
Urban landscape as public brand

a strategy and tool to manage urban order

EURAU'12

ABSTRACT. The public brand concept, i.e. a public interest and collective value is the basis for a strategy to respond to people's expectations for a place by offering a culture of identity. It relates to landscape as a tool for urban order in scattered cities. Identification with landscape adds values for physical and emotional well-being, establishing a relationship with a place and its people. Identification guides interaction for continuity of joint values, giving a strategic frame for changes, assigning public space a key role. To construct autonomous significance the brand concept explores values of continuity and congruence in mental and real images. The public brand provides a consistent link of mutual relationships to manage visibility and experience of joint values on different scales. While identification on regional scale depends on the experience of a territorial and social continuity, on local scale the quality system of vivid everyday spaces concretizes shared values.

KEYWORDS. Landscape, public brand, public space, identity

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1. Landscape as public space: a tool for urban order

Strategies and tools to guide the production of an urban landscape of high quality and public relevance are an important factor of urban order and significance in scattered cities or Metropolitan areas. **Public brand** is argued as concept with potential to guide interaction of public and private stakeholders for this purpose by managing collective values motivating both, cultural, social and economic discourses.

We illustrate our approach on the landscape of Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA).

Complexity and loss of collective values in global development processes has led to **commoditization of both city and landscape**. The diffuse and homogenized images are poorly remarkable, don't fit to people's emotional mental images and ultimately don't give orientation and motivation for targeted action (Sievarts 2003, Lerch 2011). This clearly affects a places evaluation in global context as a relationship of a place to cultural values is decisive for people's well-being (Hayden 1995, Jackson 1984).

In a metropolitan context landscape is a connecting system integrating the diversity of public spaces, their network of infrastructures and service facilities. As public space, landscape is an important tool to articulate continuous structures meeting people's common experience, memories and culture of urban identity. Therefore an aware communication of cultural characteristics of landscape is considered as an interdisciplinary means to counteract the poor generic **built environment in urbanized peripheries** (De Meulder and Shannon 2010).

Positive impact of green urban open spaces on peoples' well-being is in the focus of this research, showing benefits for physical and emotional health, security, social activities (cf. Maas 2011), influencing location decisions and economical property values (Gruehn et al. 2011) as well as intangible value recognition with roots in features of origin.

The fundamental challenge for cities and their landscapes in global competition is to develop under unpredictable conditions, instability of economic structures and dynamics of diverse social structures, an environment of quality and attractiveness (Budde et al. 2010). Therefore the appreciation of landscape as a public interest and an element of urban order faces a number of conflicting issues:

- Shortage of public finances, socio-economic shifts and useless existing planning tools;
- Required civil engagement for common interests is complicated by a loss of social cohesion and responsibility;
- Globally exchangeable goods are confronted by a general desire for a "place" and an increasing search for emotional experiences (Castells 1997, Esch et al. 2005).

2. Landscape identity as interaction guiding force

We are facing an uncertain situation where social systems seem weak and dissolving but each one has to become responsible and active for the future society. Therefore interaction and participation at all levels has become critical.

The need of more individual responsibility for public interests logically leads to a demand for productivity of landscape in the discussion about future development. Productivity as a public interest addresses landscape as service of investments for

cultural vividness, broad interaction, social cohesion, with impact on its creative appropriation and socio-economical benefits.

New management concepts are needed to motivate engagement and interaction of people with legitimate interest in certain landscape characteristics. This addresses first of all people living and working in a city as internal stakeholders. The concept we deal with in this paper responds to this objective by the argument that identification of people with landscape adds values and therefore guides engagement and interaction, contributing to well-being, productivity and urban significance.

In this sense Landscape is considered not just as a system ruled by own logics and entropies, but as a relation element of urban order, through a process of representation of identity in space and time. As social interaction is required, it becomes the integration area of necessary knowledge from different sources. By crossing interdisciplinary knowledge boundaries, we aim for a better understanding and interacting in the management of urban order.

Along with the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe 2000) we understand landscape as dynamic process whose character results of peoples' perception of cultural values in time. Therefore landscape images have to articulate expectations in peoples' awareness of values of their environment. Identification with landscape is a **result of an aware interaction with our environment**.

The aim of evaluation is our well-being, which is to be understood as a tolerance range between continuity of characteristics and adaption to an environment (Damasio 2011). The scope of our reflections guides our interest and interaction: while the more short-term scope allows us to feel the self and the calmness, the long-term scope is related to our personality and identity and also to feelings of responsibility and freedom (Damasio 2011, Singer 2002). We experience in this process certain perceptions as attractive that have some congruence to our expectations but also provide new information and ideas to improve our well-being by adaption (ibid.).

Considering physical rules of visual perception and the associative knowledge structures, continuity and vividness of images in space and time turn out as important factors to guide our interaction with relevance for our identity. Continuity is linked to consistency in the sense of a link between aesthetical, verbal and emotional associations with a material substance (Weinberg and Diehl 2005). Survival of landscape as cultural value in peoples' perception depends on a very sensible management of this link during adaption processes (Antrop 2004).



Fig. 1 Survival of Cascais fishing port: continuity of interaction values (left King D. Carlos ca. 1900)

Identification with spaces or objects is always connected to the experience of joint cultural values and social relationships. Empirical studies of market research show, that people only develop relevant relationships to products, if personality features of all stakeholders, cultural values and experiences with other people are associated as significant characteristics (Aaker 1997). This is analog to findings of sociology showing that a close emotional bond between an individual, a social community and a space manifests in time consistent characteristics of a territory and triggers social interaction (Lefebvre 1972, Halbwachs 1950).

The management of identity, for individuals as for communities, is an ongoing interactive process between inside expectations and outside experiences. Understanding identity as peoples' source of meaning (Castells 1997), landscape as well as the community producing it offers an identity if and when its cultural characteristics are judged as relevant values for the own well-being. The cultural environment in which we grew up influences our expectations significantly (Singer 2002) as a conflicting process with spatial discontinuities (Hayden 1995). Hence it is consequent to manage standards of clarity and target-orientated continuity (Jackson 1984), i.e. offer a culture of identity with value orientation to guide broad interaction.

Identification arises from an experience of space with all senses and social interaction. From that view Brandão (2011) equals public space with identity, urbanity and interactivity, as a notion referring to a process of social construction. The "sense of belonging" and "appropriation" of a public space may be considered as an idea resulting from identity exchanges and their application to public benefits of Public Spaces, Landscapes, Infra-structures or urban Facilities, as a collective service and we may also call urbanity qualities, the common culture of "living together": proximity, accessibility, connectivity are possibilities for interaction and critical structures for identification.

A continuity of adequate physical conditions defines the meaning of landscape for well-being. Therefore continuous joint ideas are likely to focus on specific locations in urban areas, to be linked to an orderly quality system. The analysis of mental images of such places and their congruence could be a key, to find synergies between stakeholders and guide the actions for a production of **urban order based on broad sense of public space.**

As social life mirrors in material substance, we can understand landscape as living organism of which we are part of and that like us aims for continuity of its characteristics with change as natural part of the process. Hence, continuity of characteristics and public spaces as communication arteries are relevant values of landscape, guiding identification and interaction. Vividness and openness are logical additions responding to the adaptive character of the identity process.

Resuming, we find a cultural notion of Brand as an anthropological representation: A landscape that communicates a culture of identity contributes to urban significance and productivity. Branding landscape is a strategy to respond to people's expectations to a place by managing common values. Brand identity management is an interactive process balancing a commitment for continuity of characteristics and openness for diverse expectations and change.

Experience of joint values at the operational level of daily life differentiates brands from generic products with narrow economic perspectives of a tactical procedure envisioning a short term result. Considering the brand as a concept of joint responsibility for a product and its benefit for people's well-being, we investigate it

as strategy and tool to guide the quality of urban landscape as joint value of the public.

3. Public brand: a strategy and tool to manage landscape identity

Brand establishes a mutual relationship between all stakeholders by continuously communicating, making collective values visible and experienced. Therefore peoples' awareness is in the centre of this communication. By mediation of personality features and values a brand contributes to quality of life and becomes a joint value of all stakeholders.

The basis of brand building is a common culture. Starting point therefore is always the identification of shared cultural values of long-term meaning. The resulting interaction, responsibility and provision of competences and resources reflect in relevant long-term characteristics of material products, an identity. These characteristics are perceptible by others and create clear mental images.

The symbolic layer makes the difference between brand and product. The brand value represents a relationship which is marked by loyalty, commitment, familiarity, attachment and clear vividness of the mental image. It is a knowledge structure with shared associations in the perception of the brand and shows in economical value (Esch et al. 2005). Brand management therefore activates the competences and resources of internal stakeholders and takes the external expectations into account (Burmam and Müller 2010).

Identity is the fundament of brand management and responsibility of an organization. Strong brands show, that the identity of a brand develops over many years and thus needs continuity (Esch et al. 2005) and strategic ideas for future development. **That is why brand identity is rooted in culture**, history, territorial and institutional features as well as specific competences of an organization and its stakeholders (Burmam and Müller 2010).

The identity-orientated approach allows it to apply the brand as a logical concept for the management of relationships with a general public by a consistent image concretizing collective values and their experience by physical and social contacts in daily life, constructing the symbolic layer (cf. Kernstock 2004).



Fig. 2 Lisbon Belem: a place communicating central values of culture in history

A continuous and consistent management of brand identity at the strategic and operative level therefore networks stakeholders vertically and horizontally, responding to diverse and also conflicting mindsets but integrating them in a frame of common value representations. Therefore the brand can be an instrument of public policy to manage a high quality landscape as joint value of a public space, a tool for urban order. **Landscape as public brand addresses the public interest** of a productive landscape, as:

- medium of value communication with impact on physical and emotional well being
- and economic resource as an asset that fosters social interaction across a public.

Through a democratic process of brand management develops a collective awareness and knowledge about a space mobilizing cultural, social and economic discourses. This is of public interest. The "landscape" public brand offers an open platform for various collaborations. In projects of joint identification with certain landscape characteristics within an overall value frame each one is asked to become an active stakeholder and contribute to a spatial quality system and social net. A network of positive images of place and time brings this relationship between individual, social community and the expression of territorial and social continuity, to experience on metropolitan scale.



Fig. 3 The public brand as consistent concept

4. Landscape identity analysis

Considering a broad notion of identification landscape carries a consistent system of references that fosters identification with a place, by balancing continuity and openness for subjective associations and change. The brand is a "natural" concept of culture, addressing an always common process of management of a products' importance, quality and recognition within a competitive field. Hence, spaces in whose image people's interaction and competences clearly mirror and which are anchored in the mind of the stakeholders have brand features.

The image of the LMA landscape shows a loss of a culture of identity but still a clear continuity of dominant structures, of a diversity of small mobile structures and less of interrelated organization. This let us assume that certain mental images of landscape to which future concepts could connect, still exists. These images can express identity by the management of a public brand.

However, due to **fragmented structures and strong transformations in present times** adequate physical conditions may miss to promote identification by the experience of continuity and interaction in space. To construct autonomous significance from landscape potential the brand concept explores continuity in mental images and its congruence to real and media image as key factor for identification. From that knowledge targeted concepts for a consistent and broad system of landscape as public space can be derived.

We analyze landscape identity by desk and empirical research. The values of continuity, vividness, openness, clarity and physical interaction availability serve as criteria. The approach to analyze brand identity by Esch (2005) offers a basic tool to systematically explore different aspects of landscape identity. The tool connects the different aspects consequently to clarify the relationship between expected benefits of a landscape and their experience in space and time. This let us conclude on qualities of the real image as key factor for identification with landscape. The tool responds to the processing of knowledge in an analytical – verbal form and an emotional - non-verbal form.

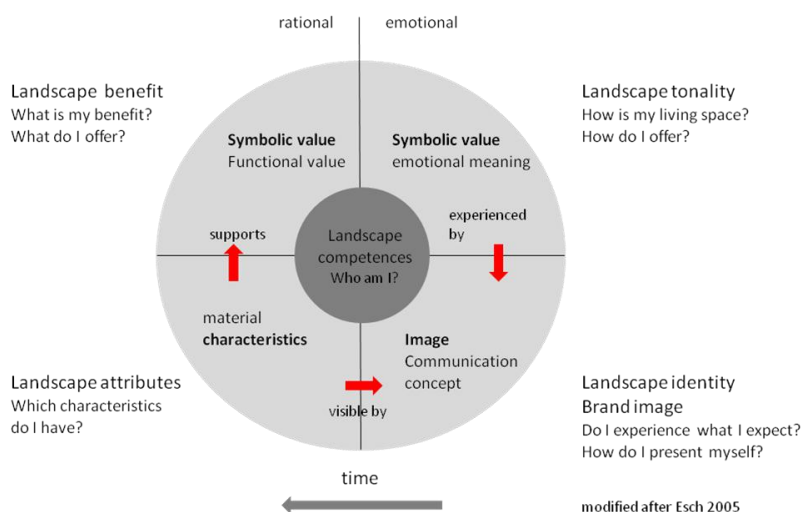


Fig. 4 Approach to landscape identity analysis

The tool can be applied consistently at all scales. The questions address the analysis of internal stakeholders' associations and the outside image.

5. Landscape as public brand: a quality system of positive images and vivid every day spaces

Starting from the aspect of continuity and interaction values of landscape identity as bases of brand identity, we may arrive to the layers of connecting structures that may recreate on regional level a collective identity (train lines, roads, coastal continuity, meeting and view points).

This may be based on relations between recognized elements of peoples' identification with the LMA landscape. Spatial belonging is investigated along the questions of:

- scope of identification,
- congruence of mental and real image,
- interaction values of physical structures.

The current status of research already shows some trends.

5.1 Scope of identification

A larger scope of spatial awareness is essential for socio-economic transformation and outside perception of regional potential in global competition. A loss of territorial and social connectivity and common culture might cause that people identify with landscape only on small scale.

Interviews show that LMA stakeholders perceive still a wider area as habitat of diverse qualities causing attachment. The scope is determined by certain places related to:

- past experiences and common history,
- relevant actual activities and experiences in landscape
- social relationships.

All places defining the scope of identification have public accessibility.

Car mobility influences the scope related to individual interests and their realization in the living space. Therefore the scope of identification in metropolitan context can be guided by a continuous network of positive images of place in time, binding to peoples' mindset.

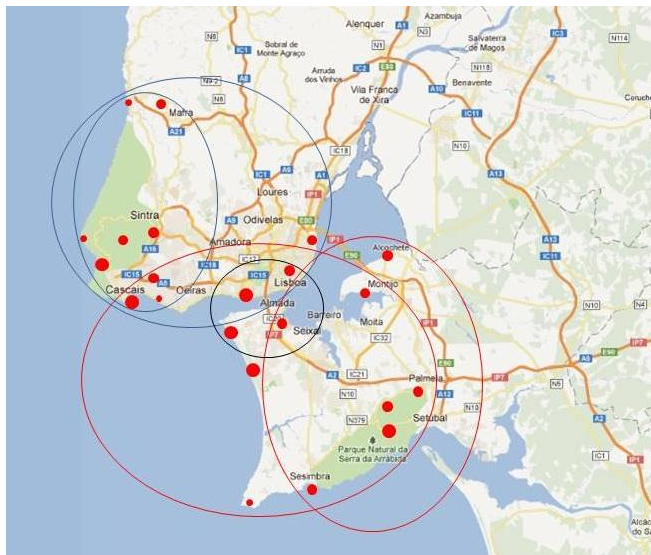


Fig. 5 Scopes and places of identification, based on interviews on current state, grouped by main geographical habitats: North and South part LMA and Lisbon City

5.2. Congruence of expectations and experience of landscape

A broad congruence between mental and real images seems to concentrate on a few types of places with a clear continuity of structures and consistent link to people's expectations: the dominant waterfronts and mountain areas, historic urban centers and public parks offering diversity and vivid social life. "Green", "water", "wide views", "culture", "movement", "social contacts" are common contents of positive memories.

Empirical research shows relevant trends:

- People have a wide notion of "landscape" as overall environment, associating structures from urban to natural images, multi-sensory perceptions, emotions;
- People associate with vivid everyday spaces a continuity of cultural characteristics i.e. typically smaller dimensions, some disorder, changes and multi-functionality enabling discoveries, feeling of human proximity by social interaction in public space, "belonging like in a village";
- Landscape distant to urbanization is related to privacy, shared only with selected persons.
- People experience emotional benefits from feelings of calmness, freedom, protection related to productivity, strength and physical health, i.e. landscape is of high importance for well-being;
- Significant is a strong call and commitment for individual responsibility and interaction for landscape qualities. This identification refers to the area of personal living.

Landscape identity analysis reveals its importance as a tool to concretize shared values by a targeted development of positive images and vivid every day spaces and their connection to a quality system.

5.3. Interaction values of physical structures

Interaction values of landscape have undergone strong transformation showing continuities and discontinuities. On metropolitan scale landscapes of relevant long-term characteristics like the waterfront and mountain areas are accessible and connected to urbanization back to history. Reduced interaction values are experienced, where public space is limited to a narrow zone carrying also transport infrastructures or where new illusive "quality" images like marinas are not consistent to past qualities of vivid public spaces affordable for all.

On local scale, landscape often lacks accessibility, basic infrastructure, cultivation, connectivity to urbanization or large structures. Main reasons are shifts of land use, a traditional emphasis on private property, reinforced by changes in mutual trust. Binding to past cultural practices people miss places for social life and possibilities for movement due to changing practices and that's why **landscape lacks conditions to promote identification** by continuity and interaction.

The further research of physical and cultural characteristics of landscape as public space is essential to understand specific continuities and adaption possibilities for conclusions on concepts to recover a culture of identity by a consistent and broad system of public space.

Considering a necessary balance between continuity of characteristics and openness for diverse mindsets in brand identity management, concepts should be

implemented by a strategic frame of regulations defining a clear commitment for joint values and continuous landscape characteristics. Hence Public policy could guide interaction by a management of a quality system of positive images and vivid every day spaces. Tools suitable to activate synergies across a society and generating cultural, social and economical benefits should support productive interaction.

6. Conclusion

Actual research already shows:

- The analysis of landscape identity from the viewpoint of brand management produces knowledge to guide interaction for a purposeful articulation of relevant landscape characteristics as a tool for urban order.
- Empirical methods give clear results on continuous cultural values and connected landscape characteristics relevant for identification on metropolitan and local scale.
- As public brand identity requires authentic spaces this is an essential request for a tool to construct autonomous significance.

From research at the interface between cultural values and landscape characteristics on a timeline, a strategic frame of relevant continuous characteristics can be declined into the future. As landscape values bind to people's expectations, they reveal a high potential to make joint values visible and experienced for a broad public by a system of public spaces clarifying a culture of identity.

People clearly relate landscape experiences congruent to their expectations with physical and emotional well-being. Continuity of associations, public accessibility and experience of social relationships are connected values that allow the concepts' wider integration with other public space strategies.

As brand management focus on the relation between expected benefits and experience in reality, public brand is a suitable concept to activate people's competences and resources for a culturally, socially and economically productive urban space, expressing high commitment for interaction.

The concepts' interdisciplinary, research references and application potential, let us conclude that public brand brings a new sense of trust and service that has a theoretical and practical strong capability: To guide the creation of urban order, requires less regulations than continuous positive concepts of joint value management that motivate stakeholder's interaction by identification with public space.

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8. Legends

Fig. 1 Survival of Cascais fishing port: continuity of interaction values (left King D. Carlos ca. 1900), photos: google (8th June 2012), Ulrike Sacher.

Fig. 2 Lisbon Belem: a place communicating central values of culture in history, photo: Ulrike Sacher.

Fig. 3 The public brand as consistent concept: connecting public space at the Atlantic waterfront and public accessible private space relating water themes, photos: Ulrike Sacher.

Fig. 4 Approach for landscape identity analysis, Ulrike Sacher modified after ESCH, Franz-Rudolf et al. *Ansätze zur Erfassung und Entwicklung der Markenidentität*, in Esch F.-R. (ed.), *Moderne Markenführung*, Wiesbaden, Gabler, 2005, p 121.

Fig. 5 Scopes and places of identification, based on interviews on current state, grouped by main geographical habitats: North and South part LMA and Lisbon City, map source google (2th April 2012), empirical data 2012, Ulrike Sacher.