An IMAGE Case Compilation

Researching the City: Mapping Imaginaries

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AN IMAGE CASE COMPILATION

RESEARCHING THE CITY: MAPPING IMAGINARIES

February 2023
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1. Notes to the Reader

You are welcome to the Teaching Case ‘IMAGE Researching the City: Mapping Imaginaries’. The case has been written in cooperation with a broad array of partners in our cities and has been made possible thanks to the extra support of the European Strategic Partnership programme Erasmus+. We found each other in the aim to contribute to better visualize and connect our cities, with a more up-to-date view, understanding them in their more current dynamics as what we like to describe, according to some inspiring literature on the matter, as polyphonic and polycentric.¹

1.1. Why a Teaching Case

Talking and discussing with many partners during the way has brought us to the most original meaning of Teaching as ‘fostering learning’. The present Teaching case is the result of all those discussions and considerations united by the convincement that doing research is an essential part of that just mentioned fostering learning. Besides a Case to work on, the current Teaching Case includes a series of guidelines plus a body of thoughts and considerations to be taken into account when conducting research on places in all their complexity. In the end we have all agreed on the importance of becoming more acknowledgeable and better-informed. It all implies a commitment to do so!

The MAGE Case illustrated in this Teaching Case compilation has been mainly the product of an already existing interest in learning more about specific areas in our cities, often the areas in which new venues of our universities have been built. Working with partners in real life cases we experienced an increasingly sense of being part of the whole. We stopped calling the companies and institutions we were working with as potential ‘clients’ and started to build on a partnership’s cooperation narrative. Next steps in this trajectory have been to take the time to better establish the implications of seriously adopting this partnership narrative as a way of working together in research and education. In this sense, it has been indispensable to review terms such as co-creation, design thinking or teaching case and to come to grips by incorporating them as concepts in a case glossary.²

In terms of context it is relevant to know that the current IMAGE Case as described in these pages has been elaborated in three different editions during the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. In each edition, we have been working with an international intercity cooperation from and within the cities of (in alphabetical order) Amsterdam, Barcelona, Lisbon, Paris and Vienna. The different schools and faculties are all part of higher education institutions in the cooperating cities and have a location in the focus areas of the case. Our districts and neighborhoods in the partner cities: Amsterdam -Zuidoost-; Barcelona -El Raval-; Lisbon -Carnide-; Paris -La Défense-; Vienna -St. Marx-. During these two years we have been working together with students coursing different subjects and mostly in the bachelor courses. Lecturers and all kind of local partners have been closely involved in the process of making the case happen. The case description in this compilation shows intentionally the dates of the 3rd edition that took place in the second semester 2021-2022. This last edition helped to improve and re-see the Case after a period of lockdowns because of covid-19 pandemic regulations.

Operating between the specific years of 2020-2022 has been an extraordinary experience in the literally sense of the word. The Covid-19 pandemic became an exceptional situation even for online intercity cooperation at a distance. Despite the longer experience built on online working together at a distance with international partners, the truly limitation of offline face-to-face meetings at all levels, together with the experiences of being ill and even losing beloves

² You will find an IMAGE Case Glossary in chapter 5 of this compilation.
ones, has obviously had an impact. In terms of conducting research and collecting first-hand data, the restrictions have been clearly visible as well. Looking at the footage elaborated by the different students’ teams during the first and second edition one sees at once the emptiness of the streets, to name an example.

1.2. What went before

The trigger for the current Case IMAGE Researching the City Mapping Imaginaries was mainly born from the increasing awareness that our look at cities’ reputations (and at the reputations of areas within cities) could use a more diverse lens. Without denying the relevance of by now referential iconic places, there is a need to go beyond the already established and towards a new positioning for cities to capture a broader and more substantiated city map—a map which contributes to seeing beyond the obvious towards the less generally known.

This need is urgent. Even before Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis, many European cities were facing various challenges from mass tourism, to gentrification and decreasing livability in some urban areas. Despite city campaigns, which insist on spreading residents and visitors through all over our cities, cities tend themselves to concentrate attention, and investments, in areas that are already considered referential. But the crux is then, why not extend our view on how reputations and attention is built and really contribute to a more informed city mapping including a larger diversity of areas and centres of interest? Or as some creative entrepreneurs have put it: Instead of everybody aiming to be in a place that is already successful, wouldn’t it be better to find new ways of making more places successful? (Bures, 2012b, 2012a)

1.3. Capacity of Change

Energized by such thoughts, one starts to realize the importance of understanding places all over the world in their capacity to absorb and concentrate time and space. One also starts to question longstanding concepts such as centre and periphery and discovers that very often these concepts are matters of perception that at the same time truly influence peoples’ lives and places’ prosperities. Guided by connoisseurs, walking, observing, checking in archives, exploring on the internet we experienced that even apparently uninteresting ‘peripheral’ places in our cities can in fact condense an amazing array of all kinds of ideas and imaginations, including unfinished stories and broken dreams (that can at once be revitalized with new energies).

This is when the concept of Imaginaries arises in its full potential. Born in the fields of the so-called sciences of ideas, Imaginaries have become a way of expressing how humans have given meaning to their lives in places, shaping urban landscapes and collective lives, developing arts, starting business, emerging technology, creating, combining and also mistaking all at the same time.

We then also see why it might be true that ideas and imaginations never totally die. Interesting new trends and flows show how imaginations from the past relate with the present and become an envisaged projection of the future. And all those dreams and imaginations, all the imaginaries are not at all limited to one specific local place but are united in intercity and global flows as they respond to similar human needs.

The interesting opportunity of this current case then is that we have the opportunity to work in an European intercity cooperation in an attempt to combine and communicate our research and our efforts for a more up-to-date mapping the imaginaries of our cities from within.
Terms such as ‘mapping’ and ‘imaginaries’ from within become important key terms and are as such collected and further elaborated in the Image Case Glossary. Cooperating from within might enable us to capture all those local places imaginaries in a more authentic and elaborated way while helping to remember the importance of vernacular languages as carriers of meanings. Connecting and understanding places from within can help us, in short, to shed new light in the always fascinating process of intercity cooperation and co-creation.

1.4. On the Case material in this compilation

This Case compilation is structured in different chapters. Chapter 2 ‘The Case’ contains an elaboration on the context of the case itself, including the main research question as a part of section 2.1. ‘The Context’. Section 2.2. ‘The Challenge’ contains an in-depth explanation of the case challenge and a plan to build on a specific mapping of what are called ‘anchor points’. A description of the approach including guidelines on the methodology can be found in section 2.3. ‘The Approach’. Section 2.4. describes a detailing of the intended output.

In Chapter 3 you can find a piece of Extra Guidelines for Students as Researchers and in chapter 4 an extra Guidelines for Teaching, with in each one a specification of the different steps that can be taken in order to achieve progress and complete this specific case. The templates collected in section 4.4. are meant to provide the needed framework in the process of working on the case.

Eventually Chapter 5 is entirely built as a Glossary. The goal of the Glossary is to provide a sketch of key concepts and ideas that have been the basis of the current project IMAGE, including the sources from which they are drawn.

Furthermore, the material in this compilation is meant to be used in combination with material available at the ‘Cities Imaginaries Knowledge Hub’. The Hub provides additional details regarding guidance on the process management outlined across the ‘Student Information Hub’. This includes the learning objectives, structure of the intercity cooperation, goals and structure of the intercity gatherings. And last but not least, the IMAGE Mapping tool kits will provide a series of more ready-to-use mapping cards that can help to shorten the mapping process when needed.
2. The Case

Imagine that you have been asked to contribute to the making of a two days programme for some (international) prestigious visitors who want to know more about the area of your university and your role in it. You have been particularly asked because you are well-known as a committed and competent student and/or as researcher on business, communications and urban affairs, to name some. The time is short, you need to improvise, and realize at once that, besides some generalizations, you don’t know much about it at all.

This is what happened a few years ago in some of our universities and the whole experience became an eye-opener and an activator to stimulate a more knowledgeable environment with care and commitment. It all made visible the importance of developing an infrastructure that could provide more time to gain knowledge, to walk, investigate, enjoy and getting more involved in the areas in which we often spent many of our days, and even live.

The current case is the result of those acquired views. As a participant and student researcher you will have eight weeks the time to dedicate to IMAGE, to get more acknowledged and to come to sharable results. The special intercity cooperation will help to provide the needed insights into possible flows of connectivity between places and on how to contribute to a better mapping of our cities. The following sections will introduce you to the IMAGE Case Researching The City: Mapping Imaginaries and will provide you the needed guidelines to make sure you can benefit from the already existing IMAGE infrastructure and become part of it.

2.1. The Context

The Revival of the City: How did we get there?

Recent years have been characterized by an impressive revival of cities as the best places to live and to have a life. This revival has come with the emergence of new urban economies. As the old industrial economy of many European cities has receded in recent decades, it has left in its wake old brown stone factories and industrial infrastructure which have been reused to become the seat and calling card of new services in the digital era.

Implicitly, the city has alongside this transformation become a place to visit. However, in this process, not all areas of the city have become part of the 'triumphant city' narrative. Year after year, we have seen together with our students in different European cities, how intangible concepts truly influence the prosperity and the prospects of those living in different city areas. While some areas have been considered 'cool' and 'the place to be' (see: the carefully restored older city centers) others suffer from a resilient bad reputation (see especially: some neighborhoods in the peripheral areas).

However, we have also realized that good and bad reputations do not last forever. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, many of the beautiful but overcrowded historical centers had become ‘no-go areas’, according to many residents due to crowdedness. Simultaneously, we started to identify clear signals that the reputation of some ‘peripheral’ places that had been considered the ‘worse places’ for years were beginning to be reframed.

Operating from the so-called peripheral areas of our cities, we started to discover the interest, the knowledge and the creativity that slowly but surely has been nesting in these parts of the European urban landscape, often home to people from all over the world. We also realized that many of these areas had become the home of our university campuses, including student housing. At the same time we have realized that lots of work still needs to be done, as all of the appealing potential of these areas is not necessarily visible at first
sight.

Aspects missing on existing mapping as far are the visualization of a mix factors and circumstances that have enabled a diversity of voices to arise which reveal new dynamics and energies. Some areas that include large state housing or modernist housing projects arising from the late 1960s onwards and stigmatized for years, have become referential and even part of the cultural heritage of the city. For example, it is interesting to see how Amsterdam’s Bijlmer, for years the most stigmatized neighbourhood in the Netherlands, has been included in 2019 as protected cultural heritage of the city of Amsterdam. The typical Bijlmer flats are now described with adjectives such as ‘the lovely mastodon’ and are examples of the ‘beauty of concrete,’ comparable to the value of the abstract art of Dutch famous painter and theoretician Mondrian.³

Figure 1: The Bijlmer source: Visser, J. (2014). Kleiburg – de laatste Bijlmerflat

Similarly, the social neighbourhood Padre Cruz in Carnide, one of the biggest social housing neighbourhoods in Europe and also stigmatized for this reason, has lately become known as a unique ‘open door art gallery’ animated by graffiti practices and art creation, and articulating new ways of promoting its recovery while revitalising the surrounding area.

Figure 2: Bairro Padre Cruz in Carnide

It is interesting to note that the so-called peripheries have often been physically cut off from the more central areas with infrastructure such as motorways, ring roads and train

lines. This has happened since the 1980s and it is only now that we are seeing efforts to cover or make tunnels to bridge the physical boundaries.

While trying to better understand the different identities of these so-called peripheries one can also imagine why some of these enclaves, literally geographically located in the outskirts of the cities have actually become attractive to many other audiences. For a variety of reasons, big firms and corporations started to build their venues in these areas. The ground was affordable and the freedom to build in every style was almost unlimited. It is not for nothing that big venues for media firms, the financial sector and sports and festival venues have found homes in the peripheries of our cities.

In this sense, the case of La Défense in Paris is emblematic in that it shows one of the first ambitions in continental Europe to build a totally new business city area. Following public outcries about the building of modern towers in the city, Paris stopped the construction of skyscrapers in the 1960s. Construction subsequently started at La Défense and it now counts 72 glass and steel buildings, with 200,000 daily workers. The Nobel Tower can be seen as the first skyscraper of this sort in Paris being a starting point for new waves of Parisian skyscrapers in La Défense of the 1970s and 1980s embodying the modern business areas with international headquarters echoing each other in the dreams to join an increasing international business world.
But that construction meant the demolition of surrounding neighbourhoods with houses, small factories, farms and even shanty towns to build the business district. Therefore, while it can be tempting to see some of these peripheral areas as new, it is important to note that we have been discovering more and more layers of history beyond what is immediately visible in peripheral areas.

We have seen, for example, that the St. Marx neighbourhood is named (not for Karl Marx!) but for St. Marcus (also called Marx). From 1846 until the end of the 20th century, St. Marx was best known as the home of Vienna’s main slaughterhouse and livestock market. While St. Marx is now home to a media quarter, some of the market infrastructure still remains—such as the colossal gate system with bull sculptures and the old cattle hall, which now serves as an events space.

![Figure 5: Old cattle market gates, St. Marx](image)

Prior considerations have led us to new conversations about the meaning of terms such as centres and peripheries. It has been key to remember that these terms are not only interrelated but also depend on the context and the position from which one views them. In this respect, it has been interesting to keep discussing the meaning and status of being a centre or a periphery and to think critically about when specific neighbourhoods have stopped being considered one or the other.

For example, we think of el Raval in Barcelona, which was once considered a periphery of the city centre and has a long story and accumulated symbolic capital. See Figure 6: El Raval
The message is becoming clear: being a centre or a periphery is not a geographical definition in itself. European cities, including neighbourhoods such as el Raval, have become increasingly aware of the need to avoid binaries such as centre and peripheries.

Moreover, the term periphery itself has become controversial among residents and advocates of these places, many of whom acknowledge the stigma the word has carried. Equally, it is also important to remember that the current revamp of certain peripheral areas is not the result of good city marketers, rather is based on the work of all kind of different experts, architects, journalists, engineers, artists, writers, simply all kind of persons living in these areas. They all have been ‘believers’ who have seen the beauty in these underdog places and have maintained a commitment to making this visible. At the heart of these efforts is the motivation to overturn peripheries’ one-dimensional image.

Again, reputations can always change and looking at the trajectory of all of these areas shows how this can happen. In fact, recently many neighbourhoods that previously had bad reputations have become concerned about gentrification and are afraid that this revamp will not be only positive but may even make the housing unaffordable for the current residents.

This illustrates the re-emergence of ideas about how to stimulate a more diverse and sustainable view of prosperity. The re-emergence of more metropolitan approaches goes beyond ideas to spread visitors for the sake of avoiding concentration in the most attractive neighbourhoods to visit, such as the restored historical city centres or the ‘fin de siècle districts’ built in European cities between the 1880s and the 1930s.

Instead, as we enter a new period for European cities, there is a need to look at a more compositional place-mapping. It is important to remember in doing so the very explicit desire of our universities to contribute to a more varied and prosperous city in all its neighbourhoods.

Being students, faculties and partners in cities means being agents in these processes. Therefore, the main questions this case asks are:

How can symbolic capital and sentient/salient data increase the visibility and appreciation of peripheral areas? In which way can we better capture the already existing imaginaries nested in places? To what extent can we visualize them as polyphonic and polycentric living organisms through a substantiated study of images, identities and reputations of our cities?

2.2. The Challenge

Our work in this Spring edition 2022 will result in an elaboration of a documentary practice geared towards increasing the visibility and appreciation of the already existing symbolic capital in the more peripheral neighbourhoods of our cities. We will explore places imaginaries and illuminate ideas, places and initiatives which have appealing and multifaceted substance suitable to represent and attract diverse audiences.

We argue that one should go beyond researching city campaigns often focused on only portraying the positive. As studies on places’ reputations show, a place does not get a better reputation because of positively formulated slogans. Simply replacing the word ‘immigrant’ with ‘multicultural’ does not always work. Instead, we aim to use more diverse research
antennas that can detect already existing realities and understand new voices. Being able to capture a broader spectrum of places’ imaginaries is in fact the essence of a polycentric and polyphonic approach.

By capturing the identity of the intended districts and neighbourhoods, we can begin to identify different places in the area that can be seen as anchors, as references of already existing identities and values that have in themselves a (re)generating potential to become inspiring references in themselves. Think for instance of how initiatives to stimulate green areas have led to the creation of parks, graffiti on the walls have led to referential arts’ exhibitions, hip hop to the opening of new art spaces and so forth.

With this case, we work on ways to transcend well-known phenomena such as the Matthew Effect of accumulated advantage (think: “the rich get richer while the poor get poorer”) (Hospers, 2004). We see that places that have accumulated symbolic capital keep reinforcing their appeal: symbols get remediated, re-used, readjusted and reproduced in new forms (Bourdieu, 1985). At the same time, we can also observe that because of such effects, places that have not yet been visualized as referential tend to be neglected as worth to pay attention to.

These observations help to also realize that even if it is not formalized, there are enough places that do already contain all ingredients to become interesting to a multiplicity of audiences. We call these places anchor points. Once identified, one can start to elaborate on a broader research following a more relational and associative approach in which data leads. It means that one a priori cannot always establish which type of sources would be most suitable.

In this sense, mapping imaginaries proposes a more extended understanding of data. These data then includes: observations of physical environments, the ideas and plans that created them and that have remained (or not), the different moments in evolution, the ideas that congregate in places, the dreams for the future. I also may include all that one can collect online and offline from sources as formal as already available business and urban planning documents to all kind of cultural production and the most ephemeral daily life communication.

To sum up, the challenge is to go beyond existing abstract segmentations about convenient and inconvenient target groups to be attracted to places and pay attention instead to a more sentient data which is produced in places themselves. This is the kind of qualitative data that is seen as the product of self-conscious i.e. data which are agents of conscious self-reflection and not merely the passive ingredients of statistical trends4.

2.3. The Approach

At the heart of our approach is the Mapping Imaginaries methodology. This strategy is focused on stimulating knowledge and also making the intercity and universal connections between places visible. A starting point here is that places can be understood as performative spaces. Places can be defined as a set of relations that not only (or not necessarily) gather what is happening at a specific site at a specific time, but rather ‘fold and pleat’ in space and time into complex configurations.4

Moreover, the mapping should not avoid portraying the controversial or the polemic. One should also remember that places with a negative image (of being dangerous, for example), can evolve and become indispensable cultural references.

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4 Remember again that a more elaborated piece on such concepts is included in the Image Glossary.
2.3.1. Specific Guidelines:

When capturing identities, images and reputations of our cities, considerations include the following (based on capturing imaginaries combination of imagology or study of images, urban studies, tribal marketing among others.\(^5\)

- **ORIGIN:** What are the origins of the place? Why was it made/built? What was there before?

  The context and the intention of when a specific place has been made, built, named is key. For instance, the importance of what was before in Amsterdam Southeast can be illustrated by the map and cartography found by an employee of ING building Achantus, very much into cartography in his free time, who at once realized that Acnathus was built on the old Amsterdam front line. When did that specific wall for graffiti appear in Carnide or in the Bijlmer? When did that specific media complex in Vienna arise? When did the renovation of La Défense begin and what was there before?

- **STYLE:** What is the style (or styles)? This can include the specific architectural style of buildings, the landscape and the accessories present in the environment.

  What has been the envisaged style? How can the style be originally described? If we look at the different offices and media parks: are they meant to be impressive, practical, cooperating, creative? Looking at social housing, what has this term meant throughout time? What are the related images and how do those differ from the images of social housing projects of the 1920s and 1930s?\(^6\)

- **EVOLUTION:** What are the (possible) prospective evolutions? The chances to become?

  What is already observable and visible? What are the wishes? See for instance how the Ajax Stadium in Amsterdam has increasingly become the wish for a center of innovation and how this wish also links to the many stadiums in our cities, many in them placed in originally peripheral areas. See also in Carnide how the municipality is making efforts to map the area and its versatility by connecting different generations and exploring places of convergence.

- **AUDIENCES:** What are the current audiences that have been gathering (online and offline)?

  While studying the different enclaves one can observe and study what are the current audiences connected to the activities, visions and ideas of the enclave. In

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\(^6\) See for instance the still very appreciated urban design of social housing by Cerdà in Barcelona and Berlage in Amsterdam.
this question there are different dimensions. Most visible would be a description of the ones who are attending online and online. Seeing from a tribal marketing research it is also interesting to describe it including the used artifacts. At the same time, it will be necessary to describe what is the current attendance in the media. How is the place represented, pointed on google searches, Instagram and other current social media?

✓ VALUES: What are the visible values? What are the associated visions of life?

How is the place positioned itself according to what one can see? What are the different already present artefacts one can already name as descriptive? Is it mean to be impressive, cosy, open, emblematic, illustrative of an idea? How do the different audiences get in there? In Amsterdam for instance a bicycle has many different meanings, depending on the sort, the place, the age of the rider. But the thing is that many of those details and nuances would probably scape to the eyes of someone who is not familiar with city codes or with a specific tribe.

✓ LINKS: What are the associated linked gathering places (in this city and abroad)?

Here we come to the previous point one can see how useful it is to have a network of intercity partners who can have a more accurate view from within, even if it is merely because of the basic facts of being (more) skilled in the vernacular languages and contextual meaning given realities.

Thanks to this network, then, we should be able to come to a more glocalized view, linking the local with the global. As illustrative examples one can think about the linking relevance of graffities and streets arts; of the role of old towns included in many of the peripheral areas we are working on; about the businesses and media enclaves around the nodes of the stations with enough parking that have proliferated in our cities and are (often) increasingly looking forward to connecting with the local residents; the emerging open spaces of contemporary art with limited financial means (especially in the current times) but with the clear mission of establishing international links of cooperation.

2.4. The Intended Output

In the Image project you, as a student, are partnering not only with students in our different cities but also with lecturers, researchers and an extended network of other partners and friends in the project. This is also a project which has and will span multiple years, so you will contribute to a wider output and body of research. The impact of this project goes far beyond the individuals participating in the IIL and can be considered in concentric circles, as visualised below:
The project is challenging as it is based on connecting cities from within. It requires attention and respect for all the knowledge that is already stored and recombined in places while at the same time making more visible and connected the map of one's own city internationally and globally. The documentary practices we are working on need then to be seen as a composition, a sort of orchestra.

As an end product uniting the multiple Image editions, we are working on a final common product in the form of a documentary: Image Researching the City Mapping Imaginaries. The goal is to launch this final documentary in December 2022, involving all project partners and student researchers. It is important to keep the wider context and this final product in mind as you work towards your deliverables. Your contribution to this research should take the form of a documentary entry plus a complementary tool that builds on your research to achieve impact in the neighbourhood. In the following section, you will find a description of what exactly we are looking for with this.

2.4.1. Guidelines Documentary Entry and Complementary Tool

A documentary entry assembles footage to portray a particular perspective and communicate a message. This necessarily involves thorough research, thoughtful storytelling and well-articulated process management.
In the International Image Lab Case, the topic of our documentary is the anchor points your IIL teams have identified in the peripheral areas. The goal of your documentary entry will be to produce footage which can be part of a larger documentary practice mapping the imaginaries of European urban peripheries.

In compiling this footage, you should be able to reflect on your own relationship with the area of study as an agent of change. In doing so, you may already have some ideas about what could be done to make the neighbourhood you are studying more visible and well-known, especially for students and young people. Therefore, along with your documentary entry, you will be asked to create a complementary tool to amplify your research findings and inspire real action to make the peripheries more visible and appreciated.

As you put together these two components, please remember to always refer to the Case and Glossary and reflect on the wider goals of the Image project.

You are expected to submit your Documentary Entry as an intercity team with the full participation of all members.

Please deliver:

Two separate written reports (as a Microsoft word file or similar):
   a) Documentary Entry Script (around 5,000-7,000 words)
   b) Complementary tool (around 2,000-3,000 words)
Plus:
   c) Documentary footage (audio plus images or video file)

2.4.2. Documentary Entry Script

The script is one of the most important elements in a documentary. The script contains your own choice of mapping proposition, support for your argument, and demonstrates your conducted research. Writing a solid script requires a significant amount of time.

The visual images are critical in a good documentary as they provide the visual support for your script. It's important to build a large image collection as you are doing your research, instead of waiting until you are putting the documentary together. You can find images online for your documentary, but you can also build your image collection by scanning or taking digital images of photographs in books. Take care to make sure that your images are at a high enough resolution to not appear pixelated on screen.

An effective soundtrack can make for a moving and effective presentation. What music or effects would enhance your documentary? Make sure that the music is not too loud or the effects too abrupt to distract from your narration, which is the most important part of your documentary.

Your script should include the following sections:

a. Introduction: The focus of your entry, your angle and argumentation for the choice of your anchor points.
b. **Conceptual background**: Elaboration of relevant notions related to the conceptual mapping imaginaries background you are working on (the Case literature glossary, the tertulia readings and the experts’ talks are in this sense very useful).

c. **Research design**: An explanation of the research design including a description of how data has been collected.

d. **Mapping**: The mapping itself according to the guidelines in the Case Description:

   - **ORIGIN**: What are the origins of the place? Why was it made/built? What was there before?
   - **STYLE**: What is the style (or styles)?
   - **EVOLUTION**: What are the (possible) prospective evolutions? The chances to become?
   - **AUDIENCES**: What are the current audiences that have been gathering (online and offline)?
   - **VALUES**: What are the visible values? What are the associated visions of life?
   - **LINKS**: What are the associated linked gathering places (in this city and abroad)? What are these images telling us about the inner and cross-city connectivity of the peripheral areas?

   It is essential that you include in this section explicit references from your data collection. Make for instance use of quotations that can illustrate different views; provide examples of variations during your observations; use explicit descriptions that you think will help to make your mapping more vivid.

e. **Conclusions**: Draws inferences from the findings of the mapping, relates them to the conceptual framework and own focus, points out implications and lays the groundwork for a communication plan.

f. **Footage**: Assemble the footage itself. This may be video, audio recordings, music, photo images or some combination. This should be collected or compiled by you and include all of the peripheral areas explored, using your script to establish connections between these places. This is the output you will present at the Final Congress.

   You can opt to focus your Documentary Entry on one lens or angel or on bringing several together in a compelling way. Whatever you choose, make sure it is **accurate, appealing and relevant** (what’s in it for me?) in order to have impact.

   Remember what you learned in crafting your walking tours. Incorporate: Something curious, something serious, something fun, something that is not immediately visible, something especially interesting or touching.

### 2.4.3. Complementary Tool

Imagine and describe a tool for making the areas of study more visible and attractive for students and young people. How to do it is purposefully open- this might look like a game, an event,
a walking route, a tour—whatever this tool is it should actively build on your research findings and documentary entry and have the potential to make real impact. In doing so, you should reflect on your own role as agents of change in the neighbourhoods you have researched and this reflection should be made clear in your description of the tool.

This project might learn that styles and differences are not only between cities, but also between groups within cities. You will also have seen first-hand through your collaboration with other students that students themselves are not a homogenous group, rather have a diversity of sensibilities, lifestyles, interests and attitudes. Remember that student identities, as everyone can vary not just person to person, but also in one’s life as well. One can be chameleonic, changing in identity based on the surroundings or even the time of day of the week (or weather or mood!). Your complementary tool should embrace this.
3. Extra Guidelines for Students as Researchers

The case begins with an invitation to map your own imaginaries about places in the city including to the place in which your university (main buildings and student housing) is located. You can use mind maps to do so together with drawings, list of keywords, texts, images, footage, etc. The point is to map (to make visible) your knowledge about the places, the sources behind this knowledge, how you view, remember, experience, feel in these places. You can revisit this mapping while working on the IMAGE case and hopefully you can see how it changes the more you research.

Before you start actively working on the case, go and explore. Spend time visiting, walking, being in the area around the campus (or other less known city area). Document what you see and experience. Talk to the residents and the visitors. Understand how the area is often portrayed in the media. What are the alternative voices (those of artists, local communities, entrepreneurs, activists, etc.) all about? Are there emerging themes (stories you see repeating very often)? Remember, both the problems and the solutions exist within the areas and you are encouraged to explore them from within (from being placed in and a part of the area). It requires attention and respect for all the knowledge that is already stored and recombined in places while at the same time making more visible and connected the map of one’s own city internationally and globally.

As a next step, start working with the Glossary. Go through the entries and select the concepts you are familiar with it and those that are less familiar. List the entries that made the most impression and try to understand what is behind the impression: curiosity to know more or they have a surprising (counter-intuitive) element. Connect some of the entries to what you have already observed and documented through your walks and visits of the areas around your university campus or other less known areas in the city.

Once the Glossary becomes familiar, dive into the case. Start your research. You are encouraged to gather various types of data: (hard) statistical factors, facts, figures, observational registration data when you take a walk and/or re-visit these places, You are encouraged to also register your emotions, senses. You can use the data gathering templates 1, 2, and 3 that can be found in the Appendix. Do take extensive field notes. You are encouraged to also do desk research to see, compare, understand the different representations of the areas. Archival research can be added to the mix as well. Connect to other students in other universities, cities and across borders. As a background to keep in mind it is important to remember that for the making of this project working in intercity teams has helped to better seeing the common characteristic of the so-called urban ‘peripheries’ and in the same time crystallizes the local approach to many common challenges.

Your role in this case is a partner. You are partnering not only with other students in your course (and/or in other universities) also with lecturers, researchers and an extended network of other local partners and friends on the IMAGE project. This is also a project which has and has spanned multiple years, so you contribute to a wider output and body of research. The impact goes far beyond the individuals participating, since you are connected and a part of your course, university, in partnership with other universities, a part of the city area around the campus, connected to larger environment, to the municipality, businesses, civic society, etc. All of this has also regional, national, and international linkages.
3.1. Documentary Entry Script Guidelines

The documentary entry is a presentation of your research or your mapping the imaginaries around an anchor point around the campus (or in other less known city area). You are encouraged to use images, videos, sounds, visualizations to recreate one can experience these urban areas, places, neighbourhoods, spots. Try to go beyond the well-known and attempt to portray the anchor point(s) with various points of view, data, audiences. Do not shy from showing the controversies, challenges, problems. Be aware that the so-called ‘peripheries’ hold both the problem and the solution to the problem. Do not forget to use the data gathering templates 1, 2, and 3 that can be found in the Appendix.

The script is one of the most important elements in a documentary. The script contains your own choice of mapping proposition, support for your argument, and demonstrates your conducted research. Writing a solid script requires a significant amount of time. If you prefer to be given a detailed outline what should be included in the documentary script, ask the lecturers and trainers in charge to provide you with one. You are encouraged to unleash your creativity.

The visual images are critical in a good documentary as they provide the visual support for your script. It's important to build a large image collection as you are doing your research, instead of waiting until you are putting the documentary together. You can find images online for your documentary, but you can also build your image collection by scanning or taking digital images of photographs in books. Take care to make sure that your images are at a high enough resolution to not appear pixelated on screen.

An effective soundtrack can make for a moving and effective presentation. What music or effects would enhance your documentary? Make sure that the music is not too loud or the effects too abrupt to distract from your narration, which is the most important part of your documentary.

3.2. Complementary Tool Guidelines

Imagine and describe a tool for making the so called peripheral areas of study more visible and attractive for students and young people. How the tool should be looking like is open- this might look like a game, an event, a walking route, a tour—. Whatever this tool is it should actively build on your research findings and documentary entry and have the potential to make real impact. In doing so, you should reflect on your own role as agents of change in the neighbourhoods you have researched and this reflection should be made clear in your description of the tool.

You will probably will have been seeing that styles and differences are not only between cities, but also between groups within cities. You will also have seen first-hand through your collaboration with other students that students themselves are not a homogenous group, rather have a diversity of sensibilities, lifestyles, interests and attitudes. Remember that student identities, as anyone’s identities, can vary not just person to person, but also in persons themselves. Also students, as anyone, can be chameleonic, changing in identity based on their surroundings or even the time of day or day of the week (or weather or mood!). Your complementary tool should embrace this.
4. Extra Guidelines for Teaching

The IMAGE case is intended for students, researchers and all kind of interested partners in the fields of urban studies, cultural studies, sociology, ethnography, European studies, sustainability studies, business and economics, communication and media, marketing, education. It can be used by campus management as a way to meaningfully and mindfully connect to the larger university campus environment, to take pride in and strengthen the connection with the university life through exploring the local surroundings and communities’ work to get a better understanding of important societal issues such as inclusivity, diversity, accessibility, creativity, heritage. The case can also be used as a training in creative research methods and design thinking that can enhance one’s educational portfolio.

4.1. The objectives of the case

The objectives of the case are essentially to:

1. Examine (so called) peripheral areas in cities from the multiplicity of points of view (polyphony) perspective.
2. Apply mapping imaginaries method to better understand the identities, images, and reputation of peripheral areas.
3. Create a research-based documentary entry (script, visual images, music/sound effects) containing a versatile portrait of the anchor points in the area.
4. Create an implementable output (complementary tool) of your documentary entry that inspires a real-world action make the so-called ‘peripheries’ more visible and appreciated.
5. Reflect on the role of your organisation as a meaningful partner in the area, city, and across cities.

The IMAGE case supports the development of **systemic** (related to knowledge and knowledge management), **instrumental** (related to know how) and **interpersonal** (values, attitudes, behaviour) competences and skills. Please find the comprehensive overview of the skills and competences in the Appendix. An overview of the skills based on the triple H approach (Head, Hearts, Hands) adapted by Malaret (2021) can be found in fig. 1.

![Competencies map of IMAGE Project](image)

*Fig. 1 IMAGE case competencies adapted by Malaret, 2021.*
The IMAGE case is an invitation to explore the urban areas around the university campus and/or other areas that are less known, popular and/or are often considered in the so-called ‘periphery’. Having an open mind, equipped with the mapping imaginaries approach and inspired by design thinking your students begin to research, understand and map the different layers of meaning, use, societal, cultural and economic issues surrounding the places of their choice (remember they have been asked to select places in these areas that reference already existing identities and values, and have a (re)generating potential to become inspiring references in themselves (we call them anchor points).

The following can be two ways of embedding this teaching case into your course and piece of research:

*As a case grounded in one city*: Since students are asked to do extensive research, gather images, footage, sounds, map, think of a documentary script and an activation, do dedicate considerable amount of time for them to do that (4-6 weeks).

*As a case in a virtual intercity collaboration*: The case has been originally developed and piloted in an intercity cooperation between universities in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Paris, Lisbon, and Vienna. Students are encouraged to work in intercity teams. Please use the Guidelines and the timeline in the ‘Teachers Training Material’ package that showcase the virtual and offline collaboration setup that also includes offline meetups in the partnering cities. To be able to do this, dedicate 8-10 weeks of your course.

Students should output:

Two separate written reports (as a Microsoft word file or similar):
- d) Documentary Entry Script (around 3,000-5,000 words)
- e) Complementary tool (around 1,000-2,000 words)

Plus:
- f) Documentary footage (audio plus images or video file)

You are encouraged to get familiar with the mapping imaginaries approach offered in the ‘Teachers Training Material’ package. The package provides you additional context, tips, suggestions on how to work with the case, specifically for the virtual intercity collaboration scenario. Furthermore, do spend time with the Glossary to get a sufficient background in the contexts, trends, developments associated with the case. Do encourage your students to explore freely the campus (or other areas), to unleash their creativity and yet to be factual, thorough, and go beyond the ‘obvious’. Reflect together with them what it is to be a partner in a larger societal process, what is the role of the university in an urban area, and what it is to be an ‘agent of change’.

If students are requesting more structured (step by step) plan on how to approach the case, do encourage them to use the data gathering templates as provided in section 4.2. of this compilation. If your students request an outline of the documentary script, you can use the following:
Documentary entry script Guidelines

Your script should include the following sections:

**Introduction:** The focus of your entry, your angle and argumentation for the choice of your anchor points.

**Conceptual background:** Elaboration of relevant notions related to the conceptual mapping imaginaries background you are working on (the Case literature glossary, the tertulia readings and the experts’ talks are in this sense very useful).

**Research design:** An explanation of the research design including a description of how data has been collected. It is essential that you include in this section explicit references from your data collection. Make for instance use of quotations that can illustrate different views; provide examples of variations during your observations; use explicit descriptions that you think will help to make your mapping more vivid.

**Mapping:** The mapping itself according to the guidelines in the Approach of the Case:

- **ORIGIN:** What are the origins of the place? Why was it made/built? What was there before?
  
  The context and the intention of when a specific place has been made, built, named is key. For instance, the importance of what was before according to city plans, archives, the living memory of the residents. What was changed and when?

- **STYLE:** What is the style (or styles)? This can include the specific architectural style of buildings, the landscape and the accessories present in the environment.
  
  What has been the envisaged style? How can the style be originally described? If we look at the different offices and media parks: are they meant to be impressive, practical, cooperating, creative? Looking at social housing, what has this term meant throughout time? What are the related images and how do those differ from the images of social housing projects of the 1920s and 1930s?

- **EVOLUTION:** What are the (possible) prospective evolutions? The chances to become?
  
  What is already observable and visible? What are the wishes? See for instance how the Ajax Stadium in Amsterdam has increasingly become the wish for a center of innovation and how this wish also links to the many stadiums in our cities, many in them placed in originally peripheral areas. See also in Carnide in Lisbon how the municipality is making efforts to map the area and its versatility by connecting different generations and exploring places of convergence.

- **AUDIENCES:** What are the current audiences that have been gathering (online and offline)?
  
  While studying the different enclaves one can observe and study what are the current audiences connected to the activities, visions and ideas of the enclave. In this question there are different dimensions. Most visible would be a description of the ones who are attending online and online. Seeing from a tribal marketing...
research, it is also interesting to describe it including the used artifacts. At the same time, it will be necessary to describe what is the current attendance in the media. How is the place represented, pointed on google searches, Instagram and other current social media?

✔ **VALUES:** What are the visible values? What are the associated visions of life?

How is the place positioned itself according to what one can see? What are the different already present artefacts one can already name as descriptive? Is it mean to be impressive, cosy, open, emblematic, illustrative of an idea? How do the different audiences get in there? But the thing is that many of those details and nuances would probably scape to the eyes of someone who is not familiar with city codes or with a specific tribe.

✔ **LINKS:** What are the associated linked gathering places (in this city and abroad)?

Here we come to the previous point one can see how useful it is to have a network of intercity partners who can have a more accurate view from within, even if it is merely because of the basic facts of being (more) skilled in the vernacular languages and contextual meaning given realities.

Thanks to this network, then, we should be able to come to a more glocalized view, linking the local with the global. As illustrative examples one can think about the linking relevance of graffities and streets arts; of the role of old towns included in many of the peripheral areas we are working on; about the businesses and media enclaves around the nodes of the stations with enough parking that have proliferated in our cities and are (often) increasingly looking forward to connecting with the local residents; the emerging open spaces of contemporary art with limited financial means (especially in the current times) but with the clear mission of establishing international links of cooperation.

i. **Conclusions:** Draws inferences from the findings of the mapping, relates them to the conceptual framework and own focus, points out implications and lays the groundwork for a communication plan.

j. **Footage:** Assemble the footage itself. This may be video, audio recordings, music, photo images or some combination. This should be collected or compiled by you and include all of the peripheral areas explored, using your script to establish connections between these places.

You can opt to focus your Documentary Entry on one lens or angel or on bringing several together in a compelling way. Whatever you choose, make sure it is accurate, appealing and relevant (what's in it for me?) in order to have impact.

### 4.2. Complementary Tool Guidelines

Mapping imaginaries builds upon the input from local partners, communities, governmental and non-governmental organizations, activists, artists, architects, the

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7 See Glossary for a more detailed elaboration of the concept
‘believers’ in the neighbourhood who have started/continue the areas’ emancipation movement. The project teams has learned to seek, cherish and also protect the time of the local partners. It is highly recommendable to organize experts talks sessions and other meeting sessions with the partners as a part of the IMAGE programme in order to avoid too many individual requests for interviews with partners. In this sense, it is also important to recall that the end product will benefit for shared and compositional knowledge. Seek to encourage your students to co-design together with the local partners, communities, experts.

The **complementary tool** is meant to amplify the Documentary Entry and inspire real action to make the so called ‘peripheries’ (it can be the area in which your campus is located or other urban area) more visible and appreciated. An activation can take the shape of initiating (various) place making activities about your anchor points, co-designing policies with local partners/communities, establishing a communication strategy (and plan) to communicate the richness (complexities) of the anchor points to various audiences, etc.

You can use the participatory design steps outlined in Figure 1 to expose your students to Design Thinking. Your students have already completed step one through your research using mapping imaginaries method carried out with care and respect of local partners and communities. Now they can follow steps two to five that focus on prototyping around needs of local communities. Do encourage your students to design and test the responses to their needs closely working and creating with the members of the communities.

![Diagram](image)

**Fig. 2 Co-design participatory projects steps**

After testing their prototype, they should modify and complete their activation plan. Please remember that the design process is never finished, so keep testing and iterating.
If your students’ complementary tool includes place making activities, you can use the design process in Fig. 3 developed by Malaret (2021). It is an overview of the process of co-design in a multi-stakeholder, multi-sensorial setting that positions ‘walking’ and ‘mapping’ the city as the activities that help you gather information (data) and build awareness that gets translated in the development of a plan/prototype of actions for your anchor point(s). The model further connects the steps of the co-design process with the competencies/skills acquired.

![Fig. 3 Co-design for place making and related competencies](image)

4.3. **IMAGE Case Competencies: A more detailed description**

**IMAGE Case Competencies**

A competency is a thinking and acting process that is a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to carry out various activities with a certain level of effectiveness. (Bisquerra 2004)

1- Systemic, related to knowledge and knowledge management

1.1 Search, identify and collect voices and substantial forms by exploring urban spaces in order to obtain significant data to highlight their richness and singular polyphony.

1.2. Understand and manage an interdisciplinary approach to the research process in order to be capable to comprehend the complexity of the context and interactions of an urban space.
1.3. Understand how and be able to generate appropriate new ideas and proposals based on the research data that can generate cultural, social and economic value to the people and places targeted.

2- Instrumental, which correspond to know-how.

2.1. Apply **Mapping Imaginaries Method** Guidelines and its processes by walking and mapping the data related to a public space/neighborhood in order to capture the complexity of a context to be capable to generate new polycentric perceptions / perspectives of the contemporary cities.

2.2. Use the background knowledge and the new tools and methods expressed in **Mapping Imaginaries Guidelines** to analytically and critically understand, organize and synthetize all both documents and data collected.

2.3. Create and design a reflective journal/ Diary of the research process showing a critical and analytical thinking about the process and all the interconnections between concepts, stakeholders, forms and spaces, with all the media and tools used in it (images, sounds, videos, writings…)

2.4. Create a video documentary entry of the city space analyzed offering a new narrative that communicates not only the research process and the polyphony of the space, but also new ideas from which to build new future viable actions.

2.5. Ideate and write an Activation Plan in order to make a real impact in all the stakeholder’s engagement, by showing not only the polyphony of the place but also new ideas to bring cultural, social and economic value to its community.

3- Interpersonal, associated with values, attitudes, and behavior in the social sphere.

3.1. Learn and improve by collaborative processes, sharing ideas, knowledge that creates collective intelligence in order to be able to face complex contexts.

3.2. Getting a leadership where the student lead and motivate the research team and all stakeholders; A leadership that fosters co-creation, continuous learning and commitment.

3.3. Understand how to use diversity as a strength factor in the work process, comparing and contrasting data and ideas between peers and stakeholders.

3.4. Be able to work with peers between the different campuses involved in the IMAGE Project in order to share and compare ideas and data, being aware and empathetic from a local, global and environmental perspective to improve.

3.5. Develop a stronger awareness of the personal impact through authentic and clear communication between peers and stakeholders in order to go deeper in the generation of knowledge and new ideas that can make a real viable impact.
4.4 Mapping Imaginaries Templates

4.4.1 Source of data collection: desk research and field work

ORIGIN: What are the origins of the place? Why was it made/built? What was there before?

STYLE*: What is the style (or styles)?

EVOLUTION: What are the (possible) prospective evolutions? The chances to become?

AUDIENCES*: What are the current audiences that have been gathering (online and offline)?

VALUES: What are the visible values? What are the associated visions of life?

LINKS*: What are the associated linked gathering places (in this city and abroad)? What are these images telling us about the inner and cross-city connectivity?

*Glossary (do check the explanations provided in the case material):

Styles: how is creativity being ‘staged’ (what is the design, the furniture: is it about industrial, classic, minimalist, modern, vintage, etc). Is there attention to detail, aesthetics of imperfection, or a sense of more corporate.
4.4.2. Observational Template

Source of data collection: field work and desk research

Observed unit: Location:

Date: Time: Weather:

Summary of your pre-understanding* (before your visit):

Your observation in terms of hard factors*:

Your observation in terms of soft factors*:

Your observations in terms of activities*:

Additional observations:

Additional impressions:

*Glossary:

Pre-understanding: your existing knowledge, expectations, perceptions, images before you visit the observed unit.

Hard factors: geography (river, mountains, sea, valley, flat, steep etc.); vegetation (type, size, age); infrastructure (modes of transportation (the accessibility of it), ‘hardware’ (wires, electricity poles, pipes, pavement); connectivity (both physical and digital)); architecture (when was it built, materials used, style); population, income, socio-economic factors, cultural and ethnic background; income, education.
**Soft factors:** how does the observed unit feel? Is it attractive, clean? What is it atmosphere, vibes? What sensory input do you get (smells, sounds, etc.)? What is your overall experience?

**Activities:** what can you do in the area (leisure, entertainment, hospitality, shopping, business, recreation, arts, education etc.)? What is the business like environment? Is there re-cycling (up-cycling), re-purposing, re-use of materials, furniture, textiles and even ideas?

**Audiences:** who are the visitors offline? Can you distinguish different (target) groups? Who are the visitors online, on their website, social pages and other partner/affiliate pages?

**Links:** do you see similarities / differences between the places from your cities (in terms of images, perceptions, expectations, origin, style, evolution, audiences they attract, and values)?
4.4.3. City Walks Template

Source of data: field work and desk research

Type of city walk*:

Focus* of the city walk:

Legitimacy* of the city walk:

Briefly narrate your walk:

Most significant observations:

List the tools* that helped you create your walk:

Have you noticed any inconsistencies while using those tools (software updates, places are missing, images are old, lack of images etc.)? Please list those.

How has the group dynamic influenced your engagement with the anchor point(s)?

Additional remarks:

*Glossary:
City walk: can include walking, cycling, both, live or recorded tour guide, virtual walk.

Focus: what is the objective behind the walk (change agency, public diplomacy, sensory activation)?

Legitimacy: who is legitimate or has the right to activate this type of neighborhood knowledge? Student tours are not in competition with grass-rooted tours by community members.

Tools: any type of device (desktop, (smart) phone, recorder) or app (Google Earth, Maps, Images, Voice Recorder, YouTube, SoundCloud, Photoshop, Word etc.) that helps you create and share your walks.
5. An IMAGE Glossary on Researching the City: Mapping Imaginaries. Major concepts that facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the case content

The goal of this Glossary is to provide a sketch of key concepts and ideas that have been the basis of the current project IMAGE, including the sources from which they are drawn. The different concepts are arranged in alphabetical order. All these concepts are not independent and isolated from each other, rather are linked and interrelated.

**Agile Project Management**
A main objective of project management is that the project team meets its goals. Depending on the project type, different tools, techniques and approaches can be used to meet the needs of a project.
Some projects are needed to quickly resolve problems, with an understanding that improvements will be made over a short period of time. An agile project management approach is meant to assure a fast-operative start, not losing much time in planning. Nevertheless, the team needs orientation at the beginning in order to develop a common understanding of the project and to get to know each other to develop trust and a team spirit.

**Capturing Imaginaries**
Developed as a way to contribute to operationalize insights into cities’ images and reputations, Capturing Imaginaries aims to give insight into more realistic and first-hand ways of apprehending current images, beyond the city marketing communication trends emphasizing what is understood as the ‘positive’. Indeed, instead of harping on the discourse of managing and increasing the positive image of our cities we propose a methodology that can also capture the controversial and the problematic by taking into account the multi-referential and contrasting nature of images. We think this approach will help to better disclose the interesting and substantiated that is already there but remains somehow invisible.
According to the capturing imaginaries logic, images can be seen as the pictures in our heads, the way we conceive and reflect on places, expressed in meaning-giving communication exchanges and according not only to places’ physical layout but also to who is there, when and why. In this sense, Images form constellations of what we can call Imaginaries. They express themselves in all kind of narratives as shared ideas in our minds and also in our physical environments and in our cultural production from business cases to urban planning to school books, literature, arts and the most ephemeral daily life communication.

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8 Beller and Leerssen.
10 Beller and Leerssen.
City
In contrast to the idea of country and nation, the city is compared to a dynamic body of ‘assemblages or collections of parts, capable of crossing the thresholds between substances to form linkages, machines, provisional and often temporary sub- or micro-groupings’, a place in which newcomers can start a new life, in which various vanguards can arise, stimulated by diversity, miscegenation and the melting-pot effect. Such cities are associated with liveliness and vitality that at its best offers the ideal environment for a contemporary society to reinvent itself, as well as find ways to reconcile the antagonistic character of concepts such as cosmopolitanism and nationalism.

Cities’ Creative Class
Creativity has been one of most celebrated words when positioning ‘referential cities’ of the western world during the last decades. Especially the work of Richard Florida and his book on the Creative Class has had an impressive influence since its release in 2002. According to Florida, cities in the postmodern era would not become prosperous anymore only because of imposing sport halls or official happenings, but because of providing a fabric for spontaneous creation and innovation, carried by actors such as designers, techies and rock bands.

Ambiance was seen as crucial: It included a tolerant gay scene, cafes with original and authentic foods and beverages, a good infrastructure for public transport, bicycle lanes, work spaces and incubators, preferably in old factories that had been abandoned after the industrial crisis in the 1970s and onwards.

Many cities have been sensitive to Florida’s argumentations and designed a wide array of specific applications to develop city spaces that could meet the wants and needs of creative residents and visitors. Amsterdam too has some specific examples of his influence as a result of his visit to the city in 2003. Florida’s ideas were surely not new, but the fact is that he managed to capture feelings and wishes of many, including influential mayors and urban policy makers. All of them were seduced by the appeal of creativity as a new economic fuel for post-industrial/late capitalist cities that would bring interesting jobs and ditto lives to all.

The story, however, started to be questioned some years after by a number of authors. They observed that the high-tech sector was indeed achieving great profits. Meanwhile, most writers, painters and musicians had not been able to make enough money to earn a living. Also the workforce in the service economy were clearly not benefiting from the prosperity of creative cities. In 2017, Richard Florida published his book New Urban Crisis, questioning his previous work and coming to a similar conclusion.

City Marketing
As a denomination City Marketing was with all probability coined at first by the influential

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16 Sabine Lebesque and others, Along Amsterdam’s Waterfront. Exploring the Architecture of Amsterdam’s Southern Ij Bank (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2006).
17 Amsterdam Economic Board, Kennis & Innovatieagenda (Amsterdam, 2011).
marketing professor and author Philip Kotler. Kotler intuited that cities, or at least certain parts of cities, could be promoted for investment by marketing them as a product. Hence, a marketing mix could be seen as a tool to help cities in developing spaces for renewed economies in the postindustrial years after the 1980s. Business parks and business districts emerging as products to attract investors and companies were good examples of the kind of city marketing as elaborated by Kotler.

However, and although the term city marketing had not been used before, the promotion of places to attract settlement and investment was not new. Looking into history authors such as Ashworth and Kavaratzis pointed at the promotional activities in the United States of America to attract new population as place marketing practices *avant la lettre*. Similar practices had been also already applied in the tourism industry while providing packages to customers for the consumption of places during a limited period of time.

**Creativity: Polyphonic and Polycentric**

A review of literature on creativity has enabled us to reconsider interesting proposals on urban creativity and innovation by different authors. Scott, for instance, elaborated on the concept of ‘polyphony’ as being the dynamic that enables different places to come to similar ideas without per se being a copy of each other: this means that Bollywood in India is not a copy of Hollywood in the United States but rather a piece of evidence that societies express in comparable ways and create similar cultural products. Also of importance, as an eye-opener, was the claim of creative agent Frank Bures, contesting Richard Florida’s works and stating that instead of always pursuing to be in a place that is already successful it would be better to work on developing one’s own place and life as prosperously as possible. His own life biography as a member of the creative class taught him about the importance of being alert against excessive place mythification.

The matter, however, is not easy to solve. Positive place reputations have proven to be magnets. The reason for moving or staying in a place are, in short, related to the prospects that the place offers to people, which is to say, the way in which a certain narrative of a place meets the expectations of one’s own projected narrative; one’s own life story. But on the other hand there is also evidence that people can make a life and feel attached to their places despite the reputation those places have. In the long run, there is also enough evidence that places reputations can be reframed and that putting the interest of places on the map by telling substantiated and appealing stories can help to make them more prosperous.

**Criticism on City Marketing**

In a broader sense, city marketing is epistemologically a problematic concept. The problem lies fundamentally in three considerations. Firstly, there is indeed much to object to the idea that a city can be seen as a product and as a market, and residents and visitors as merely consumers. The market narrative can even be at odds with the goal of cities willing to...
stimulate common place engagement and sense of belonging. In fact then, and even if one can metaphorically speak about a place as a product that can be positioned in specific cases to emphasize its attractiveness, there is probably no need to link this positioning of cities with marketing per se but more with information, communication and probably even with education.

Secondly and in terms of marketing, the big question is the role of marketing as a governmental tool. The challenge here is the legitimacy of the owner. Who is in charge and how can a city make sure that the marketing of specific areas to specific audiences will not damage the interests of other audiences in the city? How do we, in fact, make sure that places are not sold out or restricted to specific groups? Braun and alt. identified the problem from the very beginning and elaborated on a model of city marketing ‘as an integrative approach’ to manage the wishes and needs of different audiences. City marketing then would become a tool to manage differences and to come to integrative planning in which a maximum of common needs and wants can be met. The idea is inspiring but at the same time one can question if harmonizing city audiences is/ or should be a task for marketing (instead of a task for politics). It is not surprising then that most authors have abandoned the term and substituted it by terms such as place branding or place development.

A third consideration relates to an equally relevant issue that has been especially elaborated by Simon Anholt. According to Anholt branding and marketing are weak tools that cannot seriously be seen as a mean to engage places to people in a respectful and sincere way. His proposal is to return to genuine study of places images identities and reputation and to work on a more active and authentic public diplomacy.

Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA)

We work on the idea of cities as a dynamic bodies and use the metaphor of cities’ DNA to grasp their nature. DNA contains the genetic information that allows all modern living beings to function, grow and reproduce. It is stated that human beings for example have a same composition of DNA (composed of approximately 30,000 genes) but the combination and sequences of our genes makes anyone different to each other. In this sense, it is important to remember that DNA is always passed on in a modified form. This is the process of evolution: we are like our ancestors, but we are not exactly the same. The identity of cities would follow a similar process. Prosperous cities are the ones capable to adjust and adapt keeping at the same time important values and ditto identities.

Emancipation of the Peripheries

In general, European urban peripheries have not had a positive reputation over the last decades. In contraposition with the liveliness of urban city centres, peripheral areas have been considered, at their best, as boring places with less facilities and a minimum of infrastructure. However, and in the meantime, other voices have been arising. It is not for nothing that in his inaugural lecture entitled ‘The emancipation of the peripheries’ the Dutch Chief Government

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25 Kavaratzis and Ashworth.


27 Grosz.
Architect Floris Alkemade advocated for the recognition of the so-called peripheral areas as the most vivid layers of our contemporary cities. According to all those voices, it is especially in the peripheries where less visible dynamics are taking place and where more sustainable urbanism should get a chance to be developed.

It was with a very similar conviction of the latest that we started our research project on Amsterdam Zuidoost [Amsterdam Southeast] Identity, Image and Reputation in September 2014. From previous research we had concluded that Zuidoost had been burdened along a couple of decades not only by a bad reputation but also by its isolation as a truly unknown ‘hinterland’. Being geographically an exclave of the city, Amsterdam Zuidoost was literally outside the city map.

Exploring the City as a Tool
Exploring the city re-enacts and actualizes a tradition of creative researchers and walkers in the city from Simmels, to Chaplin and Benjamin. This kind of techniques are not extensively applied in education and research outside disciplines such as urban planning or social geography. Activities such as semi-structured walks in cities enable to rediscover the nature of touristic must-see spots, while other walks in the peripheries show that the same mechanisms can be applied to give more attention to incipient or more hidden gems in there. In the end these mechanisms encourage to look differently at one’s own environment.

Imaginaries
Regarding the concept of the Imaginary, it is useful to elaborate further on its possible interpretation. In branches of sociological and cultural comparative studies, the concept of a community vision of life and feelings of connectedness are expressed through the term ‘imaginary’. Imaginary also refers to ‘the creative and symbolic dimension of the social world, the dimension through which human beings create their ways of living together and their ways of representing their collective lives’. Thompson’s studies on the theory of ideology also approach similar conceptualizations of the imaginary, emphasizing the relationship between the imaginary, ideology and language. Language is considered critical, ‘for in using language we are constantly engaged in a creative, imaginary activity. We are constantly involved in extending the meaning of words, in producing new meanings, through metaphor, word-play and interpretation and we are thereby, knowingly or not, altering, undermining or reinforcing our relations with others and with the world’.

In many cases, definitions of the imaginary – such as those I have just mentioned – have been considered as vague and untargeted and, in fact, one might agree that they are in a way. The arguments and logic around the conceptualization of the imaginary by Maffesoli, for example, do not lead to a single definition of the term. However, this ‘vagueness’ has an

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28 Floris Alkemade, ‘De Emancipatie van de Periferie’ (Den Dolder: Atelier Rijksbouwmeester, 2016).
30 IVCF Exploring the City
Mapping Imaginaries
Mapping Cities Imaginaries is a proposal to come to grips with places images, identities and reputations by visualizing them. It aims at putting on the map not only factual place factors, such as dimensions and materials places are made of, but also the ideas related to them. It is its essence to emulate, in an accelerated manner, the way one gets acquainted with places and learns to tune in with (and appreciate) places’ own stories and idiosyncrasies. In order to achieve such a goal, the research toolkits are especially indicating steps that imitate an experience akin to growing up in a place. This process entails an acknowledgement that goes beyond the factual reality. While growing up, one sees, listens, touches, smells, acquires knowledge about, takes part in and forms opinions of places, and becomes a place connoisseur. Places acquire a meaning, in agreement to meaning-giving processes. One learns who is who, when and where and shares with others specific places’ mental maps. If one can choose, one will choose for a place to live according to one’s own convictions and sympathies. One finds soulmates and designs a life and routes according to specific lifestyles. Nevertheless, this choice alone might be limiting to appreciate other places. Studies on trends show how important it is to count on ‘translators’, that is to say, connectors and meaning mediators who can help to activate comparisons, making the unknown understandable and appreciable. It is in this way that the ‘ugly’ can become ‘lovely’, and certain places and habits ‘cool’. Those studies show also that these processes never come all of a sudden. As sociologist and social theorist Adrian Favell states, it requires serious involvements, knowledge, entrepreneurialism and creative skills to make products and places culturally relevant.

Place
Relatively recent theories, such as the Actor Network Theory of Latour, Law and Callon, understand places as performative spaces in which concepts such as ‘place’, ‘placelessness’ and ‘movement’ can offer some tools for analysis. These theories regard ‘places’ as a set of relations that not only (or not necessarily) gather what is happening in a specific site at a specific time, but rather ‘fold and pleat’ space and time ‘into complex configurations’. According to Murdoch and based on Latour, actor network theories have shown ‘how networks “draw things together” […] by gathering diverse places and times within common frames of references and calculations. This “gathering” process results in very distant points finding themselves connected to one another while others, that were once neighbors, come to be disconnected’.

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36 Arbonés Aran.
Project
A project is a temporary endeavor to create value with a new result (unique product or service). All projects have a beginning and an end. They have a team being brought together based on the skills needed for specific tasks. Each project has a schedule and a set of expectations the team needs to meet. Each project is unique and differs from daily routine operations.

Revival of the City
Since the 1980s, the revalorization of post-industrial cities as the best places to live and visit has become a general phenomenon in the Western world. And, if the course does not change, all pointers indicate to this process continuing. We are therefore in the privileged position of being able to pay testimony to these processes of revalorization, and even of being able to influence them through gaining an understanding of their mechanisms. Cities such as Amsterdam’s ambition during the last two decades to keep growing and become more densely populated is a reflection of a broader, international vision on cities and their nature. Edward Glaeser is one of the urban scientists who re-popularized this vision, by describing successful and sustainable urban environments as places with a high density and a variety of activities and facilities. Perhaps one of most salient characteristics in this revival of cities has been the appraisal of urban spaces as versatile places par excellence. Cities actually become livable once they are able to host diversity, tap into a large array of different activities and provide for all kinds of people and stages of life. This also means that ‘densification’ has become a key term in spatial planning policy. Put briefly, one could argue that the ideal has become to achieve a city landscape characterized by what we could call a ‘versatile density’. During the process of becoming more compact, prosperous cities tend to improve their infrastructure, especially in terms of cultural offerings and public transportation. In some cases, they also find ways of physically erasing – or at least, mitigating – some of their more robust internal barriers, such as ring roads and railways. For example, by conceiving methods of covering or converting them. In this sense, peripheral areas are getting assimilated by, and integrated into, the city’s urban fabric.

Students as Partners
Inspired by literature and practices such as ‘students as partners’ and the ‘city as a text’ and ‘reading the city’, emphasizing the role of research as a powerful tool to learn and to gain an

40 I wrote this little piece for our students before the spread of Corona as a pandemic. It will be very interesting to discuss how this sentence feels now.
43 Research group Cities & Visitors. Moving Amsterdam Zuidoost.
understanding of reality as a complex matter enable us to better meet the European goals and values we aspire to. Embracing diversity, working towards excellence, understanding multilingualism (and the advantages of understanding multiple languages when it comes to understand and ‘read’ places), sharing and exchanging findings and results and coming to dialog, grounded agency and attractive and appealing output.

Sentient Data and Implications

We consider our data in mapping imaginaries as agents of conscious self-reflection and as a guide to extra dimensions and links to explore when it comes to a better understanding of specific imaginaries that are unknown to the researcher.

What has been especially interesting then is that the possibilities offered by the internet to recall associative thinking especially suit a multidisciplinary approach and the contrasting tools of imagology. This is of crucial importance because images carry multidisciplinary baggage: when studying a discursive repertoire one cannot simply decide that history or economics or literature or physics are not relevant because they are not one’s specialty. Of course, one cannot be specialized in everything, but the attitude of a researcher in images seems above all to aspire to an encyclopedic and cartographic view, which requires taking an interest in the various components associated with a place and judgements about it.

Symbolic Actions

We still like Simon Anholt’s views on authentic place branding. According to him, if we have such an uncomfortable feeling when it comes to place branding, it is because it is extremely difficult to retain the balance between attractive but substantive communication on the one hand, and propaganda on the other. That is why certain qualities and one’s reputation should not be merely stated, but communicated and demonstrated by means of symbolic actions with real substance.46 ‘Substance’ is here understood as ‘real innovations, structures, legislations, reforms, investments, institutions and policies which will bring about the desired progress’. It mainly becomes visible through ‘symbolic actions’, that is to say: ‘a particular species of substance that happens to have an intrinsic communicative power’ because it is especially ‘suggestive, remarkable, memorable, picturesque, newsworthy, topical, poetic, touching, surprising or dramatic’.47

Toolkits: Mapping Imaginaries

Places are in fact mainly described as ‘images’. This enables us to gain a better understanding of the nature of places reputations and provides a conceptual framework to design capturing and depiction of subjective city maps, in which places are linked to interpretations and in which the characters are described by place-bound and place-specific attributes.

In order to reconstruct an image of a place, these are some of the main questions that we are posing and seeking to answer:

- What is? The origin of the tradition. The style

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- What are? The values. The gathering places. The visions of life. The communication means. The archetypes (beings to become)

To be completed: Work in process
Agents of Change
Cultural and symbolic capital
Encyclopedia-cartography
Flows of connectivity
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