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## ***Cultural heritage and identity of places: a winning combination for territorial competitiveness.***

The aim of the present thesis was to highlight how the competitiveness of the actors operating in a territory depends strictly on the heritage culture and the identity of the place itself, well-settled concepts in literature but still need empirical validation.

Therefore, the first part of the present work illustrates some theoretical references to the concept of identity and landscape, both complex and polysyllabic notions, whose meanings can be fully understood only by adopting a point of view Multidisciplinary. On the **Identity** some points of convergence are shown on which they agree the main disciplines that are employed, from anthropology to psychology and sociology. This is a concept that recalls at the same time the idea of equality and that of difference, it is a construct in constant becoming and never given forever, it is a process that has a social nature, developing in the interaction with the other members of the group that you are part of. As far as the notion of landscape is concerned, the centrality within the geography has been brought to light, which has thoroughly explored both the objective and "material" dimensions – its being a set of physical elements – both subjective and "intangible", linked to the sphere of values and meanings attributed to it. Precisely this ambivalence makes it an object of study fascinating as complex, difficult to harness according to analytical criteria, especially with regard to the aspects related to **Perception**. In this regard, it has been stressed that this report can be studied by moving on two different levels: individual, in terms of individual perceptions, and collective, in terms of social representations. Finally, some theoretical approaches are proposed through which it is possible to link place, landscape and identity: moving from the contributions offered in this direction by the ambiental psychology and I have illustrated what the place in environmental psychology can be, what relationship not only under the physical aspect of the environmental spaces but also of the psychological aspects as regulators of the relationship between the people and the socio-physical environment, then the place understood in its complexity (Canter, 1977). The study of human environments (and the perceptions that

arouse) is built around the interaction of three components of any environmental-human structure (Canter, 1977):

- The physical characteristics;
- The economic activities that take place within it;
- Cognitive representations that characterize the *Stakeholders* that relate to the environment.

The person appraisals about the site they are always related to social goals (related to the practice of social interaction) and physical objectives (spatial accessibility, functionality of structures and comfort).

**The place** It is better known and more familiar, so it is remembered in detail becoming part of a subjectivity, own or others (it becomes "place of someone"), while the non-places remain stereotypical and anonymous. If a space is not Identity and Historian but it is anonymous and impersonal, it becomes a so-called "not place".

People classify the spaces in which they live and act using these assessments.

I have described according to different authors how the identity of a place is recognized.

**The Place identity** It is therefore defined as a set of **Knowledge R**Refer to the physical world in which the person lives, with the environmental past at the heart of these cognitions; In particular, the environmental past is not exclusively a trace of the environments, but includes the **Perceptions, positive and negative**, about that particular environment; These environmental cognitions also include social norms, behaviors and related rules.

After having illustrated the different theories about the environment and the places, we illustrate what determines **Attachment to a place**. It can be traced back to the study emotional dynamics, that is, feelings, emotions, moods that to a more or less conscious extent the individual experiences against the places where he is born, lives and acts. All of us in fact have had an emotional, positive or negative relationship with different places of the past, the present and also the future.

**The Place Heritage**, Composed of intangible assets such as "practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills..." (UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Heritage Cultural immaterial) and at the same time of all those goods defined materials, like the monuments, the constructions, the works of art, the manuscripts, the books, *Etc.*, (Hague Convention) is clearly defined a "Wealth of a place and its population" (Final. Wikipedia). This evolution can only be thought of in relation to the to globalisation, which highlights the need to stand out and, therefore, in turn, the need to return to discover and highlight its uniqueness, its factors of

distinction. As states paper "The territory becomes a palimpsest of signs of the past superimposed on each other, erased and found [...]. Communities are transformed throughout history, producing information, stratifications and substitutions; but some permanent elements of the palimpsest remain constant to be the basis for the judgement and recognition of identity. We need to find these invariants and adapt them to contemporary situations and conditions and it is on this Heritage of specificity [...] that one can establish an effective and sustainable process of innovation of the territory, which can become a source of collective identity and Communication tool between generations and maximizing opportunities. "

Continuous in this first chapter To Identify the various concepts that will then prove to be some related and impressionable to each other and others instead that do not affect at all. So the bond **Between identity and image** The first information of what you are (identity) the second is of what appears (image).

The image is therefore the result of an action aimed at improving the perception of a subject. Having to face the concept of the image of A place has been moved to deepen the concepts of Brand and *Branding* both a place and a company. The **Brand** Territorial is ' a name, term, sign, symbol, design or combination there of used to identify the goods or services or the territory itself.

It is a summary of all the values that characterize the image or what we perceive. The **Branding** (Brand management) is the process of designing, planning and communicating the name and identity in order to build and manage the reputation. Through the activities of *Branding* We try to minimize the gap between the identity of the place and the image of the place, starting from the positioning choices of the same brand of that territory. The *Branding* Of the country must of course be linked to the country itself to create a national image that is Irreplaceable and Unreproducible. Wealthy countries fully exploit the activities of *Branding* To connect directly with the consumer; Poor and developing countries, however, usually do not deal with *Branding*, thus moving away from the consumer and its economic power. The brand is so important for products and companies as it is for a place. The **National Brand** and its reputation affects the way both the inhabitants and the tourists see the nation itself, the way they behave and how they react towards what is produced in that Place, influencing Hence economic, political, social and cultural progress. When we decide to buy a product, in this case our product is the transfer In another city or going on vacation in that place (product), our process of choice relies on the perceptions we have of the country and from what it transmits its *Brand*.

The function that the image of a place plays on the purchasing decisions of the tourists and ultimately emerges as the activities of *Branding*, the notion of *Brand* and on the *Country of Origin Effect* are all applicable to the tourist market.

It is an ideal prism that represents the different facets of a brand. The facets concern both the externality (physical elements, relationship and reflection) and the interiority of the brand (personality, culture and mentalization):

- **Physical elements:** The set of objective and external characteristics associated with the brand;
- **Personality:** The character of the brand, its being associated with typical characteristics of man;
- **Report:** The relationship between *Brand* and consumers;
- **Culture:** The system of values that the brand encompasses in itself deriving from the objects/services it produces. A *Brand* It can evoke the country of origin, or the know-how and technology it possesses;
- **Reflection:** The way the customers of a *Brand* Identify with the characteristics of the *Brand* Same
- **Mentalization:** As the consumer feels through the use of the brand and in our case in the visit and in the choice of a Territory

All the prism faces form a single indissoluble structure. This structure lays its foundations on the principle according to which the brand does not exist if it does not communicate.

The ***Place Image***, or image of the place, is "the perception of the Place which exists in the consumer's mind and may or might not be in harmony with the *Brand identity*» H1 We will see in fact in Representation of results that this requirement will not be verified.

The second chapter was structured on the study of *Corporate Reputation* and the *Place Reputation*, which are then how do you build a company's reputation and what are the pillars to be used and validated.

The reputation is instead the result of a long, patient, difficult-and always at-risk-work of strengthening deep consensus, to be built over time in favor of an organization or any person who has the mission to relate positively with other. The visibility aimed at the image you can "buy" the reputation is a long process that involves more *Stakeholder*.

The reputation of a person or organization or a Place is a communicative product deriving from the interaction between the organization and its stakeholders or stakeholders: all those who can influence consumers, users, investors, suppliers. I am therefore in some way the *Stakeholders*, as

intermediaries towards the general public, to fix the value of the reputation, that is, normally to create or destroy it.

The Stakeholder theory: Social legitimation coincides with the reputation • According to Edward **Freeman, founder (1963)** of this theory, the company needs a social legitimation, that is the recognition of its positive role in society. . Theory also applicable to the territorial context • The stakeholders anyone, "can influence or be influenced" by the activity of the organization. These are: associations of interest, parties, unions, press, etc. • All together become "active" subjects, i.e. they participate in the process of formation of the business objectives.

**Reputation is competitive advantage** for **Fombrun**, founder of Reputation Institute, the most authoritative international body on the subject of reputation ([www.reputationinstitute.org](http://www.reputationinstitute.org)) the interest of current reputation studies mainly depends on from the influence it exerts on the competitiveness of the company, understood as a generative capacity of an advantage against competition and the potential of attracting new customers and of loyalty to existing ones.

The term reputation, often, is used in the singular but in reality is a multidimensional construct that reflects a plurality of meters of judgement of the different interlocutors (Cavazza, 2005). There is not a single reputation, but it differs depending on the stakeholders that it relates to, each has in fact different needs, different interests and different criteria of judgement. Then we talked about relational capital is the stock of trust, loyalty and loyalty that must be accumulated in order to increase its competitive capacity and its market value over time "the reputation depends on the real consistency and the duration in the time of Relational capital. After identifying the pillars for the purpose of measuring the reputation I analyzed what may be the competitiveness of a brand and that of a territory always for the purpose of the reports that in my research hypotheses I wanted to demonstrate.

The World Economic Forum defines competitiveness as ' the set of institutions, policies and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country '. The level of productivity, in turn, regulates the level of prosperity that a certain economy can achieve and also determines the rates of return from investment. The investments will then determine the growth rate of the economy itself. In practice, a competitive economy is the one that can grow faster over time. The World Economic The Forum analyses the above-mentioned competitiveness **The Global Competitive Index**, examining his **12 Pillars**:

- **Institutions**: The legal and administrative framework within which individuals, businesses and governments interact to generate wealth. Is It is important to work in a healthy and fair

institutional environment to cope with the recent economic and financial crisis. The quality of the institutions influences investments and decisions and plays a key role in the way companies distribute benefits and bear the costs of development strategies. The Government's attitude towards the markets and the efficiency of its operations are very important in order to avoid high economic costs for businesses, to slow down the process of economic development and to prevent mismanagement, guaranteeing the Investor retention and consumer confidence;

- **Infrastructure:** If appropriate, they guarantee the efficient functioning of the economy, because they determine the location of the economic activities and the type of activities that can develop within a country. Infrastructural networks complement the market by reducing the distance between countries and are a prerequisite for the less developed communities for access to the economy. In addition they are a safe and timely way to obtain goods or services, to circulate workers and to allow a rapid flow of information;
- **Macroeconomic environment:** The economy is growing sustainably only if the macro context is stable, i.e. when the Government is able to provide services efficiently, when there are no budgetary deficits restricting the ability to react to economic cycles, when interest rates do not are excessive;
- **Health and primary education:** Poor health conditions entail significant costs for businesses, sick workers are often absent or operate at lower levels of efficiency. We must therefore invest in the provision of health services. This pillar also takes into account the basic training received from the workers to understand that the constraint they represent for the development of the business;
- **Education and secondary education:** Higher quality education is essential for economies that want to overcome simple production processes and go back to the value chain. The current economic system requires workers to perform complex tasks and adapt quickly to a constantly evolving environment. This pillar measures secondary and tertiary registration rates and the degree of staff training;
- **Product market Efficiency:** To ensure an efficient market and therefore business productivity, it is imperative that there is fair competition. In this way the production of goods required by the market is guaranteed to the most profitable companies. However, the best environment for the exchange of goods requires a minimum of intervention by the government. The efficiency of the market also depends on the conditions of the demand, forcing companies to

be more innovative and customer-oriented;

- **Efficiency of the labour market:** The labour market must be flexible, must ensure incentives for employees, must promote meritocracy in the workplace and must be fair in the context between men and women. These factors are crucial because they have a positive effect on workers' performance;
- **Financial Market Development:** The economic and financial crisis has highlighted the central role of the financial sector, which must be able to use resources for more productive purposes and for entrepreneurial or investment projects with high rates of return. Investment, a reliable banking sector and a thorough and accurate risk assessment are the keys to the financial market;
- **Technology:** It is the pillar that measures the agility with which an economy adopts existing technologies to improve the productivity of its industries. Emphasises particular emphasis on the ability to make the most of information and communication technologies in daily activities and in production processes to increase efficiency, innovation and enable competitiveness;
- **Market Size:** Market size affects productivity as large markets allow businesses to take advantage of economies of scale. In the globalisation era, international markets have replaced national markets and this type of trade opening has a positive effect on economic growth;
- **Business Sophistication:** Sophisticated business practices are conducive to greater efficiency in the production of goods and services. There are two elements taken into account: the quality of a country's corporate networks and the quality of individual business operations and strategies. The quantity and quality of local suppliers and their interaction are judged in order to increase efficiency and innovation in processes and products and in order to reduce entry barriers for new businesses. These are ultimately activities and strategies for *Branding*, marketing, distribution, advanced manufacturing processes and production of unique and sophisticated products;
- **Innovation:** Technological advances are the basis for many of the productivity gains of economies. The digital revolution has recently transformed not only the way things are done, but also the possibilities in terms of products and services. The innovative activity must be supported by both the public and the private sector in such a way as to maintain the competitive advantage. The pillar analyses the presence of scientific research institutes that can generate new technologies, collaboration between universities and industry, and the protection of intellectual property.

After you have listed and described the 12 pillars of the Global Competitive Index It is important to emphasize that these are not independent, but rather reinforce each other and often a weakness in one sector has a negative impact on others. In addition The Global Competitive Index attaches a different weight to the pillars based on the economic development phase in which the country is located, although all 12 pillars are central to all countries. To implement this concept, the pillars are organized into three Sub-Indices (Basic requirements, efficiency enhancers, innovation factors and refinement), each of which is analyzed in every stage of development assuming according to this a specific weight.

The role of **Brand Territorial** is to represent, So, The offer components of the tourist destination and convey the message to the recipients.

In chapter three I thoroughly described what is the Methodology of research used.

The image of the nation, as well as being relevant to the impact it can have on individual *Brand Product*, can play a decisive role in the **In the attraction of tourist flows**. The image must Be the End result Of the sum of ideas, thoughts and expressions that a person has of a place perceived by potential users, because it is only through the evaluation of this image that one can understand how the proposed destination is placed on the market, what is its Competitive position.

Investment Of *Stakeholder* in a place they attract tourists and create no Business for Business activities. The Studio Analyzes the role of the 'Identity and The *Heritage* of a Place which carriers of Tourist attraction, developing the Competitiveness of the place and its traders, guiding the 'Image, and The Reputation.

The methodological approach to field research has favoured a setting Quantitative, that rests Essentially on mathematical formalization and the use of statistical models, with the aim of predicting and controlling events through the proposition of theories able to respond to the requirement of observability, or the possibility of Perform objective and reproducible experiments. the quantitative approach, In fact, aims at the definition Of objective laws and models, to explain and interpret the phenomena studied. In This channel, the conceptual model has been conceived that the field analysis intends to validate and that proposes the competitiveness, both of the territories and of the operators operating there, as dependent on the reputation of a place, in turn function of *Place Image*, Powered by *Place Identity* and the *Place Heritage*.

In detail, the following *Research Question*:



Q1) What Factors positively affect The *Place Image*?

Q2) which factors positively influence The *Place Heritage*?

Q3) Is possible to identify a positive relationship between *Place Branding*, *Place Heritage* and *Place Reputation*?

Q4) What are the main influences on brand competitiveness (*Place Branding* and the competitiveness of the *Retailers*)?

In other words, research aims first to identify the factors that are most likely to have a relevant influence with a *Place Image* Favorable, starting from a *Place Heritage* Strong with a well-recognized identity. The identity of the place is largely linked to the concepts of community education, because it recognizes that geographic spaces do not only unite a community together, but rather highlight social ties that represent the building of the community.

To explore the relationships between *Place Identity*, *Place Heritage*, Influence on *Place Image*, *Place Reputation*, *Brand Competitiveness* And *Retailers Competitiveness*, have been defined seven

in order to investigate the illustrated reports, two categories of *Stakeholders*, which is intended to investigate perceptions, or tourists and employees. The data collection was conducted within one of the most famous *Department Store* World-wide, located in one of the richest and most attractive London neighborhoods, and identified in the collective imaginary as a real tourist attraction. 300 subjects of age were involved in the survey; however, 265 interviews were deemed valid.

The structural model, intervening in the second stage, specifies the causal relationships between the latent variables and serves to determine the causal effects between the constructs through the regression equations (structural equations, in fact). (Anderson and Varian, 1988).

The results suggest so that the *Heritage* of a place is a factor key to competitiveness of the retailers of the territory through his image and reputation. The study presents important implications for the widening of the literature in the matter, the development further than the theory and the implementation of more attractive commercial practices.

In particular, using the above theories, the study pushes beyond the current literature for identify the relationship that connects *Place Identity*, *Place Heritage*, *Place Image*, reputation and competitiveness.

The *Place Identity*, measured through the items Philosophy, Personality, Positioning (Melewar et al., 2016), Recalls a time-based concept (Balmer, 2017), which identifies a distinctive character of continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy and identification (Ginting And Rahman, 2016). Today, many strategies for *Place Branding* They are oriented to develop a unique and distinctive identity in the minds of their *Stakeholders* (Foroudi et al., 2016) through The improvement Quality of life and the degree of happiness, all for the benefit of the Place Image. Surprisingly, then the results indicate that the *Place Identity* did not the ability To influence the *Place Image*.

In the same direction, the *Place Heritage* It identifies a social and temporal construction based primarily on history. The Its determinants, as theorized of Hakala et al. (2011), are considered to be able to directly influence The *Place Image*, by positively influencing the perceptions of *Stakeholders*. so The *Place Heritage* Strengthens, Along with the reputation, The competitiveness of *Brand* of the place and the *Retailers*. However, the results are not validated in the research Inherent in the Correlation between *Place Identity* And *Place Heritage*.

The significant **Relationship between reputation and competitiveness** (in terms of brand and Retailers) Instead It reveals that if employees and customers perceive the territory favourably and their expectations are met, and If you Same place has a favorable reputation, It has an impact on the competitiveness of the brand and the retailer (Harrods). This study applies to the'idea that the solidity of the'Image of the place and an adequate reputation can help support A strong position of traders In a competitive market. As expected, Then, the field analysis It has shown that the competitiveness of the trade mark is positively influenced by the competitiveness of retailers. The value of the study proposed, finally, It is in an attempt to examine empirically the reports illustrated in the conceptual model, still not yet explored in the field, providing practical managerial implications for the enhancement of the competitiveness of *Retailers*