REVIEWING PRACTICES IN CITY BRANDING
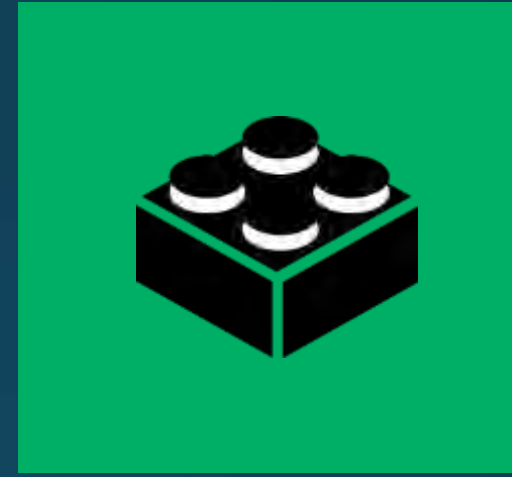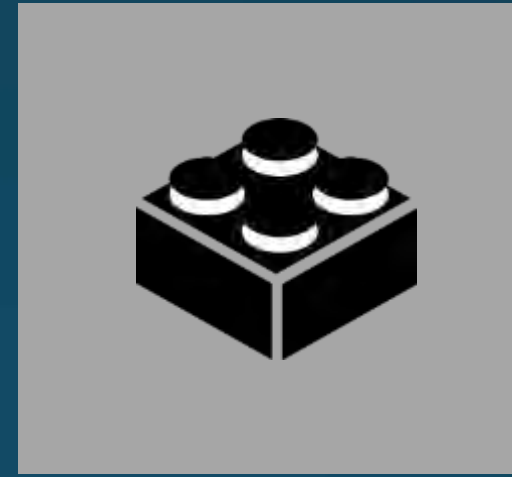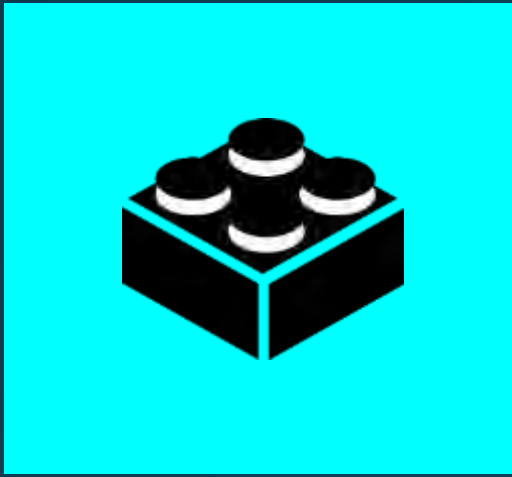
130 piece model kit

This is a sample of a 200-page full report

Miguel Rivas | Grupo TASO

At·Brand

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

ATLANTIC AREA
Transnational Programme

"Every City needs to have its story told and heard. The story is the unique branding mark that each city has drawn from history and experience. AT.Brand will help us develop a toolkit that liberates cities from the tyranny of traditional marketing and branding and allows cities to communicate their narrative globally. This transnational project, led by Dublin, will really help the partner cities begin the journey towards a radical new way of branding"

Peter Finnegan, Dublin City Council

At·Brand

On the author

Miguel Rivas is partner of Grupo TASO and has a long background at the frontline in spatial economic development and innovative urban policies, from a variety of positions in both public and private sectors. In the last years, Miguel has been appointed as principal consultant to several large-scale transnational projects on integrated city branding, through which he has been supporting over fifteen European cities such as Oslo, Warsaw, Dublin, Liverpool, Genoa, Utrecht, Zaragoza or Vilnius, as well as the Eurocities Working Group on City Attractiveness. As former CEO of Sevilla Global, he designed the city brand strategy as business place, including storytelling and visual communication, avant-garde visitor centre and a range of PR activities. In 2013 Miguel chaired the jury of the Territorio & Marketing Awards, the most prestigious event in Spain on place branding. He is team leader of the TASO-HEAVENLY consortium, which has provided main technical assistance to the AT.Brand project.

mrivas@grupotaso.com

130 PIECE MODEL KIT: INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

City branding is relevant more than ever, and fortunately most people increasingly agree it is much more than simply logo & motto. Nonetheless, and generally speaking, what we see is a field still under the influence of both the rhetoric of commercial branding and the urgency of the short term. The prevailing role of branding and advertising agencies still pushes in that direction. As a result, one can still see many short-sighted practices ending in lack of consistency, low impact in the long term and poor empathy with local stakeholders and citizens.

On the contrary, more and more, a growing number of city brand strategies, many of them working out of the spotlights, are pretty well focused on building up unifying city narratives and setting up shared working agendas for the diverse entities that are interacting with the different city´s audiences, e.g. visitors, investors, knowledge, residents. Thus, this "model kit" pretends to summarize the state of the art of those sound practices, but at the same time pointing out all the superficialities and banalities derived from a wrong focus on the meaning and scope of place branding.

To that aim we have collected a number of reflections, tips and recommendations, case studies and good practices, thoughtful images, quotes, useful links, suggested readings… as small bricks of a LEGO construction game. The kit of pieces has been organized into five colours, each of them related to one of the pillars in the practice of city branding, plus an additional colour (sky blue) related to main assumptions and introductory considerations:
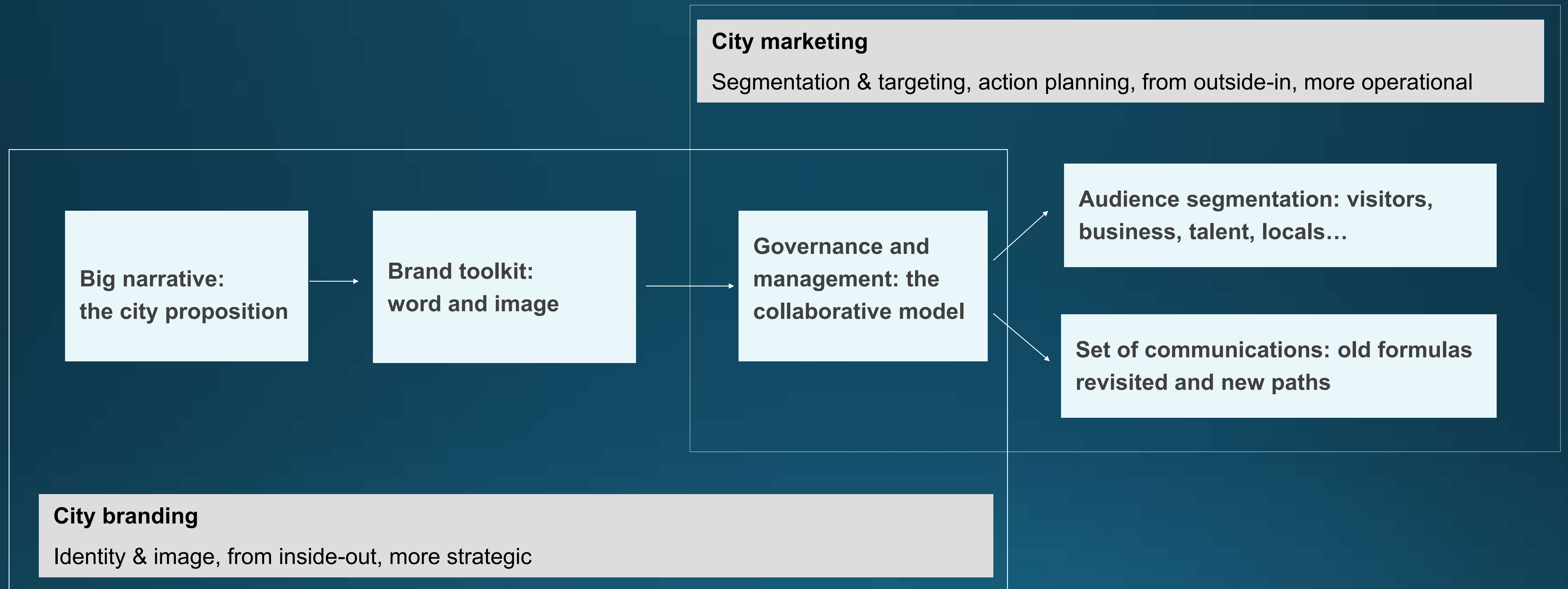
- WHY CITY BRANDING? Meaning and scope of place branding. The need to relearning - Sky blue colour.

- CITY NARRATIVES. The first and most fundamental - Orange colour.

- REPRESENTING THE CITY. From city narrative to the city brand - Red colour.

- GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT. Building up the collaborative model - Blue colour.

- AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION. Connecting to sector-focused city marketing - Grey colour.

- MIX OF COMMUNICATIONS. All-time formulas revisited and new paths - Green colour.

The final result is the outcome of working together with 6 cities in the framework of the AT.Brand project (2014-2015), but also of the author´s work done for the CityLogo project (2012-2015) in the frame of the URBACT programme, which involved 10 EU cities directly. Both major transnational experiences, plus other one-customer assignments in the field of city branding & marketing, account the organization of over 10 international workshops, more than 20 study visits and direct contact with more than 35 city brand teams from all over Europe and Latin America, plus a huge number of reports. It´s a unique background that we have now intended to capitalize by means of somewhat deconstruction/rebuilding of the city branding field.
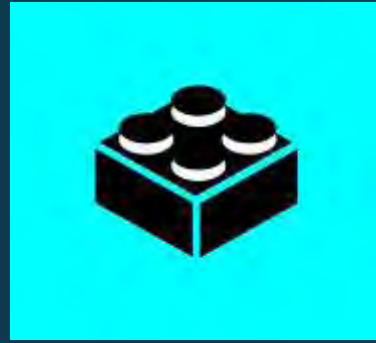
The layout or sequence hereby proposed to organize the set of pieces/bricks can be seen as a roadmap, a personal visual guide to innovative city brand management. In this case, a roadmap which does not come from the branding/marketing/creative field, but from the experience in urban management and spatial economic development. Anyhow, it is like a Meccano or LEGO construction, whose colourful pieces can be chosen and assembled according to different needs and circumstances.

As every city faces its own framework conditions and aspirations, feel free to make your choice. Enjoy the game.

Miguel Rivas

City marketing

Segmentation & targeting, action planning, from outside-in, more operational

Big narrative:
the city proposition

Brand toolkit:
word and image

Governance and
management: the
collaborative model

Audience segmentation: visitors,
business, talent, locals…

Set of communications: old formulas
revisited and new paths

City branding

Identity & image, from inside-out, more strategic

Source: M. Rivas, TASO

WHY CITY BRANDING? MEANING AND SCOPE OF PLACE BRANDING

- A content perspective
- A governance perspective
- "Brand Singapore. How nation branding built Asia´s leading global city"
- City branding is integrated or it isn´t
- Accompanying strategy to huge economic and urban transformations
- Increasing buzz capacity
- The need to re-learning
- Seven most common gaps in place branding, the strategy gap
- The community gap
- The differentiation gap
- The performance gap
- The timing gap
- The visual gap
- The funding gap
- De-brandization of place branding
- Humble city branding
- On ethics in place branding

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CITY NARRATIVES. THE FIRST AND MOST FUNDAMENTAL

- This is about building up competitive local identities
- Beyond DNAs and core values
- On-brand/off-brand
- Crowdsourcing the city story: the new frontier in place branding
- Glasgow´s wonder wall
- Collective place making: citizensourcing in Warsaw
- "Cardiff Unscripted", our own people can make a difference
- Too unpolluted city narratives do not work
- Accept to get punked
- From city narrative to the city brand
- City branding as new concise local strategic planning
- Understanding Barcelona´ success: any role of city branding?
- Guadiamar Corridor: narrative for a successful productive transformation in Southern Spain
- "Manchester Forward", a glimpse at Manchester´s near and present future

REPRESENTING THE CITY. FROM CITY NARRATIVE TO THE CITY BRAND

- From big narrative to detail storytelling

- Stories, stories, stories

- Cultivating uniqueness: world port + architectural design in Rotterdam

- Cardiff, the world´s closest capital to London

- Exploring Los Angeles´s visual uniqueness

- Cities should tell a global story

- Brand toolkits: from Birmingham to New Zealand

- What city when branding the city? Re-spatializing place branding

- Word and image: in search of a particular grammar for telling the city

- Linking images (symbolic power) to core messages (narrative power)

- Fascination as emotional multiplier

- Are we extracting the best of our cities? An urban semiology

- Capturing the poetics of the urban form

- The city as sum of architectural artifacts

- Old and new icons and symbols

- City dwellers

- Getting inspiration from Giorgio de Chirico

- Visual identities can play a role, but not always and never the main role
- Genoa launches a new logo
- Getting a logo for Eindhoven by engaging the local creative community
- City logos is a high risk business anyway
- Open code city brand
- Unveiling productive Seville through images
- Visualizing Eindhoven in the post-Philips era
- Seeing Dundee with fresh eyes
- New visuality for Siberia
- Strategies on city representation: Liverpudlians at the core
- Lima Peru by Mario Testino
- Image banks

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT. BUILDING UP THE COLLABORATIVE MODEL

- Institutionalizing city branding: no single formula but some drivers

- Branding from inside-out: City Council´s exemplary role

- OnlyLyon brand platform

- Stockholm Business Region AB

- Brand Alsace: content first, governing model later on

- Auvergne Nouveau Monde: massive stakeholder mobilization at regional level

- The Oslo Brand Alliance: a coalition of the willing

- Zurich: a work in progress

- Dundee´s flexible collaboration

- Utrecht brand network

- Connecting city branding to sector-focused city marketing: Amsterdam business capital

- Project-based funding models

- Scaling city branding up to the city-region level

- Vertical multi-governance: articulation to nation branding

- Keep the pressure and not lose heart. The collaborative model takes time

- Transnational co-branding in the EU? Maybe the real need is branding Europe, isn´t?

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AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION. CONNECTING TO SECTOR-FOCUSED CITY MARKETING

- City branding does not substitute the diverse sector-oriented city marketing practices
- Role of segmentation as connector
- More unconventional ways of clustering the city´ stories into big themes
- Segmentation by stakeholder involvement
- Segmenting Zurich´s targets as business location
- Micro-segmentation
- Some drivers to navigate across the map of real and potential targets
- Marketing the business place
- Cluster branding
- SurfCity Donostia
- Firms and sense of place
- Barcelona registered trademark
- B2B marketing is evolving to a B2C logic
- Talent and individuals more than just firms and organizations
- Make IT in Ireland

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- Talent management: like a dinner party

- University's unexploited role

- Warning! Visitors wish to be targeted as locals

- Taking care of today´s massive tourism

- Internal marketing: enhancing social cohesion

- Branding at the toolbox for urban regeneration projects

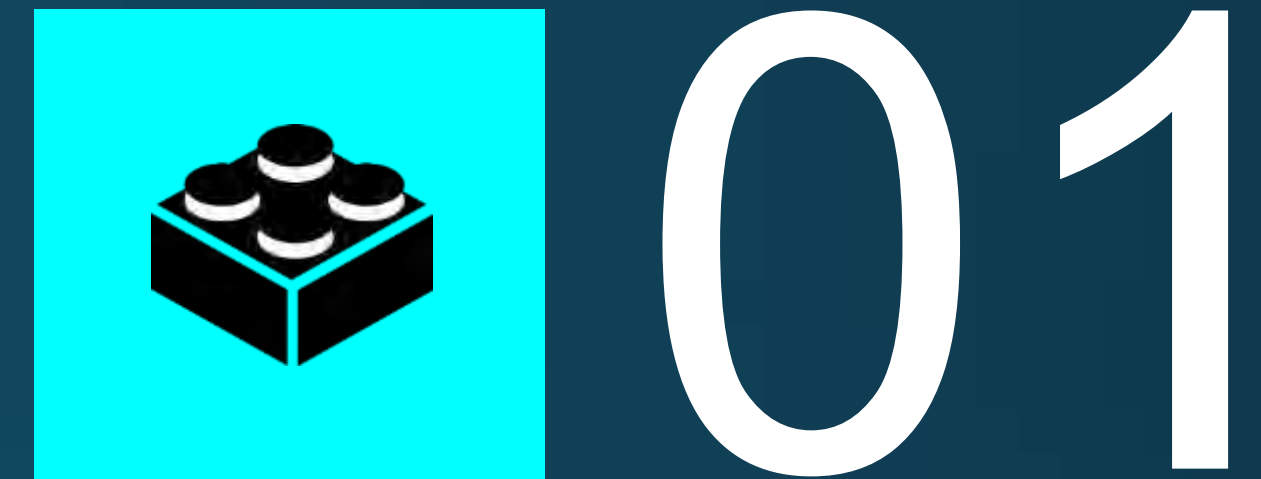- Gifts for all! The tricky business of rankings

MIX OF COMMUNICATIONS. ALL-TIME FORMULAS REVISITED AND NEW PATHS

- Understanding the different angles of the digital shift

- Digital disruptions lead to organizational disruptions

- But it is much more than just migrating to only-digital communications

- Switzerland Tourism´s 4 wheel drive model

- The communication power of good advertising

- Indoor versus outdoor advertising

- The video is unbeatable

- At MIPIM with the team Liverpool

- Events as levers to city values

- From Barcelona Mobile World Congress to Barcelona Mobile World Capital

- Brand ambassadors: what work plan for them?

- ConnectIreland, from ambassadorship to commission-based brokerage

- Rising local media awareness and involvement

- Let others tell your story

- Sign up! Let´s keep in touch

- Websites at the core
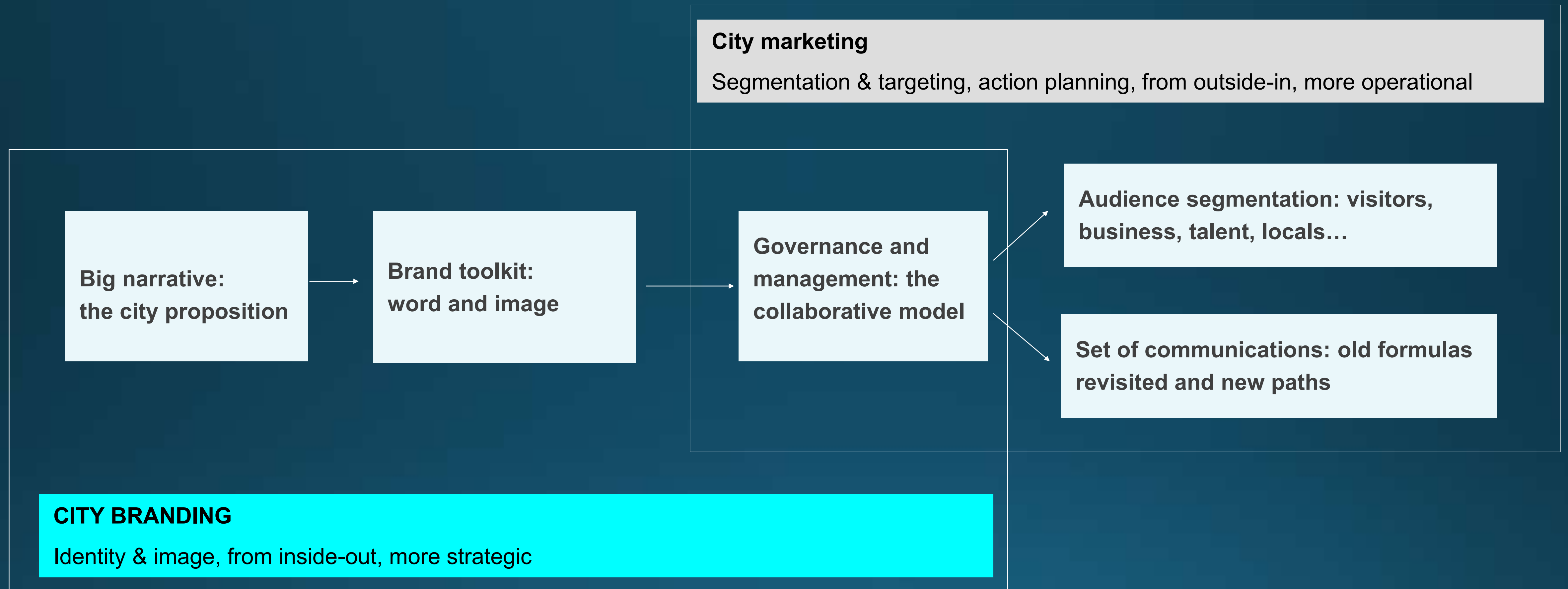
- Print is not defunct, yet

- Vueling´s inflight magazine
- Fan-advertising: learning from Game of Thrones
- The growing role of social media
- Is Instagram called to be king?
- What makes it´s liverpool App different
- New generation of visitor centres: the City of Cardiff Marketing Suite
- The Italian model of Urban Centres
- Info desks: the medium is the message
- Refreshing city merchandising: the case of Lisbon
- Upgrading urban signage, if needed
- Materializing it´s Liverpool
- Symbolic actions. Iconic architecture for Ramallah
- Experimenting new ways of city representation
- Data visualization: giving life to urban facts and figures
- Big and open data will bring new ways to represent the city and interact with the city

At·Brand

01

WHY CITY BRANDING?
Meaning and scope of place branding. The need to relearning

City marketing

Segmentation & targeting, action planning, from outside-in, more operational

Big narrative:
the city proposition

Brand toolkit:
word and image

Governance and
management: the
collaborative model

Audience segmentation: visitors,
business, talent, locals…

Set of communications: old formulas
revisited and new paths

CITY BRANDING

Identity & image, from inside-out, more strategic

Source: M. Rivas, TASO

"Even today, many governments, most consultants and even some scholars persist in a naïve and superficial notion of place branding that is nothing more than ordinary marketing and corporate identity"

Simon Anholt

Anholt, S. (2010) A Political Perspective on Place Branding. In Go, F. and Govers, R. Editors. International Place Branding Yearbook. Place Branding in the New Age of Innovation. Palgrave Macmillan.

A content perspective

From a content perspective, city branding is just about building up a unifying narrative for the contemporary city. That´s in essence the concept of brand when applied to cities and places. A narrative then filtered through communication codes.

"Rather than having businesses and individuals tell their own individual story, everybody should have their personal version of a common narrative" *Aarhus citybranding team.*

"City branding and city narrative is very useful in helping keep us focused and also in helping our stakeholders think about Dundee and what it is which defines and differentiates us". *Dundee citybranding team*

For the Cardiff´s unit in charge of city branding, the field is basically about "agreeing on a number of key facts which are true and unique to Cardiff which gives it stand out and appeal to the target audience" This short range of brand values are called to filter and shape projects planning and service delivery in the city.

This approach is similar to Oslo´s, for whom "city branding is about uniting stakeholders behind a limited number of values and concepts than can be used to tell the stories about the Oslo region". To that aim, they are developing the concept of "brand filter" and related "on-brand/off-brand" service in order to evaluate project/event proposals.

A governance perspective

From a governance perspective city branding is about creating a shared working area for the diverse entities in the city targeting and interacting with different audiences: visitors, investors, knowledge... That is why, above all, city branding is basically an organisational challenge, aimed at providing one single "control centre" to the city´s interaction with the outer world. This in turn will allow to manage purely cross-cutting issues like city image, positioning, attractiveness or reputation.

It is a response to the need for more city´ strategic communication, inward and outward.

"In terms of the role of the brand in delivering our aim, it is the strategic communication element of our city. It requires all of the major partners to be on board and to assist in ensuring that we create value in the communication of our messages through a consistent, cohesive and imaginative approach to content and delivery. The city brand provides a tool through which this can be achieved"

Dundee citybranding team

City branding is integrated or it isn´t

The idea of integration is inherent to the brand concept.

"Dublin has created multiple identities, communications and messages over the past few years. This has created a very fragmented story of who we are, where we're going and how we're going to get there. In 2009, the cumulative budget across the Dublin Local Authorities alone was over €1.5bn. It is time we focused the power of this budget on a single, clear story that positively influences the reputation of Dublin."

Who do we want to be? Discovering Dublin´s identity, 2011.

Increasingly, the arguments to attract are multi-audience. Cities need to market themselves as functional, competitive business places, but simultaneously as unique urban experiences too. A new promotional language is born.

It's not luck.
It's Belgium.

An intelligent tax system with notional interest deduction and advanced ruling system for investors.

The gateway to Europe and an unbeatable quality of life for everyone.

And comic strips too, of course.

Where?   Only in Belgium

www.invest.belgium.be   .be

Accompanying strategy to huge economic and urban transformations

To a large extent, the rise of city branding as formalised practice has been closely associated to huge changes in most of the UK´s core cities, moving from old industrialism to new post-industrial economic patterns. In those transitional contexts, city branding has proved to be a very valuable accompanying strategy. From Glasgow and Liverpool to Eindhoven and the Ruhr area.

For instance, in Italy, Genoa is successfully completing a non-easy transition from *Fordist* industrialization (steel industry, shipbuilding…) towards a knowledge-driven model, where tourism is now a growing pillar in the local economy, based on an impressive cultural heritage and central position within the Italian Riviera. This transformation, which physically can be represented by the Porto Antico re-development project designed by Renzo Piano (the counterpart to Liverpool´s waterfront), was needed for a new updated narrative of the city and subsequent communications, outward and inward. To that aim, the Italian city launched a new visual identity in 2014, with the hope to initiate a sound strategy on city branding & marketing.

Liverpool: Albert dock in 1980 and waterfront today

Telling what is going on and what is to come

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Increasing buzz capacity

But city branding is also about increasing buzz capacity. According to branding expert Andy Stalman, branding is about influencing, being followed, being shared. "Buzz" strength was recently measured by Saffron as a combination of social media (Facebook likes and Twitter sentiment analysis) and media mentions - Guardian Cities global brand survey. Certainly it is a metrics too basic and automatic, but it's a way, especially when you do not have budget for questionnaire-based analysis.

Cities change and their identities must be rethought accordingly, like those moving from industrial decline to knowledge economies. But, otherwise, there are cities joining prosperity for long time and hosting a good handful of strengths and unique values, which feel their capacity to "buzz" this is low. For example, only a few know that Utrecht used to rank as the most competitive region in Europe, ahead of the London area, Ile de France or Stockholm, according to the EU Regional Competitiveness Index. Increasing buzz capacity was precisely the main motivation of Oslo to start in 2012 an ambitious project on place branding.

Besides its strong specialisation in global financial services, Zurich hosts a diversity of high-tech manufacturing sectors, and tourism is likewise a growing industry. The business environment is unique, fuelled by one of the smallest taxation of developed countries and a bunch of leading research institutes and universitie, such as Zürich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW and the famous Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich ETH. The city used to rank at the highest positions in many indexes regarding quality of life, wealth and innovation. As a result, the city-region attracts a lot of international skilled workers. But, in spite of this enviable position, City managers in Zurich are making significant efforts to get a more consistent city brand and subsidiary city marketing strategies.
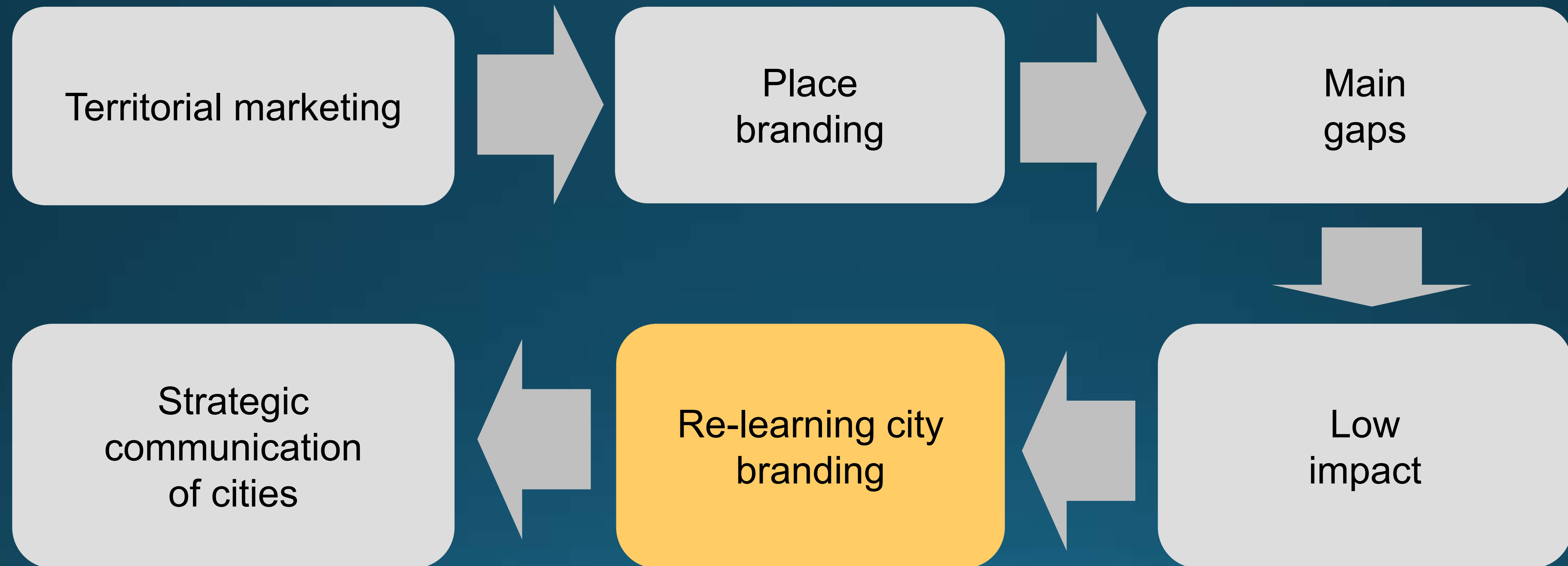
Seven most common gaps in place branding, the strategy gap

"Integrated city branding is a strategic management tool, not a logo or slogan. It should connect the city's vision/policy framework with the promise and experience it offers its target markets. It could be argued that too much emphasis is placed on the 'brand' (logo/slogan) and not enough on 'branding', the process that helps a city identify its values and distinctiveness. Integrated city branding should be more than merely the promotional, it should encompass how the city operates and behaves – don't just say it, do it".

Peter Smith, Marketing Liverpool.

Actually, the term brand is just a metaphor when applied to places. It´s about the strategic process to build up and communicate competitive local identities (see Simon Anholt , Place Branding: Is it Marketing, or isn ' t it?. Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 4, 1. 2008).

Crea il Brand per **Firenze**

In collaborazione con:

Audi
Firenze

Why do they say brand when they mean logo or visual identity?

The community gap

Weak involvement of stakeholders and civil society in city-brand building and management. Absence of a collaborative model

Trying to build up the collaborative model in city branding. Left, Zaragoza 2013. Right, Warsaw, place branding project at district level focused on the Vistula riverfront, 2014

The differentiation gap

Cities in Europe seem to brand themselves on the same topics and qualifications –knowledge, city of culture… Distinctiveness between them is limited. Behind that, there is often somewhat uncritical adoption of what supposedly the "standard modern city" should be - smart, creative, lively streets everywhere… - resulting in lack of differentiation. Roughly speaking, it has to do with leaving the city storyline only in the hands of creative and brand agencies, which often seem to work homogenizing cities instead of differentiating them.

Besides the automatic import of some mainstream discourses, like the creative city and the smart city, and their related paraphernalia, there are other factors working against differentiation: chain stores, from pioneering W.H. Smith and McDonalds to H&M and Starbucks, as they massively homogenize commercial streets all around the world, or "Calatravism" -in other words, start architects.

istanbul inspirations
İstanbul. The most inspiring city in the world.

EDINBURGH
INSPIRING CAPITAL

BARCELONA
A CAPITAL
THAT
INSPIRES

The timing gap

The question of circumstantial brands, just related to specific events or political cycles.

Lack of durability.

Genoa´s long history of logos

The visual gap

Many local governments, even big cities, still handle poor sets of images. More effective, quality-oriented policies of city representation are needed.

To the left, images sent by the European capitals for the exhibition "The Many Faces of Europe´s Capitals" to commemorate the hosting of the 48th general assembly of the Union of Capitals of the European Union (UCEU), Dublin 2008. It was an excellent occasion to assess the quality of the policies of city representation in Europe.

Top: Bucharest, "the ghost city", only monuments and stones, no people, typical soviet-influence style. Down: Budapest, there is a common big narrative behind the pictures, which is a city in the way to modernization, but the final result is visually poor.

The funding gap

Does this make sense? Zaragoza´s ad street campaign in New York

Many cities still follow a conventional campaign-oriented logic when marketing themselves, which is usually costly. Consequently, in times of public spending austerity (or one might say rationality?) they are trapped in an impasse of no money no action. Anyway, more and more cities are now re-thinking their funding models supporting place branding and marketing.

In relation to this, cities need to learn how to promote themselves with smaller budgets. The fastest way for that is moving campaigns and advertising away from the core and broadening the concept of communication action, in order to consider other subtler, less obvious ways of marketing the city.

On ethics in place branding

http://vimeo.com/102051605

Time ago I found in a blog dedicated to place branding & marketing a promotional video on the capital of North Korea. It was presented as a technological and creative achievement thanks to the collaboration between city-branding consultant JT Singh and flow-motion videographer Rob Whitworth.
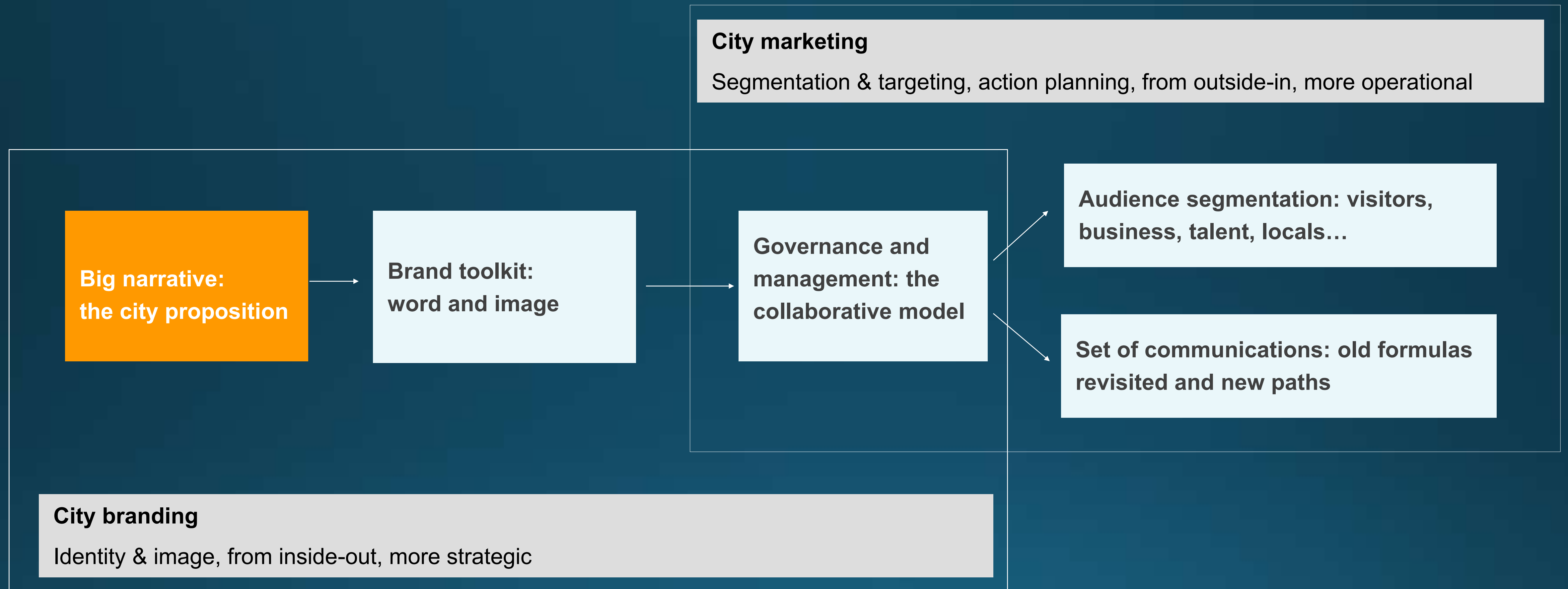
Creative considerations apart, I could only see a (vain) attempt to aestheticize, from the placebranding field, that big open-door jail which is Pyongyang. Another excess that will diminish the credibility of placebranding and its normalization as urban policy. In a very different context of course, it reminded me Monaco´ "special role in the world" 2013 campaign, where it seemed we all had to give thanks to the Principality for being a tax heaven.

I guess the major question raised by the Pyongyang video is not the right to re-branding from underdog positionings -in this sense, it comes to my mind the brilliant work made by Medellin in the last years. It simply about Ethics and Moral. The video is perfectly comparable with Leni Riefenstahl´s technically brilliant productions for the Nazi regime.

02

CITY NARRATIVES
The first and most fundamental

City marketing

Segmentation & targeting, action planning, from outside-in, more operational

**Big narrative:
the city proposition**

**Brand toolkit:
word and image**

**Governance and
management: the
collaborative model**

**Audience segmentation: visitors,
business, talent, locals…**

**Set of communications: old formulas
revisited and new paths**

City branding

Identity & image, from inside-out, more strategic

Source: M. Rivas, TASO

"Our mission is to tell London's story brilliantly"

London & Partners

At·Brand

Accept to get punked

Even it is not too bad that you accept the possibility to get punked. A city is not a product/service, whose image can be perfectly controlled and projected by the product brand manager. It is nonetheless a community, a living stuff with many angles, perspectives and feelings.

Thus, don´t be afraid of not having total command of your city speech. Underground sub-cultures will always exist, for instance. What is important is to be credible and authentic to the eyes of your neighbours, and not falling into the simplicity of just importing the ultimate mainstream discourse about the city – the creative city, the smart city, etc. More and more, a proportion of commercial brand management is left to be floating at hands of fans and users by means of deliberately exposure in the social media. Even Customer-based Brand Equity is a hot topic in today´s marketing theory (see the work of Kevin Lane Keller).

At the time of the launch of Genoa´s new visual identity, the local Instagramer community was challenged to a photo contest. Competitors had to take one or more photos of the city, mark them with hashtag #genovamorethanthis and share them on Instagram. All photos with that hashtag were automatically displayed on the Genova Turismo´s Facebook page and could be voted by all of its followers. The winner was a very good picture inspired in the prostitution around the old port. The municipality also welcomed some "outsider initiatives" that came along the official launch campaign, mixing critical voice and fun, like an online logo generator where anyone could hack the official claim "More than This", as for instance "More than Focaccia" or "More than a Logo". At the end, all of this resulted into a vivid debate on the city´s essence and how it should be communicated.
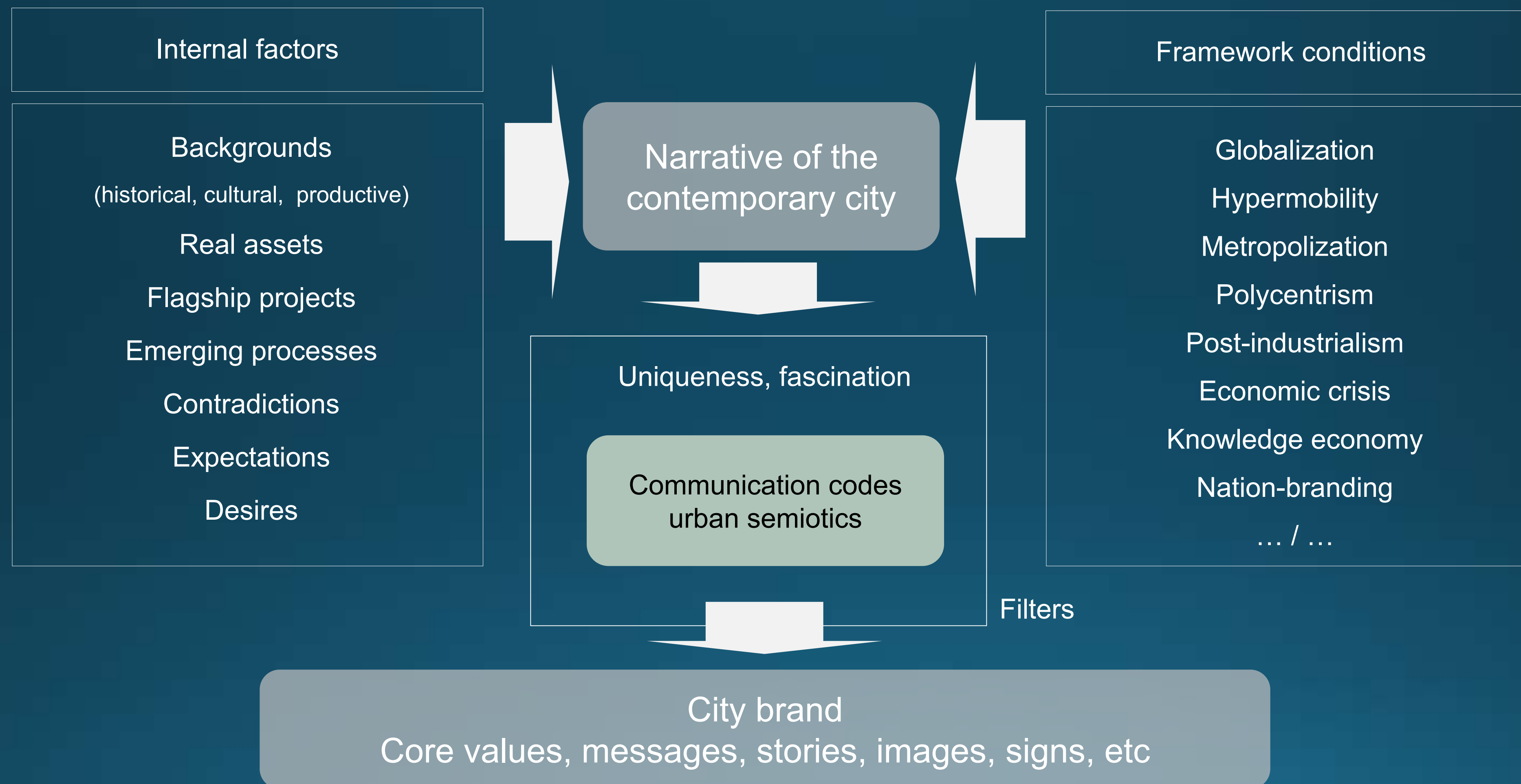

Fedra – La chiamavano Bocca di Rosa

Photo contest #genovamorethanthis
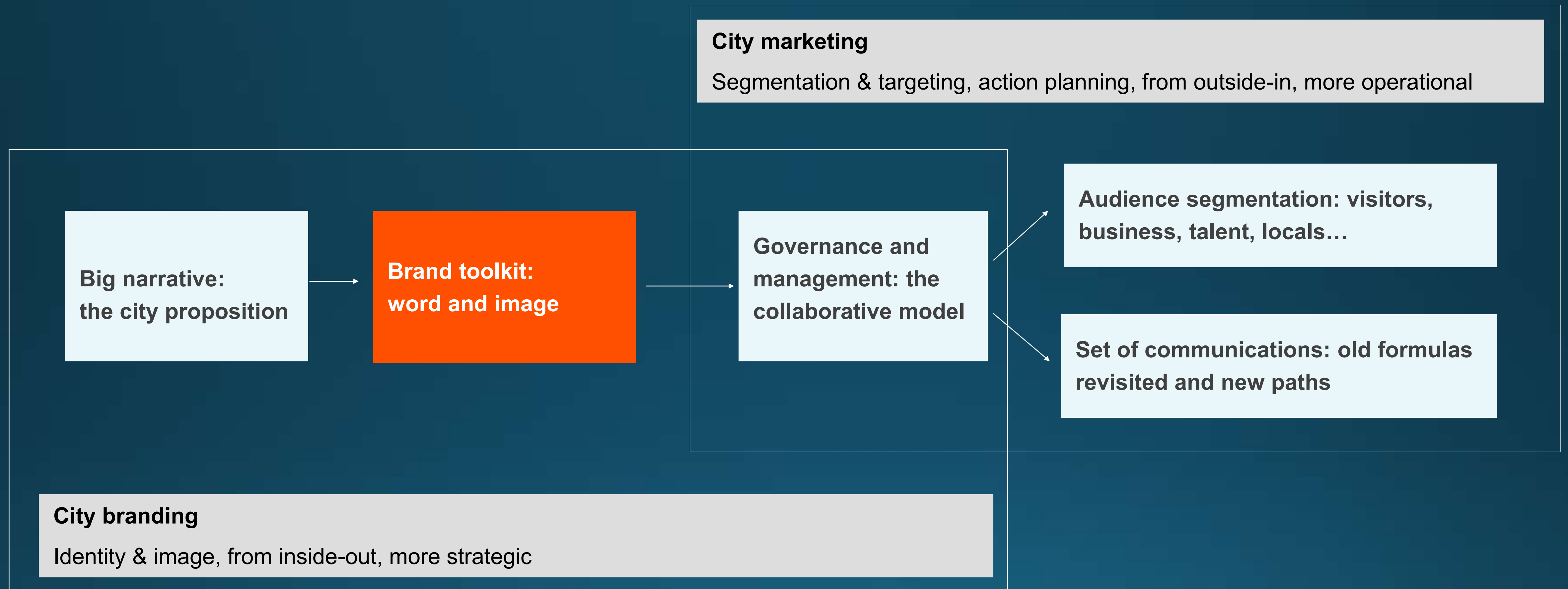
From city narrative to the city brand

Internal factors

Backgrounds

(historical, cultural, productive)

Real assets

Flagship projects

Emerging processes

Contradictions

Expectations

Desires

Narrative of the contemporary city

Uniqueness, fascination

Communication codes urban semiotics

Filters

Framework conditions

Globalization

Hypermobility

Metropolization

Polycentrism

Post-industrialism

Economic crisis

Knowledge economy

Nation-branding

… / …

City brand
Core values, messages, stories, images, signs, etc

Source: M. Rivas, TASO

03

REPRESENTING THE CITY
From city narrative to the city brand

City marketing

Segmentation & targeting, action planning, from outside-in, more operational

Big narrative:
the city proposition

Brand toolkit:
word and image

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Audience segmentation: visitors,
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Set of communications: old formulas
revisited and new paths

City branding

Identity & image, from inside-out, more strategic

Source: M. Rivas, TASO

"Today, images already express more ideas than facts"

Joan Fontcuberta, photographer

Stories, stories, stories

From the set of functional communication pieces (stats and data, key messages and statements, images…), stories, short and appealing stories, as proofpoints of the main city narrative, are getting growing importance within the brand toolkit.

25 stories about Aarhus. That was the tile of a booklet produced by the second Danish city. Each story was a compelling mix of facts, data, powerful images and links to further information. The 25 pieces were organized into three main clusters: city Development and sustainability, arts and culture and business strengths and clusters.

Any initiative of this kind must by dynamic, as stories with facts are outdated quiet fast.

Cultivating uniqueness: world port + architectural design in Rotterdam

Uniqueness in place branding used to emerge by crossing/connecting different assets of varied nature, not just by merely listing or aligning them. The resulting crossovers may be really distinctive.

One of Rotterdam´s singular features comes up by combining a world-class seaport with being the Dutch capital of the most innovative architecture (OMA/Rem Kolhaas, MVRDV and others). So, they are creating unique stories and stunning images by mixing both assets.

Rotterdam: world port + architectural design

Word and image: in search of a particular grammar for telling the city
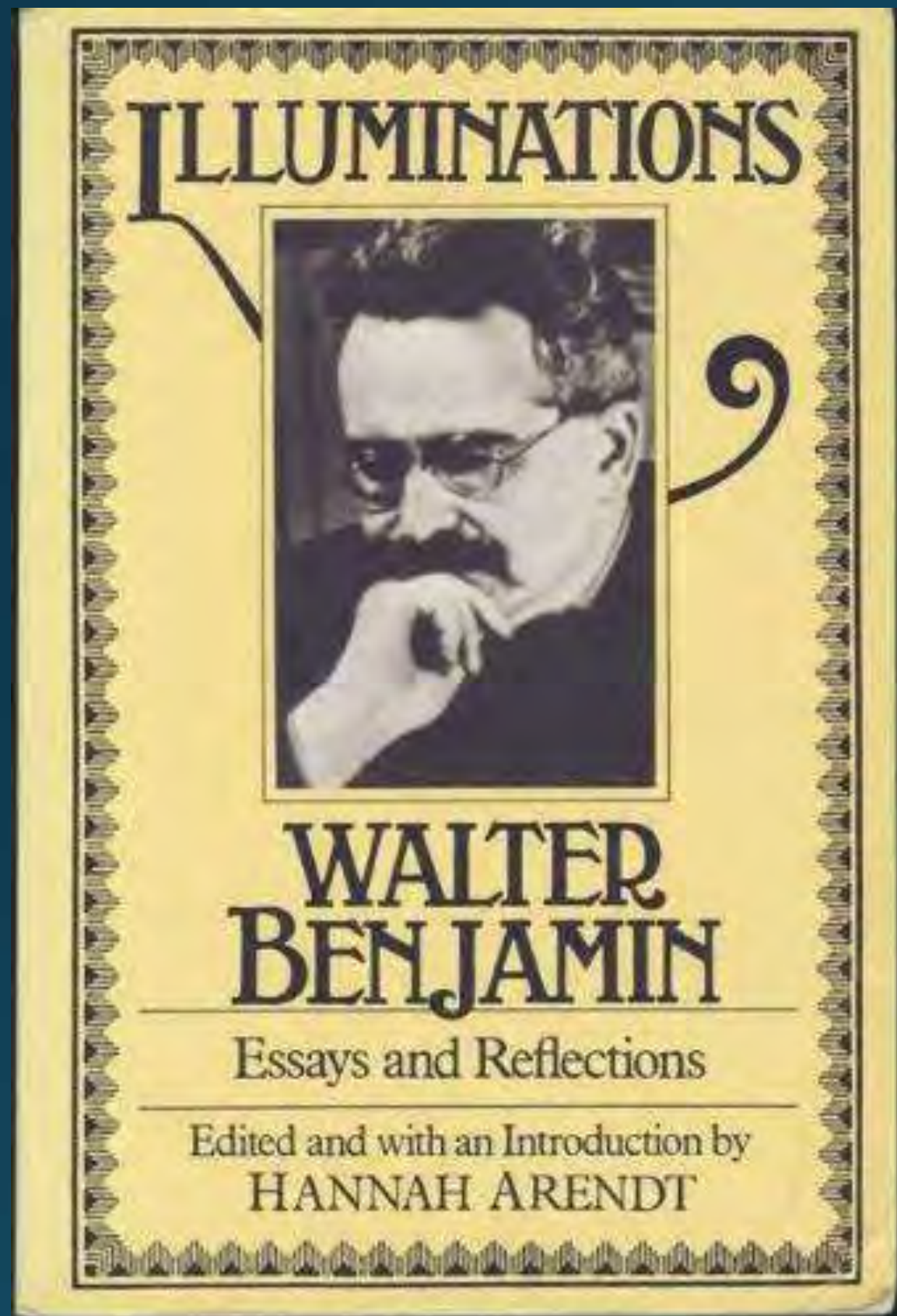
City branding or policies on city representation is about linking relevant messages to powerful images while thinking of specific audiences. Those elements are respectively sourced by a main city narrative, urban semiology and a segmentation exercise of the city´s real and potential target groups.

In his famous essays on the nineteenth-century Paris, Walter Benjamin developed a unique method to unveil how the mechanisms of modern societies leave their footprint into the urban landscape. He called it Phantasmagoria, as a mix of historic materialism, surrealism and visual arts. It may be inspiring to promote more solid foundations to narrate the city. Perhaps, his equivalent from the visual arts can be his contemporary László Moholy-Nagy, professor in the Bauhaus school.

Linking images (symbolic power) to core messages (narrative power)

Marco Pierre White:
"Very few places stun me..."

Liverpool's Pier Head

it's liverpool

Pete Townshend:
"The quintessential music city of Britain..."

The Blackout play Liverpool Sound City

it's liverpool
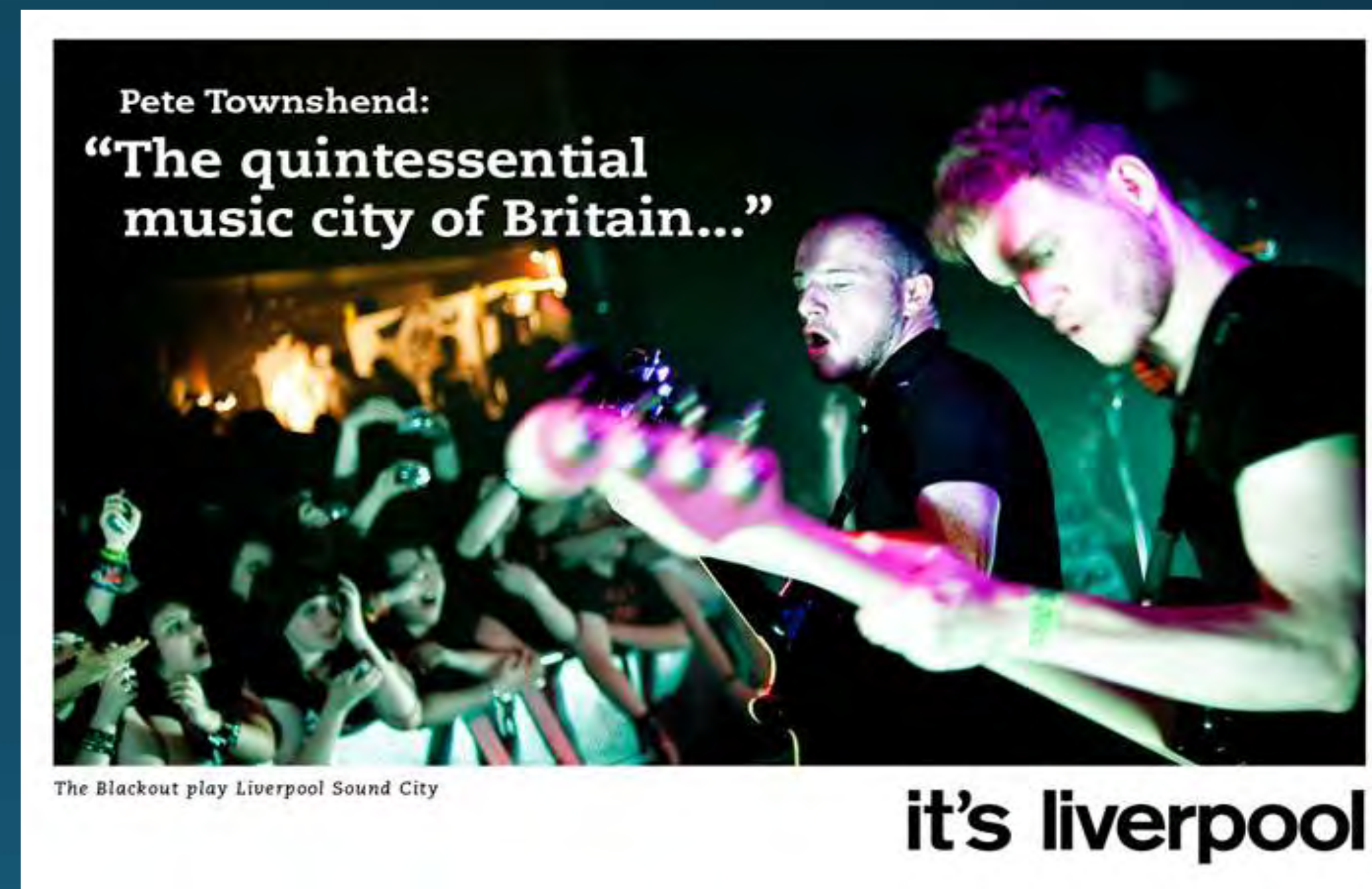
According to the Spanish photographer Joan Fontcuberta, "images already express more ideas than facts". However, the photographic image lacks of enough narrative power. On the contrary, it holds strong symbolic power. "The function (of photographic images) is not to make the story clear, it is to make it real" – John Szarkowski (1980) The Photographer´s Eye. The Museum of Modern Art. New York. Originally published in 1966. That is why in place branding the alignment between word and image is crucial. None of them has enough communicational power by itself. Each needs the other.
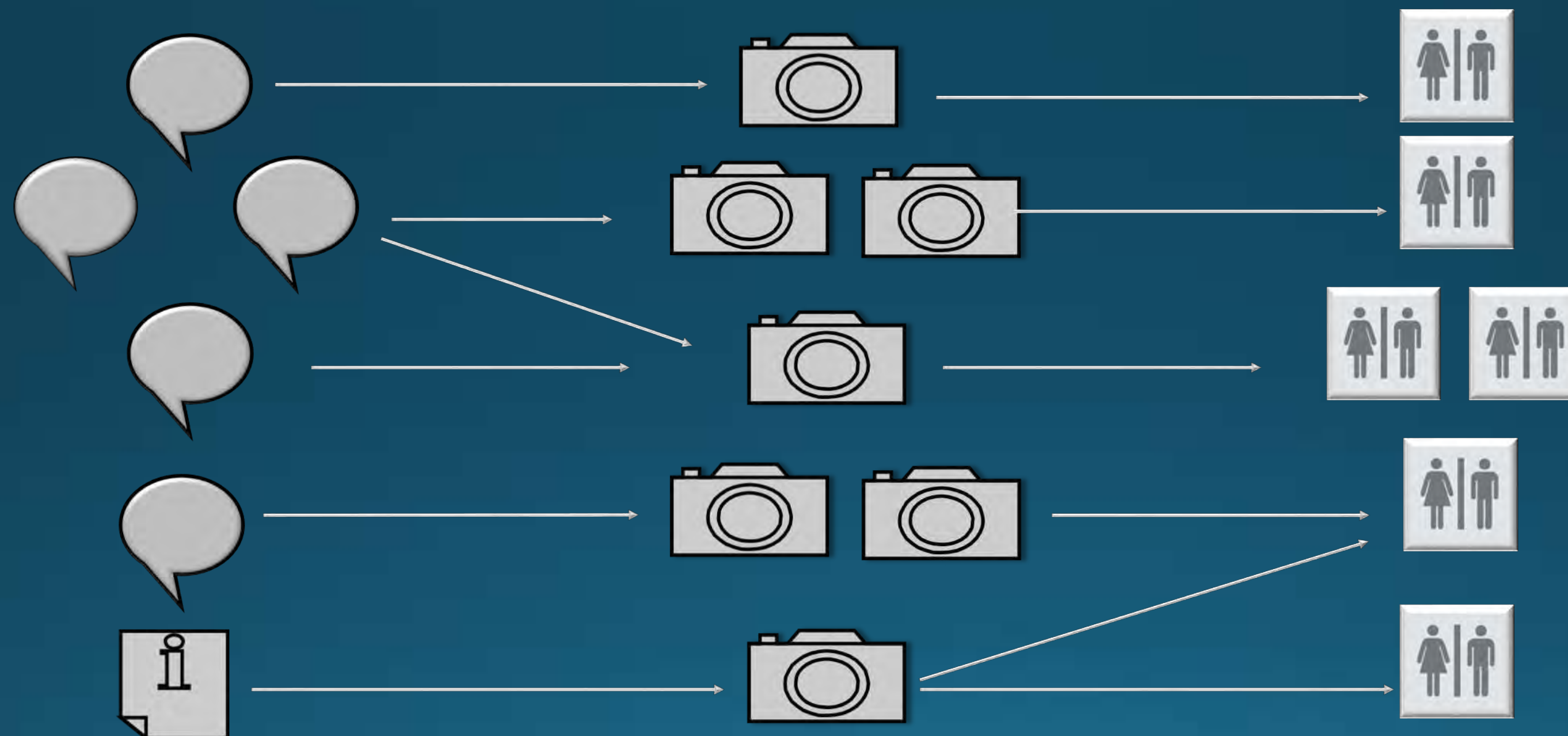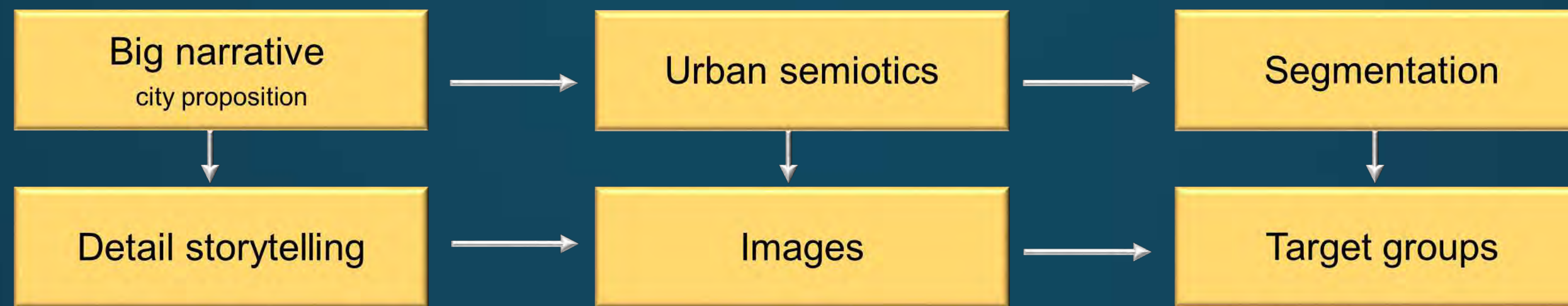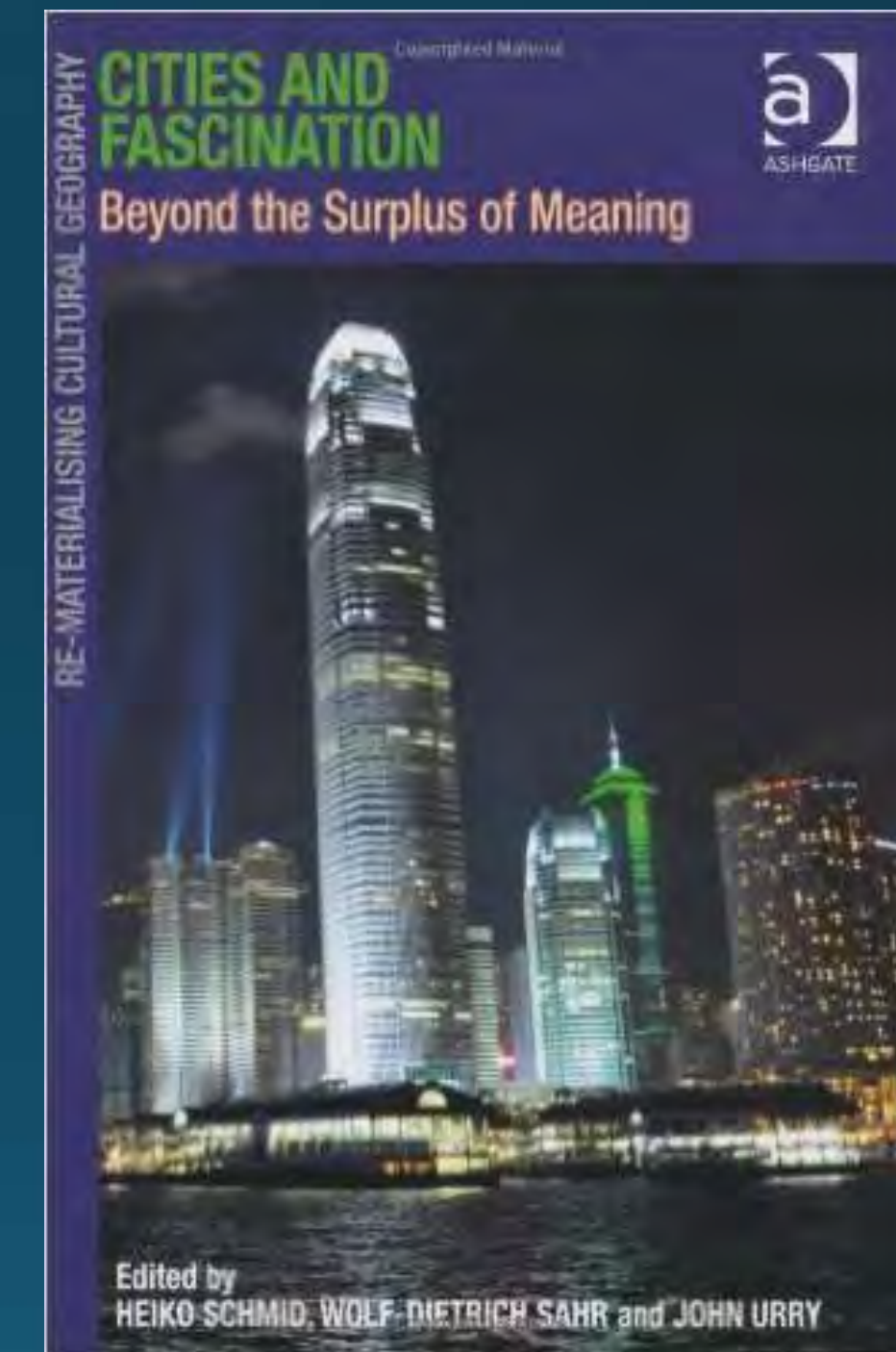
Source: M. Rivas, TASO

Fascination as emotional multiplier

As said before, getting an updated city narrative is not enough. In some way, that still belongs to the field of local strategic planning. Such a main narrative has to be filtered through communication codes to get workable material in a context of branding and marketing, e.g. bold messages, compelling stories, powerful images. Those communications codes have to do with uniqueness, fascination or a particular semiology for cities, different to the one for communicating products and services, among others.

Cultural geographers and urban sociologists, in particular Heiko Schmid, have recently identified the concept of fascination as "emotional multiplier" of the local real assets in building up the city image. At this point, a challenge would be how to properly use that kind of multiplier without falling into mere propaganda, fetishism or simple "postmodern aesthetization" of the urban landscape.

See Schmid, H. et al. Editors (2011). Cities and Fascination: Beyond the Surplus of Meaning. Ashgate. "A cutting-edge journey across the frontiers of urban theory, Cities and Fascination excavates the ways in which contemporary cities sear their way into our minds, captivate our hearts and dominate our imaginations".

RE-MATERIALISING CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

CITIES AND FASCINATION
Beyond the Surplus of Meaning

ASHGATE

Edited by
HEIKO SCHMID, WOLF-DIETRICH SAHR and JOHN URRY

At·Brand

Visualizing Eindhoven in the post-Philips era

Traditional headquarter of Philips, Eindhoven was the prototype of company-town that hit rock bottom during the decade of nineties of the past century, for then being growing up to now, when the city region ranks at the top of the EU indexes related to innovation. Such impressive productive and even societal change, from Fordist industrialism to a knowledge and creative economy (according to them comparable to Helsinki or San Francisco), has been conducted under the concept of Eindhoven Brainport.

This transition has also been accompanied by a relevant communication strategy, carried out from a dedicated agency, Eindhoven365. A substantial part of the work has been producing and promoting sets of images that best reflect the new local atmosphere and visions for the future, replacing old visualities.

© Eindhoven EHV365

© Eindhoven EHV365

New visuality for Siberia

Apparently, "I´m Siberian" seems to be another conventional campaign, heavily influenced by Western clichés of doing things – "I am" type of slogan, massive merchandising… However it can be also appreciated as a disruptive attempt to promote a new visuality of that macro-region, far from Gulag and end-of-the-world image. That is positive and helpful in order to increase young population´ sense of place and face the exodus into large cities like Moscow or Saint Petersburg.

http://imsiberian.com

04

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT
Building up the collaborative model

City marketing

Segmentation & targeting, action planning, from outside-in, more operational

Big narrative: the city proposition

Brand toolkit: word and image

Governance and management: the collaborative model

Audience segmentation: visitors, business, talent, locals…

Set of communications: old formulas revisited and new paths

City branding

Identity & image, from inside-out, more strategic
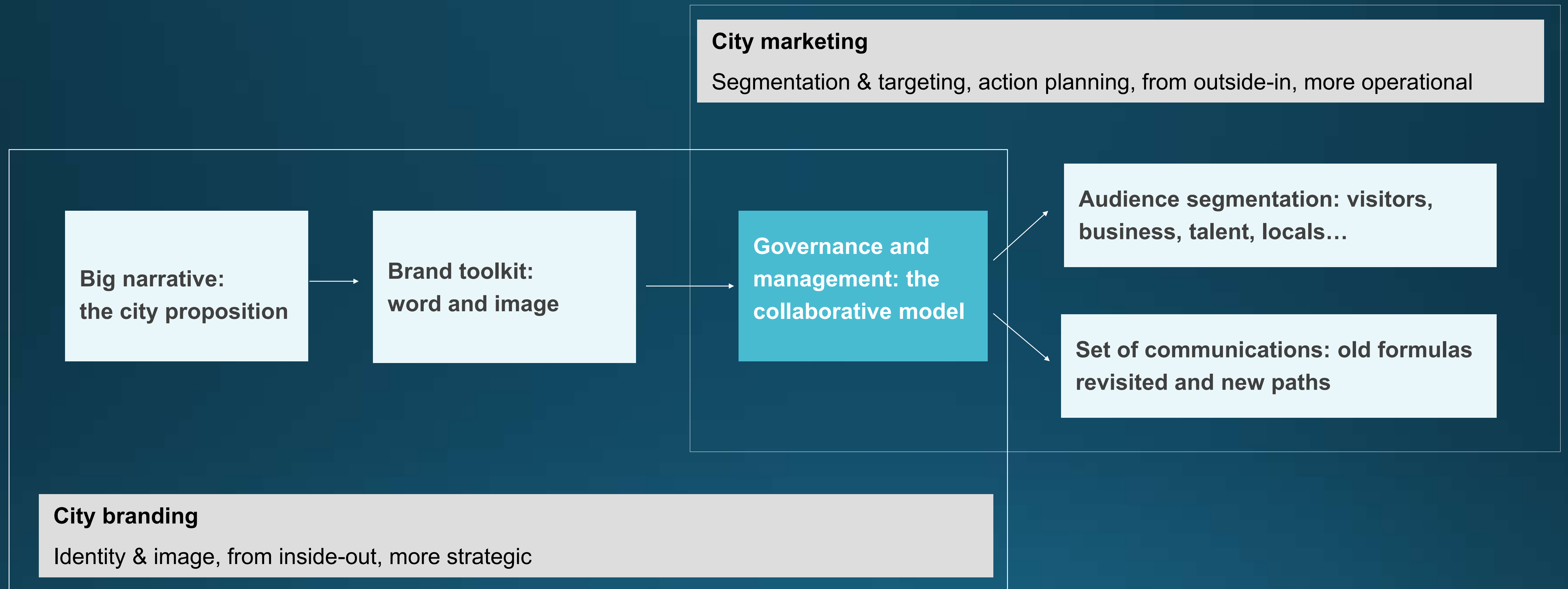
Source: M. Rivas, TASO

"Place branding can never be the responsibility of one organisation. Our approach was and is to develop and provide a strategic platform for all organisations in the city that are promoting Liverpool"

Peter Smith, Marketing Liverpool

OnlyLyon brand platform

OnlyLyon is the robust city brand & marketing strategy of the second French metropolis, dealing with international targets related to business and tourism. It has engaged a wide range of mainly public entities into the same brand platform, which is placed at ADERLY, the economic development agency for the metropolitan area, yet the brand platform has its own independent budget and funding scheme and decision-making system.

The brand platform comprises 3 local authorities, including Greater Lyon, which brings together 59 municipalities, key institutional tourism stakeholders (Lyon Tourism and Conventions, Eurexpo Exhibition Centre, Lyon Convention Centre and Lyon Airports) and economic development organisations (ADERLY as Invest-in-Lyon agency, Lyon's

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Rhône county 's main employers' associations, University of Lyon Council and the Chamber of Skilled Trades). In addition, a special sponsorship programme has been subscribed by a number of flagship private companies like EDF, Renault, KPMG or Emirates.

Within ADERLY, which employs approximately 50 members, the OnlyLyon team is around 7 full-time positions for tasks such as communications, networks management, press and public relations, relations with the partnerships and community engagement.

www.onlylyon.org

The Oslo Brand Alliance: a coalition of the willing
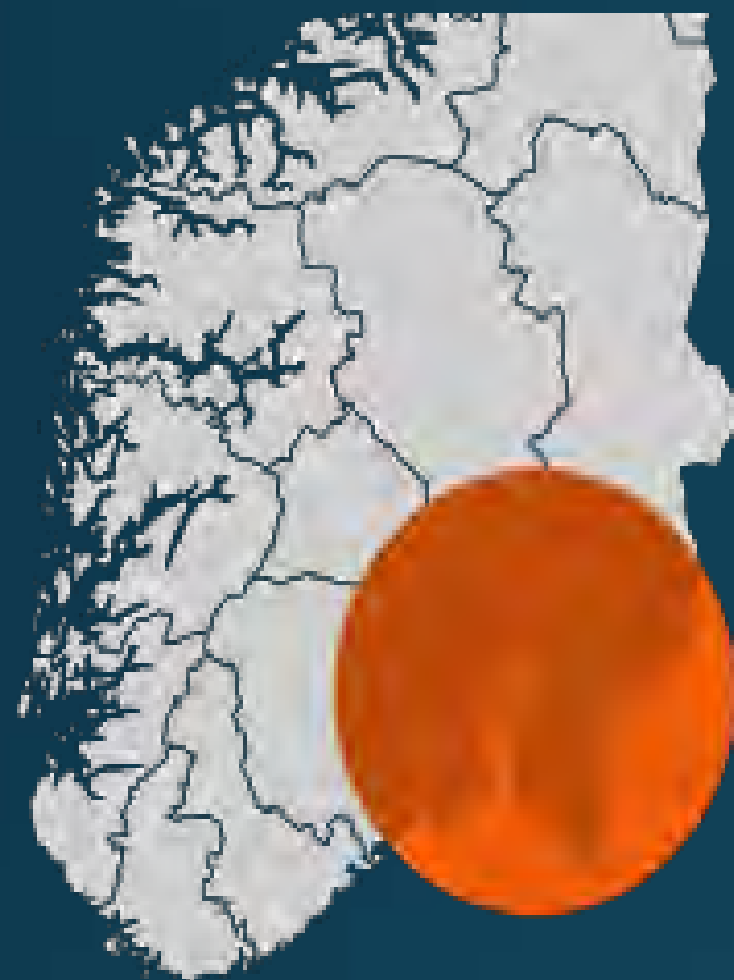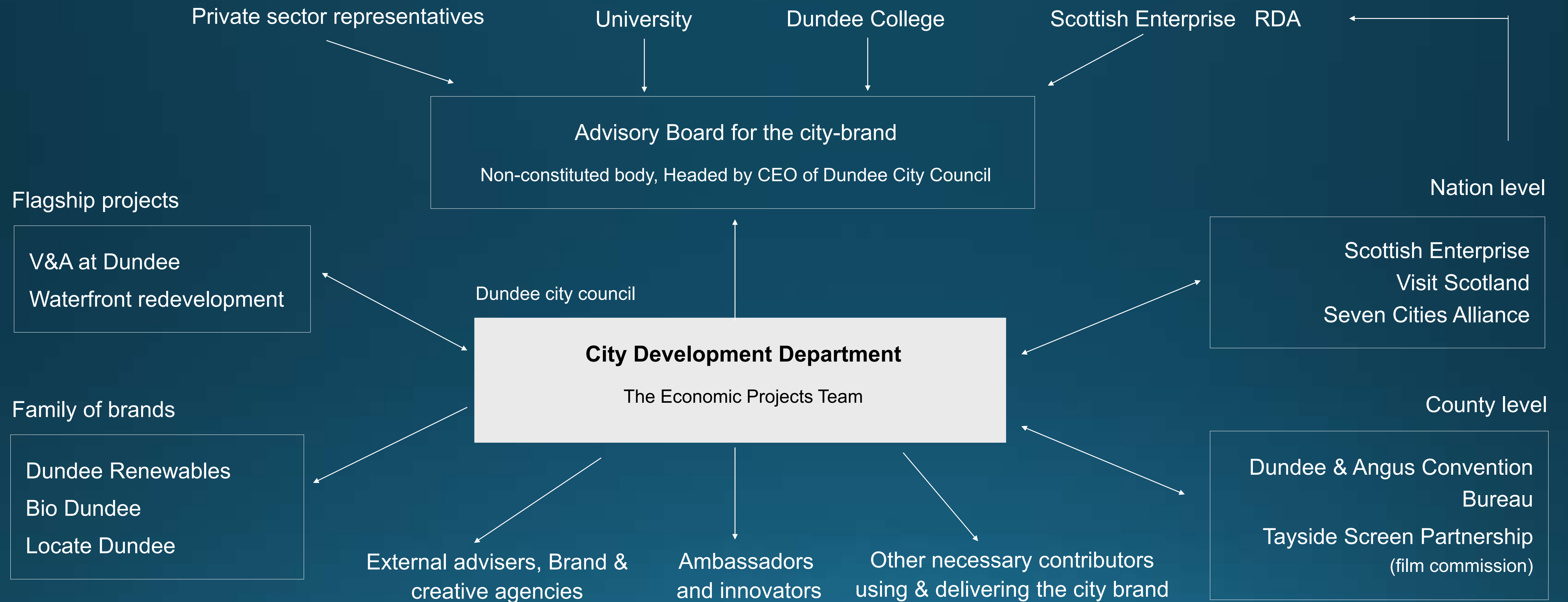
The Norwegian capital benefits from an impressive bunch of strengths and positive dynamics. The city is simultaneously managing two large-scale waterfront redevelopment projects. It´s home of competitive clusters in maritime industries, energy or life sciences, and is among the world's most eco-friendly cities. However, local authorities felt Oslo´s capacity to "buzz" its strengths and great momentum and perspectives was low. To face that challenge, it was initiated at the end of 2012 a large-scale process of city brand building called #Project Oslo Region. The initiative has been carefully designed to avoid the most common gaps in place branding. In this sense, three aspects can be highlighted: metropolitan scale of the initiative, emphasis on the need to more cohesive narrative, and above all setting up of a dedicated governing system from the very beginning, around a steering group called Oslo brand Alliance, bringing together three key organizations: The Oslo Region Alliance, in charge of inter-municipal cooperation in the city region, Oslo Business Region, in charge of promoting Oslo as business place and VisitOslo.
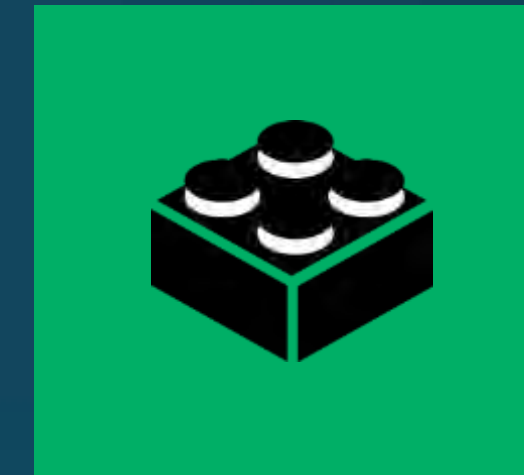
This management system will be completed with the following figures: i) Oslo Brand Partners, as second-tier key stakeholders, from Universities and main cultural facilities to airports and technology parks, with which concrete engagement will be negotiated on a project-by-project basis (as for the city region´s municipalities, the payment of an annual fee, depending on the number of residents, is under discussion, like in the case of Stockholm; ii) Oslo Brand Leadership Arena, as a consultative body comprises of a dozen of key opinion leaders; iii) and Oslo Brand Ambassadors, as appointed highly visible citizens in the arts, sport, business, creative industry, science and diplomacy. The initiative is therefore moving from participation to co-management. That is, from a bottom-up approach to work mainly with a range of selected stakeholders, which are involved by means of negotiation, agreement and commitment, leaving always the option to "opt out". It is about building a "coalition of the willing".

Dundee´s flexible collaboration

Private sector representatives

University

Dundee College

Scottish Enterprise   RDA

Advisory Board for the city-brand

Non-constituted body, Headed by CEO of Dundee City Council

Nation level

Flagship projects

V&A at Dundee

Waterfront redevelopment

Dundee city council

City Development Department

The Economic Projects Team

Scottish Enterprise
Visit Scotland
Seven Cities Alliance

Family of brands

Dundee Renewables

Bio Dundee

Locate Dundee

County level

External advisers, Brand &
creative agencies

Ambassadors
and innovators

Other necessary contributors
using & delivering the city brand

Dundee & Angus Convention
Bureau

Tayside Screen Partnership
(film commission)

Source: M. Rivas, TASO

MIX OF COMMUNICATIONS
All-time formulas revisited and new paths

06

City marketing

Segmentation & targeting, action planning, from outside-in, more operational

Big narrative:
the city proposition

Brand toolkit:
word and image

Governance and
management: the
collaborative model

Audience segmentation: visitors,
business, talent, locals…

Set of communications: old formulas
revisited and new paths

City branding

Identity & image, from inside-out, more strategic

Source: M. Rivas, TASO

"Markets are conversations"

The Cluetrain manifesto

The communication power of good advertising

It was a big challenge to communicate a new country like Kosovo. The result is very good thanks to its simplicity and lack of stridency. Just drawing the attention on the people.

The creative side of advertising can be seen as a synthesizing effort, combining word and image. It´s like the last "test tube" where the city proposition is distilled. It´s very challenging. You can get brilliant results or fail miserably.

Yet the promoter in this case is Emaar, the main real estate developer in Dubai, we see great coherence between the advertisement and a city model that is just the opposite of the inclusive approach normally claimed in urban development. But here there is no intention to unmask anything. In this sense, the advertising campaign is credible and coherent. Glamour as place value: selling the city as an expensive perfume or luxury car. A pleasure not for everybody.