

# Master thesis

The case of city branding in Buenos Aires

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## **Executive Summary**

The current agenda of local governments are diverse and dynamic. Political issues mix administrative tasks in a blend where it is difficult to recognize the beginning and the end of each element. Generally, the publicity campaigns carry out for cities are postpone or margined regarding these urgencies.

City branding, as a relatively new kind of publicity, appears in the situation as a new instrument that looks for making space between these social and economic requirements, to manage the image of the city in the developing course of it. This research has the purpose of investigating how city branding practices find room in Buenos Aires government activities and precisely how effective are they to brand the city using social media.

For that, the theoretical section includes branding meaning and the relation of it with governance and social media. The method used combines a series of interviews with Public Administrators and researchers on the matter with a media content analysis process focuses on the official Facebook Fan Page of the Buenos Aires Government.

The results permit to confirm some hypothetical ideas about this practice. The Buenos Aires government is effective at the moment of branding through social media due to include the three elements analysed in this research: actions to recognise the city identity, stakeholder involvement process in the branding practice, and connection between city branding and infrastructure development plan.

Nevertheless, it found some imbalances in the branding practice and proposes two general recommendations to improve this process. First, the government should integrate the branding process, especially the external and internal to the city branding practice. This action should integrate as well a more definite and regular effort to recognize the city identity together with the incorporation of external actors at the process. Second, researchers on the matter should attach importance to the study of Latin America city branding cases and include them in future literature.

## **Acknowledgement**

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## 1. Introduction

Cities have converted the centre of human activities during the last centuries since a large number of people moved from villages or countryside to urban areas looking for new opportunities to study, work and live. It generated areas particularly dense in the matter of human-population with vast human-built features, in contrast with the adjacent areas (Oguztimur & Akturan, 2016). Regarding the United Nations, the current rate of the population living in urban areas is 55.3%, and in 10 years it will be more than 60%. As a result, one-third of the global population is going to live in cities with at least half millions of people by the same year. (United Nations, 2018).

The increase of population in these areas have produced a rapid urbanization process that pressured for basic infrastructure and development plan. As a result, city design process increased the importance and complexity due to requiring collaboration among diverse stakeholders as citizens, private companies, NGOs, and others. The complexification of urban areas in terms of social and economic challenges generates wicked problems and the necessity of cooperating, especially when resources are divided between those actors and transparent actions are more appreciated than the past. (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Anholt, 2005)

The globalization and connectivity context adds extra difficulty to our description, due to demand to think also in actors and resources beyond the borders. (Zhang & Zhao, 2009) Local governments aim at the cohesion of citizens and institutions and compete with other cities to attract external resources, such as students, professionals, tourism, investments, and market opportunities to import-export. (Braun, Eshuis, & Klijn, 2014; Donner, Fort, & Vellema, 2014; Zhang & Zhao, 2009; Anholt, 2005; Azad Hanna & Rowley, 2015; Zenker & Braun, 2015; Cleave & Arku, 2014)

In this context described, city branding practice emerged as an instrument to solve some difficulties. The branding practice allows to position cities in the world exhibiting their attractive as places to live and grow. This exercise has also objectives for local citizens, focus on fostering a sense of belonging and promoting the pride feeling about the city. City branding

exercise signifies an opportunity to involve city actors, attending to all the voices, and planning the future of the city. Nevertheless, how and when did this instrument appear?

The publicity on places started in the XIX century with the use of basic techniques adopted from the private sector. This activity has been considered as secondary until the 1970s when it started to gain transcendence in the public administration and marketing literature. (Kavaratzis, 2004) Since that time, the cities advertisement has grown in the practical and theoretical field, initially, the literature starts to study the promotional process of places perspectives based on an entrepreneurial perspective. (Hankinson, 2015) These notions covered topics as planning approach or marketing management, but from the 1980s to the present, this publicity practice has gained clarity about the central concepts of the subject. (Lucarelli & Berg, 2011)

The consolidation of the subject helped to fix the central objectives, synthesised in managing the city image, strengthening local identity and attracting external resources (Glinska & Rudolf, 2019; Molina, Fernández, Gómez, & Aranda, 2017; Oguztimur & Akturan, 2016). For that, “strong human capital (internal and external), market forces, network capital, and social capital are necessary” (Trinchini, Kolodii, Goncharova, & Baggio, 2019, p. 537) together with “a clear competitiveness strategy (...) If someone is free to choose, in the end, it is the most attractive city that will win” (Hosper, 2003, p. 146)

Identity is a central concept in branding practice. it represents “historical, political, religious, and cultural discourses, embedded in local knowledge and influenced by power struggles. National, cultural, natural, social and religious assets become important identifiers for place branding...” (Govers & Go, 2010, p. 123) The Buenos Aires city has managed these elements historically to be identified as the “Paris of South America with its elegant European architecture, bustling culture scene, and a smorgasbord of shopping and gastronomical offerings, Buenos Aires has long been one of Latin America’s urban jewels” (Kang Wai Wong, 2017, p. 18)

## 2. Problem statement

This research concentrates on the case of branding in Buenos Aires city, the capital of Argentina. Buenos Aires is one of the biggest urban areas of Latin America together with Mexico City and San Pablo considering the complete conurbation. Official estimation informs that the city has 3.067.728 inhabitants. (Revista Ciudad Estadística, 2019). It is a dynamic due to receive constant people from other Argentinian cities and foreign countries. For example, 38% of the population who live currently there has grown outside of the city, which denotes a high rate of cosmopolitanism (Buenos Aires Ciudad, 2020).

In a matter of employment, citizens work principally in the service's activities, 65% of the total employment, followed by commercial industries 14,5% and manufacturing industry 12.3%. (Revista Ciudad Estadística, 2019). The city was visited for 1.786.866 tourists in 2019 (Turismo Buenos Aires, 2019), generated for "tourism-oriented cultural entrepreneurialism in Buenos Aires based not only on the exporting of tango abroad but also a wide range of spectacular festivals..." such as expressed Kanai 2014 (Dinardi, 2017, p. 89).

The Buenos Aires government has decided to position the city in the region through branding campaigns during the last decades. This research focusses on the practice of city branding exerted by the government of the city of Buenos Aires during the last 3 years (2017 - 2020). The relevance of this research has two dimensions, academic and political. Regarding the first, city-branding literature has concentrated during these decades in the general performing of the technique, as well as the societal and economic impact generated. However, it has not gone-in-depth adequately in the relevance of social media at the moment of performing city branding. This research seeks to fill this gap looking into the logical relation between city-branding and social media and, invite to reflect on how city-branding has been transformed since the internet revolution.

In the second dimension, this paper wants to convince policy-makers about the importance of branding at the moment of governing cities. Especially, the relevance of having a clear city identity and involving actors in branding campaigns focus on strategical development plans for the city. Following this last purpose, some questions about branding, involvement stakeholders, and development strategy are performed in the data collection.



This study has a central research objective measuring how effective it has been the local government at the moment of using social media to brand the city from 2017 to 2020. Four specific objectives reflect the main purpose of the study. First, to recognise actions focus on identifying and managing the identity of the city. Second, to distinguish if the current program of city-branding includes the voices and opinions from other external stakeholders about the matter. Third, this research wants to distinguish if there are relations between the infrastructure development plan and the branding process of the city. Finally, it looks for evaluating the presence of the 3 elements in the social media performance by the Buenos Aires government.

Following this description, we arrive at the research question: *How effective is the local government at using social media to brand the city? The case the of city of Buenos Aires.* This central question is subdivided into 4 sub-questions.

- a) Does the government implement actions to discover the Buenos Aires city identity?
- b) Does the government include other stakeholders in the city-branding process?
- c) Do the government actions to brand the city have connection with infrastructure development programs?
- d) Does the Buenos Aires branding performance on social media reflect the 3 elements mentioned above: city identity generation, stakeholder's involvement and infrastructure connection?

For the purpose of answering the research question and achieving the objectives fixed, the thesis continues with a theoretical reflection about the most important concepts of the topic in Section 3. Afterwards, Section 4 condenses the central concepts of this study and orders them in a conceptual map, as well as describes the methodology characteristics and the operationalization of the variables. Section 5 and 6 comprise the findings that resulted in the field research, which are analysed in Section 7. Finally, Section 8 and 9 focus on the most important conclusion and the recommendations derivate from them.

### 3. Theoretical framework

#### 3.1 Definition of brand and branding

Considering that the purpose of this study is to investigate as far as Latin America's urban jewel is using that reputation and how effective is the local government branding the jewel, it is necessary first to clarify some basic concepts. Brand is a central notion for this research, Eshuis and Klijn consider it as "a symbolic construct that consist of name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, created deliberately to identify a phenomenon and differentiate it from similar phenomena by adding particular meaning to it" (2012, p. 23). It is not the same than slogan or logo, the first refers to policies, projects, and actions to create an identity; logo or slogans are the visible part of brands. Nevertheless, these elements are intrinsically connected due to logo or slogans communicate the content of branding actions. (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007)

The brand also differs from the frame concept, the last refers to the application of cognitive schemas to understand a situation or a phenomenon whereas brands influence interpretation through "triggering web of associations" (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012, p. 30). The frame has the function of understanding and interpretation brand pretends to distinguish a phenomenon from a similar one. (Entman, 1993; Dewulf, et al., 2009; Bonsón & Ratkai, 2013) Frame and brand also differ with the concept of bias due to "they do not presume a single ideological position" (Street, 2011, p. 51)

Common sense may say that branding is the action of building or positioning a brand. In this line, branding allows enhancing the perception of products, people, or places exhibiting positive characteristics of the issue. It represents an exclusive amalgamation of functional attributes and symbolic values and is built in a deliberate process of associations diverse attributes to add value to the product or service (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; Govers, 2015). In other words, the brand creation embodies a set of "physical and socio-psychological attributes and beliefs which are associated with the products" (Simoes & Dibb as cited in Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005, p. 508). The objective of these associations is to stimulate emotions and triggering an interactive communication process between institutions and citizens. (Moody & Bekkers, 2018)

In this research, the focus is on branding exercised by governments and applied to cities, therefore some notions should be elucidated. The terms place promotion, place marketing, and place branding refer to different ideas although intrinsically connected. Place promotion can be considered as the process of “generating attention for what a place has to offer to certain target audiences in the expectation that this will increase the demand” (Boisen, Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018, p. 5). In this concept, the word *attention* is fundamental, because it is looking for increasing interest in the city and thus inducing action. Place promotion might include advertising materials to present much of what the place has on offer considering specific target audiences and specific target markets according to the stakeholders involved. (Boisen, Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018)

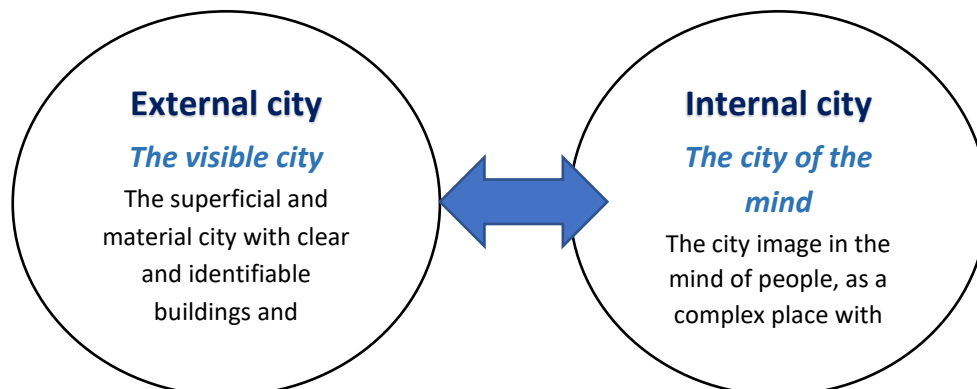
Place marketing is broader than place promotion due to requiring an extensive influence in the development of the place. It is a long-term policy that contains different and interrelated activities to keep and attract different target groups to a certain city (Hosper 2009 as cited Boisen, Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018). It aims at creating advantages for specific groups through substantive regulation and formal modifications, for instance, opportunities for start-ups, facilities for big companies, hospitality for tourists. (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007) Place marketing becomes in a more complex activity than place promotion due to it requires collaboration and coordination of private and public stakeholders. (Boisen, Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018)

Place promotion and place marketing are demand-driven, it means that both exercises are focus on creating an attractive product-market combination for the demand of a specific market segment. Place branding is an abstract process about creating the identity and the image of the city through positive associations with tangible and intangible elements of urban policy and urban development. The result of this process is an image of how the place is socially recognised, the image might be strong if majority share similar association and weak if it is diverse, and positive when these associations are favourable and negative otherwise. Place branding prioritize the affective perspective instead of cognitive as place promotion and place branding and so, it is identity-driven (Boisen, Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018)

The purpose of place branding is the construction of one image orchestration, for that, place promotion, place marketing, and place branding should be aligned to build a positive

and strong image. (Boisen, Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018). City-branding can be considered the start line for developing a policy of place marketing and place promotion. (Neri & Grandi, 2013). However, the process of place marketing and place branding requires a long-term plan and stable programs, place promotion can be planned for the short-term. (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007; Donner, Fort, & Vellema, 2014).

Figure 1 was built based on three different concepts. The categorization of two cities was made by Graham (2002) and took it with appropriate adaptations but without changing the central idea. The classification between place promotion, marketing, and branding was made by Boisen et al. (2018) with some ideas proposed by Kavaratzis (2004). This model has the objective of providing a wider understanding of different types of ways of publishing the city.



	Place Promotion	Place Marketing	Place branding
<b>Objectives</b>	Increase attention	Influence choices	Increase reputation
<b>Mandates</b>	Coordinate promotion	Product-market combination	Image orchestration
<b>Approaches</b>	Sender to receiver	Outside-in (needs)	Inside-out (relevance)
<b>Primary Domains</b>	Cognitive Knowledge	Conative - Behaviour	Affective - Attitude
<b>Drivers</b>	Supply-Driven	Demand-Driven	Identity-Driven
<b>Budgets</b>	Target audiences	Target market segments	Perceptions and associations
<b>Tasks</b>	To communicate offerings	To manage supply and demand	To manage reputation
<b>Campaigns</b>	Logos and events	Programs	Narrative and values
<b>Periods</b>	Short-term activities	Long-term programs	Long-term image

Figure 1. Theoretical model of promotion, marketing and branding

The division between external city and internal city works as a frame to consider two perspectives: a city as something material, and a city as an identity. It does not mean that two cities exist, but the possibility of observing the same city from different focus. The first represent a city as a visible and easily identifiable set of objects; the second, as a set of ideas, images and identities associated with that physical city in the mind of local citizens and external visitors.

Considering this duality, place promotion campaigns focus on emphasize the visible and superficial characteristic of places. On the other extreme, place branding campaigns want to influence the image associated to a city in the mind of people. Place marketing is an intermediate step between them which include characteristics of both. This description is clarified by Zenker & Braun, they consider that city branding “is not the communicated expression or the physical characteristic of the place (I.e., landscape, architecture, and other concrete expression of the place), but the perception of those expressions in the minds of the target audiences.” (2015, p. 213).

The tangible and intangible elements define the identity and the image of the city. The identity is the individualist and exclusive condition of the place whereas the image is the public perception of it. Following the notions of Keskin, Akgun, Zehir & Ayar the “primary strategy for city branding is the creation of a positive and strong city identity, developed as a unique set of attributes...” (2016, p. 34) These attributes seek to create the identity of the city which can fit or not with the image. The reconciliation between the city's identity and the external sense of the city “is the building block of a positive and powerful brand”. The recognition of a possible gap between the city's identity and the community image is crucial to construct a harmonic and coherent brand. In other words, “it is critical to describe the contrasts and harmonies between internal and external information” (Keskin, Akgun, Zehir, & Ayar, 2016, p. 35).

### 3.2 Definition of city-branding

The picture exhibited above permit us to reach the central concept of this research, city branding. In order to simplify this study, place branding and city-branding are been

considered as the same phenomenon despite that some authors separate them (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012; Molina, Fernández, Gómez, & Aranda, 2017). The subsequent step is found a proper definition of this phenomena. There are diverse definitions, this paper adopts the proposed by Aakers 1996 which consider it as “an approach that centres around the conceptualization of the city as a brand, and a brand is a multidimensional construct, consisting of functional, emotional, relational and strategic elements that collectively generate a unique set of associations in the public mind” (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007, p. 23).

The Aakers description includes branding element and describe the central purpose but it does not reflect how this process takes place. Then, a second definition is included which consider the process of branding in cities as the relationship between the city and other stakeholders, such as citizens, visitors, employees, private and non- governmental organizations. (Deffner, Karachalis, Psatha, Metaxas, & Sirakoulis, 2019) In that interaction, the image that they want to provide about the cities is as a good, emphasizing the uniqueness of local identity.

This perspective of branding “involves many more complexities, arising from the number of organizations influencing the city branding, the diversity of the stakeholders, the limited control that managers have over the city branding process and the different targets groups” (Björner, 2013, p. 4) The existence of complexity require a special treatment, and for that, the next section focuses on reflecting about how complexity emerged in this process and can it be managed.

### 3.3 City branding and collaboration

Last section describes that to perform city branding effectively it is required a previous collaborative process between local stakeholders to create a city identity. (Ashworth, Kavaratzis, & Warnaby, 2015) The reason is the intrinsic complexity of the branding process together with the complexification of social reality during the last decades, produced by the globalization and interconnectivity. In this line, “governments have become more dependent

on societal actors to achieve their goals because of the increasing complexity of the challenge they face” (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012, p. 2). City branding process is not excluded from this.

Complexity requires the participation and cooperation of diverse actors in a collaborative governance process. Governance has been defined as “the process that takes place within governance networks” and governance network specifically as a “set of conscious steering attempts or strategies of actors within governance networks aimed at influencing interaction process and/or the characteristic of these networks.” (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016, p. 11). Governance networks aim at promoting interaction to create a shared pattern of perception and coordinated interventions. There is an additional complex aspect in the city branding practice that is about the difficulty to prove the effectiveness in terms of real impact. (Glinska & Rudolf, 2019; Hankinson, 2015)

The process of creating a participative network in the city branding process is known as “Place Brand Governance”. (Cerdeira-Bertomeu & Sarabia-Sanchez, 2016, p. 301) Place brand governance might adopt a top-down form if local government fixes mission, vision and, planning previous to the stakeholder’s debate. Or, by contrast, the process assumes a bottom-up procedure, and the actors are involved in the discussion about the complete design and execution. Beyond the method, academics agree about the importance of city identity consensus between the stakeholders previously to be communicated. (Zhang & Zhao, 2009; Azad Hanna & Rowley, 2015)

This interactive structures permit to include diverse actors in a “robust and productive coalition between government, business, and civil society, as well as the creation of new institutions and structures to achieve and maintain this behaviour... (Anholt, 2008, p. 3). The importance of governance networks on city-branding lies in the possibility to harmonize external stakeholders’ ideas and perceptions beyond if they have “similar or complementary point of view attitudes and objectives regarding place branding development” (Cerdeira-Bertomeu & Sarabia-Sanchez, 2016, p. 300).

Local citizens are central in this process because people “communicate their experience with the city on various occasions and in various forms, acting as “ambassadors” to represent the city.” (Zhang & Zhao, 2009, p. 246). Sometimes, the authorities of the

government have their aspirations and interest in the city which not coincide with the citizens or other organization. This point is decisive to determine the relationship between the public administrators, who are in charge of implementing the campaigns, and citizens who finally represent and construct the image of the city. (Zhang & Zhao, 2009) The process of alignment might cause tension as a result of contradictions and differences in objectives, approaches, and operations. (Cerdeira-Bertomeu & Sarabia-Sanchez, 2016)

Diverse kind of instruments were developed to lead this interactive process and attenuate tensions. On the one hand, Govers and Go (2009) identify 3 main questions. The first is connected with identity analysis “who are we?”, the second is the perceived image analysis “what is our reputation?”, and finally actors should wonder about project image analysis “how are we talked about?” (Govers, 2015, p. 76). The process includes not only what image actors want to show, but also with what purpose. For instance, start-ups or companies look for young professionals and requiring an image of connectivity and high-tech, hotels, and restaurant demand images of an attractive and secure place to visit. (Zhou & Wang, 2014).

On the other, Ashworth (2009) identifies 3 instruments: the first is *Personality Association* and focuses on identifying a unique identity to associate the place with a specifically named individual. The second instrument is the *Flagship Building* and it consists of becoming specific buildings (or build a new one for this purpose) as an insigne or emblem of the city. Finally, the *Event Hallmarking* is the organization of temporary events sponsored by local government to obtain recognition and wide impact, and associate that impact with the city. (Ashworth G. J., 2009)

There is an important consideration to make at this point, and it is about the linkage between city brand strategy and city development strategy. The “city brand strategy should be integrated into the city development strategy. This conclusion is based on the assumption that the brand should proceed from a city’s core vision of development” (Herezniak & Anders-Morawska, 2015, p. 200) Moreover, the lack of continuity during a time of the program could generate negatively impact on all dimensions of brand management (Herezniak & Anders-Morawska, 2015).



Hitherto, city branding was defined, characterized and differentiated from other concepts. The next stage is to situate this practise in context detailing how this context is changing and where city branding happens in our time.

### 3.4 City-branding and social media

People consume media every day for different purposes, generally for informing, opining, entertainment, or operating day-to-day. (Zahid Sobaci, 2016; Zhou & Wang, 2014). The information received is processed by the cognition and help us to build a stable mental map with images and perceptions about the world. The purpose of this map is to navigate through the complexity of reality, understanding other people actions and decisions, and elaborate ours. (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; Amin Beig & Furqan Khan, 2019). The information helps to build our preferences, opinions and values, and also influence our thoughts, feelings and mood. (Street, 2011)

The city branding process is intrinsically connected with media due to its implementation depends largely on the “construction, communication and management of the city’s image”. (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005, p. 507). Traditionally, this communicative process has been using means as television or radio. These channels have focused on convincing passive consumer thought one-way communication. However, a new mode of communicated and interacted appeared some decades ago, social media.

First of all, social media should be defined. It is considered as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61; Muinonen & Kumar, 2016) Social media has modified the communication pattern between citizens, institutions and governments adding the possibility to interact between users and blurring the role of content generator and consumers. This change is fundamental to understand the current city-branding practice, due to means the replacement of one-way paradigm to two-way, considering now users as active producers and consumers. (Bonsón, Ratkai, & Royo, 2016; Cleave, Arku, Sadler, & Kyeremeh, 2017; Haro-de-Rosario, Sáez Martín, & Caba Pérez, 2016).

The double communication way supports “the creation of informal users’ networks facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing/refining of informational content”. (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008, p. 232) One of the biggest consequences of this situation is explained by Molina, Fernández, Gómez & Aranda, “when the brand and users co-create brand histories, the owners or managers of the brand have no control over them” (2017, p. 30).

City branding takes places in an arena where users have the possibility to produce their own content or react from these contents through comments, positive or negative reactions. Sometimes, the ideas are popular and shared multiple times becoming “viral” (spread widely content) fixing community sentiment and opinion (Andéhn, Kazeminia, Lucarelli, & Sevin, 2014; Bekkers, Beunders, Edwards, & Moody, 2011).

This new circumstance modified the traditional division of power in the communication scope, governments are unable to regulate information and opinions provided by users. (Cleave, Arku, Sadler, & Kyeremeh, 2017). Consequently, the process of city-branding should concentrate on identifying and managing the brand image instead of controlling the social media environment. (Muinonen & Kumar, 2016; Gómez, Lopez, & Molina, 2019).

This tendency has increased during the last years as result of the proliferation of specific social platforms, known as social networks. Considering the information provided by Statista, in 2010 the total user of these social networks was 0.97 billion, in 2020 the total is 3.09 billion users. (Clement, 2020) The most popular platforms in 2020 regarding Statista are Facebook with 2.4 billion users, YouTube 2 billion, WhatsApp 1.6 billion, and Instagram 1 billion. These types of social platforms are expanded the possibilities to communicate messages from brands to users and vice versa, as well as diversifying the sort of content shared, for instance, images videos or audios. (Clement, 2020; Sevin, 2016; Bekkers, Beunders, Edwards, & Moody, 2011)

Despite the evident revolution produced by social media, traditional branding is still important due to co-existing and correlated with the online format of branding. (Björner, 2013; Azad Hanna & Rowley, 2015). For example, there are street publicities that permit to take photos to post in social networks (e.g I amsterdam or, BA words in Buenos Aires city) or

leaflet with a QR code for more information. Both methods, online and offline, are intertwined and are essential in the process of city branding. (Effing, Van Hillegersberg, & Huibers, 2016; Azad Hanna & Rowley, 2015)

The situation described so far promotes the idea of developing “a multi-channel strategy for branding communications, including internet and digital marketing, in addition to more traditional channels” (Björner, 2013, p. 207). The reason is that a new paradigm of communication and interaction arise the consumer engagement and so the effectivity of city branding tools when is complemented with traditional methods and these channels reflect the equivalent values and identities. (Amin Beig & Furqan Khan, 2019; Govers & Go, 2010)

Returning to the branding practice and its connection with communication, Kavaratzis identifies 3 types of city-branding communication: *primary communication*, “which includes not only the architecture, urban design, infrastructure, museums, and other real place offerings, but also city’s behaviour (...); *secondary communication*, which includes the formal an intended communication through all forms of advertising, public relations, graphic design, and the use of logos and slogans (...); *tertiary communication*, which refers to word-of-mouth reinforced by the media and a wide variety of city users” (Braun, Eshuis, & Klijn, 2014, p. 65; Zenker, 2011; Sevin, 2016; Kavaratzis, 2004).

Tertiary communication is not controlled by the government and generally is a result of the first and second ways of communication. Social media comes in the tertiary type of communication due to the relation is horizontal between the brand and users. If it is considered primary and secondary communication as to how city’s brand image is communicated, then “tertiary communication is how an image is consumed, and thus determines how the brand is perceived by target audience” (Cleave, Arku, Sadler, & Kyeremeh, 2017, p. 1014)

### 3.5 Effectiveness on city branding

One of the most important challenges of this subject is the development of an integrated approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the practice. Researchers have developed diverse instruments and indicators to measure effectiveness on city branding during the last decades. Some of them adopt a “marketing/branding perspective” to examine the brand associations or brand attributes, with emphasis on perception-oriented measures. (Herzeniak, Florek, & Augustyn, 2018, p. 37)

Others focus on the “customer-brand equity models” which combine perceptual and non-perceptual influences of the brand on places. There are also “Financial Management point of view” with an economical perspective of branding and “Place-specific Indexes” with focus on elements as the international reputation of places, the categorization of place assets or, others place reality measures with a wider perspective of branding. (Herzeniak, Florek, & Augustyn, 2018, p. 38)

By way of example, one of the most popular indexes is the Anholt-GMI City Brands Index which recognizes 6 central concepts to measure: *The presence* is about the international status and standing of the city. *The place* is about the pleasure of travelling around the city; *The potential* considers the economic and education opportunities available there; *The pulse* evaluates how vibrant and exciting is the city; *The people* are about how friendly and hospitable are the people there; and finally, *The prerequisite* is about the basic qualities as accommodations, amenities, hospitals, etc obtainable in that city. (Anholt, 2006)

The effectiveness, in this case, is measured considering the impact and the results of the branding campaign, but without a profound reflection about the designing and performing process. This study is rooted in the public administration process of city branding with an emphasis on the design, creation and execution of branding campaigns by local governments. It does not focus on the branding customer-impact or economical results, but on the effectiveness of the local government performing its role in the process.

Following that objective, this study adopts the model proposed by Herzeniak, Florek and Augustyn (2018) to measure effectiveness. It involves 5 indicators to gauge effectiveness

on city branding practice. The *Image-Identity-related* is the first indicator and is linked with the number of campaigns to develop city branding. Second, *the business-related* indicator is to investigate the number of programs to incentive business in the city. Third, the *behavioural* indicator analyses the initiatives aim to induce desire behaviour, as an attachment, loyalty, etc.

Four, the *Institutional* indicator refers to branding programs created through the participation of diverse institutions; and the last indicators is the *Infrastructural* which focus on the presence of new developments and revitalization plans. These indicators are analysed in 3 different circumstances: First, the output of the brand strategy, which has direct and tangible effects. Second, the outcome of the brand strategy, which represents the mid-term effects. Third, the impact of the brand strategy, which represents a long-term effect. (Herzeniak, Florek, & Augustyn, 2018, p. 48)

The model fits with the concepts of this study, but it does not include a deep analysis of the stakeholder involvement process. For that reason and considering it one of the cornerstones of this research, the Herzeniak, Florek & Augustyn model is to strengthen with the Hankinson (2003) proposal. Hankinson considers that the “effectiveness of place branding relies on the extension of the core brand through effective relationships with the various stakeholders” (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009, p. 528).

This second model starts with the *core brand*: “the brand core represents a place’s identity, the blueprint for developing and communicating the place brand” (Hankinson, 2003, p. 115). This core is interconnected with four categories: *consumer relationship*, which aim at the non-conflicting between the target markets; *brand infrastructure relationship* that focuses on the connection with infrastructure development; the *primary services relationship* concentrates in the relation with external organizations in the branding process and finally the *media relationship* which focuses on advertising and public relations. The methodological adaptation of both models to measure the effectiveness in city branding practice on the Buenos Aires government is explained detailly in section 4.5.

### 3.6 The interrelation of ideas

The theoretical framework starts with a clarification about city branding concept and continues providing some definitions with an emphasis in the collaborative sense of the practice. Subsequently, social media is placed as a central context where this exercise arises nowadays, and where the brand is interpellated, questioned or supported. Then, the challenge of measuring the practice in terms of effectiveness takes place. This last section has the objective of interrelating ideas to be a bridge between the theories and the conceptual map of the next section.

Reflecting about the diverse ideas discussed in the theoretical segment, particularly the proposal of Deffner, Karachalis, Psatha, Metaxas, & Sirakoulis (2019); Kavaratzis & Ashworth (2007); Ashworth, Kavaratzis, & Warnaby (2015), this research defines city branding *as an interactive process of identifying and managing the city identity through a multidimensional construction which includes symbolic, emotional, physical and strategic elements to generate in the public an exclusive set of associations.*

Three characteristics structure this definition. First, it is an *interactive process*, which represents the collaborative characteristic of city branding to align the actor's objectives and perceptions. The relevance lies in the fact that external stakeholders can brand independently the city if they are not included in a central plan but, as describe Boisen "the concept of branding requires an indivisible presence: a brand" (2015, p. 14). The not inclusion of representative actors in the branding design process generates conflicts or misunderstanding between governmental and non-governmental actors. Besides, the involvement "provide the means for understanding what the place has to offer, including the diversity, talent, mentality and attitude of its people" (Hanna & Rowley, 2011, p. 465)

Second, the process looks for identifying an *identity* that already exists despite it has (or has not) been handled and managing it through *emotional and symbolic elements*. The emotional and symbolic elements in this definition conform an exclusive narrative that is communicated through different channels, in our time especially through social media where it might be supported or critiqued. This narrative has the purpose of creating an internal sense of belonging and an external consolidation of the city image thought the coincidence of the city identity with the city image. (Zhang & Zhao, 2009)

Third, the last characteristic is represented by *physical and strategic elements*, that denote the importance of the physical transformation of the place. Apart from the narrative and discursive elements, physical renovations in the urban area of the city also brand the city. This characteristic is strongly associated with the idea above, due to emotional and physical components are intertwined. Whereas the first manage the identity through narratives and stories, the second through physical changes and both processes are interconnected, the symbolic and emotional elements signify the physical transformation and vice versa.

Kavaratzis (2004) describes this association considering the physical transformation as a part of the primary communication, and the narrative created by the government about that transformation, as secondary communication. Hanna & Rowley (2011) also detailed this relation categorising as tangible and intangible: “the “brand infrastructure (regeneration) is the component that represents the existence, accessibility and sufficiency of the functional (tangible) and experiential (intangible) places attributes, and the possible need for their renovation and regeneration.” (Hanna & Rowley, 2011, p. 466)

The effectiveness of the government performing city branding will be measured according to the presence of these 3 elements derivate from the definition. The elements can be synthesized as actions to identify/manage the identity of the city, actions to involve stakeholders in the publicity process, and the inclusion of the infrastructure development plan in the branding process. Despite that they will be measure independently they are interconnected. Hanna & Rowley highlight this interrelation, the “brand infrastructure relationships have an influence on the development of brand identity, as the latter is dependent on the dynamic of stakeholder relationships”. (2011, p. 467)

The next section locates these 3 elements in the conceptual map that orders this investigation. Section 4 also describes the methodological characteristics, including the data collection, the operationalization, the methodology applied and the limitation of the research.

## 4. Research Method

### 4.1 Conceptual Model

The objective of this research is to examine how city branding is exercised in social media to identify how effective it has been the government of Buenos Aires performing it in the last 3 years, from 2017 to 2020. For that, the 3 elements described in section 3.7 are taken and conceptualized to determine the city branding effectiveness.

The first element is synthesized for this research as *City Identity Recognition Actions (CIRA)*. These are actions created to identify and manage the city identity using emotional or symbolic elements, as narratives or stories, to generate emotive associations and positive feelings on the city image, but especially to harmony the identity, as the distinctiveness of the city with the image of the city in the public mind.

The second element refers to city branding construction as an interactive process where external stakeholders participate in a network governance process to align branding perceptions, objectives, and to find a shared identity of the city. This process will be identified as *Place Brand Governance (PBG)* adopting the concept from Cerda-Bertomeu & Sarabia-Sanchez (2016).

The last element is based on the relation between city branding and physical transformation of the city and it is named for this study as *Infrastructure Development Connection (IDC)*. As defined before, the infrastructure development, as new construction or regeneration projects, is a manner of publicizing the city through modifications in the urban area. For this research, IDC refers to the harmonization between the infrastructure development plan of the city and the branding programme. By a way of clarification, IDC focuses exclusively on the physical development of the city for this study, despite that the infrastructure development is a general concept with a broad scope of action.

The *effectiveness* is measured considering the presence of these three elements in the city branding actions and their subsequent publication on social media channels. The effectiveness indicators proposed by Herzeniak, Florek and Augustyn (2018) are used to measure the two moments. First, the presence of these elements in the branding strategic actions performed by the government, and second, the presence of these elements in city



branding process on social media. According to the presence of these elements in the complete city branding process) of Buenos Aires local government (both stages, it moves closer to city branding effectiveness. (See figure 2)

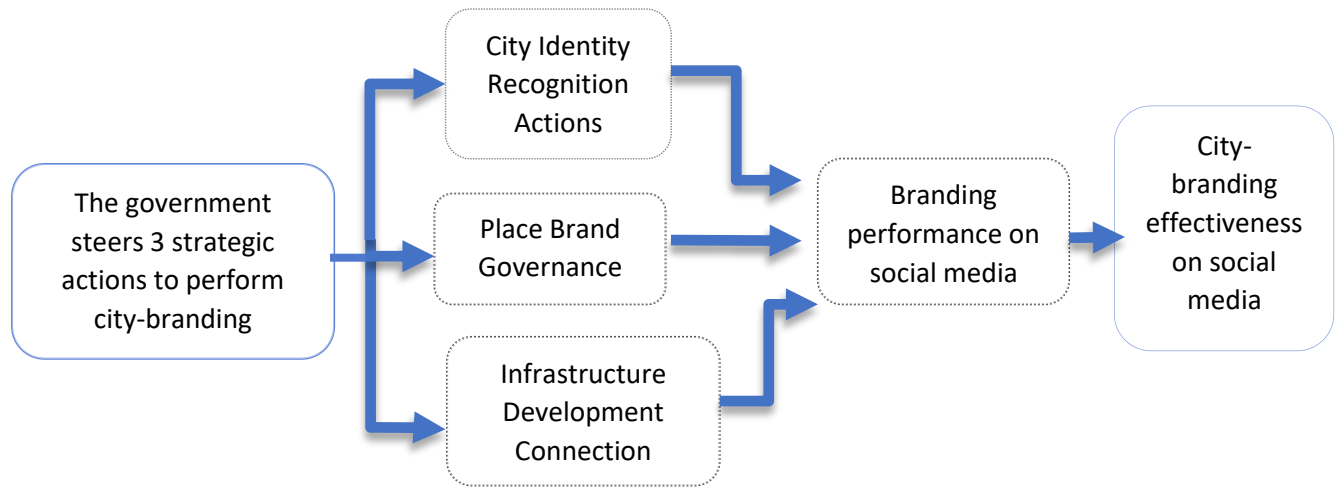


Figure 2. Conceptual Model

Ideally, a period to analyse the branding process of Buenos Aires city would cover a longer time, especially from 2015 due to in that year political elections took place and a new administration started in the government of Buenos Aires city. Nevertheless, the inclusion of five years represented a large data collection to investigate and interpret in a short period. Then, the period selected was reduced to 3 years (2017 to 2020), with the expectation that the information collected in these years were the result of a consolidate and mature branding strategy which started two years before, in 2015.

#### 4.2 Methodological design, assumptions and hypothesis

The effectiveness of local government performing city branding is measured with a combination of quantitative and quantitative research. The qualitative methodology provides a functional and relational view of city branding. For that, a set of semi-structured interviews to public administrators and researchers on the matter take place to investigate the process of city-branding design. They examine the presence of the 3 central elements: City Identity Recognition Actions, Place Brand Governance, and Infrastructure Development Connection,

and the last section the internal social media management. All of the elements are measure independently, despite that there are several connections between them as before detailed.

Nevertheless, the results of interviews do not allow to comprehend the complete picture of the branding process, because it does not cover properly social media content shared. For that reason, a media content analysis is included to measure the elements publicised on social media platforms and the user's reaction. It starts with interviews because it permits to look into the process of branding design and construction previous the publication on social media channels, lately, the media content analysis allows to identify if these 3 elements are present in publications.

The media content analyses the official Facebook Fan Page of the Buenos Aires government because this is one of the main channels of communication between citizens and the government. The content analysis technique is "a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material to identify patterns, themes, biases and meanings" (Berg & Lune, 2014, p. 335) The media content analysis is considered as a subset of content analysis with a focus on interpreting messages or texts and other social media content to generate valid interferences. (Macnamara, 2005; Domas White & Marsh, 2006; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

This research considers the publications on the official Facebook page as the text, and interpret them assigning code frame categories to the successive parts of the material to cover all those aspects that feature the description and interpretation (Schreier, 2014; Neuman, 2011). Some papers on the matter include the analysis of content generated by independent actors; a process known as User-Generated Content (UGC). However, this research focusses exclusively on the content generated by the Buenos Aires government on Facebook and the user's reaction to this content.

The double methodology is used because interviews process allows achieving a logic interference of city branding, while media analysis statistical interferences. The qualitative method permits us to comprehend "the perspective held by senior municipal practitioners on issues of place promotion and the role of social media", following the Pacione's idea. (Cleave, Arku, Sadler, & Kyeremeh, 2017, p. 1018).

This study assumes that to perform city branding effectively on social media, it is necessary a previous process of identifying the city identity. Besides, it assumes that that city branding activities should take place in an interactive process involving external stakeholders to reach consensus about that identity. Additionally, to maintaining the harmonization between messages and actions, a connection between city branding and infrastructure development is crucial.

This research also assumes that the leadership of the city branding process is on the local government, based on the idea of Hanna and Rowley. The “role of the leadership should be supporting the establishment of partnerships and networks by providing focus and fostering commitment” (2011, p. 464) and the government meet the requirements. Moreover, it accepts that the government of Buenos Aires performs city-branding using diverse channels, however, the government designs the city branding strategy based principally on social media campaigns. In that framework, social networks are the strongest channel and Facebook the principal platform.

This research has 4 hypotheses:

- H1.** The government of Buenos Aires elaborates specific actions to recognize the city identity.
- H2.** City branding is performed through a Place Brand Governance with a top-down approach.
- H3.** City branding is performed with a weak level of connection with the infrastructure development plan.
- H4.** The government perform city-branding through Facebook Fan Page showing the elements mentioned in H1, H2 and H3.

#### 4.4. Data collection

The first step involves an interviews process which takes place from two sources, public administrators of Buenos Aires government, and researchers on the matters. The Public Administrators are from diverse secretaries, Secretaría de Medios (Media Secretary), Sub-Secretaría de Relaciones Internacionales e Institucionales (International and Institutional Relations Social Communication Sub-secretary), la Dirección General de Comunicación

Turística y Promoción Internacional (Touristic Communication and International Promotion General Direction) and Observatorio Turístico de la Ciudad (Touristic Observatory). The interviews permit to collect data about the internal process of designing, construction and implementation of city-branding in social media.

The methodology applied to contact the public administrator's interviewees was the snowball sampling technique, that "the research makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contact with others" (Bryman, 2012, p. 202). The members of the Media secretary were initially contacted and they facilitated the contact with other members. The researchers were selected considering their expertise on the matter, a technique known as purposive sampling. (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016)

The interviews occurred between April, May, June and July 2020 with an approximate duration of 45 minutes each one. The dialogue was recorded provided that the users accept it and the fragments used as direct quotations in the findings section, transcribed to English. The interviews were settled using preferably Zoom or Skype platforms and considering the importance of confidentiality, it uses pseudonyms to protect the identity of interviews if they request it.

The second step includes a quantitative analysis and took place in April 2020 through an analysis of the content publicised on the official Facebook Fan Page of the Buenos Aires Government. This account is one of the main channels of communication for the local government, and one of the most significant social media platforms to interact with citizens and foreigners. The account has 1.358.465 followers and 1.345.097 of likes.

The data covers all of the publications posted about the city publicity from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2017 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2019. It included publications of the official page but did not cover content shared or liked by the official page and posted for other users. The publications were ordered in an Excel sheet and examined using the media content-coding tree. The next section describes the central definitions, variables and operationalization of each methodology.

#### 4.5. Definitions, variables and operationalization

This section has the objective of operationalizing the variables of the study. The characterisations of these are constructed exclusively for this research using the elements analysed in the theoretical framework. Table 1 shows the variables with the definition.

Variables	Definition
City Identity Recognition Actions (CIRA)	Actions created to identify and manage the city identity using emotional or symbolic elements, as narratives or stories, to generate emotive associations and positive feelings between the city and the image of the city in the public mind.
Place Brand Governance (PBG)	It refers to city branding construction as an interactive process where external stakeholders participate in a network governance process to align branding perceptions, objectives, and to find a shared identity of the city.
Infrastructure Development Connection (IDC)	It refers to the harmonization between the infrastructure development plan of the city and the branding programme, understanding infrastructure as a physical transformation of the city.
Social Media	Social media is a set of Internet applications that allow the creation and exchange of content between different users producing horizontal interactions between them.
Effectiveness	The effectiveness is measured considering the presence/number of the CIRA, PBG and IDC elements in the branding strategic actions and the social media performance.

*Table 1. Definitions*

#### 4.5.1 Qualitative research

The research process starts with interviews to public administrators and researchers inquiring the presence of the 3 concepts that it covers, City Identity Recognition Actions (CIRA), Place Brand Governance (PBG) and Infrastructure Development Connection (ICD) in the branding construction process. First, as Table 2 shows, the interviews start with CIRA and include questions about city branding understanding, the presence of actions to identify or manage identity and the term of branding projects. (See Table 2)

The second section is about PBG and has the objective of examining the presence of interactive governance actions to involve external actors in the process. The third segment looks for exploring the presence of connections between branding campaigns and the infrastructure development plan of the city. Lastly, an extra section about social media managing is included to show how the branding implementation in social media takes place in the Buenos Aires government. This section helps to connect the results of both methodologies due to containing indicators to measure the centralization of the process, content online and offline and effectiveness perception of public administrators in the branding practice. The coding trees which leads this analysis is placed in Appendix 10.1.

Variables	Concepts	Indicators
<b>City Identity Recognition Actions (CIRA)</b>	City branding performing	What does the government understand for city branding?
		What is the objective of city-branding campaigns in Buenos Aires?
	Identity generation	Has the department created a policy to discover the city identity?
		Do you consider that the city of Buenos Aires has a clear identity?
The project term	Has the department created a long-term project to publish the city? Do you differentiate short-medium-long term city-branding objectives?	
<b>Place Brand Governance (PBG)</b>	Stakeholders involvement	Do other stakeholders (external) participate in the process of the city-branding campaign?

		Do these actors are involved in the designing or only during the execution?
<b>Infrastructure Development Connection (IDC)</b>	Connection of branding with development	Do Facebook campaigns have a connection with the infrastructure development of different areas of the city?
		How integrated is the city branding program and the development program?
<b>Social Media managing</b>	Internal centralization	Does the office of media centralize the city branding process or by contrast each office/ department has the autonomy to brand?
		How many actors (internal) participate in the city-branding process?
	Content offline and online	Does the city branding program combine online branding with offline branding?
		Do you share the same content in all social networks profiles or is there any special criterion to distribute the content social networks profile?
Perception of effectiveness	Do you feel that the city branding campaigns performed by social media are effective?	

Table 2. Variables, concepts and indicators of qualitative research

#### 4.5.2 Quantitative research

The quantitative section follows the qualitative one represented in a media content analysis. This analysis is divided into 2 steps which respect a specific order. First, it starts with the classification of posts collected from Facebook Fan Page of Buenos Aires Government, in Place Promotion, Place Marketing and, Place Branding, following the proposal of Boisen, Terlouw, Groote & Couwenberg (2018) described in the theoretical framework.

The content of each publication is analysed detailly, and the post without relation with Promotion, Marketing or Branding will be excluded from the analysis. The coding tree of this first classification is in Appendix 10.2, and details how this process takes place. The

number of reactions, comments and shares will be included to allow to apply the Stakeholder Engagement Model defined in Appendix 10.6. (See Table 3)

	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Amount of publications</b>
City advertising campaigns	<b>Place promotion</b>	
	<b>Place marketing</b>	
	<b>Place branding (city-branding)</b>	
<b>Total</b>		

Table 3. Classification of media analysis content of Buenos Aires official Facebook

The results of this analysis provide a classification of the publications regarding the content of each one that enables the second step. The second phase focuses exclusively on the posts classified as branding and looks for identifying the presence of the 3 elements which represent the central variables of the study: City Identity Recognition Actions (CIRA), Place Brand Governance (PBG) and Infrastructure Development Connection (IDC). The analysis uses a coding tree detailed in Appendix 10.3. (See table 4)

Branding elements	<b>City Identity Recognition Actions</b>	<b>Place Brand Governance</b>	<b>Infrastructure Development Connection</b>	<b>Without elements</b>	Total post
<i>Number of Posts</i>					

Table 4. Branding elements recognition on Facebook publications

#### 4.6 City branding effectiveness measurement

The data collected in both methodologies are analysed using the model of Herzeniak, Florek and Augustyn (2018). It includes 5 indicators to measure city branding effectiveness: *Image/identity related, Business-related, Behavioural, Institutional and Infrastructural*. These indicators are analysed in 3 instances: the *output* of the brand strategy (direct and tangible



effects), the *outcome* of the brand strategy (mid-term effects) and the *impact* of the brand strategy (long-term effects).

Considering the focus of this study, it includes the 3 indicators that coincide with the variables of this study and permits to measure effectiveness: *Image/identity related*, identified as **CIRA** (City Identity Recognition Actions); *Institutional*, identified as **PBG** (Place Brand Governance); and *Infrastructural* names as **IDC** (Infrastructure Development Connection) in this research. Recognizing that this research covers 3 years, it does not collect data for long-term impact analysis. The effectiveness is measured considering two instances, the *output*, understood as the result of the strategic actions provided by the qualitative process, and the *outcome* as the use of these elements on Facebook publications.

Table 5 shows the model already adapted to this research. The CIRA output measures the presence of branding campaigns to identify and manage the city identity. The CIRA outcome measures the presence (number) of identitarian elements on social media content. (For more information about the impact see the Stakeholder Engagement Model in Appendix 6).

The PBG output measures the presence of joint programs developed by the government to generate stakeholder's inclusion in branding practices. The PBG outcome measures the presence (number) of external stakeholders' involvement programmes as elements to brand the city on social media. At this point, it is important to clarify that the original model of Herzeniak, Florek and Augustyn (2018) considers involvement as a result of the motivation of the external stakeholders to participate in the process.

However, this study concentrates on the practice from the local government actions. Then, the Hankinson (2003) model is adopted due to consider the involvement as the creation of spaces for participation. He explains "a key area of particular concern to local authorities is the role which relationship with local communities and employees play in the building of successful destination brand" (Hankinson, 2003, p. 118).

Lastly, the IDC output measures the presence of connections between city branding and infrastructural development plan (new or revitalized building). The IDC outcome measures the presence (number) of these elements on Facebook content. By a way of

clarification, the presence in the *outcome* is measured according to the number of the element recognized.

	<b>The <i>output</i> of the brand strategy</b>	<b>The <i>outcome</i> of the brand strategy (Social Media)</b>
<b>CIRA</b> <sup>1</sup>	The presence of branding campaigns to identify and manage the city identity.	The presence (number) of identitarian elements on social media content.
<b>PBG</b> <sup>2</sup>	The presence of joint programs developed by the government to generate stakeholder's involvement in branding practices.	The presence (number) of external stakeholders' involvement programmes as elements to brand the city on social media.
<b>IDC</b> <sup>3</sup>	The presence of connection between city branding and infrastructure developments plan (new or revitalized building)	The presence (number) of infrastructural development content as elements to brand the city on social media.

Table 5. City branding effectiveness indicators<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.7 Research limitations

This study has some limitation. First, the research question focuses specifically on social media performance without including branding performed by traditional media, and as was described in the theoretical framework, traditional channels are adapting to these new circumstances, avoiding to lose relevance.

<sup>1</sup> Originally denominated: "Image/identity-related"

<sup>2</sup> Originally denominated: "Institutional"

<sup>3</sup> Originally denominated: "Infrastructural"

<sup>4</sup> The model is adopted from Herzeniak, Florek and Augustyn (2018)

Second, there is a limitation and bias on the data collection because it includes the Facebook Fan Page content in a specific period. This represents a small portion of all the content generated through social networks, web site and other social media platforms. The content would be similar but the users are different as well as the interaction and reaction with the publications. Generally speaking, Facebook users are people above 30 years old.

Third, another limitation of the data collection is on interviews. Initially, the study pretended to interview members of the Media Secretary and International and Institutional Relations Secretary of the Buenos Aires government due to they are in charge of branding campaigns through social media. The international situation generated for COVID-19 became very difficult the coordination and to guarantee the progress of this research, it was included Public Administrators from other areas connected with the process. Lately and considering that this problem kept, it was decided to include researchers on the matter.

Four, the study performs a shallow investigation of the branding process construction, particularly how the actors involved interact and achieved consensus. Moreover, the concept of Infrastructure Development Connection takes a narrow perspective excluding branding elements as institutional modifications, economic impact or long-term programs.

Five, this study does not include User-Generated Content analysis on the Facebook comments neither other types of information related considering that it would complement this research properly. Six, this study has a language limitation due to the data is collected in Spanish but the description and analysis in English. It could generate misunderstandings or lack of accuracy.

Seven, the period selected is another methodological limitation due to cover 3 years (2017 to 2020) reducing the analysis of effectiveness to the performance. As indicated previously, city branding is a process to execute in the long term and research on the issue should cover a longer time to gain fidelity. Nevertheless, the reason for the period selected responds exclusively to the feasibility of managing the data in the time stipulated.

## 5. Interview findings

The interview's finding section structures the description according to the 3 variables and the last section that is about social media managing. It starts with *City Identity Recognition Actions* that is composed of the following concepts: branding definition, identity generation policies, and the project's term. This first variable permits us to look into the practices done to recognize activities in pursuit of identifying the city identity.

The second variable is *Place Brand Governance* that includes the stakeholder's involvement process. It looks for recognizing the participation of external actors in the process and if these actors are included in the design stage or also in the performance. The third variable is the *connections with infrastructure* and covers the linkage between development plan and branding through two indicators: the presence of linkage and the degree of connection with these kinds of plans.

Finally, the *social media managing* section investigates the social media fulfilment, in the designs and performing stages. This information is valuable to clarify how the content generated in these interviews is connected with the data examined in the media analysis content. It is composed of the content centralization, and content shared and the effectiveness perception.

The methodology applied in this section does not divide between the branding practised internal and external to the city. The reason is that, how is described in the theoretical framework, a brand is a unique construct that should be publicized internally and externally coherently as two expressions of the same phenomenon. Then, a methodological separation would force to consider it as separate processes in the interviewee's ideas.

Nevertheless, the public administrators interviewed usually distinguished between these processes. Consequently, the division is adopted to categorise the information and the analysis, but to deal with this fragmentation some questions about the connection between internal and external branding were added. The findings start describing the internal and continuing with the external performance, the last paragraphs of each section compare both situations. The list of interviewees is in Appendix 10.4.

## 5.1 First variable: City Identity Recognition Actions

The process starts with a question about what the interviewees understand for city-branding to determine if we are talking the same language. Together with the answers to this question, details about objectives and the presence of city identity recognition actions are included. The responses, as expected, are wide and contain diverse elements which coincide with characteristics of promotion, marketing and branding categories described in the theoretical framework.

A member of the Media Secretary, who performs branding internally, considered city-branding as the communication of actions related to the development in all facets. The respondent detailed that the direct actions or facts are the central elements of branding practice, and they have the objective of reach the neighbour in a clean, precise and convincing way. On the one hand, this definition shows a strong communicative connotation and emphasizes in the direction of messages to residents of Buenos Aires, mentioned as *neighbours*. This denomination appeared several times in the interviews because it is the name of how the member of the government recognize citizens in a closer and warm identification.

On the other, the element to communicate to neighbours is the *development in all facets* which include one of the core variables of this research, the infrastructure development connections. The emphasizes is on communicating to neighbours in a *clean, precise and convincing way*, the definition is influenced by the position in the government structure and the task that he is doing.

Another public administrator who works internally on the content creation for social media reflected about the division between internal and external branding practice before mentioned. Besides, she explained that branding actions are not a recurring activity in the media schedule of the Buenos Aires government, at least internally, and that was made when the current government started. She detailed:

*“...we worked on renewing the brand when this government started, and it was decided a specific tone, aesthetic and playing... [...] we worked about values to promote internally from the secretary: the idea that the government and the neighbours are the same, creativity, austerity, humidity and the closeness to the neighbour [...] the daily communication is [...] more than only branding, it is the communication of everything, some specific programmes, infrastructure modification, etc.”*

The values described above are more connected with the identity of the government than the identity of the city. However, it was included also the idea that the government and the neighbours are the same. From a branding point of view, it would be understood as an effort to align the identity between two central elements of this process: citizens and government.

Another interviewee who works in a different office but also performs the branding internally coincides with the description done before about the communication based on daily information about public policies. These include social or economic programmes, physical transformation, government activities, with an occasional focus on branding because the city generally does not performed campaign completely focus on branding. When this activity emerges, it focusses on a long-term objective that could be positioned the Buenos Aires city as a model in Argentina.

In this last answer, it is possible to recognize a long-term objective, although a bit imprecise, which is to become Buenos Aires in the city model of Argentina. Moreover, the interviewees mentioned continuously the “*playing*” created at the beginning of the current government, which refers to the slogan “Vamos Buenos Aires!” [Come on Buenos Aires!]. One of the respondents emphasized that the slogan has changed two times in 12 years, from “Buenos Aires Ciudad” to “Vamos Buenos Aires”, referring it as a way of maintaining the identity. As was detailed in the theoretical framework, the slogan is only the visible part of the branding and generally is an expression created by the government in office. The slogan appeared several times in the Facebook content analysis of the next section.

The city branding process performed externally differs with the actions taken inward to the city. The definitions provided by public administrators who perform the brand for other countries include more explicit branding elements and consider city branding as the main tool to position a city at the international. He suggested:

*“...city-branding is a consequence or a derivation from an international action strategy. This strategy is more general than city branding and has other elements apart from branding. This strategy is about networking, city to city relations, connections with international institutions, and other types of organizations, as private or philanthropic, which are increasingly interested in working with cities. Thus, branding is an element of a wider expression inside the strategy which is an international city position...”*

This definition integrates a central element for this research which is the involvement of external actors in the branding process because he considers that it takes shape through “networking” and “city to city relations”. It makes complete sense complemented with the *International Projection Strategy Document* that was sent me during the interview. This document is the product of an open and participative process led by the International and Institutional Relations Sub-Secretary with the objective of order the dispersion of the elements working independently. Some details were provided about the project:

*“...there is not any other project like this one inside the government, [...] we try to order the dispersion that would produce these elements working independently. Why? Because the niche is specializing in particular sectors and you would possibly position different attributes, different identities, different characteristics of the city. [...] [We need] a specificity with order and a conceptual umbrella to grasp them.”*

The details of the project include another central variable of this research when mentions the alignment between “different attributes, different identities and different characteristics of the city”, emphasizing the importance of recognition and unifying the identities and attributes. The notion of “conceptual umbrella” denotes the priority of coordinating the branding effort externally between the different offices and external actors, also mentioned in the quote before.

Another respondent, who works on the tourism office, complimented the idea identifying three central objectives of the Buenos Aires branding actions: the attraction of *tourism, investments, and students*. These purposes coincide with the most prevalent objectives of city branding mentioned in the literature and included in the theoretical section. Besides, he explained that the branding performed externally through the International Projection Strategy try to avoid the dissociation between city-branding and general government strategy, in other words, it connects the general purposes of the government.

The International Projection Strategy is a very clear example of city branding policy due to include actions based on recognizing the Buenos Aires identity as a set of meanings and images. As explained in the theoretical section, the purpose of the branding process is creating a unique set of associations in the public mind. Another respondent was asked specifically about the presence of actions to recognize and manage identity. He replied:

*“We have found identity attributes of Buenos Aires city [...] That identity is related to position Buenos Aires as a city with a high quality of life, home of talent, creativity, and diversity. Thus, quality of life is the central concept, and the idea is, within megacities that are urban areas with 10 million inhabitants or more, Buenos Aires has some characteristics to justify the good quality of life.”*

The examination of City Identity Recognition Actions in both processes shows notable differences. The inward actions to recognize the city identity become diluted within the daily promotion of government actions. Scant actions have been taken in this matter, and they intertwine government identity recognition with city identity recognition actions. Externally, there is possible to observe a clear and unified process of identifying and managing the identity of Buenos Aires city with attributes defined among diverse actors.

The separation between the internal and external branding practice could dissociate the process generating inconsistencies in the brand. This idea appeared clearer in the description of a member of the tourism office, who highlighted the importance of the coordination and cohesion between the image projected externally and the image constructed internally. He described that city branding has external objectives, as attracting



visitants, students or investments, but also internal ones, as creating internal coherence. He described:

*“the city-branding universe is to improve the internal image creating coherence and cohesion between what do you sell outside and what raw material we have internally, starting with the citizen [...] We have ambassadors, the citizens, who are part of the identity construction in the city-branding process, whether we want to or not”*

Previously there was described that citizens, as a group of people who live in a certain city, are central for branding identity, as are famous buildings, local customs, traditional food, among others. In this last quotation, they are mentioned as “*ambassadors*” of the branding process due to represent the city internally and externally. Zhang and Zhao (2009) include the idea of citizens as “ambassadors” who play a crucial role in the city branding process. They are identitarian elements considering their humour and particularities and as the bearer of the identity. In this research, citizens are included as actors who should participate in a Place Brand Governance process to decide the identity publicised.

To conclude this subsection, it is possible to appreciate that the identitarian activities become dilute in the daily communication process on the government activities, and the examples supplied about the identity represent the government profile more than the city. This inconsistency is connected with the distinction mentioned by Zhang & Zhao (2009), the own aspirations of the government at the moment of branding the city generate a discordance between the identity that the government want to perform and the city image that the cities have. By contrast, the branding performed for the world has a clear process of identitarian activities aimed at recognizing the image of the city and fixing the objectives for the future.

## 5.2 Second variable: Place Brand Governance

This subsection examines the presence of Place Brand Governance activities at the moment of branding the city. It analyses the process of involving external actors in network governance to identify the image and the distinctiveness of the city to subsequently manage them according to the shared objectives. Some examples of external actors are individual citizens, citizens organized in communitarian groups, private companies, social organizations, other levels of governments, etcetera.

This variable has connections with the objectives detailed previously, due to actors' aims are one of the elements to align in a combined effort. The interactive governance can take place at the moment of designing the branding strategies or when these campaigns are executed. A researcher explained the importance of generating this involvement:

*" I will see that it is important from the very beginning [...] the best thing that anybody who wants to brand the city can do, is getting the stakeholders in the same room, and asking them to have a discussion about what should be the brand of the city like, what should the activity be like, and in a way, the extent of the outcome of this discussion is more important than the final sort of campaigns or brand slogans or tools"*

The involvement of external actors allows us to have a clear perspective of how different actors, citizens, interpret and communicate the Buenos Aires image. City branding projects look for creating an authentic image and convenient image to walk in a unique direction. As was described in the theoretical framework, this process is not free of complexities.

A second researcher explained the complexity associated at this process, and suggested 3 types of perceptions to bear in mind at the moment of involving stakeholders: It should consider what people of Buenos Aires think about themselves, also, what external people think about Buenos Aires, and finally what Buenos Aires citizens think about the thought of external people about Buenos Aires. A clear panorama about these impressions is fundamental to avoid inconsistencies in brand managing.

The researcher complemented suggesting the use of *"Place Brand Management"* as a concept to describe the process of giving direction. It is central to observe the use of the word

*“management”*, instead of *“creation”* or *“generation”*. It refers to the idea that every city has an image already created independent of any plan to manage it. Moreover, in the case that there is a plan to do it, the image cannot manage totally and even less in an interactive context of social media, and so the objective of this involvement is to agree on the direction that they want to take.

Examining the answers provided by public administrators who brand the city for local citizens, we can observe a diffuse process of external stakeholders' involvement. A member of the media secretary described that the participants could integrate organizations as NGO or other, but the first action and the programme execution is done by the government. He explained:

*“it is a decision made by the government and the internal working teams. It does not mean that there aren't requests to achieve the desired objective, but the consults would be in different areas, to different companies. The governmental decision and application are made by internal working teams following a command-line (...)*

It is possible to express following these words that the external actors do not have a clear role in the internal branding process generated by the government. Other respondents agree with this low participation of citizens in the process of city branding, that could be explained from two points of views. On the one hand, the absence of a defined programme to generate the participation, on the other, a low citizen motivation to participate in the programmes.

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify two particular examples about participation and cooperation between the Buenos Aires government and external actors. The first example is about a specific process of citizens involvement in 2019 to denominate a new Metro station of Buenos Aires:

*“...a year ago, approximately, we inaugurated a Metro station and we recognised 30 significant women of Buenos Aires history. We allowed the neighbours to choose the name of the Metro Station considering those options, to distinguish their honour and social acknowledgement.”*

The second example involved the cooperation between the Buenos Aires city and the Buenos Aires province, two different levels of government, with the objective to unifying the

Emergency Medic System Attention (SAME for their initials in Spanish) in both jurisdictions. The process of unifying the emergency service has principally the purpose of providing a more effective and efficient service to citizens, but it was also a process of unifying the brand of the medical services to generate a unique identity. The respondent detailed that there was the equivalent banner in buses in Buenos Aires city as in the Buenos Aires province.

According to a respondent's description, the involvement of actors in the external branding process took place in the context of International Projection Strategy, following two steps. First, the initial idea was produced inside of the government and after an internal validation, it was sent to civil society organizations, private companies, etc, to provide feedback. At this point, the respondent clarified a significant detail, the idea of sharing the plan responds to the notion that the effort of the strategy is to position the city, not the local government, and the city includes all of them.

Second, after the incorporation of the comments, the government created a group called "Concejo Espacio BA Global" [Council Space BA Global] in 2019. This space was created for numerous proposes, one of them is to identify and generate an image to show outward. The attributes mentioned in section 5.1, a city with a high quality of life, home of talent, creativity, and diversity, were resulted of a combined effort generated in this interactive group. This group is permanent, and so it has also the responsibility of controlling the process. Some details were specified about this Council:

*"...is a group of 30 important people from culture scope, business and, others, people from Buenos Aires and foreigners interested and with knowledge about Buenos Aires city. It will be useful for a reflection and validation space of strategy and next steps. [...]  
Ideally, it will provide feedback and also contacts and links that they have."*

The process of Place Brand Governance takes place also as a result of the importance of managing digital information and big data in the city branding process. A respondent who works in the tourism office explained the cooperation between tourism companies and the government of Buenos Aires city. This involvement has the purpose of incrementing the precision and effectiveness of the publicity campaigns on social media, with a clear economical purpose for both sides. He clarified:

*“...external actors who can participate in our branding campaigns are the agencies that we contract, and perhaps some partnerships with some supplier of a different kind that feed us with information and orient with their knowledge [...] At the moment of choosing what type of content it will be produced for a market, we have diverse information sources.”*

The difference between the internal and external performance in this variable is notable. It is possible to identify some shallow cases of stakeholder’s involvement in the inward branding process, but they are sporadic examples without a clear and regular plan or programme. By contrast, externally the branding process is part of a bigger strategy of positioning the city which has taken place in a double process of actor’s involvement.

### 5.3 Third variable: Infrastructure Development Connection

The third variable is the Infrastructure Development Connection and examines the inclusion of the infrastructure development plans in the city branding process. It responds to the necessity of harmonizing the growth progress, for instance, cities which promote themselves as green and smart urban areas have necessarily to design a real change to keep this accordance, in other words, the story told has to be accompanied by a real transformation.

In the inner branding process, the connection between these elements in the Buenos Aires city is present considering that all of the respondents who work in that area agree about the idea. A respondent accompanied the answer explaining that Buenos Aires has a core objective which is to change the quality of life of the citizens, and in this idea is included all of the physical transformations of the city. She also detailed that, the office has a communication brief which includes a central question, summarized as follow: How do our actions change the citizens’ life? and every communicative action should answer that question to go ahead.

The presence of this connection becomes clear with an answer given by a respondent who works in the communication and citizens participation area. She revealed that the local government usually organize diverse action around some physical transformation to involve citizens and publicize the city:

*"...in 2019 there were many public works, we communicated these works and also organized different actions around these public works. So, there were prepared participative events where citizens could visit the progression of the public works, [in two moments], visiting the place with the public works in progress and when they were finished."*

Following the words of another public administrator interviewed, a specific case of this participation was the construction of "Paseo del Bajo". It is a big motorway inaugurated in 2019 that goes through the Buenos Aires city. The branding process organized around this infrastructure transformation was not only based on social media publicity, but there were also participative actions in two moments, during the construction process and at the moment of opening it, due to a marathon took place as a way to include the neighbours.

This example can be analysed from Kavaratzis (2004) classification. He classifies in primary, secondary and tertiary communication, the branding campaigns through traditional channels and social media represent the secondary and tertiary communication, the common methods to publicity these kinds of process. However, the local government also fostered primary communication producing specific activities to be in direct contact with the urban transformation.

On the external issue, the respondents agreed about the presence of connexions between the elements, and as expected, they situated them into the attributes mentioned before. To remind them, the city has identified characteristics to position the image outward centralizing the branding effort of the governmental offices. They concentrate on becoming Buenos Aires in a place with a high quality of life, home of talent, diversity and creativity, and then diverse actions should be made in the urban area to achieve it.

These arrangements contain not only urban transformations, as bridges or routes construction, but it requires a broader perspective which includes legislative measures, institutional transformations, social assistance, economical or financial benefits, and others. This idea is exemplified clearly through some examples provided by one of the respondents who works managing the Buenos Aires image to the world:

*“...Buenos Aires is a nice city to visit it ridden in a bike and so we show the infrastructure created on cycle-lanes and the effort made to have bikes. [Also], to attract business, we have to show some fiscal benefits that make us competitive. But perhaps none company will decide strictly considering that. Rather regarding the quality of life in Buenos Aires or what type of school can send the children an executive member of a company, or if he can walk on the street without insecurity problems...”*

The fragment reveals the intrinsic complexity that this process results in. At this point, it is important to remember the challenge of harmonizing the narrative used to foreign and for citizens about the city transformation. Along this line, a second example helps to clarify the effort of the city to connect both processes. This example includes the involvement of citizens and shows how central elements of city branding participate in the process.

The case refers to a programme called *“Turismo en más barrios”* (Tourism in more neighbourhoods) that has the objective of expanding the tourist route in the city to subsequently attract more visitors and generate a bigger economic impact. Furthermore, it looks for increasing the citizens feeling proud about the neighbourhood and become them in ambassadors of the city. It was narrated with the following fragment:

*“...we arranged a mural program on identitarian questions about the place. So, the government worked on a mural about Amadeo Carrizo in his neighbourhood or others identitarian things of there [...] The neighbours were involved with a massive communication to fix a day and place to meet, usually Saturday in a central square [...] We worked with stories that neighbours voted, about what is the most representative figure or emblematic situation in the neighbourhood. So, ¿What is it that? You are building identity, pride and future touristic value.”*

This case is a clear example of the presence of essential elements in branding practice, which at the same time represent the 3 central variables adopted in this research. First, it focusses on identifying and managing the identity of the neighbourhood through discussions about the historical celebrities or emblematic events happened there. Second, the process is done with the involvement of the citizens from the very beginning. Finally, it has connections with infrastructure development, understanding it as the creation of street art with a touristic and identitarian purpose.

In both cases, the internal and external branding performance, there are clear connections between the branding programme and the infrastructure development plan. Going in-depth in the analysis, the branding performed outward shows a clear connection between the 3 central variables, denoting a high level of coordination. For instance, it is possible to connect the home of talent and creativity, as identitarian concepts that conform to the International Strategic Projection, with the mural painted in the neighbourhood about talent personalities. Besides, these street art pieces have been decided in collaborative action with the ambassadors of the city, the citizens.

#### 5.4 Four section: Social media managing

This last section has the objective of looking into the process of city branding publicity, specifically about how the actions described before are projected in the official social media channels, boosting the impact and enhancing effectiveness. The activities and channels are



diverse, and for that reason, it structures the findings following the division used in the sections above, first the internal process and after the external one.

The course that takes the branding content to reach social media channels in the inner branding was explained by one of the respondents. The process starts in the Strategic Issues Secretary (Secretaría de Asuntos Estratégicos) with the creation of strategic campaigns focusing on general objectives. After that, the Communication, Content and Citizens Participation Secretary (Secretaría de Comunicación, Contenido y Participación Ciudadana) executes the strategy in two instances: participating in the branding actions on the city, that includes the activities analysed above, and also it is in charge of creating the social media content.

Lastly, the Media Secretary (Secretaría de Medios) takes place to publicise the content generated through digital and traditional channels. A second respondent emphasized about content produced in this route, considering that the material shared on social media are generally informative and the branding elements are produced inside of the communication flow. She explicated:

*“... for me the branding appears when you process the information with your identity, aesthetic and the tone of the brand. That is branding because you keep communicating in the same way that the city always communicates, then, it is a sort of branding whereas informing.”*

This content is categorized through 3 different kinds of campaigns, type A, type B and type C, following the words of a communication office member. The first is a general campaign that involves both communication channels online (web site, social networks platforms) and offline (street advertising, TV, radio, etcetera). The campaign type B is more focused and include 2 o 3 issues communicated through digital platforms.

The campaign type C is even more specific and uses digital channels normally. Beyond the differences between the types, the communicative work is always based on a central message synthesized as *“the closeness of the government to the neighbours”*. The government adjusts the messages to this premise in the first place, and after that, adapts them to different publics. A member of the media office complemented:

*“...the message is adapted to the receptor, and obviously, it is not the same message for a member of the Barrio 31 [an important shanty town] than a tourist who wants to know the city, Tango, culture and literature. [...] A team focus on communicating to the inhabitant of Barrio 31, and other very different to the inhabitant from Rotterdam who comes to Buenos Aires to know why People dance the Tango in San Telmo.”*

All of the public administrators interviewed agree about the importance of adapting this message to different publics but also through the diverse social media platforms. For instance, a respondent who works in the communication office detailed that Twitter is used to brand the city for a specific public, specifically opinion-makers and member of the small political circle whereas Instagram is to reach young people using images and slogans with a touristic purpose. Facebook has more information about institutional news and activities of events in the city, which coincide with the description done above.

Regarding the perception of social media effectiveness at the moment of branding the city, it is possible to recognize two positions. Some respondents, approximately half, consider affirmatively this answer arguing for instance, that the campaigns generate a positive economic impact on the city. The other half adopted a relative position contending that some campaigns are more successful and other less, but the focus is on the general performance of the communicative process.

Externally, the branding elements generated to advertise the city on social media base on the International Projection Strategy. As outlined above, the document reproduces an agreement about ideas and opinions among distinct stakeholders. The document draws a conceptual line for all of the actors who perform branding externally, as a member of the International and Institutional Relations Secretary explicated, each area of the government is free to publicise content. He explained as well that there is a Brand Manual with a series of tools to advertise the city which used and respect for all the offices.

The secretaries which performed branding outward have their own social media channels created to reach future tourist, resident, investors, students, companies, and others. For instance, a respondent who works in the tourism office explained that they use Instagram,

Facebook and Twitter differently, one is identitarian, the other is branding and the last one is institutional. He complimented saying that all the contents to brand the city are generated in-house.

Considering the internal and external branding process becomes important at this point to investigate the coordination and coherence between them. An effective branding exercise requires consistency between the story related to distant people who consume slogans, videos and photos; and the citizens who live and walk the city daily. Following the words of a public administrator, he explained that there is not an international branding strategy on the social media channels of the city, due to the content is very oriented to the neighbours. He elucidated:

*“The international communication with the city profile started recently, right before the Coronavirus. So, there is not a strategy on that there are very few examples of major tweets in other idioms apart from Spanish. We have our twitter account but is very small, it doesn’t have an impact. There is not something like a strategy for international city branding in social networks today.”*

On this matter, there was clarified that a lack of an integrated strategy does not mean a lack of coordination. The respondents agree about the presence of a good level of coordination between the internal and external process, based basically on trust. They also provide several examples of this coordination; it includes two of them. In the first case, a respondent explained the coordination about how the verbal tense used to communicate. Both try to dialogue with a close connection with people or users that are consuming the publicity. He detailed:

*“...if you see the government campaigns in the city, generally speaking, they mention “you”, “you are” or “you have to participate”. From tourism, we try to keep that line [...] That is something interesting because the city does not only sell itself considering what it is, but also regarding what it wants to be.”*

The second example concerns a tourism agreement between Buenos Aires city and New York City within the framework of “city-to-city relations” as described in the International Projection Strategy. The cooperative agreement includes mirroring actions, and one of the

most important was a publicity campaign of New York City running in Buenos Aires and vice versa.

This mean represents an alternative channel to generate impact and position the brand outward, but also it signifies the process of receiving publicity from New York in Buenos Aires and coordinate it with the internal branding ongoing. Finally, concerning the perceptions of social media effectiveness at the moment of branding the city, it resembles the same answers to the internal process. Two respondents considered that it is effective, whereas another had a relative position in front of the absence of a strict branding campaign on social media in the city profile with external focus.

## 6. Media content analysis findings

### 6.1 Place promotion, place marketing and place branding classification

This section has the objective to explain the most important quantitative findings of the study following the methodology delineated that include two steps: first, a classification of the post in place promotion, place marketing and place branding and second, the identification of branding elements in the content shared. As indicated previously, the measure of reactions, comments and shares permit to apply the Stakeholder Engagement Model available in Appendix 10.6. The Appendix 10.5 provides extra information resulted from media content analysis. The table 6 classified 1703 publications by the official page of Buenos Aires Government which has 1.358.465 followers and 1.345.097 likes.

There is an estimation of 150 publication not included in the analysis due to they do not have a relation with place promotion, place marketing, and place branding. For example, activities in other cities, national health campaigns to prevent regional diseases (e.g. “National campaign to prevent the Dengue and Chikungunya”), national or international commemoration days (i.e. International Worker’s day).

	Place Promotion	Place Marketing	Place branding	Total
<b>Amount of post</b>	948	547	208	1703
<b>Average reaction</b>	1411.5	1515.8	2731.63	1606.24
<b>Average comments</b>	262.96	267.49	286.41	267.28
<b>Average shares</b>	467.77	430.69	992.25	519.92

*Table 6.* Classification of Place Promotion, Place Marketing and Place Branding publications from 2017 to 2019.

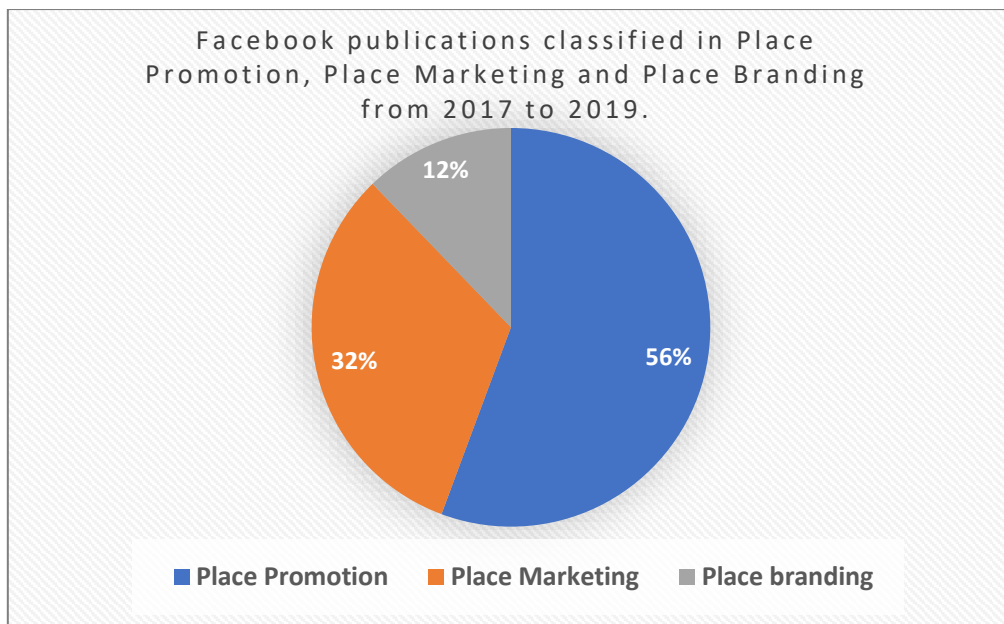
The table shows the 948 posts classified as place promotion. The variety of publications comprised are wide, including cultural-artistic workshops in neighbourhoods, sports activities in local parks, event summaries, promotion of emergency services as hospitals, firefight department or police in the city. E.g ¡*En Octubre llega el evento Celebra Bolivia!* (The Celebra Bolivia event is coming in October”) or ¡*Conocé tus derechos como inquilino en la ciudad!* (To know your right as a tenant in the city!).

People have reacted 1411.5 times on average to each post considering all types of reactions. They have provided 262.96 comments per post and shared 467.77 times on average. The second column shows the 547 posts classified as place marketing. In this case, we can recognize two groups of publications. First, the posts referred to infrastructure development, especially construction or rebuilding of bridges, streets, boulevards, train line, e.g. *Obras en el paseo del Bajo* (Working on the Paseo del Bajo).

At this point, it is important to clarify that the publications about infrastructure with a conative-behavioural perspective to promote the use or influence people choices, were considered as marketing, e.g. *¿Ya pasaste por el renovado parque Las Heras?* (Have you already gone to the renewed Las Heras park?). The information about infrastructure publicized with an identity connotation as branding, e.g. *Un siglo creando vida: Vivero de la Ciudad* (A century creating life: The city vivarium)

Second, the long-term programs offered by the government, for instance, *Programa #BAElige* (open-government program), *Programa #OperativoFrio* (a program to protect homeless during autumn and winter), *Programa Ciudad Verde* (a program about recycling and cleaning the city), *Programa Feria Itinerante* (a program of street markets in different areas of the city), etcetera. The 547 marketing publications on Facebook generated 1515.8 reactions, 267.49 comments, and 430.69 shares on average.

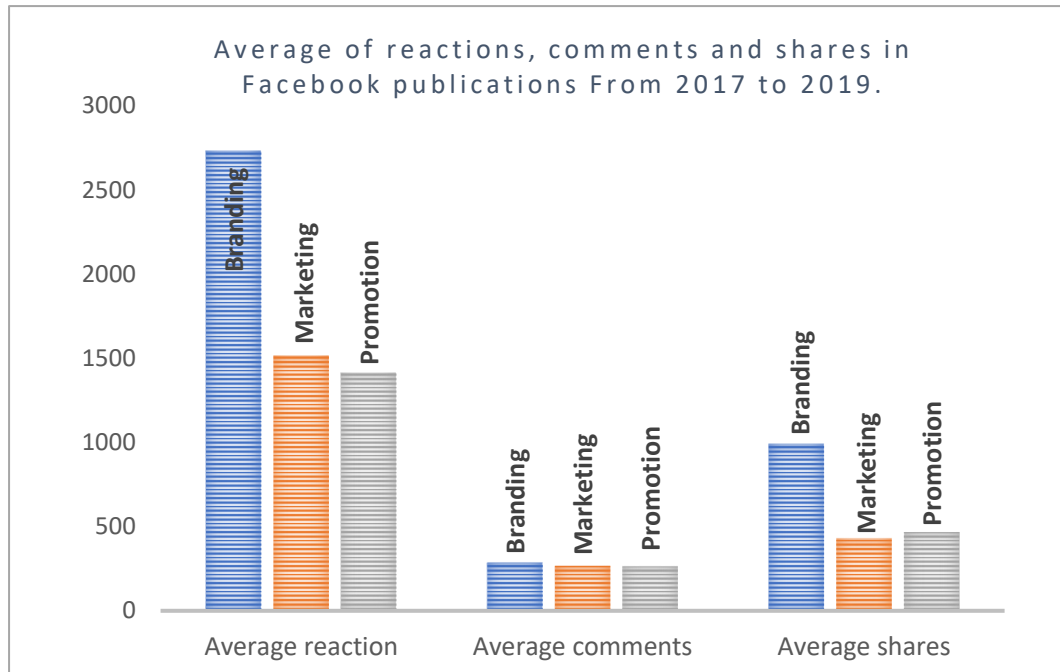
The third column illustrates the data belonging to place branding. In this case, the 208 posts are about historical places, e.g. *“Un Domingo en Villa Luro”* (A Sunday in Villa Luro) or working on the identity of the city *“La Ciudad es 100% LED”* (The city use 100% LED illumination). These publications generate an average of 2731.63 reactions, 286.41 comments, and 992.25 shares.



*Graphic 1.* Facebook publications classified

Graphic 1 illustrates the post distributions considering place promotion, place marketing, and place branding in percentages. Place promotion publications represent 56% of the total sample evaluated from 31st December 2019 to 1st January 2017. The second is place marketing which represents 32% of the total, and finally, place branding with 12%. These results show what the Buenos Aires government prioritises at the moment of publicising the city through social media.

Graphic 2 shows the average of reactions, comments, and shares considering the 3-central classification, place promotion, place marketing, and place branding. It is possible to see that place branding publications have almost the double reactions per post that place promotion or place marketing. Regarding place promotion and place marketing, it is possible to appreciate a little difference in favour of place marketing.



Graphic 2. Reactions, comments and shares

The second and third group of bars represent comments and shares respectively of the 1703 publications analysed. In both cases, place branding publications have remarkably more comments and shares than the other two. However, place marketing posts generated slightly more comments than place promotion publications during the 3 years analysed. In terms of shares, the situation is the opposite place promotion posts have more shares than place marketing publications.

## 6.2 Branding elements recognition on Facebook content

This classification enables the second step about branding elements analysis on Facebook content. This activity permits us to investigate if the elements present in the branding actions and describe in the interviews, are used to create content on Facebook. For that purpose, the publication classified as branding were analysed detailly to recognize if they included elements connected with City Identity Recognition Actions (CIRA), Place Branding Governance (PBG) and Infrastructure Development Connection (IDC). Table 7 shows the results of the element recognition on Facebook.



Branding elements	City Identity Recognition Actions	Place Brand Governance	Infrastructure Development Connection	Without elements	Total post
<i>Number of Posts</i>	161 posts	3 posts	42 posts	2 posts	208 posts

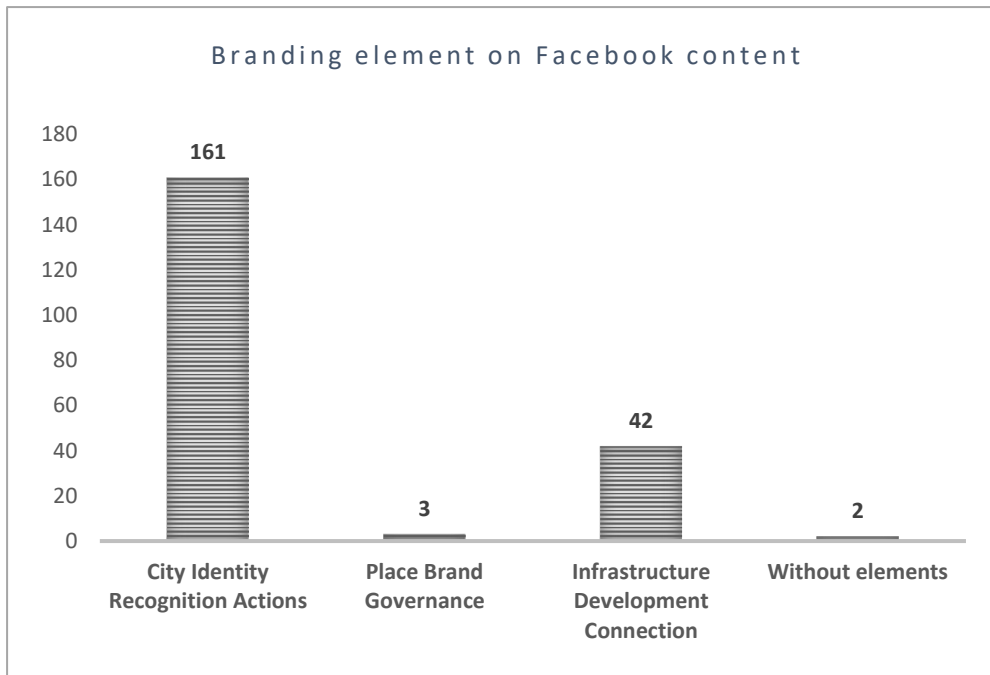
*Table 7. Result of the branding elements recognition on Facebook Content*

The element most present is notably city identity recognition actions, due to 161 publications contain characteristics to manage or enhance the city identity. These elements are represented basically for videos or images showing traditional areas or popular neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires, as Caminito (touristic area) or San Telmo (traditional neighbourhood). Moreover, some emotive videos about the “porteño” (Inhabitant of Buenos Aires city) characteristics, and also videos with narratives about how dynamic and active Buenos Aires is.

Secondly, it identified 42 publications showing infrastructure development actions to brand the city. As stated before, it does not include all the content about infrastructure modification. However, it includes the images or videos about this modification with specific narratives emphasizing on values and principles that lead the effort. Some examples are the refurbishment of The Planetarium of the city in 2018 or the renovation of the Congress Square in 2017.

Finally, and recognizing that it is more difficult the inclusion of external stakeholders in the content publicized, only 3 posts included Place Brand Governance elements. One of them is an interview to a leader of an ONG from Buenos Aires, and the remaining are virtual games organized by the government, using the Facebook reactions, to identify the most representative places of Buenos Aires in the users' consideration. Besides, 2 publications do not contain elements related to this research.

Graphic 3 illustrates the distribution of the element before detailed, showing a big difference between the presence of the elements in Facebook content classified as branding.



*Graphic 3.* Branding elements recognition on Facebook content

The data collected in every process is analysed in the next section and contrasted with conceptual ideas included in the theoretical framework. Furthermore, the hypothesis, which refers to the initial impressions about the case, are compared with the results obtained in the data collection, and the effectiveness model developed. The results of these analyses permit us to reach the final section about conclusion, discussion and recommendation where the most interesting discoveries are explained, accompanied by some suggestions about how it should continue.

## 7. Analysis

This section examines the data collected contrasting the hypothesis with findings, and findings with theoretical notions. Besides, it applies the Effectiveness Model Indicators adapted from Herzeniak, Florek & Augustyn (2018) to measure how effective is the government to brand Buenos Aires city through social media.

The first hypothesis (**H1**) of this research determines that the government of Buenos Aires elaborates specific actions to recognize the identity of the city. Comparing it with the information collected in the interviews, it is possible to affirm that the branding process for local citizens does not create activities to recognize the city identity, further the creation of a slogan or logo, that how was differentiated in the theoretical section, it represents only the visual part of the branding process. (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007).

Following the words of Keskin, Akgun, Zehir & Ayar (2016) the risk of this absence is that it does not permit to compare the coherence and coincidence between the real identity of the city as the government wants to promote it, and the citizens image about it. In this branding process, the communication bases on informing the development of the city with a clear recipient, the “*vecinos*” (neighbours). There is an identitarian narrative which refers to the proximity between the government and the neighbour: “*the government and the neighbour are the same*” (Direct quotation section 5.1). This notion refers more to the relation between the government and the citizens than the city and the citizens. This mixture of political and administrative issues present in this case is a good example of the literature on this topic.

In the outward branding process, there is a procedure of city identity recognition based on an International Projection Strategy created recently. It recognises the following attributes to brand Buenos Aires city: “*High quality of life, home of talent, creativity and diversity*” (Direct quotation section 5.1). As Kavaratzis & Ashworth (2005), and Govers (2015) clarified, these concepts embody an exclusive amalgamation of functional and symbolic values to produce a process of associations and generate added value in the brand, that in this case is the Buenos Aires city.

The Media Content Analysis identified 161 publications with identitarian elements resulting in the most important branding element present on Facebook. Generally, the posts publicized symbolic areas or neighbours of the city, as the traditional La Boca, San Telmo, also videos or images about the hospitability of the “porteños”, the colloquial denomination of Buenos Aires citizens, and similar publications about the energy of the city. This circumstance can be examined referring that brands influence interpretation through “triggering webs of associations” (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012, p. 30). The images mix traditional and internationally famous places with the warmth of the citizens and the city dynamism to generate this identitarian association. These elements are also identified as central to measure the effectiveness in the Anholt-GMI City Brands Index, denominated: *The place*, *The people* and *The Pulse* respectively. (Anholt, 2006)

The second hypothesis (**H2**) refers to the presence of a top-down Place Brand Governance in the process of city branding in Buenos Aires. The data illustrate that the inner branding course has a blurred process of including external actors supported on the isolated cases mentioned and a lack of programmes to include them systematically. The examples denote a top-down approach according to the categorization of Cerda-Bertomeu & Sarabia-Sanchez (2016), due to the involvement of external actors is after fixing mission and vision, and planning the process.

By contrast, the process of actor’s inclusion in the outward city branding is clear and adopts bottom-up approach considering the same categorization, due to the actors are included from the beginning. The participation is in a permanent team called “Concejo Espacio BA Global” [Council Space BA Global] that among other activities, has the purpose of defining the city identity and designing the international campaigns. Anholt (2008) pronounces that the generation of a productive coalition between government, business, and civil society, permits the creation of new institutions and help to structure and maintain the behaviour in the branding process. The Council Space BA Global includes national and international people “*from culture scope, business and, other people from Buenos Aires and foreigners...*” (Direct quotation section 5.2)

In the media analysis content, the number of posts recognised with Place Brand Governance elements is the lowest. It is important to correlate the diffuse process of stakeholder involvement in the internal branding performance and this measure because the Facebook official page advertises the city following an internal branding plan with a remarkably focus on Buenos Aires citizens.

The third hypothesis (**H3**) predicts a weak level of connection between city branding and infrastructure development plan. Nevertheless, the interview responses show a consistent connection between the branding process and infrastructure development. Moreover, the city has organized social activities on some big public works, for instance, the construction and inauguration of the big motorway called "*Paseo del Bajo*". The objective, in this case, is to generate a double branding communicative impact through primary and secondary communication, as proposed by Kavaratzis (2004) and explained the findings section.

Following the Boisen, Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg (2018) point of view, the organization of participative activities in public works, as the examples mentioned above, is part of an affective domain (attitude) in citizens more than cognitive (knowledge) or conative (behaviour). The cognitive and behavioural purposes can be achieved through social media campaigns or traditional channels.

The external branding process focused on the world shows also a clear connection between branding and infrastructure development of the city. It bases on the identitarian concepts fixed in the International Projection Strategy that order the branding course. The answer to one of respondent denotes an integral perception of branding and infrastructure development that includes, not only physical assets but also intangibles as public security or quality education. This addition is relevant because as Donner, Fort, & Vellema describe, "place brand particularly aims to encourage long-term development process of places. This may include the creation and maintenance of local employment, or the protection or valorisation of intangible assets [as education or public safety in this case]" (2014, p. 3)

The media content analysis recognised 42 publications with elements that connect branding and infrastructure development, including the construction of new buildings or the refurbishment of traditional places. However, the content posted should reveal a branding intention, how Zenker & Braun described: “is not the communicated expression or the physical characteristic of the place (...) but the perception of those expressions in the minds of the target audiences.” (2015, p. 213). In this regard, the communication goes beyond the details of the infrastructure modification, and focus on the significance to the city identity.

The last hypothesis (**H4**) refers to the use of the elements before described at the moment of performing city-branding on Facebook official Fan Page. The analysis of this hypothesis has connections with the answer of the research question, due to inquiring into the presence of these elements in the branding process performed through Facebook, move us close to the branding effectiveness measure. Before to go in-depth with the presence of these elements on Facebook and the effectiveness measuring using the Herzeniak, Florek & Augustyn (2018) model, some reflections take place.

The public administrators interviewed who performed the branding for local citizens did not consider the presence of campaigns to brand the city through social media, however, they see that branding appears regularly in the way that they communicate. The respondents mentioned that the Facebook page is a channel to communicate institutional news and regular city events. Regarding the respondents who perform the branding for the world, they have their channels but with less impact.

In addition to this, there is not a strategy to integrate the complete process of city branding on social media. The coordination bases on a shared communication pattern who all members of the government respect. Considering the perception of effectiveness, generally speaking, half of the interviews consider that is effective. The second half has a relative position based on the lack of integration in the branding processes on social media, and others emphasized on the difficulty to ensure the positive repercussion of the campaign in an interactive context with users. It coincides with the Molina, Fernández, Gómez & Aranda,

impression: “when the brand and users co-create brand histories, the owners or managers of the brand have no control over them” (2017, p. 30).

The second part of this analysis includes the measure of effectiveness using the Herzeniak, Florek & Augustyn (2018) model adapted for this research and explicated in the methodological section. The model examines the results of the city branding strategy performed by the government in the output section and investigates if this output is part of the Facebook publication considered as the outcome. (See table 8)

	<b>The city branding <i>output</i></b>	<b>The city branding <i>outcome</i></b>
<b><i>CIRA</i></b>	There is a presence of actions to identify and manage the city identity but with some inconsistencies.	There are 161 posts with identitarian elements on Facebook publications analysed.
<b><i>PBG</i></b>	There is a presence of joint programs to generate new branding procedures but with some inconsistencies.	There are 3 publications with external stakeholders’ involvement in joint brand-related projects on social media.
<b><i>IDC</i></b>	There is a presence of connections between branding and new infrastructure developments or revitalization projects.	There are 42 posts with infrastructural development elements with city branding purposes

Table 8. Application of effectiveness indicators model

Table 8 structures the information examined in the first part of this section. In the case of CIRA, the *output* of the branding strategy shows a presence of actions but with inconsistencies. The presence of this element is essential on the branding practice for other countries in the context of the International Strategic Projection. The inconsistencies base on three points: there is an absence of city identity recognition actions in the internal process of branding, although the external exercise can also impact on local citizens. There is a mixture

between the government promotion actions and city branding practice. Finally, the integral city branding strategy is deficient on Buenos Aires city social media channels.

The *outcome* in this first variable illustrates a presence of 161 publications which reflect identitarian elements in the Facebook content. They base on showing traditional places of Buenos Aires mix with the dynamic and active characteristics of the daily life and the hospitality of the porteños (Buenos Aires citizens). The lack of an integrated strategy to perform branding in social media indicates that these elements respond to a partial communication plan.

Regarding the second variable PBG, the *output* shows a similar situation than the first variable. There is a clear process of stakeholder's integration in the branding process for external people, that is also part of the international document before mentioned. Nevertheless, in the branding actions for local inhabitants, this activity is reduced to some isolated cases. Then, the inconsistencies are based on a lack of integrated process to include local and external actors with the objective of design basic branding campaigns.

The *outcome* of the second variable illustrates only 3 publications showing this element on Facebook. For greater clarity, the government publicizes external stakeholder's involvement activities on the official Fan Page. However, this participation has generally the objective of informing or promoting places and activities, and they are part of place promotion and place marketing.

The IDC *output* is present in the whole branding course, in the process performed to residents and also to foreigners. This variable has connections with the generation of Place Brand Governance process, as described in the examples of findings section. This relation was unexpected before the data collecting process, and it confirms the interrelation between the 2 variables.

In the *outcome* of this variable, 42 publications connect branding and infrastructure development. They concentrate on physical modification of central areas, or in the building process of new infrastructure with branding purposes. Generally speaking, the branding



elements seems to become more viral than the informative or marketing elements regarding the quantitative findings in Section 6.1. Besides, it is possible to appreciate that reactions and shares levels are notably higher in branding post than in the promotion or marketing ones, however, this high reactivity does not necessarily motivate to make more comments.

The Moody & Bekkers (2018) view permits to analyse the idea mentioned above due to branding elements refer to identitarian characteristics that promote the associations and stimulate emotions in the interactive communication, whereas the promotional and marketing contents have informative and behavioural purposes respectively producing other reactions.

## 8. Conclusion and discussion

The ideas examined until now permit us to arrive at some conclusion. This section starts reflecting on the congruency between the branding theory and the Buenos Aires case, and subsequently inspect the level of fulfilment of the particular objectives. Finally, there is studied the degree of compliance with the general objective and the answer to the research question.

Regarding the contrast between theory and reality, the literature on the matter agrees about the necessity of having a unified city branding plan, including traditional media, social media to all of the public, to keep the coherence and enhance the effectiveness. That is the reason why the methodological section focuses on studying branding activities as a unique process in the Buenos Aires government.

Therefore, a first general conclusion is about the presence of different processes to brand inward to the city and the country, and outside of the national borders, denoting a lack of cohesion and unification. It becomes evident in the analysis of the 3 variables of the study appreciating that the external process is much clearer about the objectives and procedures than internal, that becomes a blurred process.

Bearing in mind this condition the particular objectives are analysed as follows.

The first specific objective is about the recognition of actions aims at identifying and managing the city identity, and two reasons become this particular objective fundamental. First, the presence of this activity about identity allows distinguishing between branding campaigns and other types of publicity, such as promotion or marketing. Second, identity management is about the past, the present and the future and then includes historical famous places or personalities of the city and the promises of the city for the future.

The data show us the presence of activities to identify the identity of the city based on the historical places and objectives for the future on the Buenos Aires branding strategy. However, this process does not cover all of the public expected, due to holding a clear emphasis on foreign branding with an absence in the inner (to local citizens) process. Surely,

the external process slightly influences local citizens, but a proper branding process should perform branding considering all of publics.

The second specific objective evaluates the inclusion of external voices and opinions in the current city-branding programmes. The inclusion of these actors in the branding process allows to have a complete panorama about the different identitarian characteristics of the city, but also about the particular objectives of companies, NGOs, political parties, and other. The inclusion looks for generating an agreement about what the city identity is, but also about how the city image should be.

The Buenos Aires government have performed branding in two ways. It has been created a Place Brand Governance externally with a permanent condition, and inner to the city further some actions to include actors, there is not a constant and systematic plan or programme as Place Brand Governance requires.

The third specific objective scrutinizes the presence of connections between the infrastructure development plan and the city branding process. The harmonization between different ways of branding is a requisite to keep the coherence in the narrative and generate a more effective progression. The branding takes shape through direct appraisal of the symbolic value, through advertisement or word of mouth.

Therefore, the branding campaigns, the external and internal to the city, show a consist connection between branding and infrastructure development. In this point, it is possible to say that the government is effective using infrastructure development activities to brand the city in light of the information analysed and the examples provided.

The last specific objective has the purpose of evaluating the presence of these elements on the official Facebook Fan Page. The two-way communication resulted from the social media revolution allows promoting branding in interactive virtual spaces. Reactions, comments and shares provide valuable information about what the general citizens and foreigners think about the city.

The official Facebook Fan Page of Buenos Aires government uses identitarian content and infrastructure developments connections to brand the city, but there are few examples of stakeholder involvement appeared. At this point, it is important to observe the contrast between the absence of City identity Recognition Actions in the data collected through interviews and the high presence of the same elements on the Facebook analysis. This discrepancy would respond considering that, notwithstanding that there is not any inner systematic action to recognize the identity of the city, the government use these elements to diversify the daily information published on Facebook.

The general objective and the final question answers result of the information provided until now. The Buenos Aires government is effective to brand the city to a certain extent due to perform city branding using the three strategic actions, but these strategic activities have imbalances. The strategic branding actions does not cover all the public, and the branding activities existing, have disconnections specifically between the internal to the city and external to the country process. In relation with this, it is important to appreciate that the city branding projected to the rest of the Argentinian cities was mentioned occasionally and represent another aspect not included.

The subsequent advertising of these strategic actions on social media has also asymmetries. The Facebook content analysed shows the presence of these activities with a strong emphasis in two of them, identitarian characteristics, and infrastructure connection, but a weak presence of the stakeholders' involvement. As mentioned in the introduction, to enhance the city branding effectiveness on social media of one of Latin America's urban jewels, some recommendations are pronounced in the following section to deal with these limitations.

## 9. Recommendations

The conclusions open the door for four recommendations, three of them focus on public administrators from Buenos Aires government and other cities who want to learn from this process and the last one for future researchers or students on the matter.

First, the Buenos Aires local government should move closer to both branding efforts, inner to the city and outside to the city, to unify identitarian concepts, branding objectives and social media publicity. Better coordination and cohesion about these values could produce higher levels of effectiveness and efficiency in the total practice, which include all of publics.

Second, it recommends generating more activities centre on recognizing the identity of the city and how it wants to project itself for the future, especially in the inner process. This activity can take place together with a stakeholder involvement programme to incorporate other voices actor as companies, social organizations or individual citizens, to reach consensus about the government perspective and other stakeholders' opinions about the city. This inclusion can help to enhance the level of identification and the feeling of pride in the city and avoid the dispersion of the branding effort on social media.

Third, it is necessary to include a clearer city branding strategy for the rest of the Argentinian population, who live in other cities of Argentina and usually chose Buenos Aires to work or study or visit. As was mentioned before, the effort should concentrate on unifying the branding process in both instances, the strategic actions and social media advertisement, to include all of the public.

The last recommendation focuses on future studies and researches on the matter and aspires to exhibit the scarce studies cases about the city branding or place branding concentrated in the Latin America region. The main focus of the investigation is on European and North American cities with an emphasis in the successful Asian cases. Nevertheless, the idiosyncrasy and socio-cultural characteristics of Latin American cities can feed the literature with very interesting examples to continue learning about this exciting subject.

## 10. Appendix

### 10.1 Appendix – Interview coding tree

Concept	Indicators	Value
<b>City Identity Recognition Actions (CIRA)</b>	City branding definition	Definition
		Objectives
	Identity generation actions	Policies
		Presence of identity recognition actions
	Term project	Perception of image clarity
		Project period
<b>Place Brand Governance (PBG)</b>	Stakeholders involvement	Presence of external stakeholder's involvement actions
		Grade Integration (other government levels)
<b>Infrastructure Development Connection (IDC)</b>	Infrastructure connection	Presence of infrastructure development connection
		Grade of Integration
<b>Social Media</b>	Effectiveness	Effectiveness perception
	Internal Centralization	Grade of messages centralization
		Number of actors involved in the process
	Content shared	Online- Offline content presence
		Grade of message diversification on Social Networks

Table 9. Interview coding trees

## 10.2 Appendix – Media Content analysis coding tree

It classifies the information in chronological order starting with September 2019 to January 2017. In the case of overlapping of different elements from different categories, the central purpose was considered defining (“What is the central purpose of this post?”).

Categories	Characteristics	Examples
Place Promotion	Focus on gain attention	Promotion of public services (e.g. Police)
	Logos and events	New slogan for the city
	Cognitive Knowledge	Sports circuits available on the city
	Short-term activities	Activities to do in the city during the weekend
Place Marketing	Focus on influence choices	Use WhatsApp to communicate with the city!
	Programs	Education vial program
	Conative Behaviour	Do you want to be part of the government team?
	Long-term programs	Infrastructure building (e.g. a bridge)
Place Branding	Focus on increase reputation	Emotive video about the city
	Narrative, values, and identity	An image of an icon of the city
	Affective – Attitude	A description of how the citizen is in different neighbourhoods
	Long-term images	Video for cultural circuits

*Table 10.* Media Content analysis coding tree

### 10.3 Appendix – Branding element recognition coding tree

Branding Elements	Central question for the classification	Specific condition	Yes/No
<b>City Identity Recognition Actions (CIRA)</b>	Does the publication use narratives, symbolic images or traditional places to brand the city?	<u>Videos, images or text with:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local narratives</li> <li>- Identity slogans</li> <li>- Historical places</li> <li>- Traditional areas</li> <li>- Tourist attractions</li> </ul>	
<b>Place Brand Governance (PBG)</b>	Does the publication include voices or ideas from external actors to brand the city?	<u>Videos, images or text with:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conversation with citizens about city image or identity.</li> <li>- The opinion of external institutions (private or ONG) about city image or identity.</li> </ul>	
<b>Infrastructure Development Connection (IDC)</b>	Does the publication show a new or renewed roadwork, public buildings or city area to brand the city?  <u>Clarification:</u> If the content shared with infrastructure development information has the objective of influence citizens behaviours will be classified as place marketing in the step before. If the infrastructure development content has the purpose of branding the city, usually accompanied by a narrative will be recognized as Place Branding with IDC elements.	<u>Videos, images or text about: (new or renew)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roadworks</li> <li>- Public Buildings</li> <li>- Parks or squares</li> <li>- City areas</li> <li>- Sculpture or murals</li> </ul> <p>The publications should accompany with a narrative based on values, principles, identity, etcetera.</p>	

Table 11. Branding element recognition coding tree



## 10.4 Appendix – Interviewees list

<b>Interviewee<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>
1	<b>Mihalis Kavaratzis</b>	Researcher
2	<b>Anonymous</b>	Researcher
3	<b>Facundo Quiroga</b>	Public Administrator
4	<b>Francisco Resnicoff</b>	Public Administrator
5	<b>Martin Boisen</b>	Researcher
6	<b>Joaquín Cesar</b>	Public Administrator
7	<b>Francisco Zerba</b>	Public Administrator
8	<b>Ayélen Doglioli</b>	Public Administrator
9	<b>Florencia Amoedo</b>	Public Administrator
10	<b>Luis Rodriguez</b>	Public Administrator

*Table 12.* Interviewees list

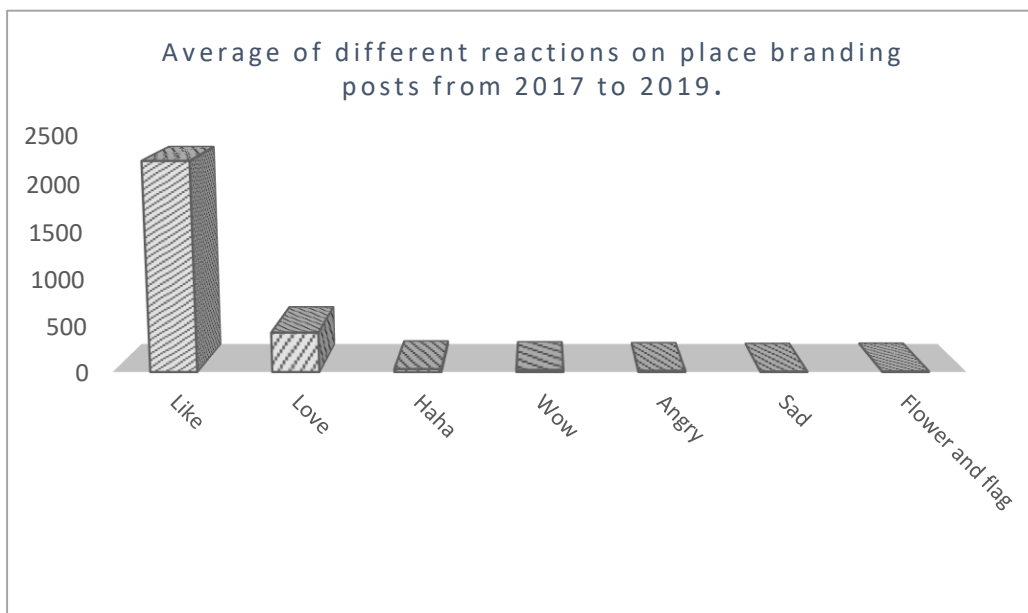
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<sup>5</sup> The transcripts are annexed in an individual document respecting the order fixed in this table.

10.5 Appendix – Extra information of content media analysis

	Place Promotion	Place Marketing	Place branding	Total
Amount of post	948	547	208	1703
Average reaction	1411.5	1515.8	2731.63	1606.24
Average comments	262.96	267.49	286.41	267.28
Average shares	467.77	430.69	992.25	519.92
Like			2232.81	2232.81
Love			425.24	425.24
Haha			31.75	31.75
Wow			22.84	22.84
Angry			12.67	12.67
Sad			3.89	3.89
Flower / Flag			2.41	2.41

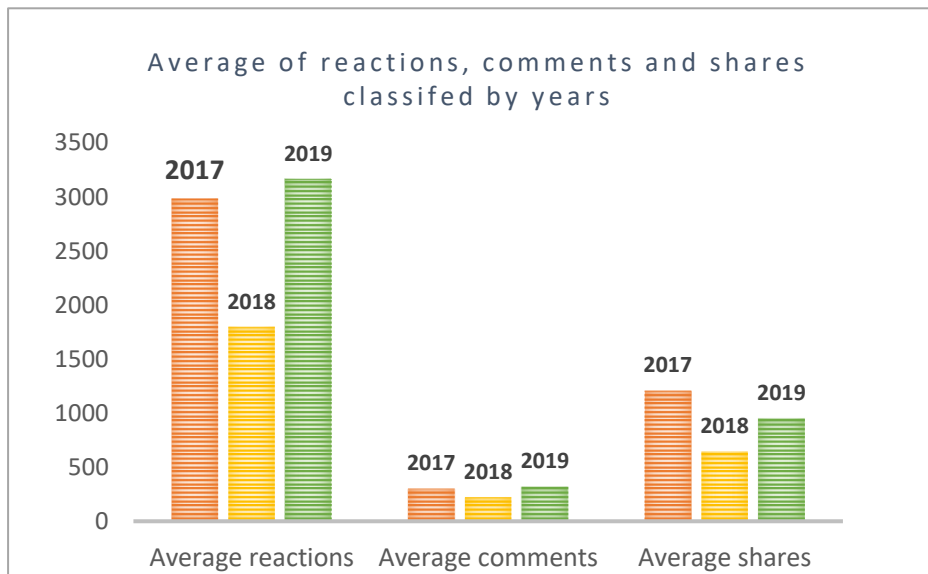
Table 13 .Extra information of content media analysis



Graphic 4. Different reactions on Facebook content

	Number of publications	Average reactions	Average comments	Average shares	Like	Love	Haha	Wow	Angry	Sad	Flower
<b>2017</b>	97	2983.6	300.8	1207.7	2405.5	487.7	38.2	31	13.7	2.1	6.5
<b>2018</b>	53	1795.1	221.3	641.7	1438.8	302.3	15.1	16.41	13.1	9.2	0
<b>2019</b>	58	3165.9	321.7	952.2	2669.4	433.1	36.01	15.1	10.4	1.9	0

Table 14. City branding publications classified by year



Graphic 5. Average of reactions, comments and shares

10.6 Appendix - Stakeholder Engagement Model <sup>6</sup>

	Concept	Variable	Indicator	Formula	Measure	
Facebook performance	Popularity	Number of likes	How many likes does each post have?	P1	Posts reactions/Total post	Proportion of posts with reactions
				P2	Total reactions/Total post	Average reactions per post
				P	(P2/No. of followers) x 1000	Popularity of posts among followers
	Commitment	Number of posts with comments	How many posts of the sample have comments?	C1	Posts with comments/ Total posts	Proportion of posts with comments
				C2	Total comments/total posts	Average comments per post
				C	(C2/No. of followers) x 1000	Followers engagement
	Virality	Number of shared	What is the average of "shared" per post?	V1	Posts shared/Total posts	Proportion of shared posts
				V2	Total shared/Total posts	Average number of posts shared
				V	V2/No. of followers) x 1000	Virality of posts among followers
	Engagement	Sum of factors	What is the level of engagement?	E	$E = P + C + V$	Level of engagement in Facebook page

Table 15. Stakeholder Engagement Model

<sup>6</sup> Table adapted from Haro de Rosario, Sáez Martín, & Caba Pérez (2016, p. 226) and complemented by the model of Molinillo, Anaya-Sánchez, Morrison, & Coca-Stefaniak (2019, p. 250)

Concept	Formula	Results
Popularity	P1	The proportion of posts with likes is 100%
	P2	1606.24 likes per post
	P3	<b>1.18</b> is the rate of post popularity
Commitment	C1	The proportion of posts with comments is 99%
	C2	267.28 comments per post
	C3	<b>0.19</b> is the rate of follower engagement
Virality	V1	The proportion of shared posts in 98%
	V2	519.92 Average number of posts shared
	V3	<b>0.38</b> is the rate of post virality among followers
Engagement	E	<b>1.75</b> is the level of engagement

Table 16. Result and analysis using Stakeholders Engagement Model to Buenos Aires city.

City	Residents	Facebook followers	Rate per 100 residents	P index <sup>7</sup>	C index <sup>8</sup>	V index <sup>9</sup>	E index <sup>10</sup>
Buenos Aires	3.067.728	1,358,465	44.28	1.18	0.19	0.38	1.75
Madrid	3,223,334	166,314	5.16	2.05	00.4	0.48	2.57
Malaga	571,026	120,490	21.10	12.39	0.30	2.96	15.65
Barcelona	1,620,343	82,292	5.08	7.59	0.24	1.34	9.17
Valencia	791,413	45.894	5.80	7.94	0.16	2.49	10.59

Table 17. Stakeholder Engagement Model: comparisons between Buenos Aires and other cities. <sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Popularity index deduces for the number of reactions

<sup>8</sup> Commitment index generates by the number of comments

<sup>9</sup> Virality Index infers from the number of shares

<sup>10</sup> Engagement index is the sum of the 3 indexes.

<sup>11</sup> The data analysed about Madrid, Barcelona, Malaga and Valencia belong to Molinillo, Anaya-Sánchez, Morrison & Coca-Stefaniak (2019)

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