

RECONSTRUCTING ESSAOUIRA'S IDENTITY: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF DISCURSIVE PRACTICES AND THEIR SYNERGISTIC EFFECTS ON TOURISM PROMOTION AND CITY IMAGE FORMATION

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ABSTRACT

This study thoroughly examines the dynamics of managing the image of Essaouira. It takes an approach considering socioeconomic, spatial and emotional factors that shape the city like a mosaic. By analysing types of media including curated and user-generated images as well as festival promotions, the research uncovers how they contribute to crafting the evolving image of the city.

The study emphasises how cultural events have an impact, on Essaouira's fabric and spatial organisation. It demonstrates that these events can reshape norms, influence memory and change public spaces significance. However, it also warns about the risks of commodifying heritage as this could undermine the city's authentic identity. A significant aspect of this research is its exploration of tourism in Essaouira throughout eras. It highlights the importance of tourism strategies that consider both dynamics and tourist demands. The study identifies gaps in practices that often overlook the synergy between tourism and urban planning.

Another critical focus is stakeholder diversity, within Essaouira, including NGOs, activists, city administrators and investors. The research reveals a consensus regarding the projected image of the city while cautioning that this fragility could hinder urban development.

The research promotes the idea of moving beyond PR and advertising methods in order to adopt a sophisticated and comprehensive approach.

KEYWORDS: *Urban Image Management Stakeholder Diversity Event-Driven Transformation Tourism*

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INTRODUCTION

EXPLORING THE MULTIFACETED IMAGERY OF THE CITY OF ESSAOUIRA¹

The urban landscape functions as a dynamic tableau for a multitude of social phenomena to manifest. In our study, the city is not merely conceptualised as a physical space, but as a vibrant mosaic.

This mosaic serves as a receptacle for the collective emotions, aspirations, and achievements of its inhabitants—ranging from anonymous citizens to renowned public figures. The formation of this composite urban image exhibits an inherent poetic quality that is simultaneously captivating and perplexing. It amalgamates a diverse array of data, thereby engaging both the conscious and subconscious cognitive faculties of the observer. In our research, we liken the city's multifaceted image to a static snapshot within an ever-changing kaleidoscope—a snapshot that we have sought to crystallise through an interdisciplinary and holistic analytical framework.

Taking the case of Essaouira, a city whose nomenclature—'*Souira*' meaning 'the little image'—inherently resonates with our line of inquiry, we have been afforded a unique empirical setting to explore the dynamics of urban image formation. Our methodological approach is multifaceted, employing a range of analytical lenses including, but not limited to, iconographic, iconological, semiological, ethno- anthropological, and socio-spatial perspectives.

Contrary to studies that confine their scope to the commodified or 'branded' conceptualisations of urban spaces, our research aims to unveil the praxeological underpinnings that contribute to the genesis of Essaouira's distinctive image. We conducted an exhaustive

Examination of both the tangible transformations of the city's physical infrastructure and the intangible framework of affective and sensorial social relations. Additionally, we scrutinised the accompanying verbal and non-verbal discourses that emerge in conjunction with these spatial transformations.

To facilitate this, we collated a comprehensive corpus of data, drawn from a plethora of sources that reflect both the overt and covert dimensions of the urban environment. Our aim was to approach the city in all its complexities, embracing its nuances, paradoxes, and temporal rhythms, while being attuned to its historical lineage, its demographic fabric, and its defining events.



**Figure 1: Place De L'horloge Essaouira À L'entrée De La Kasbah.
Source : The Authors (2021).**

¹Essaouira is a city located on the Atlantic coast of Morocco. Formerly known for its purple islands during Roman times, it was rebuilt in 1765. It is also known by the name of Mogador.

UNVEILING THE HIDDEN DIMENSIONS OF URBAN IMAGERY: A MULTIFACETED EXPLORATION

In our methodology, we were inspired by Clifford Geertz's seminal notion from 1973 that 'Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun,' while also incorporating insights from the fields of semiotics (Pierce, 1935-1994) and semantics (Morris, 1971) Our initial point of departure was a comprehensive examination of the city's image through the interconnected frameworks of iconography, semiology, and semantics. Subsequently, we delved into an interpretative analysis of the myriad channels of messages and discourses that these frameworks produce, serving not only as carriers of fluctuating meanings but also as components of identifiable communication systems.



Figure 2: Photo De La Skala Du Port d'Essaouira Reconstitue Sur L'ancien Fort Portugais Le Castelo Del Real.

Source: The Authors (2016).

Iconic Representations

In the expansive digital landscape of online imagery, where approximately 10,000 photographs are in circulation, we discerned a predominance of two types of photographs closely associated with the city's tourism promotion by hospitality businesses and tour operators. Our analysis categorised these photographs into two distinct classes:

Media's Images

Contrary to their initial appearance of spontaneity and universal appeal, professionals in the fields of visual communication and media meticulously craft the majority of these images. These images primarily serve as marketing tools for activities related to tourism.

Resonance's Images

Generated by ordinary individuals, these photographs serve as keepsakes commemorating visits to the city. They often function as visual echoes, resonating with preceding promotional imagery and messages. In parallel, our examination of promotional posters from various editions of the city's three major festivals² yielded imagery that obliquely, rather than directly, invoked the cityscape. These visual compositions spanned a spectrum, from those that subtly alluded to the city to those explicitly designed for tourism promotion or event publicity. These sophisticated graphic elements also encoded multiple layers of meaning, both overt and covert, ranging from notions of tolerance and temporal-spatial ambiguity to themes of alterity.

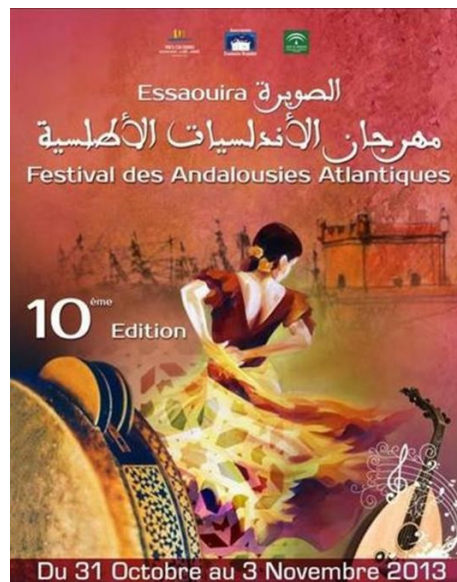


Figure 3: 2013 Poster of the 'Atlantic Andalusia's Festival.

²Atlantic Andalusia's Festival, Musical Spring of the Trade Winds, Gnaoua Festival.

The semiotic diversity of the conveyed messages varied in correlation with the specific subject being promoted be it the city itself, an event, or other and was also contingent upon the target audience's engagement level and interest in either the event or the city.

Lastly, stickers originally rooted in communicative counter-culture carried diverse interpretations based on their usage. Whether signifying local identity ('I'm from the town'), informational status ('I visited the town'), or a form of accomplishment ('I surfed this spot'), these stickers transcended their mere iconicity. Notably, we observed a recurring trend among promoters, investors, and economic development strategists in co-opting such counter-cultural artefacts for mainstream commercial and promotional agendas.



Figure 4: Stickers for Sale in Essaouira.

2.4 Semantic Representations

In our investigation into the semantic representations of the city, we explored various artistic and literary contributions that are associated with the urban landscape, organising them in a chronological framework to the extent possible.

In the specific context of Essaouira, a genealogical analysis of the city's artistic development revealed that the initial impetus for its art scene emerged from deeply personal and cultural commitments by local artists, most notably Boujemâa Lakhdar. Gallery owners, who seized the opportunity to monetise the city's burgeoning cultural reputation, subsequently commodified this initial impetus. This transition resulted in the rebranding of the city as a haven for varied, yet tolerated, artistic expressions, effectively establishing a novel semantic image of the city.

To delve deeper into semantic representations through literature, we examined works by various authors who have evinced an interest in the city, including Azoulay (1991), Delaborde (1991), El Maleh (2000), Sportes (2002), Saddiki (2005), Bouganim (2013), Mounir (2003, 2014), and Byer (2004). Our analysis discerned three distinct categories of authors based on their portrayals of and discourses about the city.

- For authors not emotionally attached to the cityscape, the urban setting is often manipulated and reconfigured to align with their narrative needs.
- The second category, whose works are akin to anthropological interpretations, presents the city as a mere backdrop for their characters' interactions, offering a bare, unembellished representation of the urban environment. We have termed this the 'anthropological' approach. Figure 4 Stickers for Sale in Essaouira
- Lastly, native authors exhibit two salient characteristics in their portrayals: - The city primarily serves as an emotional realm, often harking back to their formative years. - The publication dates of their works frequently coincide within a year of pivotal events in the city's promotional timeline, such as its listing on the World Heritage site or the organisation of significant cultural events like the Convivial University. This temporal alignment suggests that these authors, either directly or indirectly, play a role in the promotional machinery that boosts the city's image as a tourist and cultural hotspot.

2.5 Mental Representations

We identified three types of space represented and expressed by residents: emotional space (spaces with affective value), convenient space (everyday space: home, jobs, supplies) and abstract space (undefined space, either because of a lack of reference points or because of rejection). In the latter case, the discourse on the city generally crystallises neutral or negative feelings.

Cross-referenced with other approaches using life stories and commented journeys, we were able to highlight that, for nationals living in the city: the representation and appreciation of the city correspond to a narrative scheme in which the personal journey relates a situation of personal failure or success (in relation to a reference situation).

The arguments developed underpin an "opinion-image" of the city. On the other hand, for foreigners' living in the city, the representation of the city depends on one of the three phases in which the discourse on the city comes into play. We have called these phases of adaptation (or not): wonder, disappointment and acceptance or renunciation. It also emerged from our research that the time and period of life when the relationship with the city is established would also define the relationship with the affective space. This would help to define spatiotemporal markers in this space that would continue to function even after many changes in the physical space. The results also highlighted the evolving nature of progressive temporalities in the social practice of space.

The importance of sensory markers of the city and their link to affective space were also highlighted. This link is said to be a determining factor in the inhibition or exasperation of these sensory signals. The main point is that the affective link to the city that is likely to generate a positive image is essentially formed during childhood and is nourished by the constructive appropriation of public space, particularly shared spaces and community spaces for socialisation.



Figure 5: The Mental Maps Depicted by the Respondents Who Have a Strong Emotional Attachment and Have Been Residing in the City for Several Decades Were the only ones to Represent the Seagulls Marking the City's Soundscape.

Source: The Authors (2016).

For tourists, who are also users of the city, by looking at the graphic representations they spontaneously leave in the visitors' books³, we have shown that the length of their stay is a determining factor in the gradual acquisition of reference points for the city. Although this varies from one individual to another, depending on their initial skills and sensitivities.

The absence of a cartographic representation among tourists can be explained by the fact that their construction of landmarks defining a legibility of the city is an ephemeral construction and would explain the predominance of verbal expression and instant emotion. Unlike graphic representation, which is a gradual exercise, punctuated by the definition of social, professional and emotional benchmarks... Through the visitors' books, we were also able to consider the importance of the place and the conditions in which the question about the image of the city was asked: time and space (reserved for the visitors' book), the reception and the waiting area would interact to form the tourist's first image of the city.



Figure 6: T Book of a Guest House
Source: Field Surveys By The Authors. 2015

In summary, the analysis of this corpus has allowed us to suggest that the image of the city is defined in reference to two dimensions: visible and sensible. Both are dependent on the circumstances in which they are defined (formed), in addition to their primary vectors: the person who produces them and the person who receives them.

The conditions and circumstances of transmission and reception are also decisive in associating different signifiers and meanings with the image of the city. In this respect, it is also important to emphasise that iconic representations (photographs, posters and all graphic illustrations) are the most apparent, the most immediate and above all the most easily modulated. In this respect, they are quite popular with tourism promoters, but paradoxically they should not be the only means of communication in the context of an integrated and coherent tourism project, whether national or local. In the same vein, the city players involved in communicating city projects and/or in the city (as a transitional phase towards an 'urban marketing' project) would be better advised to mobilise both the visible and sensitive dimensions of the city's image. The latter are associated with semantic and mental representations. Schematically, it would be possible to take action on quality shared public spaces, in particular by enhancing them and ensuring the right to the city. The importance of culture in the urban space and, conversely, the place of the city in art would be important vectors for influencing the image of the city, firstly for its residents and then for its visitors.

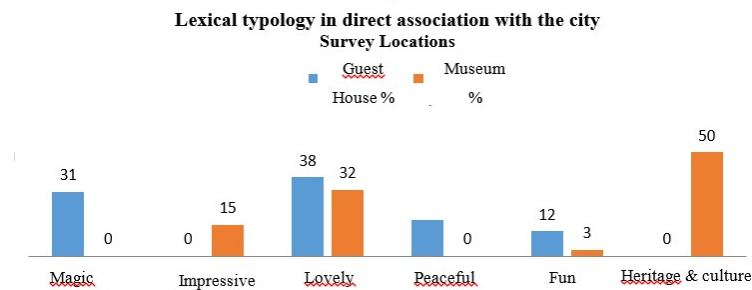


Figure 7: Survey Results From two Different Types of Sites (Museums and Guesthouses) to Determine the Lexical Typology in Direct Association with the City. Source: The Authors (2016).

In an effort to delineate the cognitive mappings of urban inhabitants as compared to those of tourists, our study undertook a multi-modal analysis that integrated mental cartography with city-focused discourse. We identified three distinct spatial categories as conceptualised and articulated by the resident populace: the Emotional Space, characterised by regions imbued with sentimental value; the Utilitarian Space, which encompasses everyday locales such as homes, workplaces, and marketplaces; and the Abstract Space, an ambiguous zone lacking in identifiable landmarks or otherwise marred by negative perceptions. Intriguingly, our findings reveal that the discourse surrounding the city often manifests neutral or adverse sentiments, particularly when discussing these Abstract Spaces.

To augment our analysis, we employed narrative methods, incorporating life histories and commentaries on personal journeys. For native residents, cognitive and evaluative schemas relating to the city were often embedded within a narrative framework that either heralded personal accomplishments or lamented failures, relative to a referential situation. These narratives substantiated what we term as the "opinion- image" of the city. Conversely, for non-native residents, their perception hinged upon one of three emotional phases associated with city life namely, wonder, disillusionment, and either acceptance or renunciation.

Our investigation also elucidated that the timing and life stage at which individuals form relationships with the city profoundly influence their emotional engagement with specific spaces. Such temporal markers, once established, endure despite subsequent transformations in the urban landscape. Moreover, the results shed light on the dynamic temporalities in spatial social practices and underscored the salience of sensory cues in shaping emotional spaces.

For tourists, our examination of sketches and comments in visitor logs indicated that the duration of their stay is crucial in gradually establishing a cognitive framework of the city. Notably, tourists generally lack a stable cartographic representation, reflecting a transient engagement with urban landmarks and accounting for the preponderance of verbal and immediate emotional expressions.

By scrutinising visitor logs, we could also appreciate how spatial and temporal factors, including the layout and atmosphere of reception areas, collectively shape tourists' preliminary impressions of the city.

In summation, our corpus analysis suggests that urban images are co-constructed along two primary dimensions: the visible and the sensible, both contingent upon various contextual factors. Both the producers and recipients of these images, with the conditions of transmission and reception playing a pivotal role in shaping their interpretation, mediate these dimensions. We further propose that, while iconic media like photographs and posters serve as effective tools for tourism promotion, they should not be employed in isolation for a holistic urban branding strategy. Municipal stakeholders,

especially those involved in urban communication and development projects, would be well advised to leverage both the visible and sensory dimensions of urban imagery. These dimensions are intricately linked to semantic and cognitive representations. Thus, initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of public spaces, emphasising cultural elements in urban settings, and respecting the 'right to the city,' could serve as potent catalysts for positively influencing city imagery, first among its permanent residents and subsequently among its transient population tourists.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF EVENTS ON CITY DYNAMICS

The additional facet of the relationship between Essaouira's urban image and its burgeoning tourism sector were scrutinised through an ethno methodological lens. Our study focused on the role of specific events in shaping the city's social fabric and territorial dynamics, namely the 'Daour des Regragua,' the Hal festival in the early 1980s, the Gnaoua Festival, and the Maarouf recreational excursions.

By evaluating the historical and current contributions of these events to the city's economic, political, and social trajectories, we discerned their influence in altering social practices and impacting urban spaces. Remarkably, we observed that events catalyse changes in social norms by incorporating unconventional practices and transiently shifting social hierarchies. Spatial practices are also influenced through the 'sacralisation or desacralisation' of specific venues, exemplified by the path of the Regraga procession and the shift of formerly private practices into public squares (such as Lilat).

We posit that these disruptions in socio-spatial norms, whether intentional or accidental, reverberate through collective memory and social cohesion by altering socio-spatial perceptions. These events introduce novel modalities of urban interaction, socialisation, and temporalities, thereby necessitating redefined regulatory frameworks.

Challenging the status quo of an event implies altering existing social norms, affiliations, and ties. The gradual erosion of these elements risks undermining the foundational ethos of events like the Regraga Daour. Our research suggests that events manifest fluctuating relationships with the city from their inception through their evolution or eventual cessation, while continually shaping its collective memory. Crucially, our study illuminates two key points:

The strategic deployment of cultural elements and the initiation of heritage conservation processes can offer avenues for urban image transformation. However, this potential is often tempered by various levels of heritage commodification for personal, economic, or touristic gains, which are almost an unavoidable aspect of such initiatives.

Effective communication through events that aim to redefine a city's image requires a multifaceted approach: historical context, sociological relevance, political and social backing, clearly delineated stakeholder roles, and ongoing assessments of process visibility, as encapsulated in a comprehensive roadmap.

For Essaouira, we discovered that the public's acceptance or rejection of an event as a valid social practice hinges on its assimilation into the collective memory. Emotional appeals in event-driven communication typically target specific social demographics. The efficacy of this tactic in generating a new urban image largely depends on the receptivity of memory custodians and their willingness to adapt their social relationship with this collective memory. Consequently, indiscriminate promotion through 'all-public' events or uncontrolled event proliferation risks diluting or negating the communicative impact, potentially leading to conflict or resistance.

THE 'LITTLE STORY' OF TOURISM IN ESSAOUIRA AN ABRIDGED CHRONICLE OF TOURISM EVOLUTION IN ESSAOUIRA

In this section, we present an alternative narrative, albeit a condensed and chronological one, tracing the evolution of tourism in Essaouira.

- The Tourist and the Hippie Era (1960s - 1970s) During this period, societal norms dictated a separation between locals and visiting hippies. However, this fringe culture outside the mainstream yielded one of the principal aims of travel: cross-cultural engagement and socio-economic enrichment. Encounters between tourists and locals led to an enriching cultural amalgam for all parties involved⁴.
- Family-Centric Tourism or 'Oulad el Blad' (1970s - 1980s) In sync with national trends, family- oriented tourism was prevalent during this era, influenced by the religious notion of 'silate Arrahim' or maintaining family ties. This era was noteworthy for three reasons:
 - The city provided a venue for social and cultural interaction during vacation periods, which was not feasible through mainstream media.
 - It served as a socio-emotional refuge for residents of larger urban centres, both domestic and international.
 - It facilitated a convergence of family and spiritual tourism, merging two historical layers.
 - This specifically involves planning family vacations during the Regraga douar, Hiloula, Aid al Adha
- The Era of 'The Tourist as the Other' (1980s - 1990s) Government policies promoting land and property availability led to a burgeoning market for home rentals. This predated contemporary platforms like Airbnb and enabled less affluent families to afford vacations. Additionally, seasonal rentals served as a supplementary income for families.
- Essaouira as 'The Place to Be' (1990s) Emmanuel Chain's 1998 TV feature on 'Capital' catalysed a media-driven frenzy towards guest houses in the city, even though this trend had already been taking root since the early 1990s.
 - ### The Age of Catalogue Tourism (2000s) This era saw a growing detachment between tourists and locals, attributed to the professionalisation of the tourism industry and the advent of intermediaries. Increasingly, tourists have been oriented towards the city's periphery, lured by a plethora of hedonistic activities. Consequently, the city has become less of a destination and more of a backdrop for travel.
 - Observations o Mismatch with National Strategies
- The tourism on offer has often been at odds with national strategies formulated in the 1970s and 1980s, which primarily catered to luxury international tourism. These later shifted towards mass tourism in the 1990s, with a focus on 'resorts' in the 2000s. Such strategies often lag behind actual demand, which remains largely untapped and uncontrolled.

- Role of the Informal Sector o often, smaller investors can more effectively meet both national and international demands. In Essaouira, such 'informal hoteliers' have capitalised on growing environmental concerns among travellers, offering attractive eco-responsible or solidarity tourism options as an alternative to mass tourism." This historical overview highlights the evolving dynamics of tourism in Essaouira, shedding light on both the socioeconomic and cultural aspects that have characterised each era.

MAKING THE CITY A TOURIST DESTINATION TRANSFORMING URBAN SPACES INTO TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

In our comprehensive research, we found that tourists engage with cities in a manner that extends beyond designated tourist sites. Such limiting engagements are often a consequence of shortsighted tourism strategies, a criticism that is gaining traction in current discourse. Whether a visitor is navigating the streets of Paris, Bangkok, or Essaouira, they are inherently interacting with the public space of the urban environment—an aspect that is conspicuously absent in the UNWTO's official framing of tourist activities. This omission risks obfuscating the integral relationship between urban planning strategies and their counterparts in the tourism sector.

Tourism and the Dialectics of Imagination and Reality

When tourists navigate the city in a manner akin to local residents, they confront a multilayered terrain that juxtaposes imagined spaces with tangible realities. In our assessment, the emotional byproducts of this interaction are often disappointment and frustration. These emotions stem from discrepancies between preconceived images and the actual urban experience. The initial, mythic representation of the city is often cultivated through various channels such as travel guides, online photographs, media narratives, and promotional materials. Meanwhile, the secondary image is constructed through experiential engagement, involving sensory stimuli such as sounds, smells, and ambient rhythms.

Prerequisites for 'Mapping' Cities in Tourist Discourse

The process of promoting a city as a tourist destination necessitates several strategic considerations. These include the identification of the 'Other,' the discernment of appropriate 'image vectors,' and the selection of effective mediums for image dissemination. This also raises questions concerning the agents of this mediatic transformation, such as tour guides who often occupy a central role, the choice of emblematic features to highlight (e.g., landmarks, rituals, heritage artefacts), and the media and techniques employed for such promotion.

Impacts and Unintended Consequences

It is crucial to note that converting a city into a tourist hub alters the sociocultural fabric, transforming objects, events, social practices, and even identities. An 'exotic' location's transition into a mainstream tourist destination has multidimensional repercussions, including environmental, social, and heritage-related impacts.

Case Study Insights

Our investigation yields numerous instances exemplifying these dynamics: the commodification of major thoroughfares in medinas, the infusion of African and Marrakchi elements inconsistent with travel guide narratives, the fetishisation and orientalization of interior decor in traditional homes converted to riads, architectural shifts reflecting orientalist tropes, and the urban expansion into surrounding rural areas.

By examining these layers, our study aims to highlight the nuanced interplay between tourism and urban planning, thereby informing more synergistic strategies that cater to both tourists and local residents.

NAVIGATING THE COMPLEX LANDSCAPE OF URBAN IMAGE MANAGEMENT: STAKEHOLDER DYNAMICS AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN THE 'ESSAOUIRA PROJECT'

Incorporating a Multidimensional Framework to Analyse the Efficacies and Limitations of Urban Image Management: A Case Study of Essaouira Methodologically, our research necessitated the intricate task of identifying the diverse stakeholders involved in the urban promotion of Essaouira. We delineated this as the 'Essaouira Project,' which entailed a complex system of actors who could be examined both through their representational discourse and organisational frameworks. We scrutinised the narratives articulated by these actors across varying stages of city-specific project developments, with particular emphasis on those narratives that drew upon the lexicon of 'urban marketing.' Our findings implicitly underscore the limitations of a purely image-based communication strategy for urban governance. We discerned a divergence between the visions of pioneering contributors comprising NGOs, activists, authors, and artists and the more routine perspectives of daily city administrators. The former group presented macroeconomic, long-term visions for the city, whereas the latter seemed confined to the immediate, administratively sanctioned frameworks.

We further categorised the evolving system of actors around the changes to the city's image through an 'urban marketing' lens. To achieve this, we located what we term as the 'zero time,' a catalyst that organised these actors into a 'system of actors' framework. By analysing the shifts in their demands and prescribed actions, we documented the organic evolution of this system. It originated from a core pioneer group, expanded into specialised project teams, and finally incorporated new urban stakeholders comprising small-scale and large-scale investors as well as external experts dedicated to reshaping the city's image.

We posit that the resultant 'emerging image' of the city is shaped significantly by the intentionality of these actors, observable at the outset of their mobilisation. This emerging image further acts as a vehicle for the projection of a new urban identity, presumed to be consensually established. However, the fragility of this consensual image becomes evident when one scrutinises its foundational premises, especially in relation to the social and spatial aspects of the urban project.

The focus should extend beyond mere public relations and advertising although these are important for initial visibility to foster a more substantive form of communication among actors. Traditional advertising strategies often come with a high cost effectiveness ratio and run the risk of perpetuating clichéd narratives.

In conclusion, the creation and management of a city's image, particularly for tourism, should be approached with due caution and nuanced understanding. There is an inherent risk that the promotional image could become so dominant as to drive morphological changes in the city to fit the kind of image desired by specific tourist demographics. Our study advocates for a more integrated, multidimensional approach to urban image management, one that comprehensively engages the diverse interests of multiple stakeholders, in order to ensure sustainable and equitable urban development.

IN CONCLUSION: CONSTRUCTING AND SUSTAINING THE EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL FABRICS OF URBAN IMAGERY: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

In the present context, the constructed image of the city emerges as an asset of high quality. This image facilitates a positive and constructive discourse within the conceptual realm of the 'circumspect image,' thereby fortifying social ties and solidifying the city's emotional landscape. As conceptualised, the 'circumspect image' serves as an umbrella term that encapsulates the complex social substrate where historical narratives, collective memory, and social bonds intersect. The critical variable here is the temporal dimension required to embed the emotional facets of urban life into this image. The resonance of this image effectively mirrors the invisible dimensions of the cityscape.

- **Individual Crafting and Emotional Space:** The image is individually curated and is influenced by a myriad of personal reference points, spanning ideologies and convictions. These define individual and collective social experiences from the nuclear (family) to the macroscopic scale (neighbourhoods or 'houma'; nations). The crafting process incorporates the gradual implantation of spatiotemporal markers into physical space, thereby delineating an emotional geography within the city. These markers retain their functional relevance even in the face of moderate spatial metamorphoses and continue to emit perceptible signals, much like a phantom limb.
- **Collective Memory and Social Cohesion:** Collective memory and social bonds act as adhesive forces that bind fragmented elements of this image, respecting individual perceptual nuances and incorporating the emotional aspects of urban sensibilities. Variability in these images serves as a gauge for the diversity of social groups and the multiplicity of historical and collective references.
- **Consequences of Imposed Change:** Conversely, when changes to the 'intrepid image' are imposed upon a community, initial social reactions often involve distancing from the source of the change, followed by a gradual acceptance or rejection by succeeding generations.
- **Risks of Abrupt Alteration:** Drastic, unilaterally imposed changes—especially those disproportionately affecting specific social groups in an already fragmented society—run the risk of inciting social or spatial conflicts.
- **Temporal and Social Foundations:** The crafted and continuously evolving image of a city is a collaborative endeavour, deeply rooted in the tapestry of collective memory, social bonds, and historical continuity. The lack of a shared history, degraded collective memory, or weakened social ties can lead to an opaque and ephemeral urban image. Investing in historical preservation, heritage management, and community-building activities fortify collective memory and strengthens social bonds.
- **Implications for Tourism and Policy:** We contend that crafting the image of a city, particularly for tourism promotion, is not a task to be undertaken lightly. It represents a burgeoning disciplinary field warranting in-depth study, financial investment, and integration into educational curricula.
- Through this comprehensive framework, this paper aims to elucidate the intricate dynamics involved in crafting and sustaining effective urban imagery, emphasising its pivotal role in enhancing social cohesion, emotional well-being, and sustainable development of urban environments.

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