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City Branding Strategies: A model for the diagnosis of the perceived image of an urban cultural landscape through spatial approaches. The case of Larnaca city

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Abstract

The perceptions and associations related to urban cultural landscapes have a direct impact on almost all aspects of its cross-border connectivity. In the context of city branding strategies, the paper introduces a model for the diagnosis of the perceived image of an urban cultural landscape through spatial approaches. The hypothesis proposes a model that could lead the contemporary places not only to define themselves in reference to their cultural assets but to give also an orientation to the urban planning processes and architectural concepts. Thus, the communicative dynamics of a place to compose its competitive identity through symbolic mechanisms are identified. The outcomes of the research confirm the conjecture that the diagnostic model proposed, as design-based guide for architects and planners, may lead to significant impacts on the perceived image of an urban cultural landscape. The hypotheses related on these issues were tested by the research in Larnaca city.

Keywords

perceived image, cultural landscape, city branding, urban design, architectural design

Στρατηγικές City Branding: Διαγνωστικό μοντέλο της αντιληπτικής εικόνας των αστικών πολιτιστικών τοπίων μέσω χωρικών προσεγγίσεων. Η περίπτωση της Λάρνακας

Περίληψη

Στο πλαίσιο των στρατηγικών city branding, το άρθρο προτείνει ένα μοντέλο για τη διάγνωση της αντιληπτικής εικόνας ενός αστικού πολιτιστικού τοπίου μέσω χωρικών προσεγγίσεων. Η υπόθεση εργασίας που συγκροτήθηκε αφορά ένα μοντέλο που θα μπορούσε να οδηγήσει τους σύγχρονους τόπους όχι μόνο στον αυτοπροσδιορισμό τους σε σχέση με τις πολιτισμικές τους αξίες, αλλά και στην απόδοση προσανατολισμού και κατεύθυνσης σε αρχιτεκτονικούς και πολεοδομικούς σχεδιασμούς. Έτσι εντοπίζεται η επικοινωνιακή δυναμική ενός τόπου στη συγκρότηση ανταγωνιστικής και μη αντιγράψιμης ταυτότητας μέσω συμβολικών μηχανισμών. Οι υποθέσεις εργασίας που σχετίζονται με τα ζητήματα αυτά, ελέγχθηκαν μέσα από το παράδειγμα της Λάρνακας. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας υποστηρίζουν την υπόθεση πως το προτεινόμενο διαγνωστικό μοντέλο αποτελεί σημαντικό οδηγό για το στρατηγικό σχεδιασμό των σύγχρονων πόλεων με χωρικές προσεγγίσεις και σημαντικό διαχειριστικό εργαλείο σε στρατηγικές city branding.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

αντιληπτική εικόνα, πολιτισμικό τοπίο, πολιτιστικό τοπίο, city branding, αστικός σχεδιασμός, αρχιτεκτονικός σχεδιασμός

1. INTRODUCTION

In the processes of economic globalization and European integration, architectural objects, visual traces and spatial goods with social-cultural content are often linked as associations and perceptions, with the city they belong. This associations' and perceptions' content is described by key authors of the city branding literature, as 'the aura' that people have intertwined with a place and it is an important element of its distinct identity. This content, as a mental construction and an intangible place asset, generates place consumption and as such consists a fundamental tool for city branding strategies.

A growing number of studies with city branding concerns appear to converge in that the dynamics of a place image to produce positive associations and perceptions have a direct positive impact in every aspect of a place cross boarder connectivity. That means

that cities with the highest positive image, attract more easily new residents, visitors and investments. Additionally, their goods and services are more easily promoted and their people are more easily get attention in business, in education, in culture etc. (see for instance, Anholt, 2007; Konecnik and Gartner, 2007; Cai, 2002; Kotler et al. 1999,1993; Selby and Morgan, 1996 etc.;).

It seems that, the perceived image of a place not only has a direct impact on almost all aspects of a city's cooperation with other places, with an important role in its economic development attracting the keen interest of the scientific and academic community (Anholt 2004, 2007, 2010; Dinnie, 2011; Klingmann, 2007; Kavartzis and Ashworth, 2005; Middleton, 2011; Florida, 2003, 2005; Markusen, 2006; Clark, 2007; Hall, 1998) but also in the tourism industry (Gallarza et al., 2002; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000; Vaughan and Edwards 1999; Walmsley and Jenkins 1993). As Deffner & Metaxas (2005, 367) argue, "European regions and cities have been, especially during the last twenty years, characterised by a plurality of efforts to define their vision, to construct their identity and to shape their images, in order to become more attractive and, consequently, competitive, and also to increase their market share in a globalised economy. Further to this, places have been elaborating and implementing particular competitive policies and strategic plans in order to attract the potential target markets (new investments, tourists, new residents etc)."

In this context of a globally competitive environment, the urban cultural landscapes seem to attempt to redefine themselves through architectural objects, visual traces and spatial goods with social-cultural content in order to promote positive images and attract new investments, visitors and residents (Ashworth and Voogd 1990; Ashworth, 2009; Lash and Urry, 1994).

This paper interprets through the methodological model proposed, the dynamic of the urban fabric, to project positive images¹. From such an interpretation emerge the spatial, cultural and social assets that are closely linked to the desired concepts and meanings, the imaginary (external process). This process contributes to a system related to symbolic economy, capital investments and the production of cultural meanings. In accordance with the process of the construction of a spatial narrative with the desired meanings (*the imaginary*), the research express the relationships of the observer with an object and between objects relationship. Furthermore, the research explores the structure

¹ The paper is based on the Doctoral Thesis, Michael, S. (2018). Η Αρχιτεκτονική και ο Αστικός Σχεδιασμός Μέσα από Στρατηγικές City Branding. Χωρικές Προσεγγίσεις Συγκρότησης Ανταγωνιστικής Πολιτισμικής Ταυτότητας. Το Παράδειγμα της Λάρνακας. (Architecture and Urban Design through City Branding Strategies. Spatial Approaches of Composing Competitive Cultural Identity. The case of Larnaca city), National Technical University of Athens, School of Architecture (in Greek).

of the urban fabric through the elements, *identity, structure and the meaning of a place*, which according to Lynch (1960, 8), constitute the characteristics of *the image of the city*.

The hypothesis proposes a model that could lead the contemporary places not only to define themselves in reference to their cultural assets but to give also an orientation to the urban planning processes and architectural concepts. Thus, the communicative dynamics of a place to compose its competitive identity through symbolic mechanisms are identified. The outcomes of the research confirm the conjecture that the diagnostic model proposed, as design-based guide for architects and planners, may lead to significant impacts on the perceived image of an urban cultural landscape. In addition, the insights of analysis reveal whether the perceptual capacity of an urban cultural landscape need to be empowered by the introduction of new nodes, urban clusters, cultural assets and networks to the urban fabric. The hypotheses related on these issues were tested by the research in Larnaca city.

2. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Place Branding is about influencing the place image formation through the reputation management` that is the *positive place image management*. For that reason, we attempt to identify the meaning of the terms that are related to place image. In this process, we accept the interpretation of the terms 'perceived-image', 'physiognomy' and 'place', as they were introduced by Stephanou (1999, 211). In particular, Stephanou argue that '*Place*' is experienced by its own characteristics while, '*image-perception*' displays all the features of a place in a single perception-character, '*the landscape*'. '*Physiognomy*' on the other hand, refers to the uniqueness, the identity, the personality of a place as it is expressed and appears through the characteristics of its landscape. Thus, the physiognomy concerns the very entity of the place, its uniqueness as it is expressed through its landscape.

According to Anholt (2007), the positive perceived image that undertakes to promote the '*Reputation*' of a place through city branding strategies, refers to its '*competitive identity*'. It seems that the six key factors of the '*City Brand Hexagon*' that Anholt suggests, i) The Presence, ii) The Place, iii) The Dynamics, iv) The Pulse, v) The Residents, and vi) The Prerequisites, affect the reputation of a city and define the three main directions of a place, A) The Advanced Economy, B) The Attractive Environment, C) The Efficient Governance.

Following the logic of Anholt (2007) for the composition of a '*competitive identity*' through the three main directions, Gospodini (2002, 60) focuses on economic development through the quality of urban space. Regarding the issue of urban morphology from the point of view of the use of urban design as a means of urban tourism development, Gospodini (2001, 932-933) emphasizes that "Especially for peripheral European smaller cities...urban space morphology and urban tourism is a chance and a challenge;"

While literature on the subject of mental representations and associations of the environment includes numerous concepts, there is a mutual consent that positive place images, depends to a great extent on the personality and the characteristics of each person, as well as on his degree of familiarity with the place (see for instance, Ashworth & Voogd, 1990; Kosmopoulos, 1994; Crompton, 1979; Goodall, 1988). For example, the perceived images of residents may differ from the non-residents', as the potential visitors, have little familiarity and experience with the place in relation to the residents, despite the wealth of information available and the destination options (Ashworth and Voogd 1990:83-95). Therefore, in the analysis of the perceived image of Larnaca city, we target visitors from countries of the main tourist market of Cyprus, residents of Cyprus who are not residents of Larnaca and residents of Larnaca (see Methodology). The interactive relationship between the terms, perceived image and competitive identity, allows us through the diagnostic model, to propose future acts of empowering the one (i.e. competitive identity), in order to enhance the other (i.e. perceived image).

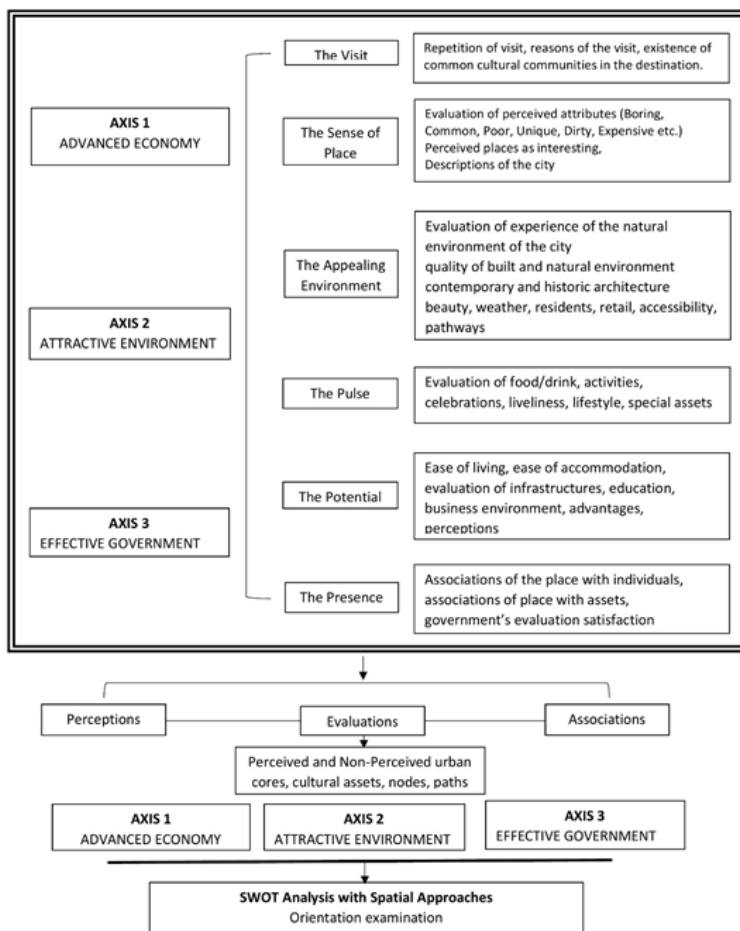
Thus, the pursuit of optimizing the content of, *the imaginary*, leads us in examining perception patterns that influence consumer's behavior. These processes of identifying patterns of mental representations of the environment, *the cognitive maps*, are described by Neisser (1976) as '*The Perceptual cycle model*': "In this model, there is a triangular relationship between objective reality, in our case places, the individual's explorative behavior of that reality through perception, what we could term place experience, and the existing '*schema*'. Place-images are *schemata*, being both passively modified by information as well as actively controlling the process of its selection" (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990:82).

The *schemata* contain a meaning for the individuals who shape the cognitive map. Moreover, as cognitive representations, they function as an evaluative tool of the environmental structure through which nodes, landmarks, districts, edges and paths are identified (Kalergis, 2016; Evans, 1980; Evans and Pezdek, 1980; Golledge, 1987; Moore, 1974; Spoehr and Lehmkuhle, 1982; Kaplan, 1973). These elements inform us about the identification of the urban environment and its dynamics in shaping cognitive structures (representations). On this, Lynch (1960: 2-3) refers to as *legibility, visibility, or imageability* and it is composed by recognizable symbols in an organized and compact structure.

Authors as Lynch (1960), Lowenthal (1961) and Tuan (1974), accepted the conception of the cognitive maps as a valid scientific tool for exploring the perceived image of places, while authors as Dawns and Stea, (1973), Gould and White (1974), Crompton (1979), Pocock and Hunson (1978), Burgess (1982), Walmsley (1988) Laaksonen et al. (2006), contributed to the introduction of methods of approaching the perceived image and measuring its characteristics (i.e. urban attractiveness, Gravagnuolo et al., 2013). In

this process of measuring characteristics of perceived image, the short-term representation in memory is considered that could be stated in a verbal way (Gärling et al., 1981, 1984).

Figure 1. Diagnostic Model of the Perceived Image of an Urban Cultural Landscape Model through Spatial Approaches



Source: Author

In this context, the identification of urban symbols through the diagnostic model proposed is a predominant element in city branding strategies with spatial approaches. Their association with the place itself is part of the conceptual meanings of the city's

narrative (Eiffel Tower-Paris, Plaka-Athens, Las Ramblas-Barcelona, etc.). According to the identity of a place by means of 'competitiveness', Gospodini (2004:242) claims that "innovative design of space can work efficiently as a place identity generator in the same ways in which built heritage has been performing highly in modern—culturally bounded and nation-state-oriented—European societies".

In our research, we acknowledge that the components that the main authors have introduced are satisfactorily approaching the social, political, economic, cultural content of city branding. At the same time, we enrich the content with sensory, spatial and perceptual psychological and mental response data, which identify the communicative dynamics of an urban cultural landscape to compose its competitive identity through symbolic mechanisms. This process is supported by the 'tourist gaze' theory (Urry, 2011) which highlights the importance of composing the perceived image of a place through recognizable urban symbols that can be photographed, multiplied and distributed.

Taking into account the above theoretical framework, the proposed model for the diagnosis of the perceived image of an urban cultural landscape that is shown in Figure 1, can lead to significant conclusions that concern the urban development of contemporary urban cultural landscapes. At the same time, it can be a part of a broader strategic plan of a city branding strategy which would promote the perceived image of a place through its cultural and natural assets.

3. METHODOLOGY

The city of Larnaca, situated on the southern coast of Cyprus, is the research site for this study. It covers an urban area of 0.12 km², with a population of around 86.000 residents, as of the 2011 census. The city is considered a traditional Mediterranean 'Sea and Sun' destination. Coastal tourism is the dominant sector of its economy.

The diagnostic model is tested using data collected in October 2013 from residents and non-residents of the city of Larnaca. Specifically, a questionnaire designed and organized in six thematic axes, i) The Visit, ii) The Sense of Place, iii) The Appealing Environment, iv) The Pulse, v) The Potential and vi) The presence of the city based on the three main directions of influencing perceived image, A) The Advanced Economy, B) The Attractive Environment, C) The Efficient Governance, according to the existing literature and author's suggestions.

The study population is, a) Residents of Larnaca, b) Residents of Cyprus but not of Larnaca, c) Visitors of Cyprus. A grouping was formed according to the place of residence of the respondents. Specifically, Group A refers to the residents of Larnaca that is the 'Self-Image' and Group BC that refers to the non-residents of Larnaca, that is the 'External-

Image'. A stratified random sampling approach was used based on the place of residence. The self-administered questionnaire was designed in Greek, English and Russian. The questionnaire was on-line distributed, as well as to the Larnaca's airport, Larnaca's city centre and to other cities of Cyprus in places with population concentration. In all, 1631 questionnaires were distributed. However, 100 questionnaires were eliminated from the analysis as a result of missing data. This falls within the acceptable 95% confidence interval (Collis et al, 2014) and the minimum sample size for visitors 384, for inhabitants of Larnaca 383 and for residents of Cyprus with a permanent place of residence other than Larnaca city 384. The survey team requested participation from adults above 17 years of age. This method resulted in a response rate of 93.8% equivalent to 1531 questionnaires (Table 1).

Table 1. Target Groups

<i>Grouping</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total Num.</i>	<i>Perceived Image of Larnaca</i>
<i>A. Respondents with permanent place of residence in Larnaca</i>	575	38	575	Self-Image
<i>B. Respondents with permanent place of residence in Cyprus but not in Larnaca</i>	463	30	956	External-Image
<i>Γ. Visitors of Cyprus.</i>	493	32		

Source: Author

The data collected from the questionnaires was analysed using SPSS for statistical analysis of quantitative data. As part of SPSS analysis each question in the questionnaire was treated as a variable measuring data on a nominal, ordinal and interval level. The open-ended questions were analysed using content analysis whereby topics arising more frequently resulted in the creation of categories. For the measurement of variables, a five-point Likert scale was used with: 1=Very Negative and 5=Very Positive. A detailed profile of the respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' Profile

Variable	%	Variable	%	Variable	%
Gender		Age		Education	
Male	50.6	17-25	32.3	High School	29.0
Female	49.4	26-44	41.8	Work Training	5.4
		45-64	18.6	College	37.0
		64+	7.2	BA/MA degree or higher	28.6

Marital Status		Nationality		Professional Activity	
Single	36.4	Cypriot	63.9	Employee	49.1
Married	42.9	Greek	4.0	Freelancer	12.8
In relation	18.8	English	14.9	Unemployed	7.6
Widowed	2.0	Russian	6.3	Retired	8.6
		German	2.2	Household	0.9
		Swedish	1.9	Student	17.8
		Norwegian	0.9	Other	3.2
		Other	5.9		
Permanent Place of Res. not in Cyprus		Permanent Place of Res. in Cyprus		Reason of Visit	
Greece	6.3	Larnaca	55.4	Tourism	77.9
England	46.7	Limassol	10.8	Educational	5.2
Russian Federation	18.1	Nicosia	20.3	Business	9.9
Germany	6.1	Paphos	4.9	Investments	0.4
Sweden	5.7	Unoccupied area of Famagusta	8.6	Migratory	2.2
Norway	2.8			Health	0.8
Other	14.4			Other	3.6

Source: Author

4. RESEARCH OUTCOMES BY THE QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

This section refers to issues that concern the visit, the sense of place, the appealing environment, the pulse, the potential and the presence of the city of Larnaca through the evaluations of the respondents (Table 3-5).

Specifically, 74.6% of the respondents present a high likelihood to visit Larnaca again. In terms of bipolar scales, the lowest rates are given to the variables, 'Technologically not developed/ Technologically developed'(2.83-mode 3) , 'Not modern/ Very Modern'(2.97-mode 3), 'Accessibility' (2.84-mode 3), 'Contemporary Architecture'(2.88-mode 3), 'Sport Activities'(3.17-mode 3), 'Ease in Finding a Job'(2.02-mode 1) and to the 'Cycle Network'(2.38- mode 2), (Table 3). It is noted that the highest values are observed in the evaluations of the variables 'Unsafe/Safe' (3.83-mode 4), 'Weather' (4.06-mode 5), 'Food/ Drink' (3.78-mode 4), 'Celebration of Kataklimos' (4.00-mode 5), 'Beaches/Sea and Sun' (4.15-mode 5), and 'Lifestyle' (3.61-mode 4), (Table 4). The respondents rated the issues

'Social', 'Economic', 'Environmental', 'Communication with residents', 'Communication with visitors', 'Possibilities of Larnaca on development', with 'medium' evaluations (2.78-3.31). The lowest rate is received to 'Economic' issues (2.78), (Table 5). Where a large standard deviation is noted to the means of the variables, the results were compared with the 'mode'.

4.1. Differenced in values between the Target Groups

The Mann-Whitney U test is adopted for examining the differences in values between the groups of 'Self-image' (A) and 'External-image'(BC), (Table 6).

A significant difference (asyp.sig.<.05) is observed in all pairs of variables in issues that concern 'The Sense of Place' sector but 'Unsafe/Safe'. The test revealed the biggest effect (effect size) to the pair of variables 'Technologically not developed/Technologically developed' (r=-.2). It seems that the 'External Perceived Image' (group BC) is more 'positive' than the 'Self-image' (group A) in all evaluations in these issues (except to the variables 'Unsafe/Safe'). The test revealed, in issues that concern 'The Appealing Environment', the biggest effect (effect size) to the pair of variables 'Contemporary Architecture'(r=-.2) and the 'Presence of historical buildings' (r=-.19). It seems that the perceived image of Larnaca in these issues is more positive for the groups that constitute the 'External-image', (BC) than for the group of 'Self-image', group (A). The outcomes of the test show, in issues that concern 'The Pulse', the biggest effect (effect size) to the pair of variables 'Liveliness of Larnaca' (r=-.25) and 'Variety of activities in general' (r=-.21). It seems that the perceived image of Larnaca is more positive for the groups that constitute the 'External-image', (BC) than for the group of 'Self-image', group (A) in these issues.

Regarding 'The Potential', the test shows the biggest effect (effect size) to the pair of variables 'Ease of Living, Not easy/Very easy' (r=-.25), 'Satisfied and Affordable Accommodation, Not easy/Very easy '(r=-.20), 'Public Transport, Very negative/Very positive' (r=-0.19), 'Road Network Very negative/Very positive' (r=-0.20), 'Cycle Network, Very negative/Very positive' (r=-0.25), 'Pedestrian Routes, Very negative/Very positive' (r=-0.21), 'Ease in Finding a Job, Not easy/Very easy' (r=-0.24). It seems that the perceived image of Larnaca in 'The Potential' sectors is more positive for the groups that constitute the 'External-image', (BC) than for the group of 'Self-image' (A), with the exception to the variables 'Ease of living', 'Satisfied and affordable accommodation' and 'Schools' where the effect size was limited.

Table 3. Lowest Rates

Variables	N	Mean Value	Mode	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis
	Valid							
Tech. not Devel./Tech. Devel.	1327	2.83	3	1.096	-.013	.067	-.530	.134
Not Modern/Modern	1338	2.97	3	1.096	-.073	.067	-.508	.134
Contemporary Architecture	1189	2.88	3	1.033	-.002	.071	-.437	.142
Accessibility	1226	2.84	3	1.233	.008	.070	-.922	.140
Sport Activities	1147	3.17	3	.961	-.082	.072	-.197	.144
Cycle Network	1062	2.38	2	1.133	.479	.075	-.558	.150
Ease in finding a job	1029	2.02	1	1.123	.869	.076	-.089	.152

Source: Author

Table 4. Highest Rates

Variables	N	Mean Value	Mode	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis
	Valid							
Unsafe/Safe	1243	3.83	4	1.051	-.677	.069	-.087	.139
Weather	1247	4.06	5	.896	-.717	.069	.149	.138
Food/Drink	1263	3.78	4	.848	-.242	.069	-.278	.138
Celebration of Kataklimos	1143	4.00	5	1.026	-.895	.072	.250	.145
Beaches/ Sea and Sun	1233	4.15	5	.900	-.901	.070	.305	.139
Lifestyle	1199	3.61	4	.917	-.327	.071	-.021	.141

Source: Author

Table 5. Medium Rates

Variables	N	Mean Value	Mode	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis
	Valid							
Social	950	3.11	3	1.041	-.339	.079	-.242	.159
Economic	937	2.78	3	1.052	-.044	.080	-.429	.160
Environmental	946	2.96	3	1.046	-.189	.080	-.416	.159
Communication with residents	942	3.21	3	1.029	-.150	.080	-.368	.159
Communication with visitors	944	3.31	3	1.021	-.222	.080	-.412	.159
Possibilities of Larnaca on development	956	3.21	3	1.162	-.175	.079	-.714	.158

Source: Author

Table 6. Mann-Whitney U Test Between the Groups: [A]-Self Image and [BC]-External Image

Variables	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Contemporary Architecture	135987.000	282057.000	-6.966	.000
Historical Buildings	138542.000	285695.000	-6.747	.000
Liveliness of Larnaca	136004.000	277782.000	-6.624	.000
Variety of activities in general	124984.500	267829.500	-7.369	.000
Ease in living in Larnaca	93195.500	360010.500	-8.570	.000
Satisfactory and affordable accommodation	89143.000	347264.000	-6.551	.000
Schools	112163.500	225689.500	-2.937	.003
Public Services	122773.500	265084.500	-4.717	.000
Road Network	119895.000	260610.000	-6.752	.000
Cycle Network	101007.000	236467.000	-8.270	.000
Pedestrian Routes	110764.000	248314.000	-7.246	.000
Ease in finding a job	96273.000	234348.000	-8.009	.000

Source: Author

Furthermore, the test revealed in issues that concern 'The Presence' that the 'External-image' (of group of BC) is more 'positive' than the 'Self-image' (the group A) to

all of the examined variables. By comparing different means through the calculation of ANOVA, the researcher was able to identify differences in respondents' perceived image, between the groups, a) residents of Larnaca, b) residents of Cyprus but not of Larnaca, c) visitors of Cyprus and between age groups.

It seems that the perceived image of Larnaca in sectors that constitute 'The Sense of Place', 'The Appealing Environment' and the 'The Pulse', is more positive to the group of 'Visitors' (C) compared to the perceived image of the other two groups. It is noteworthy, that in sectors that constitute 'The Potential', the perceived image is more positive for the group of 'Residents of Larnaca' than for the other two groups (A and B). An exception observed to the sectors of 'Ease of living', 'Satisfied and affordable accommodation' and 'Schools' where no significant difference was observed.

According to the research results, the largest statistically significant differences between age groups in 'The Sense of Place' sector, observed between the age group (64+) with the age groups of (17-25) and (26-44), (.05). It seems that Larnaca's perceived image of the sense, 'Boring/ Exciting', is more positive for the age group of (+64) than of the younger age groups of (17-25) and (26-44). In the 'Appealing Environment' sector the perceived image of the city is more positive for the age group of (+64) than for the youngest group of (17-25) and in 'The Pulse' sector the biggest differences observed between the age group of (+64) and the younger age groups.

5. RESEARCH OUTCOMES BY THE QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Interesting Places

The respondents were asked to name two places other than the coastal area of Larnaca, known as 'Finikoudes', to state as interesting. Thus, the answers were recorded and divided into the groups of, 'Self-Image' responses and 'External-Image' responses. In all, 16 categories were identified, while those rarely mentioned were grouped and named 'Others'.

Out of 474 valid responses by residents of Larnaca and 396 by non-residents of Larnaca, approximately 73%, stated Makenzi beach as the most interesting place. Considerably smaller is the percentage of respondents who perceive the 'Salt Lake' area as an interesting place. In particular, only 21% of the responses by the residents of Larnaca and only 12% by non-residents of Larnaca. In addition, only 7% of the respondents consider Hala Sultan Mosque to be an interesting place.

The area of 'Ayios Lazaros' church, is mentioned as interesting by 12% of the respondents while the response rate is approximately the same to the residents and non-residents of Larnaca. It seems that only 3% of non-residents of Larnaca and 9% of

residents of Larnaca, mentioned the city centre as 'interesting' place. We would like to stress out the significance of its effect to the perceived image of the city, as the limited effect to positive perceptions indicates the limited interest of individuals to identify it as an interesting gathering urban core. Larnaca's airport is perceived as an interesting place by 8% of the non-residents of Larnaca, while the percentage in residents' responses reaches only 1%. The group of non-residents of Larnaca includes the group of visitors in Cyprus for whom Larnaca's airport is the first impression of the city. This may interpret the high percentage observed in outcomes, compared to the small percentage by the group of Larnaca's residents.

It is noteworthy, that Larnaca's cultural elements, which are characterized as 'interesting', have a limited presence in the perceptual capacity of the city. In particular, answers that concern, the Castle, Kamares area, Ancient Kition and Museums, vary between 1% and 2% of the total number of responses.

5.2. Description of the city

In this section, respondents were asked to describe Larnaca up to three words. For this reason, word sets were formed.

Out of 19% of the respondents, Larnaca is described as 'quiet'. Many of them combined their answer with the description 'simple' and 'small' (5% and 6% respectively). Approximately 16% of the respondents described Larnaca as 'beautiful' (both, residents and non-residents of Larnaca). This perception is also confirmed by the 'positive' evaluations given in variable 'beautiful'. At the same time, 7% refers to the 'beautiful beaches' of Larnaca. This percentage is higher to the non-residents of Larnaca (9.2%) than to residents of Larnaca (5.2%).

This difference may be interpreted by the high percentage of non-residents of Larnaca who chose the city as a 'Sea and Sun Destination'. The high perceptual capacity of the city's natural assets is confirmed by the 'very positive' evaluations that the city received on variables 'Beaches/ Sun and Sea'. It is noteworthy, that while Larnaca is described by 11% of the respondents as 'interesting, fascinating, pleasant', only 7.2% of Larnaca's residents and 16% of non-residents give this description to the city. A similar difference in perceived image between the two groups is also observed in the description 'good'. This description is given by 9% of the respondents but big difference in respondent's rate is observed between non-residents and residents of Larnaca (12.8%-5% respectively). A high percentage of respondents gave the descriptions 'Underdeveloped/Neglected' and 'Monotone/Boring' (12% and 8% respectively). This perception could be correlated with the 'medium' evaluations given to the 'Sense of the Place' sectors. In addition, the description

'Developing' was given by only 5% and 3.5% of residents and non-residents of Larnaca, respectively and the description 'modern' by only 0.5% and 2.6% of the residents and non-residents of Larnaca. Higher percentages are given to the descriptions 'family', 'clean', 'and safe' (4%, 6%, and 6% respectively). Larnaca's image as a 'relaxed' city is perceived by 6% of residents and non-residents of Larnaca with the same percentage on a total number of respondents. The same percentage (6%) in all respondents (in all groups, residents and non-residents of Larnaca) described the city as 'historical'. The percentage is considered to be particularly small if we take into account the historicity of the city. This perception is also confirmed by the evaluation 'medium' that the city received in the variables 'Presence of historical buildings' and 'Cultural places'.

5.3. Pleasant Pathways

As the exploration of the spatial perceived image is considered a fundamental tool for city branding processes with spatial approaches, patterns of mental representations of the environment, the 'cognitive maps' were identified. The recording of pleasant pathways through selected nodes and routes reported by the respondents aims to evaluate 'The Attractiveness', as an attribute of the environmental structure. Thus, the researcher identified elements of recognition of the urban environment, as urban symbols in the cultural landscape. At the same time, attempts to identify elements of the spatial structure and the correlation intensity between the reference points.

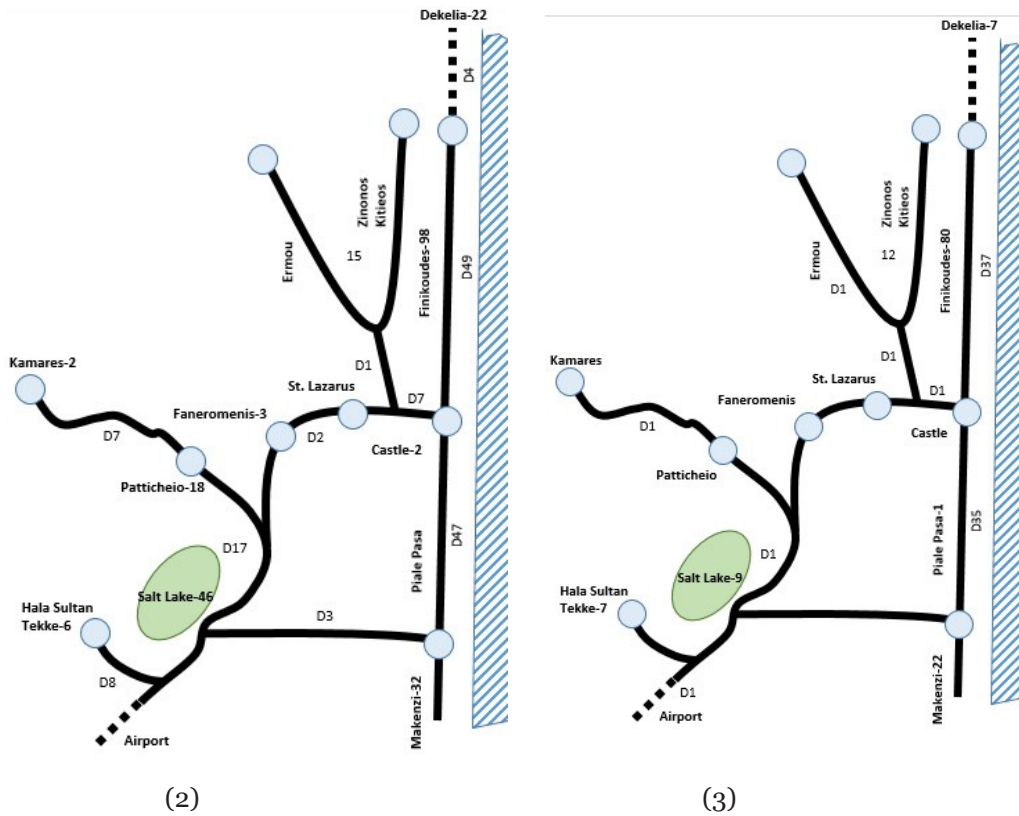
For this purpose three types of 'semantic' networks are depicted:

1. Pleasant pathways to the city or the wider area of the city of Larnaca.
2. Pleasant pathways to the natural environment, outside the city.
3. Pleasant pathways for visiting important sites and monuments.

A summary of the results is designed by registering the nodes and by diagrammatic representation of pathways through landmarks. The results were depicted on diagrams that give the perception of the spatial structure and the correlation intensity by the groups of 'Self-image' and 'External-image'. It is noted that routes reported without being identified with a sufficient number of intermediate landmarks were recorded as reference points/regions.

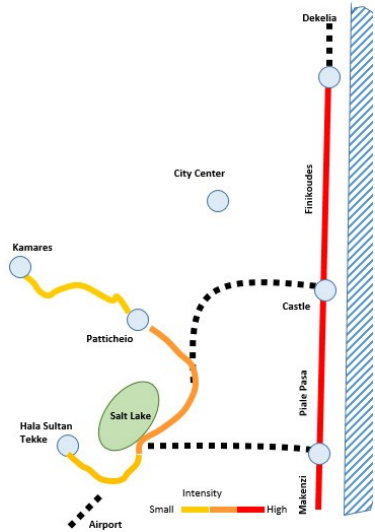
The following diagrams (Figures 2-3, 5-6, 8-9) shows pathways, nodes and urban cores with the number of the recorded responses. In the Figures (4, 7, 10), the intensity of their perception is depicted.

Figure 2-3. (2) Pleasant pathways in the city or in the wider city area by residents of Larnaca,
(3) Pleasant pathways in the city or in the wider city area by non-residents of Larnaca.



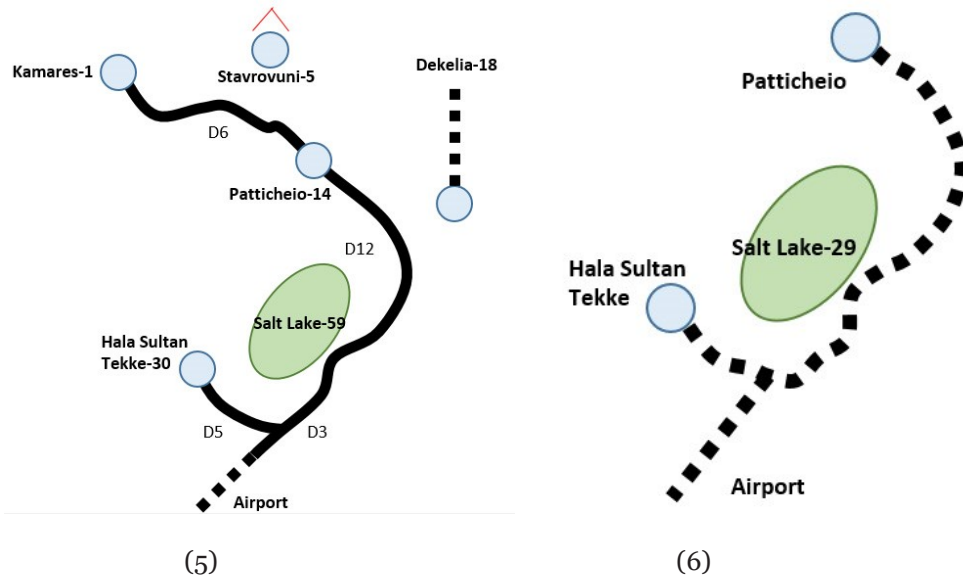
Source: Author

Figure 4. Pleasant pathways in the city or in the wider city area by all the respondents



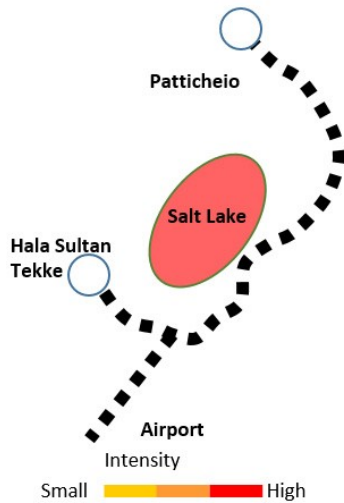
Source: Author

Figure 5-6. (5) Pleasant pathways in the natural landscape, outside the city by residents of Larnaca, (6) Pleasant pathways in the natural landscape, outside the city by non-residents of Larnaca.



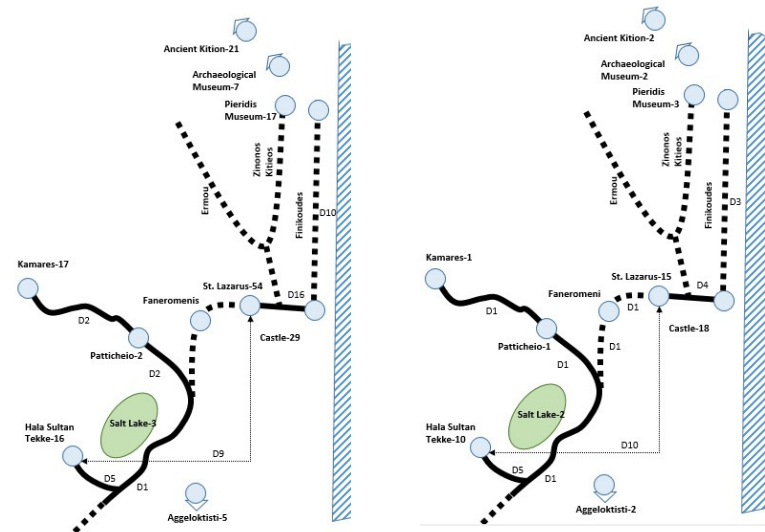
Source: Author

Figure 7. Pleasant pathways in the natural landscape, outside the city by all the respondents



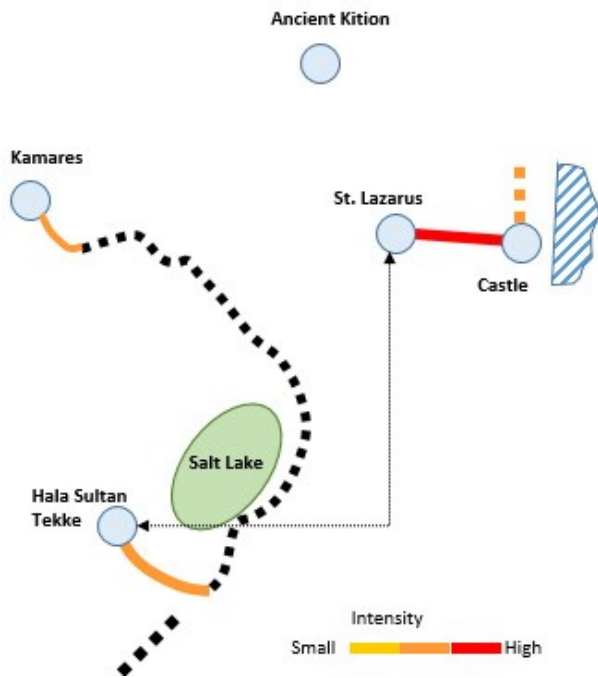
Source: Author

Figure 8-9. (8) Pleasant pathways for the visit of important monuments by residents of Larnaca, (9) Pleasant pathways for the visit of important monuments by non-residents of Larnaca.



Source: Author

Figure 10. Pleasant pathways for the visit of important monuments by all the respondents



Source: Author

The findings from the mental representations of the urban fabric reveal an accordance with the quantitative and quality data analysis. Specifically, while the urban proximity of the Shopping Centre with the significant generators of the city or the cultural sites is great (i.e. the airport, the seafront, the archaeological site of Ancient Kition, Ayios Lazaros Church, the Castle etc.), no cognitive pathways recorded that would lead to the enhancement of the perceptual urban continuity, composing at the same time a spatial network through urban cores of a particular character (Figures 2-4). This goes along with the research findings of a limited effect of city centre to positive perceptions (see for instance Chapter 'Interesting Places').

In the case of the coastal areas, 'Finikoudes' and 'Makenzi' beach were treated by all respondents as the urban cores with significant positioning on the perceived image of the city (Figures 2-4). The research results confirm, that the coastal front is not only the dominant spatial element to perceptions and associations but also the spatial channel that controls the perceptual capacity of the city (see also associations and perceptions in Chapter 'Famous Place').

Moreover, the process of mental representations' examination reveals that, while the 'Salt Lake' and the coastal front of 'Finikoudes' and 'Makenzi' region are the dominant natural environmental values of the city, no spatial continuity observed that links the two urban cores (Figure 2-4). Furthermore, the 'Salt Lake' it is not equally perceived to residents and non-residents of Larnaca (Figure 5-7). Comparing the research results of the pleasant pathways in the natural landscape with research outcomes presented in the Chapter 'Interesting Places', the limited ability of 'Salt Lake' to influence associations is confirmed.

It is noteworthy that, while the concentration of the cultural elements in the urban fabric is large and particularly important, (i.e. the archaeological site of Ancient Kition, the Castle etc.) their limited perceptions (see for instance associations in Chapter 'Interesting Places') and limited pathways associated with the historical content of the city (Figures 8-10), raise questions about the city's capacity to project its cultural content.

Our interpretations of mental representations show that some of the most important assets of the urban fabric, due to their accordance with the process of the construction of the imaginary, do not contribute significantly to the production of urban symbols, which will be strongly associated with the cityscape.

5.4. Perceived strongest advantage/s of Larnaca

The respondents asked to indicate what they consider the strong advantage of Larnaca. For this reason, 21 categories were formed, including related words.

Out of 641 respondents, 59% stated 'Sea and Sun', 'beaches', 'Makenzi' 'Finikoudes' and 'big waterfront' as its strongest advantages, with its beaches getting the highest score (7%, 40%, 5%, 4%, 3% respectively). In addition, Larnaca's compact structure and the small geographical area that encompasses the urban core are elements which are perceived by 8% of the respondents, mainly by the residents (12%). These advantages seem to be linked to the ease in transportations and in accessibility to services. On the other hand, these elements are not particularly perceived by non-residents of Larnaca (3%). The result could be interpreted through the dominant image of Cyprus, that is a 'Sea and Sun Destination' (Farmaki, 2011). Furthermore, as strong advantages are also mentioned marina, the port (7%), the airport (24%) and the proximity to the city centre (6%).

5.5. Famous Place

The respondents asked to indicate what they consider Larnaca famous for. For this reason, categories have been formed which include related words (i.e Finikoudes beach, Makenzi beach, coastal area of Finikoudes, coastal area of Makenzi, Finikoudes region, Makenzi

region, Finikoudes waterfront). 'Finikoudes' and 'Celebration of Kataklimos' seems to be the dominant elements in the perceived image of the city as out of 879 respondents, 27% stated that Larnaca is famous for 'Finikoudes' water front (25% by residents and 30% by non-residents) and 21% for Celebration of Kataklimos. Overall, 'Beaches', 'Makenzi' and 'Finikoudes' are considered the natural assets for which Larnaca is famous for (54% overall). On the other hand, 'Salt Lake' reaches only the 5% in perceptions. Moreover, 4% of the respondents, refer to 'Saint Lazarus', without being clear whether this perception refers to his personality, to the Saint's Lazarus Church or both.

5.6. Famous Person

The respondents were asked to report a famous person from Larnaca. Out of 300 valid respondents, 29% mentioned Anna Vissi. Thus, the singer seems to be a dominant personality in the perceived image of the city. It is noteworthy that Zeno the Citium (the hellenistic thinker from Kition, the ancient city of Larnaca), refers to only 7% of all the responses. This percentage represents 8% to the responses by the residents of Larnaca and reaches only 5% to the responses by non-residents of Larnaca.

6. COMPARISONS OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The performance of the perceived image in the city branding objectives is described through the three main directions that affect the reputation of a place: A) The Advanced Economy, B) The Appealing Environment, and C) The Effective Government. In this context, the investigation attempted to approach these axes, through the evaluations of the components that describe them.

A) Axis-Advanced Economy

Measurement of the perceived image of the 'Economy' sector was achieved through the rating of several variables such as the 'Ease of finding a job' and the 'Favourable environment for business'. The review given by respondents revealed 'very negative' overall ratings (more negative ratings are given by the residents of Larnaca). To the question whether Larnaca provides a 'Favourable Business Development Environment', the 78% of the respondents stated that they 'Do not know' and the 10% stated, 'No'. To the same question, Larnaca's residents seem to have the highest percentage of unawareness (78.3%) than non-residents. The variables, 'Costs of Living', 'Expensive / Inexpensive', 'Poor / Luxurious', 'Technologically undeveloped /Technologically developed', 'Not at all modern/ Very modern', 'Retail satisfaction', received 'medium' rates (with non-residents of Larnaca having a more 'positive' perceived image than the residents of Larnaca). Only the variable 'Ease and affordable living' received 'positive' rating.

Particularly low ratings were given to attributes that support city's infrastructures. The attribute that received the most negative rates is the 'Cycle network' while the 'Road network', 'Pedestrian routes', 'Public transport' and 'Accessibility' received 'medium' ratings. Under the conditions associated with the 'Advanced Economy' sector, it seems necessary the city's image to be upgraded with infrastructures that will positively contribute to Larnaca's cityscape.

B) Axis-Appealing Environment

The measurements of the perceived image of the 'Appealing Environment' in variables such as, 'The Experience of a Natural Walk in Larnaca' and the 'Quality of Green Public Spaces' received 'medium' ratings (the perceived image of non-residents appear to be significant 'more positive' than the residents' perceived image), with the group of 'Visitors' giving the most 'positive' ratings. It is noteworthy, that in all the groups the variable 'beaches/ sun and the sea' received 'very positive' ratings.

Here, the built environment of Larnaca received in the variables 'The experience of a city walk', 'Contemporary architecture', 'Presence of historical buildings' and to the 'Places of culture' 'medium' ratings (the perceived image of non-residents appear to be significant 'more positive' than the residents' perceived image). The group of

'Visitors' gives the 'most positive' ratings while, the lowest rating is given, by all the groups, to the variable 'Contemporary Architecture'. In addition, the urban cultural landscape received medium rates through the variables 'Boring/ Exciting' and 'Common/ Unique'.

The focus of attention of the research is, not only to identify the cultural assets in the urban fabric but how their positioning significantly affects the perceptions and associations developing spatial experiences with competitive and comparative advantages for the cultural landscape.

The social environment functions as a strong asset for the city and it is perceived through the variables 'Friendliness of the residents' and 'Residents' educational level' with 'positive' ratings given by residents and non-residents of Larnaca.

To the axis 'Pulse of the city' is identified strong associations with 'Celebration of Kataklimos'. In addition, the variable 'Food/ Drink' was rated 'positively' by both residents and non-residents of Larnaca. However, other components describing the 'Pulse of the city' such as 'Sport activities', 'Art events', 'Liveliness' and 'Variety of activities in general', received 'medium' ratings. It seems that the perceptions of the city according to the axis 'The Pulse of the city' is more 'positive' for the non-residents of Larnaca compared to the perceptions of the residents of Larnaca.

It is noteworthy that Larnaca's environment in sectors related on 'The Appealing environment', 'The Sense' and 'The Pulse' of the place, seem to be more 'positively' perceived by the age group of (64+).

The results of our research have highlighted the need to empower the attractiveness of the city and to manage its perceived image through internal processes of composing distinct identity but also external processes of projecting its symbolic content.

C) Axis-Effective Government.

The components describing Larnaca's 'Effective Government' received 'medium' ratings. More negative evaluations are being given by residents of Larnaca. These ratings may interpreted through their high degree of familiarity with the problems of the city. Characteristically, the age group (64+) gives significantly more 'negative' ratings to 'Social', 'Economic' and 'Environmental' issues.

In these circumstances, it seems necessary an effective government environment to be created. The purpose of this process is to provide economic, symbolic, investment, social and cultural benefits that will lead to the sustainable development of the city.

Strengths of Larnaca city

- Beautiful natural environment/ beaches
- Safe environment
- Compact urban core
- Ease in transportations
- Friendly population
- Associations with Celebration of Kataklimos
- Food and Drink

Weaknesses of Larnaca city

- No perceptions identified that link the city with associations of a "Technologically developed city", "Modern city", "City that invests to its renewable energy resources"
- The city is linked with association of an: "Underdeveloped, neglected, monotonous, boring, not very exciting, not special, not very lively, without a great variety of activities" city
- The ability of the city to influence associations of a "cultural and historical environment" is limited
- Low attractiveness of modern architecture of the city
- Moderate assessment of the city walk experience, in its natural and in its built environment

- Moderate assessment of the shopping centre
- Salt is poorly perceived as a cultural product
- Difficulty in finding a job
- Low city accessibility
- Salt Lake has limited ability to influence associations
- Moderate assessments of the city's place management

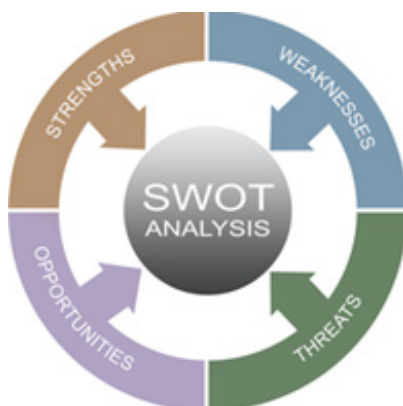
Opportunities

- Targeting to investment directions other than recreational tourism while also providing social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits
- Upgrading the tourist product
- Upgrading the built environment
- Promoting the natural environment
- Upgrading the cultural environment and cultural activities
- Upgrading the walk experience in the natural and built environment

Threats

- Urban development of other cities (in Cyprus or in the wider Mediterranean region), could lead the investments in other competitive cities

Table 7. SWOT Analysis



Source: Author

7. DISCUSSING URBAN CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AS A PLACE COMPETITIVE IDENTITY GENERATOR. SWOT ANALYSIS WITH SPATIAL APPROACH

In our research, strengths and weaknesses of the city of Larnaca were identified through residents' and non-residents' perceptions, associations and evaluations (Table 7). Here, we examine according to the research results, the perceived image and the orientation of actions that the city could take in order to promote a competitive identity with spatial approaches.

7.1. The Perceived Image of Larnaca City and Orientation of Actions

For the city of Larnaca, the beautiful natural environment and the pleasant weather in a compact urban core with ease in transportations, are consist strong advantages that cause feelings and impressions through associations. Its beaches, as associative projected elements, with a predominant value, are of significant importance in the mental perception of the place. At the same time, 'Salt Lake' while is the 'signifier' natural place, which gives environmental asset in the city, unique, non-replicable and with a spatial footprint, has limited ability to influence associations.

It seems that the environmental value of Larnaca may lead the investment interest in the environmental orientation, triggering the activation of other developmental and investment directions such as walking tourism, sports, marine, conference, health and wellness, marriage, accessible, senior tourism but also educational, research, innovation and film activities.

The accessible and senior tourism is especially favoured by the small distances and the flat topography of the city. Besides, the most 'positive' ratings were received in sectors that constitute 'The Appealing' environment of the place, 'The Sense of place' and 'The Pulse' of the city by the age group (64+).

It seems that, the cultural and historical environment of Larnaca is a comparative advantage of the city but with limited ability to influence associations. Furthermore, while the number of its cultural elements is high and very important, the projection and processing of its cultural symbols is very limited. The need to empower the perceptual capacity of the cultural content of the city lies on our interest to generate spatial symbols, with synergies of capital investments and cultural meanings. These actions mainly produce a language of social identity with positive correlations and associations, non-replicable, recognizable and unique. At the same time, they ensure the improvement of the perceived image of the city

and city's reputation. Certainly, these efforts have an economic nature but mainly concern the empowerment of its cultural identity and the enhancement of city's associations with its origins.

In this context, it is revealing that while the cultural and geographical advantages of Larnaca city are strong, they do not have a direct impact on perceptions, associations and investments processes, related on the urban cultural landscape. Thus, we insist on providing guidance on which a course of action would be defined in order a competitive identity with a strong symbolic content, to be composed. It is pointed out that through the multidimensional mix of research data, *the cultural and environmental local orientation* is identified by the research.

8. CONCLUSION: THE INTEREST OF THE CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL LANDSCAPES FOR CITY BRANDING POLICIES WITH SPATIAL APPROACHES

The composition of a model for the diagnosis of the perceived image of an urban cultural landscape through spatial approaches is powered by means of cultural, social, physical, geographical and institutional frameworks, through which assets and comparative advantages are identified. The proposed model identifies the spatial parameters that compose the symbolic economy of a place and defines the direction and orientation of architectural and urban design. Thus architectural and urban design are put as regulators into symbolic mechanism processes with wider economic, social and political conditions.

Larnaca city is presented as a case study with a generalized value and multiple benefits for modern Mediterranean places with strong historical perception (such as cities in Greece, Spain, Italy, etc.). The promotion of their material and cultural background follows symbolic economy practices while enhancing the dignity of populations.

The research findings allow us to proceed with interpretations through which the implementation of city branding strategies with spatial approaches to urban cultural landscapes would lead not only to their sustainability but to the creation of a positive (attractive and competitive) city image as a continuous process. As Deffner and Metaxas claim (2008), "The creation of a positive (attractive and competitive) city image is a continuous process, based on strategic planning, by examining, each time, not only all the promotional actions that the city has implemented, but also their impact on the city's internal and external environment. The major difficulty is to maintain a positive image for a long-term period".

The perceived urban structure, enriched with positive associations, reflects in this sense residents' dignity giving at the same time a symbolic content to the spatial narrative and a competitive non-replicable identity to contemporary cultural landscapes.

This process of analysis provides not only a model for the diagnosis of the perceived image of a place through spatial approaches but a design-based guide with significant impact on city branding strategies. In this regard, research outcomes concern city branding professionals, architects, urban planners, tourism professionals, academics, researchers, policy-makers, government officials etc.

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