City Branding Through Instagram:
The Case of Athens

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Introduction

Attracting approximately 5 million tourists per year, it is safe to say that Athens is one of the main reasons someone chooses Greece for their next trip, either that is a short or long stay vacation. Due to its long history, the side of Athens that is usually promoted is the one related to the city's ancient past. Visiting any travel blog and reading any travel guide dedicated to Athens or Greece in general, one will definitely find tips, tours, "must see" and "must go to" ancient monuments in the city: the Acropolis, the modern Acropolis Museum, Ancient Agora, Plaka, the Open Air Market or commonly known as Monastiraki and so forth. However, when visitors come to Athens, what they actually see a very diverse city. The ancient ruins and archeological monuments are blended with modern day apartment and company owned buildings, busy streets and neighborhoods of different architectural styles. This cultural and architectural blend visitors witness, is a result of the city's rich history, that formed both the ancient but also the modern character of Athens.

Nonetheless, by a simple social media search, pictures of the ancient parts of Athens can be found with such ease, whereas more modern and alternative parts, or at least not deeply connected to the city's ancient history, are more rare. Since nowadays, social media play an important role in people's everyday lives, organizing a trip through such platforms, that includes must see places, alternative tours and locations, is an easy task. Therefore, state officials responsible for a city's branding and promotion use social media to engage with past, current and future visitors. Another tourism related function of social media is the creation of public profiles dedicated to a city (region, country) owned by locals to show and promote the city through their eyes and everyday lives. Both types of profiles are used to promote the city, but the main question of this research is ***what are the differences and similarities between the branding of Athens done through the official Instagram profile of the Municipality of Athens and a locally owned profile, according to a recent visitor and a local?***

Attempting to answer such question, several other issues will be addressed; for instance whether there are differences and/or similarities found in the way the city is depicted, what is the narrative and which storyline is left out on both types of profiles, how is both the official and unofficial branding of the city experienced by a local and a recent visitor. Such comparison will be done

in order to investigate and at the end conclude which branding and promotion of Athens shows the different sides of city, so that potential visitors can have a more clear idea of what to expect when visiting.

Hypothesis

Through this research, what was expected to be found is that although Athens is visited by thousands of tourists every year, the promotion done from the state is not enough comparing to other European cities. People visit Athens to experience the ancient culture through tours to archeological places since the city is know worldwide for its historic past. However, Athens is unfortunately also known due to the economic crisis of the last ten years, which changed people's perception of the city. Prior to the crisis, Athens was promoted in a romanticized way with the main focus of state officials being the branding of the city's archeological sites, however, when Greece entered the years of financial and political instability, Athens went under the microscope with issues regarding the quality of life in the city being on the front page of newspapers and blogs. Branding the city during that time was a challenge since Athens went from being an open-air museum city to unsafe and dangerous to visit. The media worldwide presented the city in a way that formed a negative image in people's minds and tourist numbers declined the first two years of the crisis. Changing the image created by the negative publicity is an undergoing process and city officials still have a long way to go. Perhaps social media and a strong presence of the city's images can assist in that process due to the fact that millions of users can have direct access to material related to the city's development, improvement of quality of life and overall state.

Methodology

In order for this thesis to be well structured and comprehensive, different researches following a logical order were conducted in an attempt to give a better understanding of the complex matter of city branding. Starting with a broad academic research on place branding and a more detailed research on city branding and promotion, in order to identify what type of information is there about the subject in general and of the branding processes of the city of Athens in specific. Through thorough research, several academic texts have been found related to city branding. From identity and city branding, branding through culture and entertainment, the difference of branding a city, a region

or a country, the political economy of city branding, the differences and similarities between marketing and branding of a city, to how to conceptualize, develop and apply a city-branding plan. Further research has been conducted regarding the paradoxes of city branding and societal changes, how to understand cities through their branding and the role residents hold when it comes to the branding of their city. The use of such academic articles will be helpful in order to identify what city branding is, which aspects of city branding should one take under consideration in the specific case of Athens, what methods are being used and why; lastly, which are the different city branding techniques that are being applied in different cities.

In the case of Athens and its branding, there has been research on city competition and urban marketing in the tourism industry of the city, however, there was no academic literature found on how the city is being branded, what techniques are being used, what places of Athens are being promoted more and which ones less or not at all and why. Also, there was no literature found when it comes to the branding and image formulation of the city by locals and the differences and/or similarities there are with the branding and image formulation done by city officials. The academic literature used to answer these questions, is related to what city branding is in general so that there is a clear understanding of the methods, limitations and difficulties of the branding process. Due to time restrictions, the academic literature used related to other cities and their branding process, will mostly be of cities that could easily be related to Athens: for example, cities that are located in Europe, cities that hosted Olympic Games, cities that have archeological sites at their center and their modern architecture is not as popular or not the reason why people visit the specific city.

Moving on to the second part of this research, which was focused on how could Instagram be used in the process of branding a city. This part was rather challenging, since academic research on Instagram and city branding is limited due to the fact that it is a rather new phenomenon in the tourism industry. It was concluded that Instagram would be the most appropriate mean to use for this research, the most prominent reason being that as of June 2020 one billion people have joined the platform and the stimuli it promotes is meanly visual since pictures and videos are mostly uploaded and shared, attributing much less focus to the written information. The profile owners can only use pictures to get their message across and, in this case, city officials and

citizens can create and promote a city's image only with the use of pictures and videos. Additionally the popularity of the platform has grown tremendously the last ten years and it has created new profession opportunities like travel influencers. Travel influencers are people whose hobby became their career and by travelling around the world they promote places, hotels, restaurants and tourism experiences in general to their followers. In many cases, tourism officials who want to intensify the promotion of a location, invite travel influencers to visit and give them suggestions on places to stay, museums and monuments to go to, while covering most of their expenses.

After the congregation of related information, an application of theoretical framework was done in the case of Athens in order to investigate which methods of branding are used from behave of city officials. Here, the categorization of methods was done and actual examples were given along with their analysis, based on anterior gathered information. Additionally, quantitative research was conducted on Instagram itself. Since the focus of this research is how is Athens branded through the Instagram profiles of the Municipality of Athens and a locally owned profile, and whether or not there differences and similarities in that process, this quantitative research was conducted in order to find the most suitable to the goal of this paper, profiles. The selected profiles used had to cover a list of preset criteria. For example, the profile that would represent the branding done by the city's stakeholders had to be the official profile of the Municipality of Athens. The profile representing the branding and promotion of the city done by locals, had to be a profile with large following with which there would be daily engagement, with original, high quality and preferably unedited or slightly filtered content. There are multiple profiles dedicated to Athens and its scenery, however; two profiles matched the set of criteria mentioned above: @thisisathens is the only official profile of the Municipality of Athens and @athensvibe is a locally owned profile, with the largest following, daily engagement, with original and slightly edited content created by a professional photographer.

During the analysis of 3.732 images promoted through both accounts, an analysis of the descriptions and hashtags used was also conducted, due to the fact that by the use of a hashtag an image can get more views in the research section of Instagram, therefore, more people will visit a specific profile. The descriptions were analyzed in order to see how state officials and locals describe Athens and which message they want to communicate. In this part of

the research, application of academic framework regarding Instagram and its use in city branding was done, examples of means of promotion that the users can afford were given accordingly along with an analysis of the content uploaded from both profiles.

Semi Structured Interviews

Moving on, the interview part of this research will be conducted after the social media analysis. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that the interviewees will be asked a series of predetermined but open-ended questions. Choosing semi-structured interviews was due to the fact that the questions could be prepared before hand and this type of interview allows informants to express their views and opinion in their own terms. An additional reason behind this choice was that, in contrast to "closed end questions", "open end questions" allow the interviewees to elaborate more on the matter, creating further points of discussion during the interview.

Participants (Background, Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria)

They will be divided in two categories: interview with a local and interview with a past visitor. Deciding to include two types of interviewees was made in order to give locals the opportunity to state their opinion regarding the way Athens is branded and promoted by city officials and also understand the viewpoint of past visitors on the same matter. During the interviews, both participants were presented with an introduction, which includes the meaning of city branding and the two Instagram profiles, which are the main tools of this research. The planning of the interviews was done prior to the unique circumstances caused by Covid19 and that included a trip to Athens to interview locals and tourists on location. However, adjustments had to be made and the interviews were conducted through online meetings.

In order for someone to participate in the research specific inclusion and exclusion criteria that were established had to be met. The criteria past visitors should meet were that they ought to have visited Athens only once, so that they would not have a set of experiences to compare and with a packaged trip organized by a travel agency, so that they would not have done extensive personal research to organize the trip prior to their visit. Additionally, their trip to Athens had to be as recent as possible, preferably right before the global lockdown, so that the experience would still be quite fresh, without the

interference of stimuli gathered in other destinations. Lastly, they had to own an Instagram profile in order to search through the two accounts mentioned in the section above.

The first interviewee chosen that wished to remain anonymous, covered the criteria as she has been to Athens once, it was her last trip before the global lockdown, she owned an Instagram profile and she purchased a typical three day package most visitors opt for. Those packages usually last three to four days and the first day of arrival along with the day of departure are spent in Athens, while the rest of the days are in other locations around Greece, an hour away from Athens. That as a result makes the city an intermediate but not final destination. Perhaps if future visitors could come across the profiles used in this research, Athens could become the main destination of someone's visit. If people knew that Athens has more to offer than ancient monuments that can be visited in one day, people would prolong their stay and the city would receive a series of benefits.

The second interview conducted was with a local and here there was also a set of criteria that candidates had to meet. Starting with the fact that the local had to have lived in Athens for more than 18 years so that there would be time to experience the city as an adult, they would currently live or would have lived abroad for at least five years so that they have experienced life in another city along with its local and international branding. An additional criterion was that, although they would be living abroad they would frequently visit Athens so that they could be informed about the city's development and current state. Lastly, they had to own an Instagram profile. After research, the second interviewee selected was the only one that met the before mentioned criteria. He was born and raised in Athens, lived there until the age of 19, has been living abroad for the last six years, visits Athens three to four times per year and has an Instagram profile. His point of view regarding the branding of the city is highly important, as seen in the forthcoming research . Locals, as seen in the research, hold a key role in the formulation of the city, since cities invest in the construction of places that will firstly improve citizen's quality of life and secondly will be visited by tourists. Additionally, in the case of Athens the tourism industry is one of the city's economy pillars and locals benefit from the thousands of tourists that visit every year. Therefore, their level of satisfaction of the branding done is important and has to be taken under consideration.

In this research, future construction plans that are currently taking place in Athens or that the state has announced that will take place in the next five years will also be mentioned briefly. Such constructions, due to their nature, will definitely hold an important role at the tourism industry of Athens and giving future visitors another reason to visit the city. Ending with the conclusion, where the main research question will be hopefully answered in a successful way and there will be suggestions for future academic research.

Chapter 1 "Place Branding to City Branding"

1.1 Introducing place branding

One of the effects of globalization according to Kavaratzis (2005) might be the rising competition between cities, which can be seen through various activities in the field. Contemporary cities have to continuously be up to date with the trends in the industry, causing as a result the development of strategies by city officials in tourism, in order to support, sell and advertise the city within the global market. In his research "Branding the City through Culture and Entertainment" Kavaratzis argues that countries, regions and cities around the world "are faced with the effects that economic and cultural globalization and other major trends pose to the environment that these places operate in, and are challenged by changes in their economic, cultural and social mosaic". Competition within countries from resources, business relocation, foreign investment, to visitors and even residents is evident in today's world (Kotler et al, 1999). As people, and therefore companies of different industries, are more flexible in moving from place to place, places are in need of finding ways to attract more visitors, place-users and new activity and also keep the existing ones satisfied.

In order to respond to the increasing competition and attract visitors, place administrators have been adopting methods and techniques used in marketing (Kavaratzis Mihalis, 2010). Places have been employing practices developed by marketing, transferring knowledge to their own peculiar environment and translating concepts according to their needs and characteristics (Rainisto 2003; Barke 1999). Practitioners worldwide have as a task to improve the image of countries, regions and cities for different types of audience, for example citizens, governments, investors, tourists and media.

Although in the past such tasks were related to developed countries only, today many developing countries provide significant budgets to such practitioners to improve and/or create a positive and attractive image.

'Place brands' and 'place branding' have been defined by several disciplines like marketing theories, public relations, international relations, public administration, public diplomacy, communication and geography. However, Lucarelli and Berg (2011) argue, that there are different approaches regarding the nature of the activity: marketing, promotion or branding. In his research "Branding the City through Culture and Entertainment" Kavaratzis argues, "Cities nowadays are marketed like products, an action that has created place marketing". He continues by saying that "place marketing was established as a philosophy of place management and is complementary to planning. In the context of marketing a place, countries worldwide are focusing on *place branding* and in order to do that, they have been incorporating methods used in product and corporate branding". This "trend" was created by the increasing role of strategies that are image- based and the growing importance of different industries of the tourism field like culture, leisure and entertainment within the current economy.

The main goal of place branding is "that when a place is named, several associated concepts are invoked in individuals' minds" (Kavaratzis, 2004). These concept associations can be used in a way to create a better brand for places; thus, place branding has as a focus to create a brand management system with identity being its core (Freire, 2005) with unique and definitive characteristics of that specific place (Zhang & Zhao, 2009). Zenker and Braun (2010) define place branding with a comprehensive way and argue that "a brand is a network of associations in the consumer's mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioral expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design''. To put this simply, place brand has as a base the perceptions of target audiences regarding each place.

1.2 Country, Region and City Branding

Past literature regarding place branding has categorized branding in three sections: country, region and city branding. Various researchers perceive these three as sections that have no connection with one another and should be addressed by using different approaches.

According to Heinstein et al (2011) "Place marketing/image is derived from a location's geography, history, art, music, famous citizens, and other features". Coming back to what Karavatzis mentioned in his research, nowadays governments (countries), municipalities (cities) and councils (regions) all over the world are constantly competing with each other in order to brand their assets and attract more visitors than their competitors. Those assets in the past were products made in the country, region or city. However, nowadays due to the competition, the assets are the country, region and city themselves and that is the reason why governments, regional councils and municipalities make constant efforts to create competitive advantages over other countries, regions and cities accordingly (Kotler et al., 1997). In order to create such competitive advantages, "countries, cities, and regions promote their superiority in terms of tourism and location (to attract factories, companies, and talented people) and finding markets for their exports" (Gilmore, 2001).

Caldwell and Freire (2004) stress that, people have a different perception about countries, regions, and cities. According to their research, one of their main differences is that countries function in diverse ways and therefore people perceive them according to the " representational parts of their identity", in contrast to regions and cities that due to their size "are perceived from a more functional point of view". According to O'Shaughnessy (2000) another difference can be found in the process of country branding that involves more variables than the process of region branding of the same country due to the fact that countries have attributes their that regions do not have. Adding to that, Anholt (2002) referred to the fact that countries and regions also differ in the way they are perceived by other countries: countries can be perceived differently by other countries' citizens, in contrast to regions that are mainly perceived the same stable way, making it easier for marketers to brand them.

According to Hankinson (2001) out of the three (country, region, city), cities are more complex to rebrand since "branding a city is a much more involved process than branding countries or regions". The reason why cities are more complex to brand is that they cannot identify themselves with widely known human assets like for example famous artists, celebrities and politicians (Gilmore, 2001). As a result, cities lack the ability to become their own asset, meaning they cannot become their own object of tourist attraction. These are issues marketers have to face when they have to create a branding campaign

of a smaller city and/or cities that in people's minds are perceived as unattractive. Based on the research done by Savitch and Kantor (1995) megacities, like for example Paris and London whose population numbers are larger than various countries and regions, can compete in an effective way with countries for "foreign direct investment capital" (FDI). Attracting FDI to a country is a challenge marketers have to face since there are chances of conflict within the different levels of government in the marketed country (Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2002) due to the fact that different types of governments (provincial, state) can possibly have programs, campaigns and goals that diverge from the national government. However, Ram Heinstein in his research "Thin line between country, city, and region branding" (2011) argues that " it appeared that country branding, city branding and region branding processes are integral parts, which in some instances cannot be separated" and he proposed a 'country-city-region matrix positioning' model that focuses on the country's geography and the population- nationality, two dimensions that are relevant to the image tourists create and are also useful when marketers try to rebrand countries.

He had as an example the research done by Kotler and Gertner (2011) regarding the mandatory labeling of products marketers had to do, disclosing a product's country of origin (COO) and resulting the creation of the COO effect. Research showed that products made in countries that are considered as "first- rate manufacturers" and exporters, like for instance Japan, France and Italy, are mostly perceived by consumers as high quality products (Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2001), in contrast to products made in Russia (Johansson et al. 1994), Costa Rica and China (Khachaturian and Morganosky, 1990) that are perceived as negative or low quality. These researches were of high importance for the evolution of place image and marketing. He argues that even though marketers have the tendency to have a different approach when it comes to the process of national, regional and city branding and divide the process in three different types accordingly that have no connection with and no immediate effect on each other, his model proves that actually the branding processes of those three sections are connected and affect each other, adding that " In some instances, a country cannot be rebranded without referring to its main regions or main cities".

Coming back to the two dimensions of his model, he starts with what he considers the first dimension, which is a **country's geography**: meaning each country's physical characteristics (mountains, forests, lakes, sea, dessert) and

each country's climate (humidity, warmth, snow). He considers that the first dimension of high importance when it comes to assisting marketers to define the potential of each country that is branded and also to which type of audience it will appeal. He continues by saying that tourists in general are interested to travel to countries that have a vast variety of topography and geography (Woratschek and Horbel, 2005). Therefore it is important to define the topographic diversity because more diversity in the types of topography the country has to offer, more branding potential the country has. The second dimension he used in his model is the **range of ethnic groups consisting a country**: meaning the potential human characteristics offered to tourists. According to both Heinstein and Ng (et al., 2007) tourists tend to prefer travelling to countries that are culturally rich, therefore it is important to define the cultural diversity of the country that is being branded. The more cultural diversity a country can offer, the more branding potential that country has.

His 'country-city-region matrix' can be divided in four types of positioning strategies of branding.

1. **Heterogeneous– geography– multinationality culture strategy**: used when branding countries like Spain and Israel that have a heterogeneous topography made by diverse nationalities. According to his model, marketers in charge of those countries branding campaigns should focus on the countries variety of regions and cities that differ in topography but also in culture, giving on one hand tourists the chance of having a variety in their experiences and on the other hand, giving those countries an advantage over similar competitors. The branding of Spain through the years has been done in a way that, although it attracts millions of tourists, these tourists just visit specific regions (Valencia/Andalucía) or specific cities (Madrid/ Barcelona). He suggests a country oriented brand approach with marketers focusing on the creation of tours that include characteristics of the two dimensions mentioned above: culture that is consisted of history, art, music and food (dimension 1) and landscapes (dimension 2). He stresses that, the statement done by many tourists " I visited Barcelona/ Madrid – I visited Spain" can cause issues at the branding of the country since it is misleading and Spain should be branded as a whole so that tourists can experience the "real Spain" by staying longer and visiting places all over the country. The same goes for the misleading concept of "I visited

Jerusalem- I visited Israel". In contrast to Spain and Israel, the United States have been branded in a way that urges tourists to travel to both coasts and cities all over, like for example New York, Washington, Miami and Los Angeles and Las Vegas, are considered places one must visit in order to feel like they had a complete touristic experience.

This method is suited to countries where country branding is more beneficial that region and city branding combined (country brand > city brand þ region brand).

2. **Heterogeneous–geography–uniform–nationality culture strategy**. This strategy according to Heinstein is better for countries that are rich in topography but lack variations in their ethnic groups. Such countries can be Australia and Japan and marketers in charge of the branding of these countries should avoid marketing them as " full range one package country deal" since tourists can feel mislead once on site due to the fact that regions and cities are similar in terms of landscapes. Marketers using such methods to brand countries like the ones mentioned above should a) promote the cities with the most unique landscapes and b) reinforce the branding of those cities in a way that they will be considered as a main part of the country's brand. Such branding will be useful in attracting more tourists and keeping the tourists satisfied since their experience will be the one they paid for. In the case of Japan, Hiroshima has been branded in a way that made it one of the main branding parts of the country. In cases like these, marketers should focus on making sure that people perceive visiting selected cities equal to visiting the whole country (country brand = city brand or country brand 1/4 city brand).

3. **Homogeneous–geography–multinationality culture strategy**. This is a branding method more suitable for countries that have a homogeneous topography but are diverse when it comes to nationalities under their flag. The goal here is to brand these types of countries by focusing on specific regions that represent their cultural diversity. In this category, Heinstein gives as a negative example the branding of Nigeria. According to him, it was a mistake to focus the branding of Nigeria on the fact that the country is the second largest and second most powerful out of all the countries consisting the African continent and instead, marketers should have focused on the different cultures through out the country's regions that cannot be found anywhere else.

On the contrary, he gives as a successful branding example Jordan, where marketers focused on the branding of the Petra region instead of the whole country. This strategy creates a region brand stronger than country brand (country brand < region brand).

4. **Homogeneous–geography–uniform–nationality culture strategy**. This method is used when branding countries that are homogeneous when it comes to topography and are more uniformed when it comes to the nationalities located there. In this case he suggests that marketers should have as their main focus branding the capital cities of those countries than the entire country as a unit, since they cannot offer a variety of landscapes and culture and branding them as a "package deal" will not keep visitors satisfied. He gives as examples the branding done in Denmark, Portugal and Lithuania, with the last one, according to him, not being branded in a successful way. Lithuania was branded as "Europe's bravest nation" and instead marketers should have focused on branding the capital of the country, Vilnius, and the close by cities. That can only be achieved if marketers invest a lot of effort and recourses in branding the city of Vilnius as a city that can offer to visitors a unique touristic experience full of entertainment, culture and history. Branding the city as unique will result to attracting people that will consider Vilnius the same way as other European capitals like Prague and Budapest that belong to countries that fall under the same category (Czech Republic and Hungary). That will benefit the country as a unit and visitors will perceive their visit to one Lithuanian city as a complete experience of the real Lithuania. The focus of this method is a stronger city brand than a country brand (country brand < city brand).

Besides the differences and similarities within country, region and city branding, it all comes down to the fact that place marketing mostly depends on the perception people have of those places even if it is related to the entire country, a specific region or one city.

Starting from the beginning of the decade the European countries that underwent the process of rebranding and promoting a more positive image about themselves in order to attract more tourists are Moldova (Florek and Conejo, 2007), Ireland (Gould and Skinner, 2007; O'Leary and Deegan, 2003), Spain (Gilmore, 2001) and Britain (Gilmore, 2001; Hall, 2004) and along with them various European cities like Glasgow (Daskou et al., 2004), Manchester

(Ward, 2000), Amsterdam (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006) and Barcelona have been rebranding themselves by creating a more positive image in the minds of tourists, attracting more tourists through the years and improving their local economy since they are cities whose base of economy is the tourism industry.

1.3 City Identity, Image and Branding

After briefly analyzing what is place branding and which types of branding there are in general, from this point onwards the research will exclusively be related to city branding so that the analysis of the branding methods used in the case of Athens can be easily distinguished. As previously mentioned, branding is the method used by marketers to create an unique image in people's minds regarding a place and promote it accordingly. Heinstein (2001) based his research on the geographical and cultural characteristics of each location that from its identity. But, what is place identity? According to Lynch (1960) " identity is the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places". This distinction can be so powerful that can create an image on peoples' mind even if they haven't visited it. Every city has a unique identity that cannot be copied and it is created by the image people have about that city and the memories they create (both positive and negative) once on location.

There is a direct connection between the city's identity, the city's image and the city's branding. The city's image is a combination of its urban elements like monumental buildings and public spaces along with other unique characteristics. Based on Kavaratzis (2007) almost every city in the world invests in its branding. The image of a city is also considered important for both city identity as well as city branding (Riza, Doratli, Fasli, 2012). Another important role held by the image of a city is that it strongly influences both the levels of citizens' satisfaction and well-being but also the levels of satisfaction of tourists. In Heinstein's research, he mentions that unsuccessful branding is the type of branding that creates a false or quite different from reality place image. People visiting places whose branding portraits them in a way that once on location they realize it is not as expected, feel like they have been deceived. Of course past and current visitors that felt this way and their satisfaction levels after visiting are low, will share their experience with people of their social cycle and through the word of mouth, potential future visitors might change their mind and avoid visiting such places. With lower

chances of attracting future visitors, there are higher chances of negative effects on local economy in the long run, especially to places whose economy is mostly dependent on the tourism industry. As a result, citizen's satisfaction and well-being gets affected in a negative way. Such catastrophic domino can be avoided when city image is created in a realistic way.

Based on Kotler (et al, 2002) "Due to fast changes in technology and the shift from local to a globalized environment, cities are forced to compete with each other in order to be an attractive tourist destination, workplace, cultural rich place and much more". Andrews (2001) argues, "Restless competition between cities is strongly related to the concept of Quality of Life (QOL)". Quality of Life is simply defined as a feeling of fulfillment, satisfaction and well-being for both citizens and visitors. In his research he confirms that a unique and strong image can impact positively the levels of satisfaction of visitors. Rogerson (1999) in his research states that the quality of life is also an issue taken under consideration with place promotion and city marketing to make a place/city attractive to capital. Harvey (1989) in his research adds " the Quality of Life impacts the process of capturing or ensnaring capital lies in the arena of place promotion and marketing, being part of the attempts by cities to forge distinctive images and atmospheres, which "act as a lure to both capital and people `of the right sort'". Therefore, the city's identity and the city's branding are connected by the practice of place promotion methods used through the images which have an impact on the Quality of Life in that specific city. Branding, mainly developed from marketing strategies, is more and more used for city marketing and promotion, similar to products. Kotler even argues, " places are products whose identities and values must be designed and marketed as products"(Kotler, et al. 1999). According to Ashworth one of the objectives of city or place branding is to discover or create uniqueness, which makes the city differentiable from others (Ashworth, 2009). The main aim in construction of brands for cities is the articulation of the city in the globalized world. If a city claims to 'work' successfully it needs economical wealth and an attractive image. Thus, city branding has to be concerned with "how culture and history, economic growth and social development, infrastructure and architecture, landscape and environment, among other things, can be combined into a saleable identity that is acceptable to all people" (Zhang, 2009). According to Kavaratzis (2007) almost every city has as a goal to develop or redevelop an image through branding and from a branding point of view, city branding is based on three pillars: authenticity, image and uniqueness. He continues by

saying that many cities try to promote themselves using iconic constructions. City image is a combination of the city's urban elements like monumental buildings, public spaces and other special features. Jencks (2005) in his research suggests that iconic buildings contribute to the creation of an "identifiable city image" and they can influence in an indirect way both the feeling of well-being of locals but also the level of satisfaction of visitors, connecting the image of a city and the Quality of Life there.

There are several researchers categorizing the methods used in city promotion in sections. Starting with Hankinson (2006) and Kavaratzis (2005) who categorize the methods used in city promotion in three sections that include megaevents & restoration, promotion of heritage and construction of iconic buildings, since they are used to create a unique identity and image with a view to capture the attention of current and future visitors. Richards and Wilson also divide the marketing methods used in city promotion in four categories, the first one being iconic structures, followed by megaevents like the Olympic games and lastly thematization and heritage mining. For the purpose of this research three general categories will be analyzed and examples will be given accordingly.

1.Megaevents

In the category of megaevents, Richards and Wilson mention as an example the 1992 Olympic Games that took place in Barcelona as a rebrand and reimage strategy and the transformation of industrial areas as alternative cultural districts, where various types of events take place, for instance the Edinburg Festival. According to Carriere and Demaziere et al (2002) large scale events or as Karavatzis refers to them, mega events, have a positive effect on the development of urban areas. Cities use these events having as a main goal the mobilization of endogenous potential, development of infrastructure, improvement of the city's image and improvement of the identification of locals with the city. Borja (1996) argues that through this process systems like accessibility, economic support infrastructures, media and communication, human resources and overall quality of life in the city will improve making it more competitive and more attractive to visitors. In the city of Barcelona, a mega event that was used for this purpose was the Olympic Games, which according to the city's economic department in 1995, hosting the 1992 Olympics increased by 79% the number of visitors between 1991 and 1995. The city underwent a process of venue development, transformation of landscape and general public open spaces and enhancement

of culture. In the planning followed one of the main projects was the re-establishment and reconstruction of the existing natural connection between the center of the city and its coastal line. However, the biggest challenge of branding the city and its new redeveloped image was the day after the Olympics. According to Garcia – Ramon (et al 2000) after the 1992 Olympic games followed an economic recession along with a series of changes that effected the city in a negative way: environmental goals became less visible, small local businesses were deconstructed to make room for big shopping malls, neighborhoods were dislocated and public spaces function was reoriented to restricted consumer locales. Although Barcelona went through a process of re-branding itself and the Olympics did play a major part in that, several other events mainly sport related, also had a significant role, like for instance the FC Barcelona football games in the Camp Nou stadium, UEFA Champion League finals and the annual Formula One Grand Prix.

With a visible after plan for the use of constructions and investments done in cities in order to enable them to host megaevents like the Olympics, issues faced in the case of Barcelona can be avoided, since in general these events do offer profit and impact in a positive way a city's image and quality of life.

2. *Heritage and Cultural Promotion*

According to Kavaratzis (2010) another way of branding cities is through culture and entertainment that hold an important role in local economic development. Cities around Europe compete with each other to become the "Cultural Capital of Europe" and in order for that to happen there is an increased demand of investment. In his research argues "the transformation of derelict industrial areas into culture and entertainment districts has been seen all over Europe as a major "method" of regeneration and the means to revitalize local economy". Thus, culture and entertainment also play a huge role in the city's branding. That role is even more evident when it comes to the promotion of new cultural areas, the promotion of existing cultural events and festivals and the creation of new cultural opportunities. The organization of various events and festivals related to art, sports and local traditions is a way to establish and reinforce a place's, in this case a city's brand.

The effects of culture and entertainment in terms of marketing have been examined in relation with the physical, economic and social environments of the city (Evans 2003; Greenberg 2003; Hannigan 2004). Cultural branding, used by cities worldwide, is a creation of the continuously growing

importance of industries of culture, leisure and entertainment within locals, visitors and the contemporary economy overall (Evans 2001). In combination to that, there are attempts of incorporating that trend in the planning of the city along with the increased demand of industries that are image-based and the people working in these industries are helping with the reinforcement of the processes involved in this type of branding (Evans 2001, Florida 2002). City branding and its connection to culture is crucial and there are two main elements that assist in to making that connection. According to Karavatzis, the first element is the importance of a city's image not only for it's branding but also for the shaping of its image itself. The second aspect is the high dependence of the city's brand on the identity of each city.

Another aspect is how much tourism influences the economic development of each city, mostly of cities whose economy is based on tourism or at least a major part of city's annual profit. Cultural tourism is a continuously growing trend and most urban destinations or the majority of the cities try to present their cultural characteristics in a way that they can promote themselves through them. Urban centers have an advantage when it comes to combining the need of leisure and entertainment with visitors that are on a business trip. In addition to that, according to Lloyd and Clark (2001) in current societies there are parts of the city's local population that act as tourists and their demands for leisure are explicit.

Kunzmann (2004) is another researcher that stresses the immediate connection of the city's culture and it's planning, arguing that culture "sharpens the city's image and is indeed extensively used in place promotion". History, architecture, facilities and events under the umbrella of culture are the baseline of a city's promotion and according to Kunzmann, culture is a strong element in a city's identity and is needed more and more with the globalization of society nowadays. Zukin (2004) argues that many city officials and agencies related to urban development worldwide are using cultural activities in order to redevelop a city's image. This method is not only used for the promotion of the city's identity but to also market the city on an international level in addition to boosting the economy of cities that experience an industrial decline. He continues saying that culture will hold a highly important part in the promotion of future cities. Richards and Wilson stress that culture is becoming a resource from where themes and narratives are derived that are important in the place marketing process, due to the fact that they are seeing as a connection between the physical assets and the living culture. Cities that go through a decline period are in need of a plan that will

create new narratives and rebrand their image, so they use urban culture and heritage along with the use of signature signs and symbols that derive from the local culture.

Cultural events and activities are not only used as a way to attract a specific number of visitors at the event or at the site but their use has as an ultimate goal to create associations in the minds of locals and current visitors with the city's rich cultural heritage and vast variety of choices offered in entertainment and leisure. Through these associations the city officials create a brand for the city that uses as a base culture and entertainment. Based on Zukin (2002), " branding is a cultural strategy of an entrepreneurial city". What branding attempts to do is to "re-image a collective identity that has been fractured by the structural changes of the late twentieth century" like the majority of cultural strategies. From a practical perspective, branding is a method used in marketing that is customer/user oriented. Therefore the important first step here is to get a better understanding of what people whom value the associations need and want from a city that uses them as a branding technique. In his research, Florida (2002) argues that one category of such people are the ones with creative interests whom actually find physical attractions like sport stadiums, freeways, shopping centers and theme parks irrelevant to their interests even though most cities focus on them. Instead what they are more interested in is high quality and quantity of diverse experiences that they can relate to.

According to Evans (2001) the construction of infrastructure that will enable cities to use their culture for their benefit in order to attract and maintain the interest of creative people is necessary. He continues by applying a *production chain analysis to culture,* so that the definitions of "cultural industry activity and production" can be translated and a conceptual framework for both the cultural planning but also the determination and planning of art and their infrastructure. Evans divided his production chain analysis to culture in five categories:

- *Beginnings.* In this category he includes the city's capacity "as a site for ideas generation, general creativity, trademarks and patterns the city holds and the copyrights of those. As far as infrastructure, he includes investment in education, training and resources for research and development.

- *Production.* Putting ideas in reality through products and locations or

in other words, the capacity a city has to go from the initial stage of creativity to the stage of production. Here is important to assess whether or not the human resources of the city like for example managers, producers, editors, engineers, suppliers, makers of equipment, frameworkers etc. have the capacity, level and quality to produce those ideas. Part of the infrastructure in this category is entrepreneurs, 'makers' technology, and premises.

- *Circulation.* The quality of agencies, promoters, distributors, wholesalers, brokers, packagers and assemblers that are in charge of the distribution and marketing of a product along with the quality of materials like catalogues, archives and other support mechanisms of product sale and circulation. Here he also includes the human resources of the city as part of the infrastructure, meaning the agents, promoters, publishers and distributors.

- *Delivering.* In this category he includes mechanisms used in order for cultural products/services to be consumed referring both to the places they will see but also to the experiences and purchases. Here, city officials have to assess the availability in theaters, cinemas, museums, record shops and other venues of distribution including media like television and on-line commercials that are a constantly increasing way of product consumption and it will replace the traditional methods used until now. The infrastructure here is as mentioned above places (museums, shops, galleries) and media (TV channels, social media, magazines).

- *Audiences*. This category concerns the general public and activities like watching, listening and viewing along with the environment in which art and cultural products work and are being received. Assessment of targeting markets, pricing and audience including gender and diversity in their cultural background is advised, in addition to testing the social and demographic spectrum in which those activities reach (local/international). The infrastructure of this category includes marketing, pricing, transport, safety and access.

By the creation and management of the suggested chain, Evans argues that cities will be able to obtain the necessary infrastructure and ultimately become and brand themselves as cultural/entertainment centers. Cities

gradually become cities of entertainment with facilities and public spaces where a vast variety of cultural events take place (Kunzmann 2004). He adds that, besides art and culture an element that creates unique city identities is the landscape. Hubbard (1998) in his research mentions that the physical characteristics of a place, in other words the landscape, belongs in the same category of cultural forms like advertisements, brochures, guidebooks and other media. In addition to the landscape, Hubbard includes the culture of cities in terms of cultural diversity of local population, which is a characteristic that Heinstein includes in his categorization of marketing methods.

3. Iconic Buildings

As mentioned above iconic buildings are part of a city's identity and have a deep connection with its image and in extent with the Quality of Life of both its locals and visitors. In order to give practical examples of iconic buildings that have played an important role in city branding, Riza, Doratli and Fasli (2012) selected four iconic buildings and presented them in a way that the focus was on the effect these buildings had on the character of the city, therefore its image. They evaluated them as successful or not successful based on two types of criteria: the virtual character of the buildings, meaning their scale, proportion, construction material and rhythm in combination with their spatial character meaning siting and massing. If the buildings were evaluated as successful they would contribute positively on the city's image, which, as mentioned above, affects the well-being and satisfaction levels (Quality of Life) of residents and visitors.

The first example was the *Dancing House' by Frank O'Ghery* designed in 1996 as an infill project and it is located at the old part of Prague. There, visitors have the chance to see buildings belonging in various periods and the Dancing House is a "contemporary representation of the historical buildings surrounding it". Keeping in mind its location, the material used and the fact that it fits in the environment but still stands out, it was evaluated by the researches as a successful with a positive impact on the city's image and therefore at the Quality of Life concept. The second example in their research was the *Louvre Pyramid by I.M.Pei*. It was constructed in 1989 and its purpose was to modernize and extend the museum. Nowadays it serves as the new entrance of the museum and it is surrounded by three wings. The glass used to construct the pyramid creates a visual contrast with the material used for the rest of the historical museum. That contrast in combination with the

attractive visual character of the glass pyramid itself (not higher than the rest of the monumental buildings, transparency), enhances the image of the museum in total. Since the effects are positive on the museum itself and it contributes to the city's image and its QOL, the building was evaluated as successful.

The third example used was *The Guggenheim Museum by Frank O'Ghery* located in Bilbao and built in 1996. It was constructed in a former 19th century shipyard and it is connected to the old part of the city of Bilbao with a bridge. It is known for its waving rooflines that reflect the mountains and the river surrounding it. Although it can be characterized as iconic, it is dominating its surroundings and doesn't blend in with the environment of the location and based on the criteria mentioned above, the museum doesn't fit in the spatial or visual context. If it is taken out of that context, it could fit in various other locations worldwide. Although the city of Bilbao was affected positively and the museum contributed at the social and economic part of the QOL, the museum doesn't fit in the area and the researches evaluated it as non-successful as it has a negative effect to the physical character part of the QOL. In contrast to their research, Richards and Wilson consider the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao as a successful iconic building since it positioned the city on the cultural map of Europe.

The final example given in their research was the *Swiss Re Office building by Norman Foster* in London. It is located in an urban area surrounded by buildings of different time periods. Its material is steel in combination with glass, it is characterized as a "high-tech" building, massive in height and due to these characteristics is dominating the buildings surrounding it, therefore it is out of spatial context. It doesn't create a positive image of the location and according to Wood (2004) "if it is taken out of the location it could be built anywhere in the world". Based on its replaceable image, the Swiss Re Office doesn't contribute to the area's image and it was evaluated as non-successful.

They conclude their research by arguing that iconic buildings do play a huge role in the promotion and image of a city and can have both a positive and negative effect and therefore city officials should take under consideration the spatial and physical criteria given in their research in order to avoid the construction of a building that will affect the city's Quality of Life in a negative way.

1.4 . Instagram and city branding

Although, there is not enough academic research regarding the use of Instagram as a branding tool, previous researchers like Fokkema (2016) have used the perspective of affordances to get a better understanding on how DMOs use Instagram for city branding. Various academic researchers have written about affordances like Gibson, Leonardi, Kietzmann and Spector. Starting with Gibson, who was the pioneer of affordances in 1966, he identified the term affordances as " an environment that offers to an individual" (Gibson, 1975). This term is applicable in a variety of fields, for instance technology and communication. Along with the development of society, the term of affordances has been modernized and it has been applied to technology and social media. From a modernized perspective an affordance can be described as the interaction between a physical or digital object and an individual (Burgess, Marwick & Poell, 2019).

Since the Internet became a big part of society's life, Destination Marketing Organizations or Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), which have as a goal to promote a destination and attract more visitors, had to adapt to new technologies. Therefore, they have been using the possibilities offered, meaning affordances, when it comes to marketing destinations through social media (Fokkema, 2016). In other words, DMOs benefit from the use of affordances in order to achieve their goal, advertising a location. In their attempt to adapt, DMOs in the past have used social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, as part of their marketing methods but it wasn't until recently that city branding through Instagram was also used as a marketing tool. Many DMOs around the world have created profiles on the platform as a marketing method in order to promote their cities and engage with visitors. According to Morrison (2013) DMOs worldwide have departments and units dedicated to looking after, updating and maintaining their websites and social media profiles in their overall effort of digital marketing.

While searching about the theory of affordances, it became evident that only one theory complied fully with the goal of this research. Even though, Kietzman also provided an insightful representation of affordances, Spector's representation was more easily linked to the usage and purposes of Instagram. The reason being, that Spector stresses about communication technologies, as seen in Conole's research (2013) and also as seen in Fookema's research (2016), his theory can be applied on how organizations

can actually benefit from the use of Instagram. Therefore, the application of his theory was more suitable for the purpose of this research. According to Spector, his interpretation of affordances was named 'ICT' (information and communication technologies/affordances) and included 8 sections. To delve into Spector's affordances, an analysis of the categorization he made will be presented below.

Collaboration

According to Spector, new technologies, including social media, therefore Instagram, have created the opportunity to share and construct knowledge. He points out the importance of sharing knowledge " Learning with and through others is a valuable and important form of learning nowadays". From an etymological point of view, collaboration means working together; based on that Spector talked about the opportunity that social media provide to the users, in this case DMOs and their audience, to create, share and construct knowledge.

Reflection

This affordance relates to the function of reflection, which is the transformation of negative situations in positive, through reflective thinking, which, according to Spector is a more critical way thinking. He adds that, communication tools like social media offer people the chance to reflect, share and discuss both ideas and experiences. In the case of DMOs getting feedback regarding their development and improvement can be done along with answering questions related to the destination.

Interaction

According to Spector, interaction is a procedure during which an exchange of information between technology and users takes place. As presented by him, an interaction can occur once there has been a reciprocal exchange of information and influence between DMOs and their audience. People can receive information about allocation through posts uploaded by DMOs. Another aspect of interaction can occur when DMOs feature people's photos proving that users can also influence DMOs.

Dialogue

New forms of dialogue and communication have emerged through the widespread use of social media, including Instagram. Based on the ICT of Spector, new online communities can be established and can be used to share information and establish a general mean of communication. In the case of Instagram, which is a visual stimuli oriented platform and communication can be achieved only through the "instagram direct" function of the platform, it is possible to share photos on other social media platforms like Facebook and Pinterest, which enable dialogue more.

Creativity

Creativity, as described by Spector is a key digital literacy skill that can construct new and meaningful ideas. Technology has provided the means to support creativity via collaboration of its users, in this case DMOs and their followers. In other words, Spector supports that, "creativity can be achieved by working together".

Organization

Spector refers to this affordance, with its literal meaning; meaning the organization/ categorization of information based on the content. By organizing information users can be benefited due to the fact that they can have immediate access to " the archives more relevant for them".

Inquiry

The inquiry affordance of Spector is similar to his reflection affordance, since both include feedback and reaction. Feedback regarding the performance, content and relevance of sources can be given to DMOs, in order for them to use the feedback and improve their relationship with their audience.

Authenticity

Spector's affordance of authenticity is a definition referring to aspects of trust, reputation and the difference between virtual and actual reality. In other words, authenticity encompasses how genuine and real the presented content is. In the case of Instagram, authenticity regarding the content DMOs upload is of high significance, since it formulated the image of a city in the audience's

mind; therefore if in reality a location is not as presented authenticity decreases.

After analyzing the theory of affordances presented by Spector, since it can be related to social media in general and to Instagram in specific, technology, DMOs, audiences, interactions, information, images, locations, branding and authenticity, it was concluded that it was the most suitable theory to analyze the content of the two profiles related to the branding of Athens from both an official and an unofficial perspective.

In combination with the analysis of means that both DMOs and locals can afford through their Instagram profiles to promote a city, it is equally important to analyze the actual content of each profile. According to the researchers "for brands or products, even for places and cities, it is important to monitor the perceived image resulting from the overall online experience, especially on social media". Kotler (1997) argues that, in general images are the mental picture held by people regarding an object and understanding these mental pictures is of high importance since people's actions and attitudes towards an object (or a city) are deeply connected to that object's image. According to Gilboa et al (2015), social media can be used as a branding tool in order to process the representing images of cities and city officials in charge of the branding process can use these pictures in order to spread their message across their target audience. Culotta (2016) suggest that "User Generated Content (UGC) has become one of the primary forms of communication capable of influencing customers' perceptions on products and brands, thereby shaping brand image, through brand associations". That comes in agreement to Költringer's and Dickinger's (2015) argument that "UGC has come to represent one of the richest and most diverse sources of online information". User Generated Content includes online sources of information that can be conceived, transmitted and used by consumers in order for them to communicate and share information with each other about products, brands, services and places (Alcázar, Pinero, & de Maya, 2014). Furthermore, UGC cannot only highly affect the image of a brand but also the brand knowledge in general (Keller, 1998), through image associations to that brand (Fitchett, 2005), which as mentioned above, has an influence on the perception of the brand (Zhang & Sarvary, 2014). Cities, like products and brands, can manifest themselves on social media as "user generated and according to Andéhn et al. (2014), they can become the result of how users or consumers, project them on these platforms. Additionally, since UGC can be

characterized as a reliable source of information, it can assist a user, that is residents, potential visitors and investors, to from the image of a destination. When it comes to the use of Instagram for destination branding purposes, according to several researchers, it has a variety of strengths. Starting with the fact that is one of the most used social media platforms worldwide. Up to 2017, there were more than 700 million active members (Statista, 2017), with 60% of them login in daily, making Instagram the second most used platform after Facebook (Brandwatch, 2016). Based on Brandwatch (2016), the total number of pictures shared on the platform is approximately 40 billion and on average 3.5 billion likes per day. Taking under consideration these numbers, more and more branding officials use Instagram as a branding and marketing method. Marwick (2015) suggest that Instagram "de-emphasizes textual description and replies in favor of images thereby differentiating it from other social networks". Moreover, images can usually be considered as more credible than text, which in the long term has a higher influence on human behavior (Bergkvist, Eiderbäck, & Palombo, 2012). Analyzing the photos posted on the platform, can lead to the identification of topics related to specific products, brands, people and places (Lee et al., 2015). In addition, the structure of the platform's posts enhances the connection between users through "mentions" (the name of other users) and "hashtags" (words starting with a "#" character), which, according to Small (2011), are useful for denotation of topics and increasing the accessibility of posts to the public. Although there has been limited research one the analysis of Instagram posts for the purpose of city branding, an interesting research was conducted by Acuti, Mazzoli, Donvito and Chan in 2018, regarding the use of Instagram content for the city branding of London and Florence as fashion cities. Their research applied a content analysis of visual and textual information, that is both pictures and hashtags in order to reconstruct the brand image of the cities. For the analysis of the pictures they used the 10 categories of classification of visual contents of Choi et al. (2007). According to Choi (2007) there are 10 categories namely: Historic buildings and heritage, which includes ancient palaces, monuments, works of art; Cultural events; Parks and gardens, Fashion, which includes traditional or typical to the city clothes and accessories along with shopping centers; Tourism facilities and infrastructure, which includes hotels, museums, touristic attractions; Entertainment, Scenic view; Local cuisine, which includes food, drinks, restaurants, food markets; Recreation and sport; and lastly People and local residents and their everyday life.

Acuti, Mazzoli, Donvito and Chan assigned to each picture a maximum to three categories depending on the content, due to the fact that this way they were able to identify connections between the pictures and to consider the main aspects of the city represented by the users. In combination with the analysis of the pictures, the researchers also conducted an analysis of the hashtags related to the cities, since users use hashtags to denote topics on Instagram, which improves the visualization of the posts categorized by the topics of Choi (2007). Indeed, through their analysis of pictures and hashtags, it was shown that the recurring associations had formed a specific image about the two cities.

As mentioned above UGC has the capacity to influence people's decision making process, thus makes it necessary for city officials in charge of the branding and promotion of a city to take under serious consideration the image their city has on the platform (Acuti, Mazzoli, Donvito & Chan, 2018). For the case study of Athens and its branding through Instagram, an analysis of the actual content uploaded by the official Instagram profile of the Municipality of Athens and the locally owned profile will also be done, using the ten categories of Choi in order to investigate how is Athens depicted by the profiles.

2. City Identity, Image and Branding: The case of Athens

2.1 Identity of Athens

Place identity is the extent to which a person can recall a place as being different from other places (Lynch, 1960). Every place has a distinct identity that cannot be imitated and it is constructed by various factors, for instance the landscape, culture/heritage, people and the image people create about that place through their memories (both positive and negative ones) when they visit (Kavaratzis, 2005). As mentioned, an important part of the formulation of the identity of a place, in this case a city's identity, is cultural heritage, which according to Mc Kercher and du Cross (2002), "has an intrinsic value to a community and extrinsic significance as attraction". Capital cities usually have significant qualities that function as motive for people to choose them for an upcoming visit (Maitland, 2010) and cultural identity is one of the most valuable assets. According to Pearce (2001), "many cities' historical centers are identified as important destinations since they

amalgamate a series of attractions such as old buildings, monuments, and museums".

Park (1991) argues that heritage places are strongly bonded to the city's character. Taking under consideration the fact that capital cities are rich in cultural heritage, they can be valuable cultural destinations through their unique identity (Meethan, 2001). In the tourism industry, cities aim to differentiate themselves through their distinctive characteristics, usually based on the promotion of their cultural heritage, thus, "the interrelationship between material tourism features and symbolic elements of a destination shape the ways that the local is conceptualized as a counterweight to the standardized tendencies of the global market" (Meethan, 2001). In this regard, the cultural elements of cities, especially capital cities, become important signifiers of the local identity in a global context (Meethan, 2001). According to McKercher and du Cross (2002), the cultural elements of a city integrate its exclusive characteristics, which reflect its history and cultural heritage with the branding and promotion of its traditions, background and scenery. As Maitland (2010) suggests, "for capital cities, the deposits of culture provide an opportunity to represent themselves and undertake a significant role for epitomizing and signifying a nation". Therefore, the cultural assets of a capital city along with an appropriate tourism development can be significant promoters of the local identity of a nation worldwide.

As a city with a rich historic background, Athens has created its identity based on a past that has reportedly shaped its current urban form and landscape. As claimed by Zukin (1995), one of the crucial cultural strategies of urban economic development is the emphasis on "the aesthetic or historic value of imprints on a landscape". However, according to Stavridis (2008) in order to reconstruct an urban narrative out of pieces of past history, the implementation of selection is necessary. In the case of Athens the selection of materials for the construction of its new urban identity started when Athens was chosen as the capital of the newly declared Greek state in 1834. During that time efforts were made to remove all the buildings and sites that were or could be an indication of a complicated political and historic past. The sites that remained and defined 19th century Athens belonged to the classical history of the city and fewer ones belonged to the Byzantine era (McGregor, 2014). The process of selection continued through various points of the city's history and it is evident today. Even in the 21st century it was prominent that city officials have a tendency of preserving and promoting mainly the ancient

identity of the city, in combination with the creation of an international identity.

Athens competed twice with other cities for hosting the Olympic Games, once for the 1996 Olympics, which was an unsuccessful attempt and then again for the 2004 Olympics, which was successful. Both times the city's plans for economic growth and prosperity along with the city's projected identity were immediately affected (Stavridis, 2008). According to Stavridis (2008) the effects of the Olympics on the city's identity were not cause because the city lacked a recognizable identity that helped its citizens to identify with it nor the city was completely changed from hosting the Olympics. What happened was that, Athens was given the chance to substantiate and project a role in the national network of cities; a role that had been developing for quite some time, while facing internal dilemmas, political and economical instability. As McGregor (2014) suggests, Athens as the capital city of Greece emphasized on developing a European identity parallel to its own. That European identity could be compared to other European cities in terms of monuments, transportation, facilities and quality of life of locals. The Olympics offered the opportunity to enhance that European image of a city while keeping certain aspects of its own identity (Stavridis, 2008).

The strategy of forming a clear modern identity for Athens had two combined parts. The first one was focused on enhancing the existing landmarks that proved the city's ancient past and the second focused on rapidly modernizing the city's landscape by implementing urban and recognizable landmarks. The way city officials attempted to fulfill the enchantment of the city's past, was through the unification of archeological sites in the city's center. That unification was executed by the construction of green areas and walkways and had as a goal the creation of a historic park, which would establish spatial historical continuity (Stavridis, 2008). This site- specific historic continuity would assist in creating a concrete urban and regional identity that would differentiate Athens from other cities. With a unique place identity, Athens could therefore become a city that would attract visitors and would be able to offer them a pleasurable and unique experience. According to Bauman (1998) "consumers are first and foremost gatherers of sensations". From this perspective, "the city's unique identity could offer visitors the sensation of being in a place where history actually happened" (Stavridis, 2008).

In addition, in order to create a contemporary identity, city officials found the opportunity through the hosting of the Olympics to upgrade and develop the

urban features of the city. For this purpose the assistance of "signature architecture" is required. According to Zukin (1991) "this kind of architecture is produce by "superstar architects" who create a standardized form that they move from place to place". In the case of Athens and the hosting of the Olympics, Calatrava was the architect of choice to design a monumental stadium that would assist in the formulation of an international identity for the city.

However, through the development of an international urban identity in combination with the enhancement of the city's historic identity, a series of selective initiatives were taken by city officials. Specifically, according to Stavridis (2008) through the program " City Image" that was launched before the Olympics, important parts of the city's past were hidden/ excluded from that process. This program had as a goal the remodeling of façade of old buildings in order to make them more attractive to the eyes of visitors. It gave building owners loans to remodel only the façades of the buildings without encouraging them nor assist them to renovate the building's interior in a qualitative way. Of course the façades that got remodeled belonged to old buildings that although they were valuable pieces of its identity, they were also related to a complicated political and historic past, which city officials wished to hide or exclude from the selection process of formulating the city's international identity.

Another example of selection of cultural identity also took place during the time of preparation for the Olympics. At one of the most prominent Olympic Routes, Alexandra's avenue, in 1935 city officials built a complex of housing buildings, known as Prosfygika, for the Asia Minor population exchange refugees. While city officials were in the process of preparing the city to host the Olympics the issue of the fate of the buildings had to be faced, thus one of the suggestions was to demolish the complex (McGregor,2014). Due to the resistance of some residents that are decedents of refugees along with activists, the complex was not demolished. Instead, city officials chose to erect in front of the building on the part facing the avenue, a huge placard image to completely hide it. The placard depicted a panoramic view of ancient monuments of Athens, like the Parthenon and it was used to promote Athens as a city with a historic identity (Stavrides 2005).

Additionally, through a research conducted by Boukas, Boustras and Ziakas in 2012 regarding the revision of Athens as a cultural destination after the Olympics, it became even more evident that city officials focus on preserving

and promoting the ancient parts of the city's identity while they neglect the rest of its components. The researchers conducted seven interviews with representatives from Greek National Tourism Organization, Ministry of Tourism, and Athens' local authorities. The interviewees agreed on several issues regarding the city's identity. The first issue is the change the city's identity went through as a result of globalization: the change in the composition of the city's population, which as an extent changed its image, international status and qualities as a national capital. On one hand, the plethora of foreign immigrants from different cultural backgrounds and their own identities made the social structure of the city more international, on the other hand the criminality rate got higher. Based on one of the interviewees, there was lack of promotion of the positive aspects of the city's new multicultural identity and the focus was on the criminality issues the city had to face.

Another interviewee in their research suggested that, the identity of Athens starts and stops at is classical times. There is little to no projection of pieces of the city's identity that date to the Byzantine era, the Greek revolution nor its modern multicultural identity. Although there are several interesting places of culture, art and history that people can visit, local authorities have not used in their advantage the changes Athens still goes through in order to incorporate them in the branding of the city that might appeal to new cultural tourists (Karavatzis, 2008). Based on Karavatzis (2008), developing and promoting a unique identity enhances the city's competitiveness. In this regard, culture holds a valuable role when it comes to regenerating urban places, which contributes to the enhancement of their image (Smith, 2003). Additionally, another respondent in the research of Boukas, Boustras and Ziakas (2012) stated that there is lack of linking Athens' heritage with its present in order to build a new identity for the city that would include both its past but also its present and future growth. Thus, it is projected internationally that Athens is only the Acropolis, which, in combination with the negative image the city gained the last decade due to the recession, makes the branding process of the city more challenging. In general the researchers, concluded that "there is incongruity between the projected identity of Athens and the current status and qualities of the city". According to Karavatzis (2008), while globalization constantly challenges the identities of cities, in the case of Athens, a more careful management and promotion of the city's past and present could build a representative, authentic and unique international identity for the city.

Although, the question of what is the new identity of Athens has yet to be

answered, the aforementioned study indicated that there is little effort done by city and state officials to understand the city's new identity in order to promote all its elements and instead they choose to capitalize the elements of its classical antiquity.

2.2 Image of Athens

As mentioned prior in this paper, destination image holds an important role in the branding process of a place. It is well acknowledged in the tourism industry that destination image, has a high influence on people's perceptions, behavior and choice of destination (Echtner & Ritchie 1991; Chon 1992). According to Kotler (1993) destination image is defined as "the sum of ideas, beliefs, perceptions, feelings and general information, the members of a society hold regarding a specific place". Later on Kotler and Gertner defined destination image as "the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places" (2002). Based on that definition, the image of a place can be considered as an individualistic concept, since it is not always consistent over different societies and people, and it is a concept that depends on people's individual travel experiences, cognition and needs (Della Corte & Micera 2007). In social cognition theories and psychology, brand images in general and destination images in specific, are being referred as schemata (Atkinson et al. 1987). That includes inferences and associations to places, which allows people to cross-link from various, even contradicting, sources (Govers & Go 2009). Anholt (2010) argues that "destination images are based on normative events about countries, largely being networks of associations", which according to Govers (2011) by the time these associations become evident to people, they create inferences about countries, regions and cities. Based on these references, destination image can be defined as twofold.

Gallarza et al. (2002) suggests that destination image is a multidimensional concept, which according to Mazanec (1994) is consisted of three dimensions: objects (countries, cities, islands), subjects (people) and attributes. According to various researchers, destination image attributes can be divided in three categories, them being cognitive, affective and conative (Kaplanidou & Vogt 2007; Lopes 2011; Moon et al. 2011). The cognitive components of place image include all the information known or that is believed to be true about a specific destination. According to Gunn (1988), affect represents a person's feelings about the destination and conation represents the intention a person has to visit a specific place in a given time.

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) through empirical research have shown that out of the three components, cognitive and affective evaluations are the ones that have direct influence on the overall image of a destination. Likewise, Lopes (2011) states that the formulation of the overall place image is a combination of the cognitive and affective components along with the influence of other factors like past traveling experience and socio-demographic characteristics.

Various researchers agree that the affective components of place image have been formed as a function of cognitive components (Stern & Krakover et al 1993), thus, affective evaluation of a place depends on the cognitive assessment (Baloglu & McCleary 1999). In addition, researchers have drawn attention to the distinct importance of affect as a component of place image, due to the fact that "emotions have a greater impact on individual behavior than the cognitive component" (Agapito et. al 2013). Agapito et al (2013) argue that visitors with positive feelings associated to a destination usually react positively to this place. Based on Kim and Yoon (2008) " the primary components of the destination image are the items associated with internal sources and feelings about travel", which can be relaxation, good weather and beautiful scenery and the overall atmosphere of the place.

Adding to the complexity of the concept of destination image is the fact that, according to Gallarza et al (2002), destination image cannot be studied without taking under consideration time and space. Through time, destination image may face various situations, which can be positive, negative, mixed, overly attractive, contradictory or weak (Kotler et al. 1993). Destination images that can be described as positive are of those destinations that have already been established in a positive way, for example London, which is one of the most visited cities worldwide, or a series of emerging images that have gained positive publicity within specific groups of people. Secondly, destination images that can be described as overtly attractive are the images that are so well known to the point that they attract larger amounts of people than the ones they can afford to host. That usually causes over-tourism, traffic congestion or even water pollution, like in the case of Venice. Negative images are the ones related to negative reputation and publicity like war, poverty, terrorism or natural disasters. Kotler and Gertner (2004) argue that "associations with a country can add or subtract the perceived value of a product, influencing tourists' decision to visit the destination". Additionally, Echtner and Ritchie (2003) state the situation of a place image is a key factor that influences the decision making of potential visitors. Negative events

association, even if the events are not related to tourism, can formulate a negative image of a destination, which can be difficult to change and the process of attracting visitors becomes more challenging (Govers, 2011).

When it comes to space, Stylidis et al (2014) have been focusing on the destination image residents have regarding the place of interest. He continues claiming that the role of residents is highly important since a destination is a social place where locals live, work and create families, thus taking under consideration the quality of their life in the concept of destination image is necessary.

Throughout time and space, destination image can be also formed by different sources of information like history, geography, art, music, famous personalities or citizens and the Internet (Govers et al. 2007; Govers 2011). Societal and historical issues for instance crime, terrorist attacks, natural disasters and unemployment can formulate a negative destination image and due to the tendency of media to focus on negative events, the creation of destination image- related crises arises. In times of crises, destinations receive more media attention, which negatively influences their image in a relatively small time frame. As a result, potential visitors are being refrain from visiting and/or revisiting, which can make the crisis even more intense (Avraham 2004). The affective components, which are related to the feelings of potential visitors, are unpredictable (Kim & Richardson 2003); therefore, they are likely to evolve through recession years along with people's affect and sentiment regarding a city (Anholt 2010). Additionally, researchers generally agree that the affective components are subsequent to the cognitive components of a destination image, since the evaluative response of people emerge from their knowledge about the destination (Beerli & Martin 2004).

According to researchers, destination image- related crises could be categorized in three types starting with immediate crises, for example terrorist attacks that occur with little or no warning, emerging crises, which are evolving slowly and can be eventually stopped, like the outburst of a disease, and sustained crises, which can last for extended periods of time like financial crises (Ritchie 2004). Although destination image is a complex concept that changes in time and space (Gallarza et al. 2002), there is limited literature regarding the influence of time during periods of crises (Avraham & Ketter 2006; Avraham & Ketter 2008) and social media (Sigala, 2011).

The Greek economic recession of the last decade is a sustained crisis that was

long lasting and was accompanied by a series of events, such as national elections and general strikes, that although are not related to tourism, had a significant effect on the industry in general and of Athens in specific.

The influence of the crisis on the industry was not monitored on the arrivals, but it was monitored mostly in tourism receipts, with a drop from 10,40 million euros in 2009 to 9,611 million euros in 2011 and then a slow raise to 13,500 million euros in 2014 (Gkritzali, Gritzalis and Stavrou, 2017). In Athens that is not the case, since the impact of the recession and the negative publicity gained during that time, led to the effects being more severe. As a result of extensive and constant negative publicity, the city suffered a major drop in visitor numbers from 2009 until 2013, which marked the beginning of the crisis (SETE Report 2015). In Attiki, which is the metropolitan area were Athens belongs to, the nights spent in hotels dropped in 2009, from 3.479 to 3032 and slowly raised in 2014, to 3.700. In addition, hotel capacity dropped in 2009, from 61.882 beds to 58.000 beds in 2014, due to the fact that the number of events and conferences held in Athens declined because of the negative image of the city during those years, especially from 2008 to 2012 (Menzel 2014). However, when Athens was voted as the 3rd Best Destination by more than 24.000 people, the situation changed. Starting from 2016, Athens has slowly started to become a key destination for conferences and events, which has helped hotel owners and tourism related establishments like galleries and museums to offer more competitive prices compared to other destinations in Europe and within the country.

This crisis surprisingly had both a negative and a positive effect on the city's image. Specifically, according to a research of 2017, regarding the city image of Athens, from 2005, the year after the Olympics, until 2015, six years into the crisis, it was shown that the image of Athens underwent a series of fluctuations.

For their research, Gkritzali, Gritzalis and Stavrou, studied the perceptions of Tripadvisor visitors from 2005 until 2015, while taking under consideration the affective components of the city's image. Furthermore, considering that image cannot be studied out of space, the researchers took into account the visitors residence, within and outside of Greece, based on their profile description, so that they could investigate the subjective character of the city. In order to investigate the evolution of the city's image, they examined discourses from the Athens Travel Forum of Tripadvisor, and analyzed 109,460 messages related to various matters regarding the city.

When it comes to the normative beliefs of Tripadvisor non-resident users regarding the image of the city, Athens was generally described with more positive attributes throughout the three phases of the crisis them being before, the beginning of the crisis and after. More analytically, non- residents viewed Athens as hospitable, authentic, friendly and pleasurable in all phases of the crisis. However, changes have been monitored regarding some image attributes through the three stages of the crisis.

When it comes to the attribute of security in the city, the findings indicated that the perception of the platform's visitors changed quite significantly from the time before the crisis to its beginning and from then to its stabilization. Athens was perceived as more risky in 2009-11, which was the beginning of the crisis rather than before and after. Also, the city was perceived as less valuable during the first couple of years of the crisis than prior and after.

Additionally, Athens was perceived as less attractive as well as less exciting during the beginning of the crisis comparing to the years before; for both attributes, there was no indication of significant change the years during the crisis. Although findings show that the attribute of relaxation did not change from the period before the crisis until its beginning, there was a negative change from the beginning of the crisis onwards. The overall findings showed that the most significant changes in people's perceptions of Athens happened the first two years of the crisis, and the city was perceived as more risky, less attractive, more stressful and less valuable from before and after that period. However, the experience in the city was perceived as more hospitable, pleasurable and exciting during the same time.

Thus, according to the researchers, the social, political and economic events of the last ten years seem to have a short-term and partial influence on the perceptions of potential visitors. These findings are in agreement with existing views in the industry that claim that destination images are of ephemeral character and can be influenced by a number of autonomous sources like the media (Govers & Go 2007). In agreement with Anholt's argument as well, the findings indicate that " destination images are normative and help people evaluate events and behaviors based on a country's perceived norms" (Anholt's, 2010). Although the norm for Athens as a destination through the messages on Tripadvisor is presented positively (friendly, hospitable, authentic), the political and economic events that took place the last decade have changed the city's image in a partial short-term way. Since, according to Anholt (2010) "the norm is considered to have a

strong bias against change in order to be preserved", the norm in the case of Athens is still resistant.

On the other hand, local residents had a more negative image of the city through the two phases of the crisis, with attributes like risky, unsafe, less valuable, unpleasant and unattractive being some of them. Based on the researchers, local residents viewed Athens as less secure, less pleasurable, less exciting, more stressful, less attractive and less valuable at the first two years of the crisis and onwards than it was before.

The researchers indicate that there is a firm contradiction in the formulation of destination image of Athens, since although the negative impact of the Greek crisis is not deniable, the city's image stayed partially positive with Tripadvisor, with visitors perceiving Athens as more pleasurable and hospitable than before the crisis. Thus, the results of the research complement the theory of Anhotl (2010), which argues that " the norm can be still favorably revised after a non-corroborating event, if a milder corroborating behavior is frequently repeated". In the case of Athens, the events that took place during the crisis have been partially perceived as 'out of character' by the Tripadvisor users outside of Greece.

According to the researchers, non-Greek residents have a significantly more favorable image of Athens than the Tripadvisor visitors residing in Greece. This conclusion comes to an agreement with the argument of Chen et al (2011) that destination images could be socially biased, however contrasts past research, which has shown that people who are familiar with a destination might have a more positive destination image than the ones who are fully aware of it (Milman & Pizam 1995). The important difference of a city's image perceived by residents and non- residents are in agreement with recent research which suggest that in some cases, visitors hold a most positive and favorable image of a destination than local residents (Stylidis et al. 2015). That difference in perception can occur based on multiple factors. The first and most prominent factor is personal interaction along with familiarity and sociocultural insight gained from this interaction, which may result in to variable perceptions about numerous image components (Milman & Pizam 1995). In the case of Athens, locals viewed the city as more risky and stressful, which can be a result of their direct experience of the crisis and its social impact. In contrast to non- residents, that although might have been exposed to negative publicity, they perceived Athens as more secure, exciting and pleasurable, possibly because the crisis had a limited affect on them.

Additionally, locals due to their direct experience of the city might be emotionally attached to the city's traditions, culture, scenery and people (Milman & Pizam 1995). Stylidis et al. (2014) suggest that residents' views of a city can be affected by macro-environmental factors, for instance the economic status of the country. By embracing the Greek culture of the city and creating an emotional attachment, residents might view Athens as an important part of their national and personal identity, which can lead them to create a different perception of the city's image than the one visitors have.

The analysis of the evolution of affective sentiment per location indicate that the views of both location groups changed during the periods of the crisis, in different directions. It was proven that the crisis brought more negative images to Greek residents, rather than non-Greek residents, since, although both groups were impacted by the crisis, the impact on non- Greek residents was less obvious over the years. In reference to space, the findings show that the views of the affective image of Athens are overall inconsistent and partially shared between the two groups, which confirms the subjective character of place image (Chen et al. 2011). Finally, the researchers suggest that through their research, it was proven that destination images can be significantly affected both negative and also positively, by major events non related to tourism (Govers & Go 2007), but their normative nature assist them in maintaining their established image in the long run.

Since it was 2017 when this research on the city's image was completed, there has been no further studying of the image of Athens, therefore it can be assumed that no significant changes have occurred, considering that both the economic but also the political situation of the country have not changed either.

2.3 Branding of Athens

When it comes to the branding of Athens it has been quite a challenge, considering the aforementioned issues of its identity and image and their effect on the branding process. However, there are certain methods that have been preferred and used by city officials through the years. To analyze the branding methods used for the city's promotion, an application of the theoretical framework established by Hankinson (2006) and Kavaratzis (2005) regarding the different categories of city branding will be done. The two researchers have categorized the methods of promotion in three sections: megaevents, promotion of heritage and construction of iconic buildings. As

seen through the analysis, due to the city's historic past, these methods are combined in cases like for example the Olympics or Marathons, which are considered megaevents but they can also be used in the promotion of heritage and culture.

Megaevents or large-scale events according to Carriere and Demaziere et al (2002) affect positively the development of the hosting cities, which as an extent affects their image. Cities host megaevents to mobilize endogenous potential, development of infrastructure, improvement of the identification of locals with the city and, of course, improvement of the city's image. Through this process several important systems for the locals' quality of life and the quality of the touristic experience of visitors, like for example accessibility, infrastructure, media, communication and human resources will be improved and make the city more competitive and attractive.

In Athens, like in Barcelona, hosting the Olympic games was used in order to change the image of the city not only in people's minds but also in a practical level and make it a both competitive and attractive destination. According to Feloukatzi (2004) the catchphrase/motto " The Games return home" along with the opening line of the event "Citizens of the world welcome to Athens celebration. Olympic Games, welcome back to Greece" were used to highlight the effort of the country to host the games for the second time in its modern history and according to Karakatsoulis (et al 2005) it was used to enhance the city's identity and increase the pride of its residents.

Initiatives related to improvement of infrastructure, transportation and services for locals and visitors started in the 90s' and where mostly connected to the Olympic Games that eventually took place in 2004. Issues like traffic and the environmental problems caused by it, which the city was facing up until then, were dealt with during the preparation period the city went through. For instance, during that time the city acquired a new metro system, a tram network and a suburban railway reaching the new international airport in order to manage in a more efficient way the transportation of foreign visitors that would come for the Olympics and to improve the quality of air of the city. In addition, extended motorway networks were constructed that in the long run decreased both the time and cost of transportation. Other modification projects related to environmental, aesthetic and gentrification took place in general, including in areas that at the time were socially and culturally neglected (McGregor, 2014).

Private investment also focused on making the city more attractive to tourists by improving and upgrading existing hotels, special tourist facilities and marinas. According to Beriatos and Gospodini (2004) "a large amount of money was invested on built heritage renovation but mainly on innovative design projects upgrading the pure, fragmented design of Athens urban tissue". Chapil L. (2002) argues "Olympic games had the capacity to re-signify Athens position as a destination, at least in the short term". Research done during the time of the 2004 Olympics already highlighted the importance of creating an "after-Olympic" plan so that the international attention, development, improvement of the quality of life of the city and its overall image within tourism industry remained the same.

Like Barcelona, Athens did obtain a chain of open spaces that played an important part in the upgrade of peripheral areas and encouragement of social and cultural integration along with re-establishment of the city-coastal line connection. In Barcelona, the leading public sector was what determined initiatives of development whereas in the case of Athens, that was hardly done. Infrastructure development after the Olympics was questionable with mainly improvement of existing projects and creation of issues like what the function of the buildings created for the Olympics is going to be and if, how and when projects that were supposed to be done back then, will actually be executed. For example, the re-development of the seaside part of Athens located at its southern suburbs stopped after the Olympics and as only in 2017 some decisions were made about reconstruction and redesign of the area. Therefore a mega-event like the Olympics maybe wasn't as positive for Athens in the long run as state officials hoped and possibly visible after plans were extremely needed. Maybe state and city officials could have used Barcelona as an example since no visible future plans were made either, which according to Garcia – Ramon, led to financial instability, absence of environmental objectives, shopping malls were constructed replacing small local businesses, dislocation of neighborhoods and the function of public spaces was directed to limited audiences.

Overall, the Olympics despite the economic, social and environmental issues they brought, in terms of tourism development, they helped in re-imaging the city and upgrading its infrastructure (Asprogerakas, 2007; Kavaratzis, 2008). However, the lack of strategic planning about the post-Olympic use of the newly constructed facilities (Beriatos, 2006; Gospodini, 2009) has also led to an inability to develop a competitive post-Olympic tourism product (Weed, 2008).

The second category established by Hankinson and Karavatzis (et al) is the promotion of heritage through culture and entertainment. Karavatzis (2010) supported that, in order for local economy to be revitalized state officials have to equally focus on the redevelopment, construction and promotion of both heritage sites but also industrial areas that are not being used in their maximum potential. More researchers for instance, Evans (2003), Greenberg (2003) and Hannigan (2004) share the belief of Karavatzis, that a balanced promotion of cultural heritage and entertainment can be beneficial for the marketing, economy, image formulation of the city, the QOL of the residents and quality of touristic experience. Capital cities have the ability to benefit from their cultural heritage (Stavridis, 2008). Heritage forms the city's identity through the years, represent the locality of the city and can be a significant point of attraction for people worldwide. When it comes to heritage, sites related to the city's ancient history like the Acropolis, the Temple of Hephaestus, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, the Kerameikos Cemetery, the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, the Panathenaic Stadium, the Roman Agora and the historic neighborhood of Plaka, are the most visited sites in Athens. One of the mottos used in past campaigns was "Athens, the oldest capital of Europe", which had as a goal to promote even more the ancient heritage sites mentioned. Monuments like churches and museums that are related more to the city's recent history are not as highly promoted by city officials, making the current promotion process non-profitable and unbalanced.

A European city whose cultural heritage and entertainment promotion is equally executed done is Rome. State and tourism officials in charge of the city's branding have been promoting both the ancient history of Rome through archeological sites, like the Colosseum, but also sites related to the city's recent history, like the industrial district of Ostience with the Centrale Montemartini Power Plant Musuem. Created in the 20th century, Ostience was one of the first industrial districts of Rome. In the area, buildings like main power plants, gasometers, military stations, warehouses and factories were constructed and back then they symbolized modernity. Nowadays, these buildings are being used as an attraction for both locals and tourists (https://www.romeactually.com/industrial-archaeology-romeostiense-oldgasometer/?fbclid=IwAR3akYmvfrnNgbwlEob33ORWH5iYIqp4nM_kcLCRK46yxI_U2CL1GUFT0).

In the case of Athens, ancient history is at the front line of promotion, drawing away significant touristic attention from modern areas of the city for example

the Gazi Technopolis, which is a former industrial area of Athens, where events like concerts take place. Although it is visited frequently by locals, tourists are not aware of its existence, therefore it is excluded from their scheduled visitation sites, in contrast to the Ostience district, which is highly visited by tourists. A more inclusive promotion done of all aspects of the city's identity could assist in the flourishing process of the areas with touristic potential, like Gazi Technopolis. As found in the research of Gkritzali, Gritzali and Stavrou (2017) cultural campaigns projected the culture of Greece in general rather than of Athens separately. Therefore, the lack of adequate cultural promotion and management has turned Athens in a cultural destination for short breaks rather than a city able to keeping visitors for longer periods of time. Since people choose to visit Athens for a limited amount of time, the cultural tourism of the city was based only on its ancient heritage, even for people interested in visiting Athens for its culture, there is not a plethora of attractions and activities offered besides the ones found in its historic center. As also seen in academic research, "the lack of appropriate tourism policy and systematic research and as well as inefficient marketing management led to a hesitant policy in tourism (Karavatzis, 2008; Moutafi-Galani, 2004; Wickens, 2005). As a result, Athens has limited potential to become a competitive cultural destination in comparison to Rome.

When it comes to the construction of iconic buildings as a branding method, the New Acropolis Museum is the most prominent one. The museum has been visited by almost 15 million people ever since its grand opening in 2009. The former museum was located on the Acropolis and its construction was completed in 1874 and it was expanded in 1950. Through excavations archeologists discovered a plethora of new artifacts having as a result the need of constructing additional facilities to both demonstrate and maintain the new findings. Additionally, the access to the museum was limited since it was smaller in size, was lacking facilities and it was not easily accessible for people with disabilities. After various delays, the transfer of the artifacts from the old to the new museum started in 2007 and it lasted four months. The area where the New Acropolis Museum was constructed can be referred to as a "key location" since it serves multiple purposes. Its location lays on the very center of Athens making it accessible from various metro stations, it is only 280 meters away from the Parthenon and just a few minutes away from other ancient monuments in the city. The issue of limited access has ceased to exist, since the architects, museum officials and tourism officials ensured that facilities can be accessible for all visitors, meaning that people with physical

disabilities can still enjoy their touristic experience. Another unique characteristic of the museum, is the glass walls surrounding it, which, although create a visual contrast with the neoclassical buildings of the area, it reflects "the holy rock", making the contrast less evident and the blending process obtainable. Similar to the Louvre Museum and the crystal pyramid, which, although the glass material of the pyramid creates a contrast with the architectural style of the museum, it enhances the image of the museum in total. In the beginning of 2020 further excavations were completed underneath the museum reviling an underground archeological area that is now open to the public. According to the criteria of Müge Riza, Naciye Doratli and Mukaddes Fasli (2012) mentioned above, the New Acropolis Museum has also a positive effect on the quality of life of locals. That is due to the fact that, the economy of the area has been reinforced by the operation of the museum, which was especially helpful during the years of financial crisis the country went through (https://news.gtp.gr/2019/06/05/acropolis-museum-celebrates-10-years-14-5-millionvisitors/?fbclid=IwAR3qx29UhbAhNHkVFchf9EccCyxbwEJG22GGvxcfKmgkvBzKTk2JEn1EFWo). Considering that the construction of the New Acropolis Museum had as a result a series of benefits on the quality of life of locals, the touristic experience and the economy of the overall area, it can be evaluated as successful. According to Khirfan (2010), the New Acropolis Museum "continues Athens' modernization in terms of enriching its cultural tourism product". However, the museum by itself is not enough for fully exploiting the potential of the city's heritage.

Continuing with the construction of iconic buildings as a branding method, the last decade various constructions took place and have somewhat affected in a positive way the city's image and QOL. A great example is the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Foundation completed in 2017, which is located in the southern neighborhoods of Athens. It is a center open to the public where several cultural events take place, since the National Library and National Opera are under the same roof. According to their website, the material used for the design, construction, operation and maintenance, is both sustainable and in agreement with the areas natural characteristics: self-sufficiency regarding their water use and consumption, use of 40% less energy than buildings of the same size and Mediterranean plants that not only help to cool down the temperature of the buildings during summer but are also used as a protective layer during winter. Taking under consideration both the information provided by the center's website, in combination with the theory of Riza,

Dorati and Fasli (2012), although the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Foundation doesn't follow the architectural design of the surrounding buildings, it respects the physical characteristics of the area, it is constructed with sustainable sources, it is free to the public and accessible to all. Thus, it is a building that has a positive effect on the city's image, well being of residents and visitors and it is useful to the city's branding process.

Even though Athens' cultural elements are of high importance and value, they are not adequate enough to create a core destination by themselves, without the assistance of strategic planning. Based on Gkritzali, Gritzali and Stavrou (2017), strategic tourism planning should take under consideration the complex process of branding and globalization, since their interaction can re-construct a city's social conditions or identity. In order to create a fruitful branding plan, Tsartas et al. (2008) state, that "a city like Athens must become a self- sufficient empowered destination with multiple characteristics". Therefore the national policy needs to focus on its developmental, statutory, political, marketing and heritage management assets. According to Asprogerakas (2007), the issue with the case of Athens is that "the management and marketing of the cultural sites seems to be inadequate and unable to reach the potential visitors and revenue". As a capital city Athens has diachronic cultural/heritage assets that with an effective management and marketing plan could be the base for the foundation that would substantially enhance the city's tourism product, improve the city's image, complete its identity and upgrade its status among other capital cities.

2. 4 Analysis of @thisisathens and @athensvibe

The content selected for this research contains photos, captions, comments, hashtags, profile pages and profile biographies through Instagram's application and website. However, it should be noted that there are no tools of profile analysis and observation provided by Instagram, thus all the selected data from both profiles were manually analyzed by scrolling through them. As mentioned above, the collected data will be structure based on Spector's affordances (collaboration, reflection, interaction, dialogue, creativity, organization, inquiry and authenticity) and upon the data analysis, the most relevant posts were selected and in result in this research there will be included 16 photos by print screens. In relation to the analysis of the actual content uploaded in both profiles, the ten categories of Choi will be used.

General information

@thisisathens

Starting with the first profile that belongs to the official tourism office of the municipality of Athens, called "This is Athens" and created in 2014, with 32,5 K followers and 1.185 photos depicting different parts of the city of Athens. It is a page created in order to promote the city and also to provide information about local cultural events, museums and "must" places to visit. Since it is a page catering to tourists the description under the pictures is in English along with the description of the profile itself. As the purpose of this page is to promote the city to tourists, the pictures used depict landmarks that Athens is known for, like for example the Parthenon. The photographs are mostly taken by professionals and are slightly to non- edited/filtered.

@athensvibe

The second profile is a personal blog, also founded in 2014 and owned by a photographer. With 59,5 K followers and 2.585 pictures it is considered to be one of the most famous social media profiles dedicated to Athens. In contrast to @thisisathens there is not a plethora of pictures related to the city's landmarks and one can find more pictures depicting local neighborhoods, shops and flea markets only resident of the city know and go to. In addition there are numerous pictures of graffiti that is not considered high quality street art, which is part of the Athenian reality. Due to the thousands of locals following the page various projects have taken place during the years where people can participate by sending one of their pictures in order to be featured on the page.

Affordances application on the profiles

1. **Collaboration**

This affordance is related to Spector's creativity affordance and is about user generated connect and "working-together". DMOs can use photos uploaded by other media users, in this case Instagram users, and share interesting facts, information and overall knowledge about things related to the destination of interest.

@thisisathens

This is a great example of sharing interesting facts about the city through pictures taken by other users. Here the @thisisathens gives interesting information, unknown to most people regarding the facades of the temples on the Acropolis that used to be colorful instead of white as seen today. When it comes to the picture itself, the Parthenon is depicted, which is expected since it is the main pole of interest in the city.
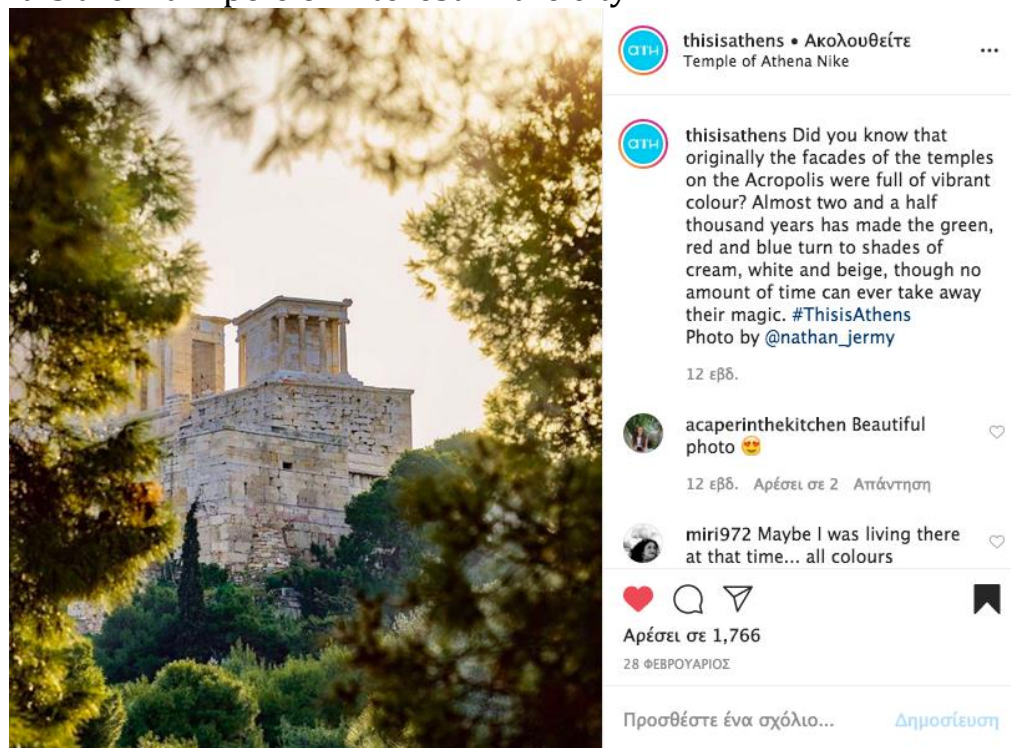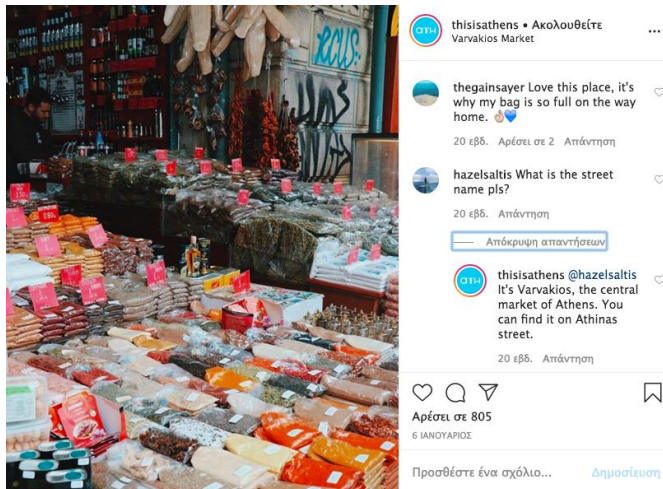

@athensvibe

Although the description here is in Greek, the photo used is sharing information that visitors and possibly locals as well, wouldn't know about the specific location. Walking down that street people actually walk parallel to our different avenues without changing direction. Here they also give a challenge to followers to guess which four avenues are they referring to. In this post a typical neighborhood of Athens is depicted, showing the point of view of locals.
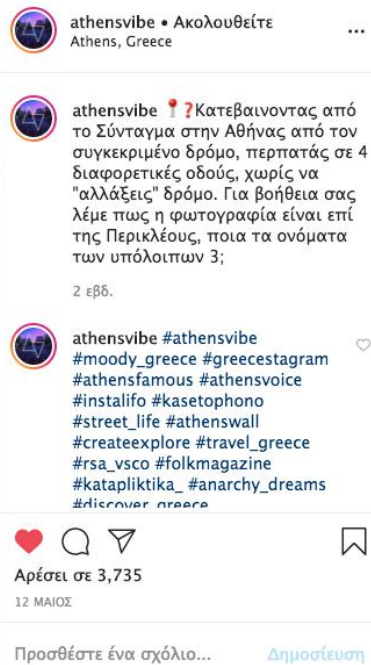
2. Reflection

Reflection relates a bit to inquiry, Spector's other affordance seen below. According to him, the function of reflection is the transformation of situations where experiences are negative in situations where experiences become positive. He continues adding that communication tools like social media offer people the opportunity to reflect or share and discuss ideas and experiences. In this case DMOs can get feedback for their development or answer questions related to the destination.

@thisisathens in the example given below a follower asks about the location of where the photo was taken although it is indicated at the top right of the picture. As an answer they responded with even more analytical directions and they examples what is the function of the depicted place. An important part of locals lives is the main market of Athens, called Varvakios, were locals can get their produce in bulk.

@athensvibe here responds to a followers question about the location of the street depicted in the photo. Anafiotika, as mentioned above is a neighborhood of Athens that is mostly visited by locals, even though lately it has been promoted more. Although it seems quite, usually is full of people and only few lucky ones can get a chance to walk around the streets in peace.

3. Interaction

Interaction is a special affordance when it comes to social media and also relates to Spector's dialogue affordance. Here interaction is done through communication. DMOs can educate people about their city through posts and even feature people's photos. People will get credit for their picture, which gives them a feeling of honor and they will also grow their following. Here one

of the archeological sites of Athens is depicted, called Temple of Olympian Zeus, during sunset hour. Although this picture can be perceived as it is being used to romanticize the city, from the point of view of the residents living near by, this view is a daily event.
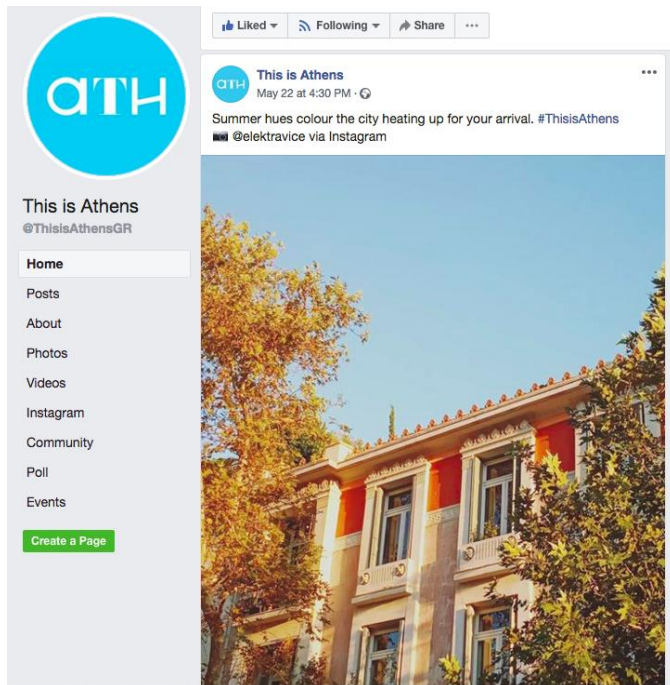
@thisisathens

@athensvibe

As mentioned previously one of the relatively new functions of instagram is the "stories" section, which this profile uses more for interacting with followers. Everyday pictures taken by followers have a chance of being included in the stories with their user name tagged as seen below. Various shopping malls used this type of wire for protection during closing hours and artistic pictures like this, are frequently taken by locals, as seen in the profile in general.
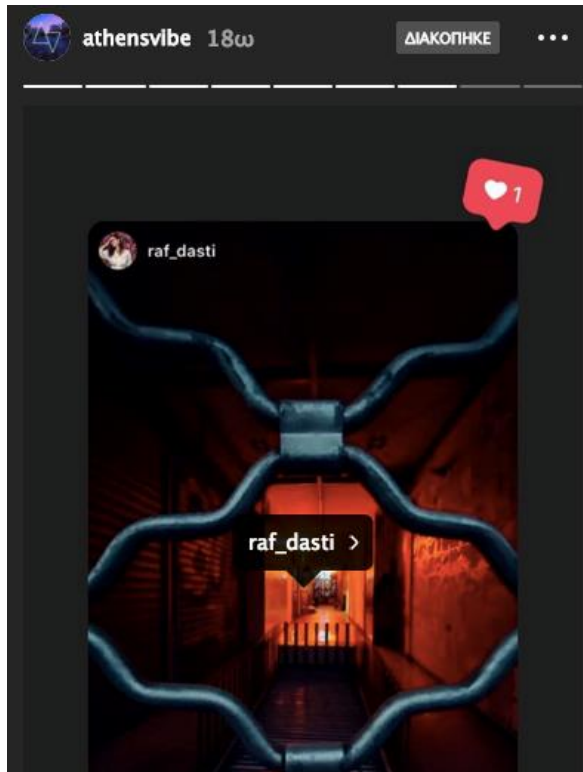
4. Dialogue

Social media offer new forms of dialogue and communication and according to Spector, through communication and information sharing people have the opportunity to interact with people of the same interests. A feature of Instagam that can be used in this case is the "instagram direct" which people use to message each other. Since the access to these messages is limited and they cannot be analyzed for the purpose of this research Spector's information sharing will be used. Instagram does offer the option to share photos on other social media platforms like Facebook and Pinterest. Here both profiles have uploaded a picture of a neoclassical building located in Theseio, an area close to the Museum of Acropolis and it can be visited with ease by all visitors.

@thisisathens on Facebook
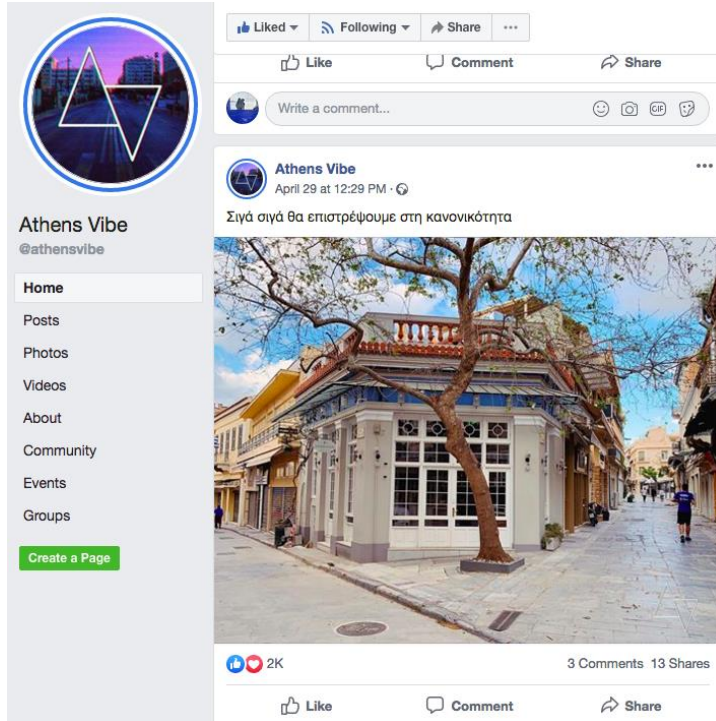
@athensvibe on Facebook

5. Creativity

According to Spector, creativity is related to collaboration due to the fact that "creativity can be achieved by working together" and continues adding that creativity is about making new ideas, forms, methods and interpretations that surpass existing ideas, rules and relationships. Creativity can be promoted by discourses and collaboration and social media can be used in various ways to support the promotion of creativity, since they enable new forms of collaboration and discourse. DMOs can promote their cities through beautiful and creative pictures and share creative photos of their followers as mentioned above.

@thisisathens During the lockdown DMOs had to be even more in touch with their following in order to still attract some tourists after the travel bans have been lifted. Here they created a challenge asking followers to comment under pictures what they wish they were doing if they were in Athens and after the challenge was over they uploaded some of the most liked comments accompanied with pictures of the locations mentioned. This building is located next to the entrance of the Museum of Acropolis. Even though here potential visitors do not get to see how busy this street can get, people can experience it the way it is depicted below in the early morning hours, therefore, a picture that can be characterized as misleading, is indeed depicting a part of Athenian everyday life.
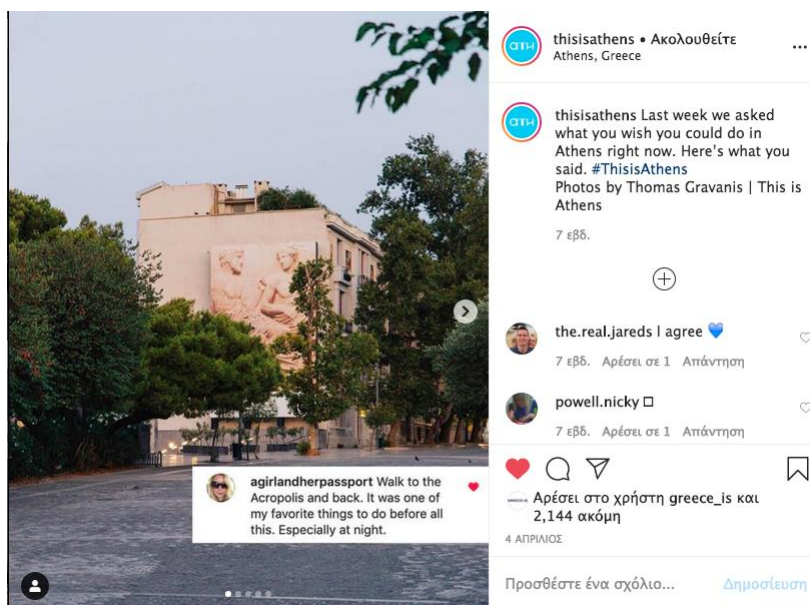
@athensvibe Again at the stories section, there are pictures found of one of the newest projects organized by this profile called " the beautiful buildings of Athens". People could submit photos of buildings that they considered beautiful, preferably of beautiful buildings that are not vastly known by people. The pictures with highest quality and better angle of various buildings were uploaded and stay permanently in the AthensBuildings stories/album of the profile. This challenge gave followers and potential visitors following the page to keep up with life in Athens got to see buildings located in non touristy neighborhoods and get inspired to visit during their next trip.


6. Organization

Organization is the affordance of organizing information in such way that people can have easier access to it. Hashtags is a way in which posts can be organized but a new feature of Instagram called "stories". This feature allows users to upload photos for twenty-four hours and then if they wish to keep them on their profile they can create sections or albums and organize their photos thematically as seen below. This way past, current and future visitors can take a look on photos related to the area they are interested in.

@thisisathens As the official profile of promotion and branding of Athens ,they have created stories/albums with pictures from the most visited locations of the city like for example Monastiraki.

@athensvibe Here there is also content organized according to the challenges done in the profile like the one mentioned above with the buildings throughout Athens.
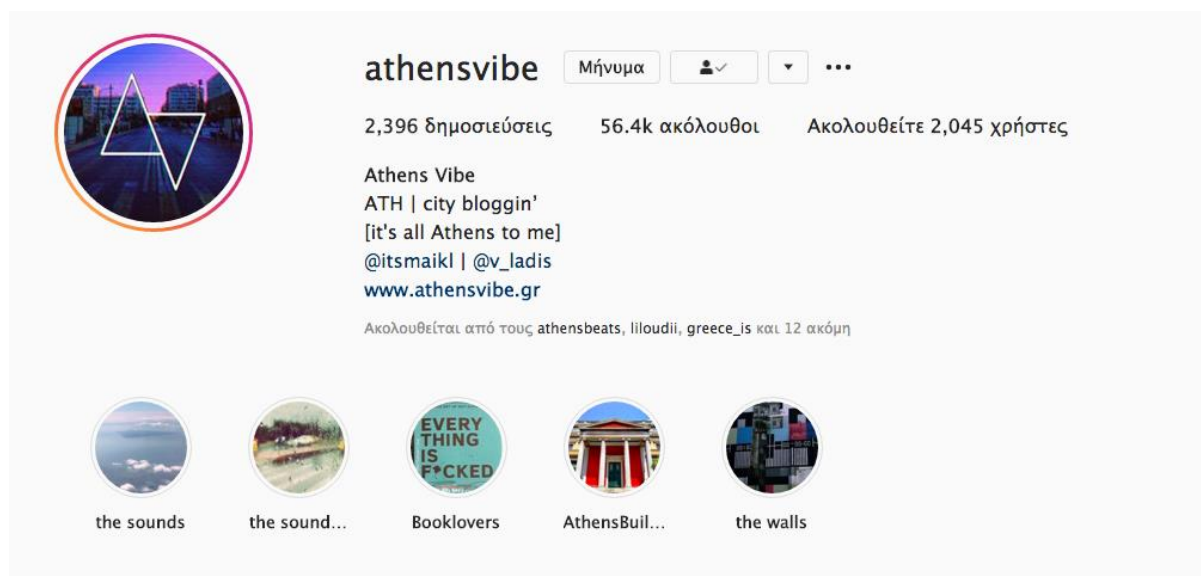
7. Inquiry

This affordance as Spector describes it is focuses on question- driven context is a bit similar to his reflection affordance and is mainly about getting feedback. DMOS can get feedback on their performance, what type of content people are interested in and improve accordingly. This can be done by using the search engine and hashtags and see which are the most popular hashtags related to the destination. However, due to lack of evidence that this affordance actually works when it comes to destination branding is difficult to use. The hashtags used by both profiles are simple and it is just the same as each profiles name, which is easy for followers to remember while they want to tag them in their pictures with a chance to be featured.

8. Authenticity

Spector's affordance of authenticity has to do with action and experimentation and focuses on the fact that there is a difference between reported experience and reality of lived experience. In Instagram and destination branding terms, authenticity can be reached by posting content that hasn't been posted before, not heavily edited and definitely not photoshoped since visitors will be disappointed once on location if what they saw through social media is not the same in reality. In both profiles there are numerous pictures depicting people during their various activities from having a coffee to going to the flea market of their neighborhood, cars, local streets and graffiti which are all included in the everyday life of Athens. @thisisathens uses pictures that are less filtered which is highly appreciated by foreign visitors since they get to see " a real" image of Athens. Whereas @athensvibe uses more pictures with edited colors, usually darkened and more intense than they actually are, however this might how to do with the fact that the owner as photographer has a specific aesthetic.

In contrast to the majority of pictures uploaded by **@thisisathens** that showcase Athens as a city that is not filled with hundreds of annual visitors, this image is one of the few that includes a "busy" street of the city. In the case of **@athensvibe** a typical neighborhood of Athens is depicted, which comes in agreement with the rest of the content and purpose of the page, promoting Athens from the point of view of locals.

@athensvibe

Content Analysis

As seen above, according to Choi (2007), the most adequate method of analysis of visual content is by the categorization of the content based on specific characteristics. This way, researchers can gain a better insight and understanding of how a city is depicted on Instagram (Marwick, 2015). There are ten categories of content classification and each one has a specific set of characteristics, which assists in the categorization process. The categories are: Historic buildings and heritage, which includes ancient palaces, monuments, works of art; Cultural events; Landscape, which is parks, gardens, lakes and the sea; Fashion, which includes traditional or typical clothing and accessories along with shopping centers; Tourism facilities and infrastructure, which includes hotels, museums, touristic attractions; Entertainment, Scenic view; Local cuisine, which includes food, drinks, restaurants, food markets; Recreation and sport; and lastly People and local residents and their everyday life. In addition, these categories are accompanied by specific hashtags that are related to the content of the picture, for instance in the category of historic buildings and heritage the hashtags #archeologicalplace, #history and #culture can be used by the profile owners to categorize the pictures on the platform and make them more discoverable (Azuti, Mazzoli, Donvito and Chan, 2018).

For the purpose of this research these ten categories will be used to investigate the differences and/or similarities of the way Athens is depicted by @thisisathens and @athensvibe through their content. By manually scrolling through the profiles up to their very first post, each picture will be classified in one of the ten categories according to the characteristics mentioned above along with an analysis of their hashtags. In the end, a comparison of the total number of pictures per category will be done in order to conclude which category is more prominent in each profile along with its significance.

Categories	@thisisathens (1,185)	@athensvibe (2,585)
Historic Buildings and Heritage	588	348
Cultural Events	38	25
Landscape	107	224
Fashion	15	5
Tourism Facilities and Infrastructure	83	42

Entertainment	24	68
Scenic View	111	7
Local Cuisine and Dining	133	162
Recreation and Sport	14	20
People and local residents/life	72	1.684

While taking under consideration that the two profiles have a respectful difference on the number of pictures uploaded, an analysis and a comparison of their content can still be done. The content uploaded by the official Instagram profile of the Municipality of Athens, @thisisathens, seems to be mostly related to parts of the city that hold an important role in its tourism industry. The first category that will be discussed is the one that holds the higher number of pictures and almost half of the total number of images uploaded to the profile in general (588), which is related to historic buildings, heritage sites and monuments. As expected, the majority of the images in this category are related to the Acropolis and surrounding archeological areas, since the hold an important role a city's identity and image (McGregor, 2014; Meethan, 2001, Smith, 2003).

Second most popular category, is related to local cuisine and dining and includes pictures of food markets, restaurants, rooftop bars and cafeterias with a view of the Acropolis or other archeological sites of the city's center (133). Two other categories with a high number of pictures that have an affect on the way the city is perceived by potential visitors are scenic view (Kotler and Gertner, 2002) and landscape (Herstein, 2012), with 111 and 107 pictures accordingly. In both categories the pictures had some type of connection to the city's archeological places, either that was a bird eye view of the historic city center or gardens and seaside view close to archeological places. The National Garden is intensively promoted by city officials, since it is close to famous tourist attractions like the Constitution building, the Temple of Zeus and Zappeion Megaro; pictures of the beach close to archeological places located along the Athenian coastal line, like Cape Sounio. The number of images related to tourism facilities and infrastructure, which include museums, galleries, hotels and public transport, was 83. The museums included in this category are the Acropolis Museum and the Benaki Museum, galleries that focus on exhibitions related to Ancient Athens, the biggest and most historic hotel of the city, Grand Bretagne along with Hilton Hotel and the

metro stations were archeological findings are exhibited, like the Acropolis station. The last category with a relatively high number of pictures is related to people and local life, with 72 pictures. Although there were plenty of pictures that present locals on their every day scroll and local meeting points, there was lack of any indication of issues of life in the city, for instance traffic congestion, unattractive neighborhoods, graffiti   or the abandon sports complexes used for the Olympics that can be found allover Athens (Tsartas et al. 2008). However, these issues are an inextricable part of local life, which are also experienced by visitors upon their arrival (Karavatzis, 2008). Thus, the lack of images that depict those issues might create a romanticized image in potential visitors' mind and make room for disappointment (Wickens, 2005), since they will not experience Athens the way they thought they would.

Although aspects of the city regarding cultural events, fashion, entertainment, recreation and sport, play an important role in a city's image, all these four categories had less than 50 pictures each. In the category of Cultural Events, 38 pictures were classified that depicted mostly Christmas and Easter celebrations and less pictures of celebrations of National Holidays like Independence days, which are not well-known to people outside of Greece, thus their depiction might not be considered of high benefit by city officials. In regards to Entertainment, 24 pictures were found related to this category, which depicted concerts of international artists hosted at the Oden of Herodes Atticus, located right bellow the Acropolis and across the Acropolis Museum, hence, here it is also evident that, the pictures chosen to brand the entertainment offered by the city, are also connected to the city's archeological heritage. In the category of Fashion, 15 pictures were classified depicting two fashion shows hosted in Zappeion, by local fashion designers and local shops in the historic neighborhood of Plaka. The last category with the least number of pictures is the related to Recreation and Sport. Here 14 were found, 7 of them depicting the only still functioning stadium of the time of the Olympic Games, OAKA, from various view points and the rest depicting the Panathenaic or Kallimarmaro Stadium, which is used for special events like the Marathon. Since both Cultural Events and Entertainment categories hold fewer number of pictures in comparison to the category of Historical Buildings per say, potential visitors that could come across the profile and wish to use it during their trip for advice or prior to their trip in order to plan/organize their visit, might get the impression that Athens lacks cultural events or entertainment places outside of the spectrum of its ancient identity. Additionally, the repetitiveness in the depiction of the archeological places

and the lack of representative pictures of modern areas of entertainment and culture can be one of the reasons why people continue to perceive Athens as an intermediate destination. Since the archeological center of the city can be visited in one or two days, if city officials aim to prolong the visitor's stay, they need to present Athens as a city that can offer to people a variety of possible experiences. An interesting finding through the analysis of hashtags of the city's official profile was that there were only two types of hashtags used. In pictures depicting people and local life the hashtag #Weareathens was used and on every other picture, despite of the content and the category it belonged to, the hashtag #Thisisathens was used. The lack of hashtags describing the actual content of the pictures might be a reason why, even though this profile is the only official profile dedicated to the city and catering to tourists, has less number of followers (32,5 K) than other official city accounts like for example, @iamsterdam (236 K). Perhaps a more descriptive use of hashtags could assist in growing the profiles following, since hashtags make images, thus profiles, more discoverable (Azuti, Mazzoli, Donvito and Chan, 2018).

On the contrast, the locally owned Instagram profile, @athensvibe, has proportionally more pictures related to the everyday life of locals (1,684). Here, there was a vast variety of pictures that included issues of the life in the city, like traffic jams, graffiti, unpleasant neighborhoods and abandoned Olympic sport centers. The pictures of historic buildings and heritage were 348 and included more pictures of historic neighborhoods than the Acropolis, along with abandon and unexploited heritage sites, like the Palace of the former King of Greece. That perhaps has to do with the fact that, as aforementioned in the research, the selection process of the formulation of the city's identity excluded parts of its history related to a complicated historical and political past (Stavridis, 2008), which, however, locals are fully aware of and could possibly add interest to the potential visitors' travel experience. Landscape pictures were frequently posted, with a total of 224 images. Here local neighborhood parks were mostly captured and fewer pictures of the National Garden, since it is mostly visited by tourists. Images of local cuisine were also frequently uploaded with most pictures being related to local dining areas, bars and cafeterias that can be found in many neighborhoods around the city (162). In this category, what was interesting was the lack of rooftop bars and restaurants with a view of the Acropolis, which came in contrast to the official city profile. The images uploaded to the profile related to entertainment were 68, with concerts, open-air cinemas and theaters being the most popular ones. When it comes to the category of tourism facilities and

infrastructure, 42 pictures were classified here and they depicted the Acropolis Museum, the War Museum, which is dedicated to findings of the two World Wars, the Museum of Cycladic Art and the Museum of Folklore Art. In addition cultural centers and galleries like the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Foundation, which is home to the National Gallery and Library were also posted. One of the categories with a few numbers of pictures (25) was the category of Cultural Events, which included mostly pictures of religious celebrations like Clean Monday, which marks the start of the fasting period for Christian Orthodoxes and Easter, along with celebration ceremonies and parades of the national independence days. As for the category of Recreation and sport (20), here the most popular stadium depicted was the one designed by Calatrava for the Olympic Games and it is the only one still at use. Lastly, the two categories with the least number of pictures are Scenic View and Fashion, with 7 and 5 pictures accordingly. The possible lack of equipment that could provide a bird eye view of places of the city, could be a reason why the local photographer has not been able to capture such images. Lastly, the few images found related to Fashion, could be explained by the fact that, Athens has not be presented as a city with a rich fashion industry, however, the last couple of years efforts have been made by local designers to introduce that aspect of modernity to the city's identity.

By the comparison of the content of the profiles and aforementioned academic research, it is evident that, city officials through @thisisathens present and brand Athens as a city with a rich archeological identity and cultural heritage (Boukas, Boustras and Ziakas, 2012), which is undeniable, however, they exclude the depiction of modern or dark parts of the city that are not directly connected or somehow related to the city's historic past (Stavridis, 2008). In comparison to the @athensvibe, which has as a primary goal to represent and present all the parts of the Athenian identity, through the capture of images related to different and contradicting aspects of the city's life.

3. Interview analysis

The interviews will be analyzed with the principals of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative tool used to identify, analyze and interpret information (Christiane Schmidt, 2004). Schmidt categorizes this guide of analysis in four sections: data review, creation of initial coding (identification and naming of themes), review of coding and lastly presentation of themes in a cohesive manner.

The guiding principle in this analysis is the interchange of material and prior theoretical knowledge, which doesn't only begin when the data are available in a transcribed form, but also at the beginning of the data collection. During this process theoretical pre-assumptions may be refined, questioned and altered. The analytical categories formed can be determined during an intensive and repeated reading of the material, meaning the transcribed interviews. The researcher's prior theoretical knowledge and the research questions guide the attention in the reading of the transcripts. Based on Schmidt " taking under account the openness of the interviews, it is important not simply to take over the formulations from the questions that were asked, but to consider whether the interviewees actually take up these terms, what the terms mean to them, which aspects they supplement, which they omit and what new topics actually turn up in the collected data". In this first approach to the material the interviews should not be compared, however, it is useful for the following stages of the analysis to note any similarities and differences. The aim is to note occurring topics and their individual aspects, which can be related to the research question(s).

While analyzing the interviews, three themes were acknowledged. The first one being the " Contradictory Image of Athens ", which had no subthemes, followed by the second theme, which was named " Touristic Experience". This theme includes to subthemes the positive touristic experience and the negative one. The last one was named " City Branding through Instagram", with no subthemes.

Theme 1 " The Contradictory Image of Athens Through Media"

Upon the familiarization of data, it became noticeable that both interviewees mentioned that the way the media presented Athens is one-sided. To be more specific, during the years of financial crisis Athens was presented in a way that the negative aspects of the city were the main focus of the media.

J.: " I was surprised actually in a good way! I was expecting a different image you know like the one you see on the news all the time but actually it was not like that."
"Yes like the whole crisis thing of course affected people but I didn't see anyone begging for money or being rude towards us. Also sure some streets felt unsafe I am not going to lie but that happens in every big city or capital. Some streets are

safe some not, that's reality. Also like, not every street is dirty or not every one is using drugs on bright daylight."
"People just need to always keep in mind that there are nice and ugly parts in cities in general."
" The last decade with the crisis there are some news channels that promote only the problematic areas and negative sides of the city... but there are two sides on each coin in everything right?"
" I just wish media stopped presenting the city as they do cause I was expecting something really different and I was actually not excited visiting so now every time a person I know has second thoughts about visiting I just tell them not to think about it and book their trip".

Based on the extract above, J. talks about what was presented to her through media in contrast to what she saw for herself upon visitation. Media as one of the most used sources of information can highly affect people's opinions and views; even for things or situations they have yet to experience (Hansen, T., 2020). To be more specific, media grabbed on the crisis and focused on the negative aspects of city life, which exist in cities worldwide. For example, media made it seem as if Athens was a low quality and unsafe area to live and travel to, it was lacking facilities and people begging for money were found everywhere (Tzanelli & Korstanje, 2016). When cities are presented in such one-dimensional way, it has inevitably a negative effect. If future visitors have a negative image of a city in their minds, chances are they will choose another destination, or they will be hesitant upon their visit. The same happened to the case of the interviewee herself. Interestingly, although she had a negative image of Athens in her mind that changed when she experienced the city for herself, since as she stated she "*was surprised actually in a good way!".*

Similar views were shared from the local interviewee.

Dionysis: "Athens is a safe city to go to go to even though the media used the crisis to make it seem otherwise. As in any other city no matter the size there are places where illegal activity happens. I am not happy with that, or any other Athenian for that matter but it is the reality. With a simple Google search you can see where people advise you not to go to as a tourist".
"...enjoy the beautiful things Athens can offer despite all the issues. No city is perfect...Again same with Paris. Not all streets and neighborhoods are safe and yet people travel and enjoy their time there either way, they are just being cautious".

Surprisingly enough, both the foreign visitor and the local agreed on the fact that the image the media created during the years of crisis was misleading. To expand more on this topic, the second interviewee, who is a local resident of Athens, got to experience the crisis on a daily basis and his opinion regarding the city was formulated through personal experiences and not only through the media. This gave him the advantage of seeing and experiencing Athens from a real point of view. He also stated that Athens is just as any other city hence it is a city with safe and unsafe, pleasant and unpleasant places to go to. He concludes that potential visitors should "...*enjoy the beautiful things Athens can offer despite all the issues. No city is perfect*".

As a conclusion of this part, it can be stated that media can significantly influence people's opinion about a destination, Athens being a great example of this phenomenon.

Theme 2 " Touristic Experience"

The second most frequent theme was the Touristic Experience, subdivided in positive and negative. Both participants shared their experiences and opinions regarding Athens as a destination and what the city can offer to visitors.

2.1 Positive Touristic Experience

As far as the positive touristic experience is concerned, rich cultural heritage (Brent & Zins), hospitality (Riley 2016) and a variety in visitation places are the main aspects.

J.: " I liked the museum a lot! It is a big museum, nice open space, interesting exhibitions; minimal aesthetics and I really liked the language options in the audio tours... Also I enjoyed seeing the actual Acropolis right across the museum."
"People were very helpful and nice, which was very important to me and it made up for all the negative things heard about the people of Athens".
"I hope I can go again and this time I will make sure to visit more places".

When it comes to the positive aspects of the foreign visitor's touristic experience, the two most known monuments of Athens, the Acropolis and the

Museum of Acropolis, marked her experience. She specifically said that she liked the museum's open space, interesting exhibitions, aesthetics and language options which, evidently left her with a very nice impression of the city's museum. Adding to that, being able to see the Acropolis from the museum made her experience even more enjoyable. Another positive aspect of her touristic experience was her interaction with locals. The fact that locals were as she stated, " very helpful and nice", balanced out all the negative bias she had prior to her visit. After having an overall positive experience, she concluded that revisiting Athens is in her future plans adding more sites and locations to her "must –visit" list.

Dionysis: "I know it is a cliché but the Parthenon…but with all honesty, the Parthenon is worth visiting and will not disappoint anyone that chooses to do so".

Based on the extract above, it can be noticed that the opinions of the two participants align once more. Specifically, they both mentioned that the Parthenon and as an extent the museum hosting the artifacts found there, are two places of great importance. This great importance stems from the fact that these two sites hold an important role in the promotion of cultural heritage of the city and can greatly enhance the touristic experience. As expressed by the local interviewee, "*the Parthenon is worth visiting and will not disappoint anyone that chooses to do so".*

2.2 Negative Touristic Experience

In this part of the thematic analysis, information about the components that created a negative touristic experience have been gathered, including the inadequacy of existing touristic packages and lack of infrastructure.

J. : "Yes and it is frustrating! I booked that tour cause it was interesting but now I see so many locations I would rather visit and I am disappointed. I feel like I didn't get to see a lot of things in these two days".
" I would have organized my trip using that page and ignore the tour the travel agency organized and gave us. Also I would spend more days".
" …I would say that even two are not enough. I know people sometimes, like I did book packaged tours that include other places but now I would say just add one more day. Three days, still not enough, considering all the places I just saw but in case some people are not interested in visiting all of them, three days are good".

While analyzing the text above, one factor that created dissatisfaction and resulted to a negative touristic experience, was the inadequacy of the chosen touristic package. Although the package seemed interesting, as stated by J., it is apparent that the package she chose was outdated and limited as far as visitation areas and time dedicated to the city, are concerned. Through the Instagram part of the interview, she came across visitation points that drew her attention and wished she had visited, making her feel frustrated and disappointed of the package she booked. She also stated that the days dedicated to the city were not enough in order to experience all the things Athens can offer. After realizing that there are so many areas to visit which obliviously require extra time, she stated that she would have stayed longer, organized the trip herself and ignored the schedule the packaged tour offered.

J.: *"I would most definitely improve the sidewalks because in the most part it was difficult to walk without having to walk on the street on one point or another".*
"The other thought is more commute. Make commute more frequent and tourist friendly".

When J. was asked as a visitor to give her opinion regarding needed improvements the municipality of Athens should make, she stated that the improvement of sidewalks should *"most definitely"* be planned along with more frequent and tourist friendly commute. Lack of infrastructure holds an important role in someone's touristic experience, since issues like transportation (Khadaroo & Boopen, 2007) from one site to another can become difficult and walking around a city where sidewalks are not maintained has as a result an unpleasant and uncomfortable experience. Based on the research conducted by Adeola, Ogechi and Evans published in 2019, it is of great significance for a city to have well functional infrastructure due to the fact that it strengthens tourism.

Although the second interviewee is a local resident and has not experienced Athens from a touristic point of view, he is aware of the insufficient touristic packages that exist.

Dionysis : *"…one or two or even three days are not enough to see what Athens has to offer. One day is not even enough to go to all the museums or to all the outdoor locations that are worth visiting".*

Agreeing with the foreign visitor, he also stated that the existing touristic packages offer a limited amount of choices of visitation places and can be characterized by time shortage. Although not all existing packages are similar to the one chosen by the foreign visitor, it can be understood that all packages should be up to date with what the city has to offer, so that every tourist regardless of the packages has a positive and complete experience.

What was unexpected to be found, was that both interviewees had a similar opinion on the aspect of lack of infrastructure and the negative effect that has on the visitor's experience.

Dionysis: "Even as a local the quality of life here needs a lot of improvement so I can imagine how tourists experience it. Transportation is awful.... not friendly for people with disabilities...".
"People coming from countries where such issues are non-existent, of course will be disappointed"

When the local interviewee was asked about whether or not he was satisfied with the touristic experience visitors have, he stated that he understands the frustration and possible dissatisfaction of visitors when encountering with the lowered quality of public transport and the poorly maintained public spaces. Not only such issues have a negative effect on the quality of life of residents but also negatively affect the touristic experience of " *people coming from countries where such issues are non – existent*". He concludes that such issues set the grounds for disappointment and could lead to a negative touristic experience.

Theme 3 "City Branding via Instagram"

Since one of the main components of this research was Instagram and its use for branding Athens, both interviewees gave their opinion on the content of the two Instagram accounts used in this research.

J.: "Like I had no idea these places are in Athens. There are so many pictures of places that seem so cool to visit".
"Um well there are no pictures of the "ugly" parts of the city but no official tourism page would include such pictures".
"I don't find it romanticized, there is just a specific aesthetic..."

"…but some people could be interested in seeing a typical neighborhood of Athens and see what locals do and where do they go…Personally I wouldn't use it".
"I think that they could definitely be benefited if they check out these pages and it will surly encourage them to visit".
"The pages I checked out today are definitely worth following and I think they do a great job promoting the city…".

The initial reaction of the foreign visitor when presented with the content of the official Instagram profile of the municipality of Athens, can be described as enthusiastic. While scrolling through the page, she found pictures of places she wished she had visited and stated that as a tourist she would have used the page to organize her trip. This indicates that this page fulfills its purpose, meaning promoting Athens and facilitating future visitors regarding their trip. She also indicated that she was unaware of the variety of Athenian scenery, since she specifically stated that she *"…had no idea these places are in Athens".* While contemplating more on the content of the page, she supported that the places she had visited were not presented in a romanticized way and she normalized the fact that for marketing purposes, unflattering or problematic areas are not included in the promotion process. When it comes to the planning of her trip, the unofficial profile did not comply with her preferences, however she would have used it as hobby inspiration, that being photography. Moreover, she acknowledged the fact that, the unofficial page could possibly benefit people interested in seeing and experiencing Athens from a local point of view. Although the profiles have a different orientation and are catering to different audiences, they are of equal importance. She concludes that both profiles promote the city in a useful to the potential visitor way, without excluding locals from this process, making the branding of Athens both realistic and inclusive.

In contrast to the previous themes, here apart from some common points of view, a contrast in opinions between the two interviewees was observed.

Dionysis: "I do see a lot of pictures dedicated to the city's archeological places…I mean that is what Athens is known for and what sells".
"…of course they will not show the rough areas or the ugly parts because that doesn't sell and it is marketing and promotion and branding we are talking about…"

"The pictures here feel more familiar in a way. It is the local point of view…It is the non-stereotypical side, the everyday life type of feed."

"…But I do believe that people who like Athens and want to keep in touch with the city and its locals and its vibe…should follow the page and use it in as an inspiration for the pictures they will take during their next visit."

"I just suggest tourists follow the official profile that gives the information too and then once in Athens for inspiration and afterwards in case they really like the city, they can follow the other profile."

While the local interviewee was observing the content of the official profile, his concluding opinion was that he was already expecting to see a more intense promotion of the city's archeological sites, like the Parthenon, since "*that is what Athens is known for and what sells".* One of the mutual points amidst the two interviewees was that the official profile dedicated to the branding of Athens, does not include pictures of the " ugly" parts of the city, as it does not serve its marketing purposes. A main difference was spotted when it comes to their personal preferences. As expected the foreign visitor had a strong preference towards the official profile, as it caters to tourists, whereas the local interviewee, had a preference towards the unofficial and locally owned profile, which created a feeling of familiarity. Although such difference was spotted, it cannot be described as unnatural. As both interviewees stated, both profiles refer to different audiences, therefore, it is expected from a local resident to feel more familiar with a non- touristic content and a tourist to feel more comfortable with touristic oriented context. In spite of the slight difference of preference they both concluded that the two profiles are worth following and can act as a mean of generating touristic information.

 Conclusion

The aim of this qualitative research, that applied thematic analysis, was to investigate the differences and/or similarities on the way Athens is being branded via the official Instagram page of the Municipality of Athens and a local, hence a less known and non-touristy Instagram profile, according to a recent visitor and a local. In order to execute this investigation in a successful way, certain individual researches were conducted regarding related aspects, such as city branding overall and city branding via Instagram in specific.

To be more precise, city branding and the methods used to achieve it, were researched, due to the fact that they hold an extremely important role in the formulation of perception of destinations in peoples' minds. Apart from city branding, place branding and country branding were explained in order to understand the touristic generation and growth that correct branding could offer. Therefore, terms including, the quality of life, promotion and marketing were included to this qualitative research. Additionally, with a view to create a more complete and in depth research, certain sections including the city's identity and formulation of image were established in order to make a connection amidst the development of Athens to what it is known for today. Regardless of the publicity that Athens as a destination holds, technological means are used on a daily basis with a view to promote the city and its various locations that are worth visiting, such as slogans, brochures, television and social media in order to create an approachable touristy destination. Instagram was the platform of choice, due to its undeniable influence in the tourism industry which was caused by its great growth over the past years and creation of new opportunities in the industry, such as place branding. A main component of this study was the section regarding its branding process that can be achieved via photos. To be more specific, the research concluded to the fact that there is a direct connection amidst the images of a city and the actual branding of the city, since images, especially in the modern society are deemed as extremely important means of sharing information and visual stimuli. Therefore an analysis of visual content was conducted. The two profiles, "This is Athens", followed by "Athens Vibe", were presented to accordingly two participants who stated their opinion about the branding of the city through the content of these profiles, while taking part in semi-structured interviews. Prior to the analysis of the interviews, the theory of affordances interpreted by Spector, was added to the research given the fact that its focus on what an environment can provide, along with Instagram, its audience, its images and the process of city branding, created a sufficient combination; the significance of this theory was explained based on the way in which a place is being promoted nowadays via social media, such as Instagram by both DMO'S and citizens. Therefore the theory of affordances was significant since it presented a more complete framework for the research. Additionally, an analysis of the actual content of both profiles was done through the application of the theory of content analysis of social media established by Choi. Apart from the significant information drawn by the theoretical framework of this research, the analytical part of the interviews and their corresponding analysis also offered insightful conclusions about

how Athens is being both presented and perceived from different perspectives. To be more specific, the approach of thematic analysis offered certain themes that were categorized after their screening process. The three main themes, were defined as "The Contradictory Image of Athens through Media", the "Touristic Experience", subdivided into "negative" and "positive" and lastly, the "City Branding via Instagram". All the three themes, including their subthemes offered critical conclusions, including the one of the misleading image of Athens that had been established abroad, due to the financial crisis. Both participants evidently stated that this negative financial event affected in a bad way the image of Athens, however the outcome of this theme referred to the minimal influence that this crisis actually had on tourism and how Athens actually is. This conclusion is of high importance since it encompasses the influence that media can have and how easy of a process it is for an individual, to formulate an unrealistic opinion/image about people, situations/places, even though this individual does not have any firsthand experiences with the aforementioned. Additionally, another image-oriented outcome that was produced via the interviews and the analysis is that, even though, the two Instagram profiles followed a different approach as far as the promotion and branding of Athens is concerned, both interviewees stated that their distinct approaches are equally important and resourceful; otherwise stated, an insightful conclusion would be to mention that, a city, which is in this case Athens, can be and is in fact multi-dimensional, hence a visitor should be provided with a variety of options to choose upon personal preference. Therefore, these Instagram profiles and Instagram in general, can be indeed described as an accurate, efficient and strong tool for city branding and promotion. As far as the other theme is concerned, both interviewees who had a different cultural background interestingly expressed quite similar opinions regarding the aspects that add up to positive touristic experience and the aspects that have the exact opposite outcome. To be more specific, they both expressed their linking towards great monuments, including the Acropolis and the Acropolis museum and also referred to the significance of hospitality for an overall positive touristic experience. On the contrary, both the foreign and the local interviewee referred to situations related to infrastructure that affect negatively tourists that visit Athens, especially if this negative touristic experience is enhanced by the fact that several touristic packages do not give the opportunity to visitors to actually experience Athens, and all the places this city has to offer. In other words, this theme offered several information that are thought provoking, with regards to future research about how improvements regarding the infrastructure of a city,

along with an up to date touristic package can eventually formulate a positive touristic experience.

After an in depth research on the matter of city branding along with its components, a visual analysis and an analysis of the interviews were conducted, it was concluded that the are various differences between the way Athens is branded and depicted through the two Instagram profiles. The main difference was regarding the fact that the official profile of the Municipality of Athens selectively focuses on depicting and branding the ancient parts of the city's identity, giving the impression to potential visitors that Athens is a mainly historic city. On the contrast the locally owned profile depicts and brands Athens as a not only historic city but also as a modern and globalized city regardless of the issues that accompany that modernity. When it comes to the similarities of the way the two profiles brand the city, it was concluded that both profiles present Athens as a culturally rich city with an equally rich landscape. Additionally, even though that the two pages that were presented to the participants, had noticeable differences amidst them, they both managed to depict, promote, brand and reinforce Athens as a touristic destination since, according to the statements of the participants, it is a destination that is worth visiting. Further more, it was also concluded that this antithesis on the content of the two pages actually had, based on the analysis, a positive impact on the branding of Athens since this differentiated promotion of the city, essentially referred to a variety of audiences, increasing in that way the amount of tourists that can start becoming invested and interested in exploring Athens, after having received the stimuli of correct and adequate branding.

To efficiently conclude this qualitative research, it is of great significance to refer to ideas for future research, either from a qualitative perspective or from a quantitative perspective. When taking under consideration the great history that Athens as city has, along with the great need of the city for development and evolution, it would be rather insightful to conduct studies that focus on how civilians of Athens are experiencing the lack of infrastructure and whether the mesmerizing sites of Athens can make up for the structural downsides that the city includes. Additionally, given the fact that the great influence of social media, and especially Instagram was acknowledged, it would be interesting to compare media platforms in order to see if a social media platform whose core is not visual stimuli, would be equally efficient at promoting a city.

Appendices

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Appendix 2 Table of Themes

Theme 1	Participant	Extract
Contradictory Image of Athens Through Media	J.	I have seen some videos on Facebook and Youtube about that and I was a bit scared and hesitant on going but once I got there again, some streets are like this some not, like in every city. I don't know why people make such a big issue out of it. Such problems are in every city not just Athens... And having as a comparison London and New York and even Rotterdam where my brother stays at, it was just like that. People just need to be realistic.
	J.	I think it was called Ominia – Omonia something like that. In the reviews I read before booking they said it is not a nice or safe area to be but it was cheap so we went for it. Actually it wasn't that bad. Not the prettiest area but it was ok.
	Dionysis	Yes, um personally when I visit another city, I walk around a lot and eat at local places and do what locals do and I advise people that want to visit Athens to do the same. Touristy places are nice; people go there for a reason but also it is worth experiencing the local life to get an inclusive opinion about the place and always keeping their

		safety in mind and be realistic with their expectations.
Theme 2		
Touristic Experience		
Subtheme 1. Positive Experience	J.	I did the tour in Dutch and my dad and brother in Chinese, which was nice it was easier for them.
	J.	I know two days are not enough for big cities or capitals that have a historic center and stuff but some of these I can see that are close to the Acropolis so it wouldn't make a huge difference time wise to go there. As long as you know that they are there!
	J.	No nooo God no. One day who does that?! No, I would say that even two are not enough.
	Dionysis	Athens can offer a complete experience to people that will keep them satisfied as long as they give the city a chance and stay longer than 24 hours
Subtheme 2. Negative Experience	J.	Also more green. A looooooots of green. The mountain was like brown- gray, which I think it's a pity it would have been so beautiful to see that entire area full on green like here in the Netherlands. I know the weather is different that is a huge factor in plant growth but other places were green so I think that can be too.

	J.	try to do something with the people that are doing illegal stuff, which I mean you can not do a lot…
	Dionysis	Don't get me started on that. It is a huge issue. It doesn't have to do with the climate, which is something that I hear a lot since people compare Athens with Paris for example. It has to do with the fact that people in charge don't care.
	Dionysis	I have seen what typical tourist packages offer. There are so many things that they don't include.. There are palaces in forests people can go to, tours under Athens where you can see anything from ancient ruins that didn't make it to the surface to churches and war tunnels. Going to the beach is not something that can be done only to the islands; it just takes a little bit more personal research before they visit.
	Dionysis	Ask any Athenian what they think about the streets, public spaces in general and public transport and you will see that no one will be happy about the way things work.
Theme 3 City Branding Via Instagram	J.	So, I mean, wow are all these places in Athens. It looks really nice for an Instagram photo! I wish I knew that.

	J.	Definitely! There are so many places I see here. Plus my hobby is photography and I would love to be able to take photos of these places I see here.
	J.	I preferred the other one better. I could have it as an alternative and inspiration when it comes to photos but not for organizing my trip.
	J.	Um as I said I do see a lot of street art and that is definitely more realistic and there are a lot of pictures of neighborhoods that are visited I guess only by locals, I don't see anything interesting. Like I wouldn't go there since I can't see anything interesting from a touristic point of view
	J.	so maybe they could try to get more followers and become more known or verified by Instagram so more people get to find out the things Athens has to offer and how it actually is.
	Dionysis	There are a lot of pictures of places that are not located at the center and they are at any of the suburbs, which I think is both positive and negative.
	Dionysis	Because people might hesitate to go since transportation is not the greatest and out of convenience I suppose they will not go. There

		are not many times where I have been out and see tourists in the south suburbs or any of the suburbs for that matter. But it is good because people coming across the profile and seeing the options the have and places to go that are not at the center possibly can choose to stay more than two days which is something that I feel like people in charge of the tourism of the city want to achieve. Keep tourists longer in Athens before they go to the islands by adding places and activities and spread them throughout the province.
	Dionysis	I think that comparing to other cities Athens is not branded enough abroad or not in a correct way. The way people have Athens, as a destination in their minds is an intermediate stop before they go to the islands. Of course there is nothing wrong with going to the islands but honestly
	Dionysis	Also the pictures are filtered I can tell whereas in the previous profile if there was any editing I couldn't tell. The pictures are alternative, artistic… postmodern one can say. There are more pictures representing the urban side, the chaos that is definitely a part of local life and not many pictures of the Acropolis or museums and other

		places tourists go to.
	Dionysis	Well this page represents the local point of view. And that cannot be perceived by tourists maybe if they visit Athens again and again then they might understand the feeling this pictures create to locals.
	Dionysis	I think most Athenians have a love- hate relationship with Athens. Myself I like to see places through pictures used to promote the city to tourists and also through the eyes of locals. I like the archeological places and I walk around the historical part of Athens and I enjoy that the same way I enjoy the street art that is not something that is depicted in the official profile.

Appendix 3 Interview Schedule

On the beginning of the interview both participants will be given a brief introduction of the matter of city branding and its various aspects and will be asked to follow the two profiles of interest. Each participant had a set of questions according to their individual characteristics.

Questions of Foreign Visitor Interview

1. Why did you visit Athens? Was it a specific reason related to the country's culture or other reasons?

2. When did you go? And why did you choose that specific time period?

3. What did you expect before your visit? Were things as expected once you were there?

4. Do you think the media present a different image than the one you saw?

5. Where did you go? Which places did you visit?

6. Did someone recommend them to you or did you choose the specific places by yourself?

7. Where was your hotel located at?

8. So the two days you were in Athens the only recommendations they gave you were the Acropolis Museum, Acropolis and the National Library and University?

9. Which one did you like the most and which one you found that if you haven't visited it wouldn't make any difference in your experience?

10. Do you have anything else you would like to add regarding your experience?

At this point the interviewee needed 10 minutes to scroll the page before we could move on to the rest of the questions.

11. If you knew that this place is open for visitors would you go?

12. Do you see more places that fall under that category? That if you knew about them you would make time to visit?

13. As a recent visitor, would you use that page to organize another trip to Athens?

14. The places you did visit, do you think they are represented in a realistic way through this page in your opinion?

15. Do you think there is an overall realistic representation of the city or is it "romanticized"?

Here the interviewee needed 10 minutes to scroll down the profile before we moved on to the rest of the interview.

16.   Would you use that page as an advice or guide for your next trip?

17.   Do you see places you didn't know existed like with the other page?

18.   Do you find these images more realistic than the ones before?

19.   Do you think that the way Athens is represented in those pages could be eye opening for people that have a false perception of the city's state?

20.   Would you say that is enough since you did stay two days yourself?

21.   In your opinion, is Athens promoted enough?

22.   As a visitor, if you could suggest the municipality of Athens to change three things about the city, which ones would they be and why?

Questions of Local interview

1. Where were you born and how long did you live in Athens?

2. When you lived there and when you visit home, how often do you go to the center of Athens?

3. As a local do you find that this division exists in a non- geographical context?

4. When it comes to the branding and touristic promotion of Athens are you as a local satisfied with it?

5. What do you think is lacking in the promotion of the city that has created such misconception in the minds of tourists?

6. Are you content with the quality of experience tourists get to have in Athens?

7. In the interview with a recent visitor she said that except from the public transport that you addressed already, lack of greenery was also something that she believes is an issue. What is your opinion on that?

8. You said before that Athens has a lot to offer to tourists but it is not known and people in charge do not promote it. Can you elaborate on that?

9. In your opinion, which place people most definitely must visit and why?

At this point of the interview, the participant scrolled through the profile for ten minutes before the interview continued.

10. What is your first impression when it comes to the content?

11. Do you think that this profile could assist a potential visitor to plan their stay in a successful way?

Here the interviewee needed 15 minutes to scroll down the page before the interview continued.

12. Do you think a tourist will benefit by following that page?

13. Previously you mentioned that you already follow both profiles, why both?

14. In your opinion, the future construction plans that are and will take place in Athens will have a positive effect on Athens?

15. Which profile do you think depicts Athens in a more realistic way so that people know what to expect upon their visit?

Appendix 4 Complete Interviews

Considering the current situation with coronavirus and respecting everyone's safety, the scheduled interviews were done through video call with the help of the two interviewees in order to complete this research. The interviews are qualitative with open questions and both local and recent visitor were presented with a brief explanation of what is city branding before moving on

to their personal experience and input followed by a presentation of the two Instagram profiles mentioned above dedicated to the city of Athens for further discussion.

1. Foreign visitor interview

Lucy: Hello! How are you?

J.: Hi! I am good! Man this is so weird! I was so looking forward to meet up and talk and have some coffee but I guess times are changing and we have to do a lot of adjustment. How are you holding up?

Lucy: I know right? I am good, just stressed over the thesis and everything going on with restaurants now but I am trying to be productive to keep my mind busy! Thank you so much for making time and effort to help me with this research!

J.: Oh time is all I have these days so why not help someone out and socialize at least this way.

Lucy: We do have a lot of time now but motivation to do stuff is another thing!

J.: I know I have also been lacking in motivation and I procrastinate adulting as much as possible but this was a fun project and not an obligation and I was kind of excited to talk about Athens since it was my last trip before this freaking lockdown and travel restrictions and what not.

Lucy: Ok lets get this started shall we? First of all I have to let you know that this interview will be used in my master thesis research about the city branding of Athens, if at any point during the interview you want to stop or at the end you don't want me to use the interview you can let me know.

J.: Sure you can use it otherwise what is the point of doing it?

Lucy: I don't know people change their minds so I have to give you the option and do whatever with it. Now, since I can't physically show you the things a have planned I will need you to follow two Instagram profiles to have them handy when we get to that part of the interview.

J.: Ok which ones?

Lucy: The "This is Athens" and "Athens Vibe".

J.: Ok I followed them both.

Lucy: Ok before we start with the questions I will briefly introduce you to city branding to have a general idea of theme of this research.

J.: Ok.

Lucy: City branding is essentially the way city stakeholders and tourism officials promote and brand a city in order to attract more tourists. Some branding techniques that you are familiar with are TV commercials and spots, posters, slogans and one that you have certainly seen before the worldwide famous "I am Amsterdam" sign.

J.: I have been there of course! I have taken pictures and honestly I was lucky there were so many people that day it was absurd.

Lucy: It is one of the most successful branding methods used by a city in the world. And, fun fact, many cities worldwide have copied or better say adopted that method.

J.: I didn't know it was so successful that they use it in other cities too. That's cool!

Lucy: Yeah, I mean there were so many people form all over the world that wanted to visit Amsterdam for that reason. Are you ready to start with the questions?

J.: Lets do it!

Lucy: Grab your coffee and lets start! So, I will start with the obvious question, why did you visit Athens? Was it a specific reason related to the country's culture or other reasons?

J.: Well I have created a list of capital or big cities around the world that I want to visit and I try to check out as many as possible out every year. In 2019

I went to New York and London before going to Athens. I did like mythology when I was little so that was the main reason of why Athens was on my list.

Lucy: When did you go? And why did you choose that specific time period?

J.: I went in October with my brother and my dad, we choose October cause it was cheaper for a family of three and also the weather was still warm but not to the point of sweating all the time and a bit chilly but not like cold or raining and non of us can stand warm weather but we did want a break from the Dutch October weather.

Lucy: What did you expect before your visit? Were things as expected once you were there?

J.: I was surprised actually in a good way! I was expecting a different image you know like the one you see on the news all the time but actually it was not like that.

Lucy: Do you think the media present a different image than the one you saw?

J.: Yes like the whole crisis thing of course affected people but I didn't see anyone begging for money or being rude towards us. Also sure some streets felt unsafe I am not going to lie but that happens in every big city or capital. Some streets are safe some not, that's reality. Also like, not every street is dirty or not every one is using drugs on bright daylight. I have seen some videos on Facebook and Youtube about that and I was a bit scared and hesitant on going but once I got there again, some streets are like this some not, like in every city. I don't know why people make such a big issue out of it. Such problems are in every city not just Athens… And having as a comparison London and New York and even Rotterdam where my brother stays at, it was just like that. People just need to be realistic.

Lucy: That is indeed an interesting point you make. No matter the size of the city some areas are safer than others. Where did you go? Which places did you visit?

J.: I went to the Acropolis Museum, the actual Acropolis and walked outside of the National Library and University.

Lucy: Did someone recommend them to you or did you choose the specific places by yourself?

J.: Yes the travel agency that we booked with has given us some recommendations and the plan was first day in Athens visiting those places and then Olympia and Delphi and again Athens before our flight home. I did some small research myself but since I was hesitant on going I just followed their advice and I thought that if I visit again I will do it my way since I would have some experience.

Lucy: Where was your hotel located at?

J.: I think it was called Ominia – Omonia something like that. In the reviews I read before booking they said it is not a nice or safe area to be but it was cheap so we went for it. Actually it wasn't that bad. Not the prettiest area but it was ok.

Lucy: So the two days you were in Athens the only recommendations they gave you were the Acropolis Museum, Acropolis and the National Library and University?

J.: Yes. Oh and the flea market.

Lucy: Which one did you like the most and which one you found that if you haven't visited it wouldn't make any difference in your experience?

J.: I liked the museum a lot! It is a big museum, nice open space, interesting exhibitions, minimal aesthetics and I really liked the language options in the audio tours. I did the tour in Dutch and my dad and brother in Chinese, which was nice it was easier for them. Also I enjoyed seeing the actual Acropolis right across the museum. I found the walking outside of the National Library and University kind of boring like we couldn't get inside and it was noisy and I just couldn't find the point of considering it a must. I walked past by it the second time to go to the flea market and I think that it was enough. Like walking past by it, stopping for a picture was enough not a must. People were very helpful and nice, which was very important to me and it made up for all the negative things heard about the people of Athens.

Lucy: Ok now if it's ok with you we can move on to the second part of the interview. Um do you have anything else you would like to add regarding your experience?

J.: I just wish media stopped presenting the city as they do cause I was expecting something really different and I was actually not excited visiting so now every time a person I know has second thoughts about visiting I just tell them not to think about it and book their trip. I hope I can go again and this time I will make sure to visit more places.

Lucy: I hope you can revisit and stay longer so you can see more. I can also give you recommendations. Are you ready for the fun part of the interview?

J.: Yes lets do it! Which page do I go to first?

Lucy: Ok so the first page we will work with is the "This is Athens". It is the official tourism page of the municipality, created for and catering to tourists. It is used by the municipality to promote the city and provide information about each location you see in their feed. You can scroll down as much as you want and let me know your thoughts.

J.: Ok let me scroll a little bit more.

Lucy: Sure, whenever you are ready.

(At this point the interviewee needed 10 minutes to scroll the page before we could move on to the rest of the questions)

J.: So, I mean, wow are all these places in Athens?

Lucy: Yes and no at the same time. It is rather complicated.

J.: What do you mean? Can you explain while I scroll a little bit more?

Lucy: Sure, um...

J.: This is so weird. Like I had no idea these places are in Athens. There are so many pictures of places that seem so cool to visit. Like this Sap- Sapion? Is it in Athens?

Lucy: Yes that one yes it is. So um, there are places you see there that do not belong at the municipality of Athens. Athens is the capital of the country and also the province of Attiki like Amsterdam is the capital of the country but also the capital of the province of North Holland. Under the umbrella of the municipality of Athens there are locations like Zappeion Megaro that you mentioned before. It is a more recent historic site that locals visit it a lot during their Sunday scrolls especially during spring and autumn.

J.: It looks really nice for an Instagram photo! I wish I knew that.

Lucy: If you knew that this place is open for visitors would you go?

J.: Yes! I mean it looks way cooler than the two sites that we just saw from outside and it was so noisy and we couldn't get in.

Lucy: Do you see more places that fall under that category? That if you knew about them you would make time to visit?

J.: Yes and it is frustrating! I booked that tour cause it was interesting but now I see so many locations I would rather visit and I am disappointed. I feel like I didn't get to see a lot of things in these two days. I know two days are not enough for big cities or capitals that have a historic center and stuff but some of these I can see that are close to the Acropolis so it wouldn't make a huge difference time wise to go there. As long as you know that they are there! What is this Sounio?

Lucy: Well, Sounio is located at the south east point of Attica. It is not under the municipality of Athens but many people visit it once in the city since it is an hour and a half away from the center when there is no traffic. Two hours when there is.

J.: That I wouldn't visit with only two days in the city but if I had more time I would.

Lucy: As a recent visitor, would you use that page to organize another trip to Athens?

J.: Definitely! There are so many places I see here. Plus my hobby is photography and I would love to be able to take photos of these places I see here. Maybe next time I stay longer to do that.

Lucy: The places you did visit, do you think they are represented in a realistic way through this page in your opinion?

J.: Yes, like when it comes to the Acropolis yes. The library and university that I saw I couple of pictures of them, I think yes in a way but in my experience there were not that interesting to consider them a must but I do get why they include them here too.

Lucy: Do you think there is an overall realistic representation of the city or is it "romanticized"?

J.: Um well there are no pictures of the "ugly" parts of the city but no official tourism page would include such pictures. You know, pictures from the places they are not proud of. I don't find it romanticized, there is just a specific aesthetic and story line and since it is for tourists again of course they would promote the successful and beautiful places. People just need to always keep in mind that there are nice and ugly parts in cities in general.

Lucy: Do you want to move on to the second page?

J.: Yes lets see! Was Athens Vibe right?

Lucy: Yes. It is a page created by a local photographer not related to the municipality or the government. It is his personal blog; he reposts and shares pictures taken by other Athenians but also tourists if they send him their pictures. You can scroll down again and tell me what you think.

J.: Ok give me a minute so see what we have here.

Lucy: Whenever you are ready.

(Here the interviewee needed 10 minutes to scroll down the profile before we moved on to the rest of the interview).

J.: So um, first thoughts I can tell it's only for locals because it automatically translates the description of the pictures were as at the previous one is was already in English... Um lets see, I do appreciate the artistic aesthetic of the page and as an amateur photographer I can tell he is a professional and I really like his work.

Lucy: Would you use that page as an advice or guide for your next trip?

J.: Not really. I preferred the other one better. I could have it as an alternative and inspiration when it comes to photos but not for organizing my trip.

Lucy: Do you see places you didn't know existed like with the other page?

J.: Yes and I can spot some I saw before. There are a lot of photos of street art.... some I like others I don't understand what they say I guess it is in Greek?

Lucy: Yes the majority of the street art in the photos is in Greek. Do you find these images more realistic than the ones before?

J.: Um as I said I do see a lot of street art and that is definitely more realistic and there are a lot of pictures of neighborhoods that are visited I guess only by locals, I don't see anything interesting. Like I wouldn't go there since I can't see anything interesting from a touristic point of view but some people could be interested in seeing a typical neighborhood of Athens and see what locals do and where do they go. So, for some people it could be beneficial. Personally I wouldn't use it.

Lucy: Do you think that the way Athens is represented in those pages could be eye opening for people that have a false perception of the city's state?

J.: I think that they could definitely be benefited if they check out these pages and it will surly encourage them to visit. The last decade with the crisis there are some news channels that promote only the problematic areas and negative sides of the city and the country's problems overall but there are two sides on each coin in everything right?

Lucy: That is true there is always a positive and negative side.

J.: As a tourist if I have done a better research and I have found these pages, specially the one for tourists, I would have used them for sure and I would have organized my trip using that page and ignore the tour the travel agency organized and gave us. Also I would spend more days.

Lucy: I wanted to ask you that…Most visitors come to Athens as a in between stop before the go to the islands for example. They usually stay two days or in many cases just one day. Would you say that is enough since you did stay two days yourself?

J.: No nooo God no. One day who does that?! No, I would say that even two are not enough. I know people some times, like I did book packaged tours that include other places but now I would say just add one more day. Three days, still not enough, considering all the places I just saw but in case some people are not interested in visiting all of them, three days are good.

Lucy: In your opinion, is Athens promoted enough?

J.: Yes and no. I know all the things I know due to history I did in school, which for some might be not their thing and might prefer a more modern city with modern or alternative art, which I guess Athens has but is not famous for. Also as I said I know things through the news, which can be false or one-sided and people might be discouraged from it and avoid visiting. The pages I checked out today are definitely worth following and I think they do a great job promoting the city…so maybe they could try to get more followers and become more known or verified by Instagram so more people get to find out the things Athens has to offer and how it actually is.

Lucy: As a visitor, if you could suggest the municipality of Athens to change three things about the city, which ones would they be and why?

J.: I would most definitely improve the sidewalks because in the most part it was difficult to walk without having to walk on the street on one point or another. Also more green. A loooooooots of green. The mountain was like brown- gray, which I think it's a pity it would have been so beautiful to see that entire area full on green like here in the Netherlands. I know the weather is different that is a huge factor in plant growth but other places were green so I think that can be too.

Lucy: There have been several fires throughout the years that made it this way and I totally agree with you on both. And the third?

J.: The third I am torn in two... one thought is try to do something with the people that are doing illegal stuff, which I mean you can not do a lot... Here it's the same. Even Nijmegen has dealers and junkies walking around. Just feels more safe because is also home for me. The other thought is more commute. Make commute more frequent and tourist friendly.

Lucy: Thank you so much fore your time and for sharing your experience in Athens for this thesis do be done!

J.: You are very much welcome! Hope you got everything you need for the thesis and wish it goes well! If you need anything else let me know!

Lucy: Will do! Bye!

J.: Byeeee!

2. Local interview

Interview with local resident of Athens. Again the interviewee was presented with a brief explanation of what city branding is and the social media profiles used in the research. Due to the circumstances the interview was done through a video call.

Lucy: Good morning!

Dionysis: Hello hello! How are you?

Lucy: I am good! Thank you so much for helping me with my thesis! Is everyone in your family ok?

Dionysis: No problem I have a lot of time now. Yes everyone is healthy and everything is under control.

Lucy: Glad to hear.

Dionysis: So what is the interview and your thesis about exactly?

Lucy: My thesis has to do about the way Athens is branded as a destination through social media and for that I decided to do two interviews one with a recent visitor and one with a local resident so that I can include both points of view.

Dionysis: Great so I basically represent my fellow Athenians in this interview.

Lucy: Yes in a very generalized way yes yes you do.

Dionysis: Ok! Lets do this.

Lucy: Before we start I have to let you know that if at any point you want to stop the interview or you wish your interview not to be used in the final research you can let me know.

Dionysis: Will do but I mean if I participate voluntarily then it means I am ok with my answers being used afterwards.

Lucy: Also I will need you to follow two instagram accounts since we will need them later on.

Dionysis: Ok, which one?

Lucy: @thisisathens and @athensvibe.

Dionysis: Oh I already do follow them.

Lucy: That is interesting; I will come back to that later on.

Dionysis: Ok so what is the first question?

Lucy: Mmmm lets start with your background. Where were you born and how long did you live in Athens?

Dionysis: I was born at the southern suburbs of Athens, Voula in specific and I lived there until I was 19 years old when I moved to Nijmegen for my studies.

Lucy: When you lived there and when you visit home, how often do you go to the center of Athens?

Dionysis: Usually now depends how long am I staying home but when I was there I would go every other weekend, mostly for a night out with my friends.

Lucy: You mentioned before that you were born at the southern suburbs of Athens. As I did my research prior to this interview I found that there are four suburbs and the center geographically speaking. As a local do you find that this division exists in a non- geographical context?

Dionysis: Well yes and no at the same time.

Lucy: Can you elaborate on that?

Dionysis: I think that for all of us living or lived in Athens there is a division in a non-geographical context. The center of Athens is where you can find most of the areas history with the archeological sites proving that and the suburbs were all very new and build out of necessity for housing all the people that came to live there. Of course there are historical findings all over the area including the suburbs but they have their own character, the weather differs, the people are different but all of it together is forming what Athens and that happens in most cities. I mean Rome and Paris have as well a combination of suburbs and the center. It is hard to separate them and explain this but all five locations with their different character, form the overall identity of Athens.

Lucy: When it comes to the branding and touristic promotion of Athens are you as a local satisfied with it?

Dionysis: I think that comparing to other cities Athens is not branded enough abroad or not in a correct way. The way people have Athens, as a destination in their minds is an intermediate stop before they go to the islands. Of course there is nothing wrong with going to the islands but honestly one or two or even three days are not enough to see what Athens has to offer. One day is not even enough to go to all the museums or to all the outdoor locations that are worth visiting. And yes not everyone is interest in museums and there is more than that to see and do to Athens but when people come for one day and then they say that their experience was poor or that there wasn't anything special to do or see, I mean it doesn't make sense.

Lucy: What do you think is lacking in the promotion of the city that has created such misconception in the minds of tourists?

Dionysis: Make clear the fact that Athens can offer a complete experience to people that will keep them satisfied as long as they give the city a chance and stay longer than 24 hours. Which truth be told is not even 24 hours the just land in the morning go out to the famous places of Athens and then they are on their way to the islands.

Lucy: Are you content with the quality of experience tourists get to have in Athens?

Dionysis: No I am not. Even as a local the quality of life here needs a lot of improvement so I can imagine how tourists experience it. Transportation is awful. I knew that prior to me moving to the Netherlands for studying and I see it even more now when I go back. I get so frustrated when I have to use a bus or the tram or even the metro, which is our fancy public transport. Streets are dirty, lots of cars, not friendly for people with disabilities... People coming from countries where such issues are non-existent, of course will be disappointed. Ask any Athenian what they think about the streets, public spaces in general and public transport and you will see that no one will be happy about the way things work.

Lucy: In the interview with a recent visitor she said that except from the public transport that you addressed already, lack of greenery was also something that she believes is an issue. What is your opinion on that?

Dionysis: Don't get me started on that. It is a huge issue. It doesn't have to do with the climate, which is something that I hear a lot since people compare Athens with Paris for example. It has to do with the fact that people in charge don't care. Arson is not penalized the way it should so every time there is fire at any part of Greece, people spend the minimum amount of time behind bars. The fire in Hymettus Mountain was a disaster and I wasn't even born and I know that. Still today according to people that had the chance of seeing the mountain before the fire, it is not as it was. And there are fires every year because people want to build more houses since the mountain is not green again. I do hope that one day it gets its glory back and tourists can go hiking

and see the view from up there. I have seen it and it is amazing, it is worth going up the hills in order to experience that.

Lucy: You said before that Athens has a lot to offer to tourists but it is not known and people in charge do not promote it. Can you elaborate on that?

Dionysis: I have seen what typical tourist packages offer. There are so many things that they don't include.. There are palaces in forests people can go to, tours under Athens where you can see anything from ancient ruins that didn't make it to the surface to churches and war tunnels. Going to the beach is not something that can be done only to the islands; it just takes a little bit more personal research before they visit.

Lucy: In your opinion, which place people most definitely must visit and why?

Dionysis: I know it is a cliché but the Parthenon. And for so many reasons... The history, the architecture, the fact that it stood there through all these centuries, the way it was made, the view from the top and I know many times people see monuments in pictures and once they visit they are not as they seem online for example but with all honesty, the Parthenon is worth visiting and will not disappoint anyone that chooses to do so.

Lucy: Is there anything else you want to add before we move on to the social media part of the interview?

Dionysis: Athens is a safe city to go to even though the media used the crisis to make it seem otherwise. As in any other city no matter the size there are places where illegal activity happens. I am not happy with that, or any other Athenian for that matter but it is the reality. With a simple Google search you can see where people advise you not to go to as a tourist. And just don't go. There is no point going there when you already know it is a dangerous area and then complain about it. Stick to your safe route and enjoy the beautiful things Athens can offer despite all the issues. No city is perfect...Again same with Paris. Not all streets and neighborhoods are safe and yet people travel and enjoy their time there either way, they are just being cautious. Now we can move on.

Lucy: Thank you for making that point the recent visitor stated something similar in her interview.

Dionysis: I think it is common sense but people still get surprised.... Should I go on Instagram now?

Lucy: Yes we can start with the official profile used by the municipality of Athens called @thisisathens and it is used to promote the city to foreign visitors. People can visit the guide which is linked in the description of the profile and ask for further information about locations and activities. You can scroll as much as you want and when you are ready we can continue with the questions.

Dionysis: Great give five minutes.

(At this point of the interview, the participant scrolled through the profile for ten minutes before the interview continued)

Dionysis: Ok I am ready. Ask away.

Lucy: So. What is your first impression when it comes to the content?

Dionysis: I do see a lot of pictures dedicated to the city's archeological places, which I expected this to happen since there a lot of monuments and I mean that is what Athens is known for and what sells. There are a lot of pictures of places that are not located at the center and they are at any of the suburbs, which I think is both positive and negative.

Lucy: Why is that?

Dionysis: Because people might hesitate to go since transportation is not the greatest and out of convenience I suppose they will not go. There are not many times where I have been out and see tourists in the south suburbs or any of the suburbs for that matter. But it is good because people coming across the profile and seeing the options the have and places to go that are not at the center possibly can choose to stay more than two days which is something that I feel like people in charge of the tourism of the city want to achieve. Keep tourists longer in Athens before they go to the islands by adding places and activities and spread them throughout the province.

Lucy: Do you think that this profile could assist a potential visitor to plan their stay in a successful way?

Dionysis: Yes definitely, of course they will not show the rough areas or the ugly parts because that doesn't sell and it is marketing and promotion and branding we are talking about but again people need to practice common sense and of course city officials need to improve the situation and address the issues not only for visitors but for residents as well.

Lucy: You can go to the second profile, @athensvibe, which I assume you already know but still I have to mentioned, it is owned by a local and the purpose of including it in the research is to see how Athens is promoted by locals. Again you can scroll down as much as you want before we continue.

Dionysis: Ok I think I will need a bit longer there are more pictures here.

Lucy: Whenever you are ready.

(Here the interviewee needed 15 minutes to scroll down the page before the interview continued)

Dionysis: Ok so first impressions here too.

Lucy: Yes first thoughts.

Dionysis: The pictures here feel more familiar in a way. It is the local point of view. The non-touristic places, the graffiti, taxis and people and narrow streets. It is the non-stereotypical side, the everyday life type of feed. Also the pictures are filtered I can tell whereas in the previous profile if there was any editing I couldn't tell. The pictures are alternative, artistic… postmodern one can say. There are more pictures representing the urban side, the chaos that is definitely a part of local life and not many pictures of the Acropolis or museums and other places tourists go to.

Lucy: Do you think a tourist will benefit by following that page?

Dionysis: Well this page represents the local point of view. And that cannot be perceived by tourists maybe if they visit Athens again and again then they might understand the feeling this pictures create to locals. But I do believe

that people who like Athens and want to keep in touch with the city and its locals and its vibe, as the name of the profile, should follow the page and use it in as an inspiration for the pictures they will take during their next visit.

Lucy: Previously you mentioned that you already follow both profiles, why both?

Dionysis: I think most Athenians have a love- hate relationship with Athens. Myself I like to see places through pictures used to promote the city to tourists and also through the eyes of locals. I like the archeological places and I walk around the historical part of Athens and I enjoy that the same way I enjoy the street art that is not something that is depicted in the official profile.

Lucy: In your opinion, the future construction plans that are and will take place in Athens will have a positive effect on Athens?

Dionysis: If they actually go through with their plans and construct all the things they claim they will, then yes I think it will improve both our everyday lives and the experience tourists get to have here. Athens needs improvement and investment and sure thinks that were created poorly in the past cannot change or is difficult to change them but it is worth it. I think Athens was created quickly, to be a capital because the state needed one, to accommodate people that were coming in by hundreds at a time and then the Olympics and there was always something done that was done quick or with poor thinking and planning or just to benefit some and not all. Thinks like spatial advantages and disadvantages for any type of construction were not taken under consideration or it wasn't benefiting the people in charge. The Olympics were such a controversial happening for example… Many benefited from it, people involved in politics, investors, large construction companies and sure people from allover the world came but locals had to deal with how the situation was after it all ended. The former airport is still like it was left back in 2004 after the Olympics ended. Tourists came to Athens and pass by it and it is a disgrace.

Lucy: Which profile do you think depicts Athens in a more realistic way so that people know what to expect upon their visit?

Dionysis: Both but in their own way. I just suggest tourists follow the official profile that gives then information too and then once in Athens for inspiration

and afterwards in case they really like the city, they can follow the other profile.

Lucy: Is there anything else you would like to add in general?

Dionysis: Yes, um personally when I visit another city, I walk around a lot and eat at local places and do what locals do and I advise people that want to visit Athens to do the same. Touristy places are nice; people go there for a reason but also it is worth experiencing the local life to get an inclusive opinion about the place and always keeping their safety in mind and be realistic with their expectations.

Lucy: Thank you very much again for participating!

Dionysis: If you need anything else let me know! If something is unclear or you need more information message me and we can arrange another meeting.

Lucy: If I need anything I will let you know! Thank you again so much! Have a nice day!

Dionysis: You too!

Lucy: Bye!

Dionysis: Bye!