enterprise Lithuania, Air Lituanica and the Vilnius Conference Center

- **Culture and NGOs: Vilnius City Department of Culture, Mayor's Advisor on Culture, Vilnius** Volunteers for Cultural Night, Global Lithuanian Leaders, Lithuanian Youth Organizations Council, Arts Printing House, Vilnius Parks, Culture Night, Street Music Day, etc.

- Film: Vilnius Film Office and **Mayor's Advisor on Film.**

As a result, the "Vilnius Logic" concept and strategy haven been produced, along with a new visual identity for the city. **Vilnius Logic** provides a unique path to better positioning the capital of Lithuania throughout a more cohesive and distinctive narrative, mixing charming life and disruptive character (the *Fluxus* spirit), as well as eight specific target-oriented programs, namely: Green Vilnius, Gastronomic Vilnius, Conference Vilnius, Romantic Vilnius, Vilnius events, Smart Vilnius, Film Friendly City and Business Vilnius.

In agreement with the local stakeholders above mentioned, four of those segments have been prioritized, some of them after being renamed:

- Film Friendly City. Vilnius is also home of the renowned Jonas Mekas Visual Arts Centre.

- Smart Vilnius. The city joins one of the fastest high speed internets in the world and the best public area access to free Wi-Fi.

- Eco Friendly City. Vilnius stands out because of the massive amount of green spaces not only in the outskirts but also in the city centre. It is also ranked number one in the EU for air quality, according to the European Green City Index in 2009.

- City Breaks. Vilnius´ unique old town, Baroque city, is among the largest in Eastern and Central Europe and was declared UNESCO World heritage site.

Anyway, next big challenge for the city in the short term is strengthening the collaboration model, by bringing together all the key local stakeholders from the tourism, business and culture clusters – also with the concourse of some national Lithuanian entities- into a common platform, aimed not only to participation but overall to co-decision making and co-implementation of the communication initiatives.

Challenges & Objectives

- Involvement of stakeholders from various sectors.
- Wider introduction and visibility of new city logo.
- Unification of city marketing and branding efforts.

Actions

The main aim was to identify the most positive aspects of Vilnius to make it stronger, louder, brighter, better:

- Approaching and inviting stakeholders to play an active role as ambassadors.
- **Wider presentation of VILNIUS LOGIC, the city's unique way of doing and being**.
- Providing a general logo for diverse programs related to VILNIUS LOGIC.

Warsaw Vistula, branding and promoting a unique space of nature and culture

After the fall of communism in 1989, and then after the accession to the EU in 2004, Warsaw, like the rest of the country, has been focused almost exclusively on catching up with the infrastructural development. Now Warsaw (1.7 million inhabitants and 3 million including daily commuters) is the capital of a big country with a rising role in Europe.

In the last years, the city launched the **logo of the mermaid along with the tagline "Fall in love with Warsaw", has invested in studies about perceived image of the city, and overall has made use of** big events as main communications channel, e.g. Chopin Year 2010, International Year of Chemistry 2011 (the year of Maria Sklodowska-Curie), UEFA championship in 2012. However, all of this have not taken a big or durable impact in building up a truly integrated strategy on city branding and marketing.

More recently, in the frame of the URBACT-CityLogo project, Warsaw has done a great effort involving a fine range of selected stakeholders to work on city attractiveness, which is an excellent starting point towards effective place branding & marketing. On this occasion, the effort has been focused at district level, on the Vistula riverfront. It makes sense since the area, which was neglected for years, has turned into one of the major public spaces in the city, especially after substantial revitalization works and investment:

- building on the river banks the Copernicus Science Centre and Multimedia Fountain Park which are now extremely popular facilities among Warsaw citizens and tourists;

- conditioning beaches and building beach pavilion;

- reconstruction of Czerniakowski Port;

- current reconstruction of neglected over the years left bank boulevard;

- construction of the Vistula cycle lane, outdoor gym, platforms, canoeing-biking loop, walking and cycling paths through the forest floodplain, etc;

- organizing the ferries, trams and water vessels on the river;

- moreover, near the river, in connection with the organization of UEFA EURO 2012, the National Stadium has been built, which has become a new city´s icon.

Warsaw´s Local Support Group meeting, November 2014 - promoting the collaboration model in place branding and marketing

Warsaw's video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWJaqlCYeYU&feature=youtu.be

The river banks have changed in the past few years beyond recognition. Thus, Warsaw has addressed the challenge of branding and communicating its new urban riverfront to the local population as a matter of promoting an overall image of the area, connected to nature and culture (Warsaw-Vistula) on the one hand, and on the other hand aligning the activity agenda and communication efforts from a number of diverse stakeholders already operating in the area, like the following:

- Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Warsaw for the river banks.

- Public Dialogue Commission for the Warsaw Vistula. Inter-department platform in the field of environmental, social and economic issues related to the Warsaw Vistula.

- Szerokie Wody Foundation. Organizer of events on the Vistula River, including the "Vistula Feast".

- Environmental Protection Project Team, Cabinet of the Mayor, City of Warsaw. In charge of applications for financing investment projects in the field of environmental protection, including those related to the Warsaw Vistula.

- Municipal Water Supply and Sewage Company as well as the Regional Water Management Directorate in Warsaw.

- Public Transport Authority. Organizing public recreational transport (ships, ferries) on the Warsaw Vistula

- Warsaw Tourist Organisation.

- Mayor facilities like Copernicus Science Centre or National Stadium.

- University of Warsaw. The largest and one of the best universities in Poland, located in the centre of Warsaw, near the river.

- City Forests – Warsaw. The management of forests located within the area of Warsaw.

- Stoleczna Estrada. A city-owned entity that organizes festivals and cultural activities.

All of them have been integrated in a dedicated Local Support Group, which has been working as a truly brand platform for the area, and will keep on working in such a collaborative way in the future. Through this Local Support Group, the involved stakeholders have jointly addressed questions like: what concrete goals those stakeholders are going to share in relation to the image and attractiveness of the urban riverfront area? What working agenda for reaching such goals? What role will play each of them? How are they going to interact among them, e.g. what collaboration model? What kind of leadership the City Council is going to develop? In parallel to this, it´s worth mention the extensive use of advanced crowdsourcing techniques to get opinions and content from the residents [59]

The resulting Local Action Plan has been conceived under the principle "many small actions, a big difference". Its main effect in the very short term has been the adoption of a new way of working, inspired in the principles of integrated urban development and community-led development; pooling resources and creating synergies in what respect the different communication efforts projected over the Warsaw Vistula area; and organizing jointly some flagship activities, like the Vistula Feast, a parade of vessels in the form of a 'light and sound' show, preceded by cultural and artistic activities located mainly at the riverbanks.

Challenges & Objectives

- Need for more effective cooperation between the stakeholders that works in the Warsaw Vistula area.

- Need for a coherent image of the Warsaw Vistula.

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[59] See http://otwartawarszawa.pl/

Actions

- Creation of Warsaw Vistula as permanent platform for cooperation and communication.

- Developing of a common vision of Warsaw Vistula.

- Specific event agenda for Warsaw Vistula.

Towards an integrated management of Zaragoza´s brand

During the last decade, the city of Zaragoza (700,000 inhabitants, the fifth city in Spain in terms of population) has experienced a great transformation. In addition to big projects in the logistics, business and industrial sectors, the International Exhibition that was organized by the city in 2008, on the theme "Water and Sustainable Development", boosted big infrastructures as well as the city image at national and international levels.[60]

As a result, after an intense and participatory work of analysis and documentation, Zaragoza presented its City Brand project in 2009 with the slogan "Zaragoza a Challenge, a City", with which it was looking for competing nationally and internationally in the FDI and tourism markets.

Thus, the city was pioneer in Spain in this field. A dedicated agency called Zaragoza Global was also created in 2009 to undertake a set of overall communications and PR[61]. However, due to unfavorable financial and institutional conditions in a time of crisis in Spain, notably at local level, that work in the field of integrated city branding stagnated, and Zaragoza Global was cancelled in 2012.

The work done in Zaragoza in the context of URBACT-CityLogo has been focused on re-establishing again the local conditions for integrated city branding, re-taking the path that was already initiated some years ago.

To succeed in this endeavor, Zaragoza has an amazing set of assets, not well known yet for many from abroad and even from Spain. Therefore, a priority issue is defining and organizing those assets into a more **appealing narrative**. Zaragoza´ strengths deserve a more determined, less modest, pushing style of branding and marketing the city.

The other top priority must be building up the collaboration model for bringing together the whole range of key stakeholders that promotes the city nationally and internationally. Actually, a significant shortfall of the work on place branding done after the Expo 2008 was the low appropriation among local entities. At this time, perhaps **Ebropolis**, the inter-municipal association created in 1994 to manage the strategic plan of Zaragoza and its metropolitan area, is in good

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[60] The Expo brought €700 million investment just in the premises of the exhibition. The overall investment in the city related to the Expo, including private and public initiatives, was over €2,400 million.

[61] Zaragoza Global´ shareholders were: Zaragoza City Council 51%, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry 28% and the Regional Government of Aragon 21%.

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position to adopt a role as brand platform. Therefore, there is no need to create any new organization for that task in Zaragoza [62].

Anyhow, the Local Support Group that has been created with the occasion of the URBACT-CityLogo project, has boosted a new behavior on the need to a more collaborative approach in the way Zaragoza markets itself. That first involvement has embraced five big groups:

- Territorial governance: Zaragoza City Council, Regional Government of Aragon and Ebropolis.

- Visitor Economy: Zaragoza Tourism and Puerto Venecia Shopping Centre - the largest commercial & leisure centre currently operating in Europe.

- Business And Investment: Zaragoza Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of Businessmen of Zaragoza, CAF (leading company of Zaragoza, which offers comprehensive global rail solutions) and IQE (industrial firm in the chemical sector).

- Logistics and Transport: Zaragoza Airport (AENA is the company of the Spain Government which manages the Zaragoza airport, which is the third airport cargo area in Spain), Zaragoza Tramways (the new Tram is now part of the city brand) and PLAZA (the largest logistics platform in Europe with 13 million m2 just 10 km from Zaragoza).

- Knowledge: University of Zaragoza (founded in 1542 and one of the oldest universities in Spain, with over 40,000 students), San Jorge University, Zaragoza "City of Knowledge" Foundation and European Students' Forum (the biggest interdisciplinary student organizations in Europe, with about 17,000 members in 271 university cities).

- Creativity and Culture: Association of Media and Advertising Agencies of Aragon, DIRCOM Association of Directors of Communication (Spanish leading association which has over 900 members and 7 regional offices) and Al Ayre Español (Zaragoza-based renowned ensemble of Baroque music).

In collaboration with this group, the City Council and its agencies like Zaragoza Tourism have agreed on the following set of actions to keep on moving in what respect the different sector-oriented city marketing practices in Zaragoza:

Study in Zaragoza

- Promoting University lines of research related to place branding and city image
- Communicating Zaragoza as University town
- Surveillance of international students´ urban experience.

Business, Investment and Knowledge

- Zaragoza, city of congresses and events.

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[62] Besides Zaragoza City Council, other institutions participating in Ebropolis are the Province Council (Diputación provincial), University of Zaragoza, Chamber of Commerce, Zaragoza Business Association and trade unions.

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- Zaragoza, stunning urban scenario for your ad.

- Branding Zaragoza as world-class cluster in logistics

- Promoting Zaragoza as shopping city at national level.

Citizenship

- Socializing the smart city project.

- Branding Zaragoza as smart city.

- Ambassador programme.

- Development of social media-based tools to crowd the city story.

Visitors, culture and events.

- Travel agencies´ involvement in Zaragoza´s destination marketing

- Zaragoza, the Spanish hotspot for tapas and gastronomy

- English spoken

- Zaragoza: the best set of Apps for visitors

- Reinforcing the association of Goya with Zaragoza

- Marketing the Ebro riverfront re-development project

Zaragoza´s video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ns-RrGg_tM&feature=youtu.be

Challenges & Objectives

- Involving local stakeholders in co-managing a city brand strategy.

- Producing a more integrated and compelling city´s narrative.

- Drafting communication action planning.

Actions

- Workplan together with the members of the Local Support Group.

- Set of concrete communications in the following segments: students; visitors, culture and events; business, investment and knowledge; and citizens.

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. URBACT helps cites to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. At present URBACT is 500 cities, 29 countries, and 7,000 active participants. The URBACT Programme is jointly financed by ERDF and the Member States.

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