City Branding and Video Production:
The Case of Greek Semi-Urban Centers

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ABSTRACT

Today, branding directly affects the growth process for countries, regions, and urban centers. Particularly, a successful branding process, including the framework design and establishment of regulation tools, is necessary and quite important to be able to succeed on recognize and furthermore to enhance the catch-up process, enforce competitiveness level and development. The socio-economic implications from a successful branding are more apparent using some of the main socio-economic variables, such as public investment, employability, and socio-economic regional growth. In this context, the urban and semi-urban centers must clearly define their position in the market through branding and marketing policy. This text attempts to examine the contemporary role of branding and furthermore to examine and analyze the results in the process of development for semi-urban centers in Greece.

KEYWORDS

City Branding, Digital Industries, Semi-Urban Centers, Small Greek Cities, Video Production

INTRODUCTION

Greece is known for its rich history and culture, with its cities reflecting a remarkable diversity. However, the spotlight often overlooks smaller Greek cities, which offer an authentic and more intimate experience compared to their larger counterparts. These hidden gems feature narrow cobbled streets, traditional houses illuminated by the Mediterranean sun, friendly locals, the flavors of local cuisine served in family-run tavernas, and traditional festivals (panegiri) and vibrant celebrations. Such unique aspects characterize semi-urban centers.

Nestled in stunning natural landscapes, these towns, either in the mountains or overlooking the sea, provide stunning views and opportunities for outdoor activities. Small towns, each with its distinct identity, emerge as attractive destinations in Greece. The role of city branding plays a crucial role in contributing to their economic development.

City branding is a key tool in the marketing processes employed to promote a city. It involves a transformative process aimed at redesigning and rediscovering the identity of a place, building a new sense of connection to it. Video, as a medium, can play a crucial role in branding a city by

offering visual storytelling to showcase its distinct characteristics. Through immersive storytelling and widespread digital distribution, videos have the power to create a compelling brand for a city, leaving a lasting impression on viewers.

This article attempts to examine the complex process of video production and its efficacy in urban branding. The goal is to develop a standardized tool for audiovisual production that can articulate the video production process in a clear, user-friendly, and valid manner for the city. The emphasis lies on creating a tool tailored for city branding initiatives.

The study begins by examining basic concepts, versions, and scales of branding in general, focusing on city branding. Notable examples of city branding applications are then presented. The article then tries to classify small Greek cities based on their development needs, offering a general example of implementation. The final attempt aims to create a video production planning tool, combining the basic technical requirements of video production with the demands and requirements of market promotion. The tool's purpose aim is to enable the creation of a personalized roadmap for each small town, guiding the production of a successful city brand video. The conclusion provides examples of the tool's application, both for the whole of Greece and for specific small cities.

METHODOLOGY

This study explores the role of audiovisual production, specifically video, in shaping a strong brand for small- and medium-sized Greek cities. Using a mixed methodology that includes literature surveys, literature review, and descriptive statistical analysis from secondary databases, the research incorporates mapping and cartographic visualizations. The study focuses on city branding, a convergence of economic geography and marketing, with the case study on small- and medium-sized cities falling within the fields of urban geography.

The study draws on existing literature to present data on branding-related issues. For the current case study involving small Greek cities, available data from the Greek population censuses and the average per capita income from 1950 onward, as provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority, were used. In addition, European Union (EU) data were used for indicators related to the Les Favored Area.

The study includes the identity of small cities, considering basic indicators that combine population, per capita income, and the Les Favored Area index. These indicators are selected to serve as potential examples for the application of the standardization tool on a broader scale in Greece. In addition, the research includes a study of three individual cities based on the resulting city classifications.

The aim of the present research is to develop a framework for city branding, essentially a roadmap for the production process of the audiovisual product associated with city branding. The process highlights the initial combinations of parameters to be considered, followed by the proposal of a framework for selecting specific technical parameters based on the form and type of city. As a result, a tool selection grid is created in an attempt to create and optimize the methodology and techniques for the creation of the city brand.

Multi-criteria analysis (MCA) was used to create the standardization tool for video production. In the MCA process, different policy options are first identified, followed by a comprehensive evaluative comparison that includes outcomes, performance, impacts, and trade-offs between them. The multicriteria approach allows a choice between more equivalent solutions.

This study aids the client (city) in making decisions for branding through video production. The method attempts to provide the technical steps of video production rather than the strategic level, excluding the creative aspects of the video. The research provides an innovative model that outlines the steps with inputs for branding cities in Greece, incorporating their unique characteristics through video production.

PLACE AND VIRTUAL GEOGRAPHIES

The increasing potential of computer visualization has expanded the possibilities for people to imagine the world in new ways. This evolving reality shapes the way in which images representing places, people, landscapes, and cultures reflect the desires, fantasies, and prejudices of their creators. The term "imaginative geographies" was introduced by Said, an art and culture critic, in his 1978 book *Orientalism*.

Imaginative geographies, when combined with history, help the mind to emphasize its own perceptions. However, it is important to note that dramatization does not automatically constitute distortion. While it seems that these productions create "mental maps," they serve as a means through with the modern world can understand events of all kinds, including both fictional and real scenarios (Gregory et al., 2009).

In general, a brand name derives from the existing elements of a place, such as the way it is perceived by the audience. The ultimately produced image of the brand is then shared through various communication channels, such as television advertising and internet marketing. At this point, a key tool is used, facilitating the creation of the brand through the audiovisual product. In recent decades, media issues have found fertile ground in geography. This is related to the great expansion of the digital media economy and cultural industries like book publishing, radio, cinema, television, and audiovisual media.

BRANDING AND CITY BRANDING

Place branding has emerged as a valid space management function, complementing traditional planning methods. In the framework of place marketing, which has broader site management goals, regions around the world are shifting their focus to branding, introducing the principles and techniques commonly associated with branding products and companies. In the field of marketing, branding serves as a strategic approach supporting tactical objectives.

Initially, branding was related to products, but over time, the concept of branding has expanded to cover issues of geographical space, namely place branding. Place branding is implemented across different geographical scales, including neighborhoods, municipalities, regions, rural and urban areas, and countries. While the approach is relatively similar in all cases, the techniques and tools employed may vary. The operational implementation of branding relies on specialized factors like economic development organizations, tourism agencies, audiovisual production companies, and urban planners (Bouron, 2017).

Place branding is part of the agenda of many public authorities, as it is a tool for effective area administration. Destinations that want widespread recognition and distinctiveness often propose a brand that conveys a unique image. For example, since 1975, the "I Love NY" brand remains one of the strongest place brands today. It is obvious that place branding and its management consist of an extension of marketing in non-conventional sectors, beyond trade (Pike, 2005).

Cities are trying to attract tourism and investments, underscoring the growing importance of city branding as a strategic initiative. This logic applies to activities that aim to transform a city from a common location to a potential destination. A successful brand makes the city more desirable. The active involvement of stakeholders is an indication of the widespread acceptance of the brand strategy. Additionally, the willingness to experiment in resolving potential issues and the tolerance for unfortunate choices for missteps are crucial components of this process (Van Gelder, 2005).

FURTHERMORE, THE CONTRIBUTION OF BRANDING TO SUSTAINABILITY

Branding, in turn, can play an important role in fostering sustainability in small towns. It serves as a tool to promote sustainable practices and raise awareness about the importance of sustainability.

By creating a positive brand image that emphasizes the city's commitment to sustainability, the city can attract businesses and residents who align with these values. The use of branding can convey a commitment to sustainable practices and raise awareness around the value of sustainability within the community.

Sustainability holds as much importance for larger cities and global urban centers as it does for small- and medium-sized cities. Often, small- and medium-sized cities can be at the forefront of sustainable development, leveraging their flexibility and responsiveness to local needs and conditions. These cities can develop sustainable solutions tailored to specific circumstances, such as harnessing renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and reducing waste. Sustainable development brings numerous benefits to small- and medium-sized towns and cities, such as improving residents' quality of life of residents, reducing the environmental impact of development, and attracting investment.

Branding plays a crucial role in promoting investments in sustainable initiatives, such as renewable energy, green infrastructure, and sustainable tourism. By actively promoting sustainable initiatives, a city can attract investors and businesses looking for environmentally responsible places to operate. Furthermore, the brand can raise the city's profile and highlight its commitment to sustainability, thereby creating a positive impact on its reputation. By creating a robust and positive brand image, the city can demonstrate its dedication to sustainability, enhancing its appeal as a desirable destination.

FROM BRANDING TO THE DEVELOPMENT DYNAMICS OF SMALL CITIES

Branding can play an important role in the dynamics of small towns. It can create a unique identity, enhancing their overall reputation. There are several ways in which branding contributes to development (Baker, 2019; Warnaby, 2015):

- **Diversification:** Effective branding helps small towns stand out from their competitors by highlighting their unique characteristics, culture, heritage, and attractions.
- **Economic Growth:** Successful branding can make a small town a desirable destination. This can attract visitors, generate economic activity, increase revenues, create jobs, and support the growth of local businesses.
- **Attracting Investment:** A strong city brand can make small towns attractive to investors and businesses. It can convey a sense of professionalism and credibility, inspiring investors. It can also promote economic growth.
- **Community Engagement:** Branding efforts can enhance the sense of community among residents. A well-designed brand fosters a sense of identification, turning residents into ambassadors who promote their city's assets, thereby attracting visitors.
- **Attracting People:** A successful city brand plays a pivotal role in attracting and retaining a workforce. Small towns with an attractive image can be ideal locations for raising a family, contributing to the retention of the local population and attracting new residents enticed by employment offers.
- **Partnerships:** Effective branding requires collaboration between stakeholders, including local government, businesses, and residents. This collective logic contributes to the formulation of a shared vision for community development. The different actors can then undertake initiatives that support development.

URBAN GEOGRAPHY AND AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTION

Branding serves as a determining factor for the selection of a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The selection is based on the place's ability to create a positive image, mainly achieved through effective communication highlighting the beneficial and special features of the destination (Gartner,

1989). As a result, when different places compete, the strongest and most visible image is rewarded, claiming a dominant position in the minds of visitors.

The audiovisual arts attempt to fill a role previously held by text. This is a cultural revolution known as the "age of image." Today, the text tends to be displaced, signifying a shift in societal values and how the world is viewed differently than in the past (Flusser, 2011).

Audiovisual production is one of the most important institutions in the construction of an increasingly visualized and dramatized world (Gilian, 2009). The image itself becomes a spatial experience, allowing the viewer a chance to experience something distinct from their own reality. While the extent of the experience may be limited by the creator's ability or the viewer's cognitive background, it plays an important role in either accepting or challenging the perception of a geographical location (Corbin, 2014). Although audiovisual production is a pivotal tool in constructing a visualized environment, the relationship between the real and the cinematic world has been the subject of much criticism (Aitken & Zonn, 1994).

Geographers, when examining audiovisual production as a cultural asset with symbolic value in the globalized economy, choose to follow an approach that includes production, product, distribution, and consumption (Lukinbeal & Sharp, 2014). The importance of audiovisual products must, therefore, be interpreted in relation to the economic conditions of production and consumption, encompassing the entire film industry from production to distribution and consumption.

In audiovisual productions, the product-city is a platform for both direct and indirect branding. In direct branding, the city is referenced for its advantages (D'Astous & Seguin, 1999). This approach offers an advantage over traditional advertising channels through its latent, stimulating persuasion impact (Boukouvalas, 2019). For example, after the release of the 2006 film, A Night at the Museum, the American Museum of Natural History experienced a 20% increase in the number of visitors during the holiday season of the same year (The Associated Press, 2007).

The most successful portrayals of a city in films are integral to the storyline and easily recognized by audiences. These depictions are often featured in the title, as seen in Casablanca (1942), Manhattan (1978), An Evening in Notting Hill (1999), and others. The promoted product, in this case the product-city, becomes a vital part of the narrative, creating a stronger emotional connection with the viewer. A successful example is the Cities of Love franchise, created by producer Emmanuel Benhiby, with titles like Paris, I Love You (2006), New York, I Love You (2009), and Berlin, I Love You (2019).

VIDEO BRANDING DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Regions around the world are shifting their focus to branding, recognizing its potential contribution to regional development, identity enhancement, and sustainable development (Hemelryk-Donald & Gammack, 2007). The traditional boundaries between place promotion and production, particularly in terms of design, are decreasing (Porter, 2016). Audiovisual production is emerging as a dominant force, and image techniques, especially those in the audiovisual arts, are trying to replace a function previously held by text.

To maximize effectiveness, the strong image of the destination should align with specific standards to enhance its impact in free advertising. Stakeholders like municipal officials and video creators ordinarily consider a range of verifiable criteria when making decisions. They are likely to base their choices on relevant issues and a comprehensive assessment of multiple criteria to ensure effective branding.

SMALL GREEK CITIES

As cities undergo internationalization, they acquire the characteristics of a global city. This global environment is intertwined with the city's entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial city is related to a competitive mindset and entrepreneurship spirit, operating on a business logic (Goldsmith, 1999).

Small cities host about half of the global urban population and absorb a significant portion of its growth. In Greece, they appear to serve as an economic starting point, as they have been less affected by the crisis and maintain relatively greater economic dynamics (Asprogerakas, 2003). However, this new role as a developmental factor varies among different categories and groups of cities within the urban system. In addition to the general characteristics, individual groupings are highlighted, emphasizing their role in competition within the wider system of the cities to which they belong (Gospodini, 2005).

Cities that benefit from their transport and communications network, boasting representative characteristics, unique natural environments, distinctive cultural heritage (archaeological, architectural), and well-developed urban functions (those with academic institutions) form a category that favors development. However, cities in peripheral areas lacking cultural and natural resources and far from metropolitan centers represent a category vulnerable to competition (Gospodini, 2005).

The study focused on cities with a population ranging between 2,000 and 10,000. Specifically, semi-urban centers like Filippiada, Naxos, and Nigrita were selected to explore the implementation of the proposed model in branding. These towns fall within the limits set by the Hellenic Statistical Authority for small towns in Greece.

PRODUCTION OF THE CITY BRANDING VIDEO: THE STANDARDIZATION PROCESS

It would not be an exaggeration to state that city branding is practically absent in Greece. A few years earlier, although place branding was often mentioned in scientific discussions, conferences, presentations, and studies, practical implementation by Greek municipalities and state authorities were sporadic (Gekas, 2017; Vrachnaki, 2014). Recent studies continue to confirm that branding is not widespread in Greece, with only a few cities implementing it (Pantelaion, 2023). Kavaratzis (2019) wrote that branding efforts focus on the two major centers of Athens and Thessaloniki. Regarding smaller cities, he mentions "the interest" of three cities—Kozanie, Kalamata, and Larissa. Efforts by Chania and Nafplio are also acknowledged, with no reference made to smaller cities with populations ranging from 3,000 to 10,000. The creation of a brand name for Greek cities in mainly associated with the European Capital of Culture designation. In this case, the implicit criteria align with the logic of city branding (Gómez et al., 2018). The Greek cities that have been cultural capitals are Athens (1985), Thessaloniki (1997), Patras (2006), and Elefsina (2023).

The question of how a small city should choose video production to build a strong brand involves two parts: the potential customer (small cities) and the product (video production).

The Customer

Creating strong branding for small cities involves making the right choice of the product (video production) in relation to specific features related to the customer (small cities). A generalized categorization of small towns was defined by examing the main development indicators, including population, economy, and geographical location. In particular, the following characteristics included:

- Index of percentage change of the population (1951-2011) from the Hellenic Statistical Authority.
- Income identity of their prefecture for 2018 (see Figure 1).
- Position on the map of less favored areas, concerning the dynamics of their agricultural production in 2018 (see Figure 2).

While these were the selected indicators, the choice could have included a wider range of developmental characteristics (e.g., quality of life, index of housing degradation) or more focused

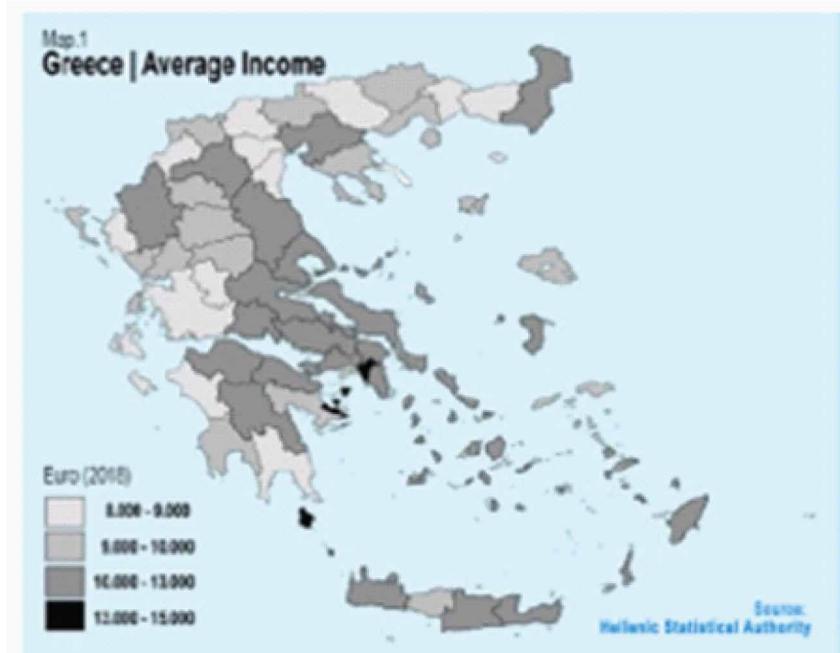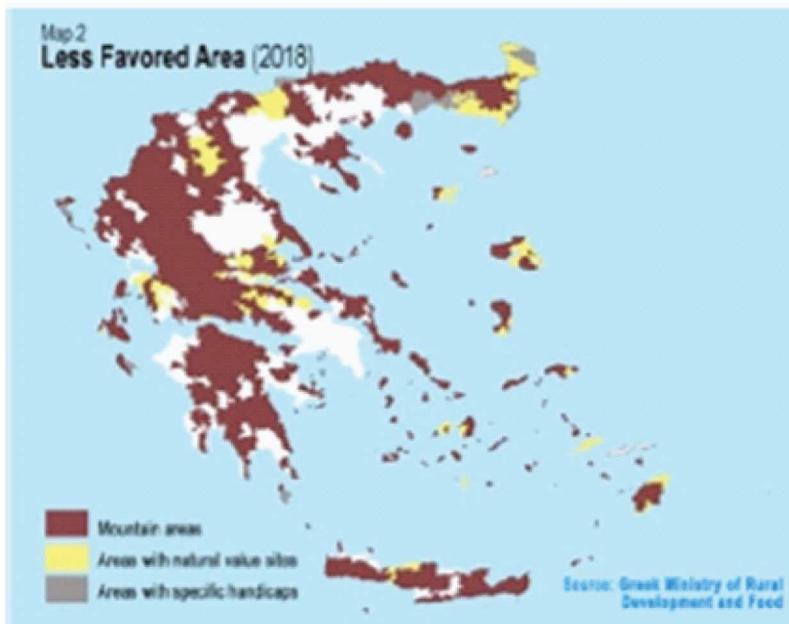**Figure 1. Average income of Greece (2018)**

Figure 2. Less favored area (2018)

areas (e.g., archaeological sites, cultural events). The final selection was shaped by the availability and relevance of data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT, 2018).

After identifying the characteristics, the study examines whether these attributes give the small cities a competitive advantage. If so, the study identifies those cities. According to the above, the study presents a grouping of small cities, visually represented in Figure 3.

Cities with no previous market presence (see Figure 3a) are characterized by a lack of geographical features like coastal areas, natural beauty, archaeological sites, or cultural events. Usually, this category has low population and income characteristics. Geographically, these cities are situated in a zone that starts from the islands of the North Aegean, extends through the prefectures of Eastern Evros, Chalkidiki, and Northern Macedonia, and descends along the whole of Western Greece. The central part of the zone includes of the Pindos Mountain range. Additionally, much of Evia and the islands of the Northern Cyclades fall within this zone.

Cities with a market presence (see Figure 3b) stand out for a special feature. These cities have a clear advantage, such as being classic island destinations, traditional settlements, cities with archeological sites, religious destinations, or areas with natural beauty. This category experiences high growth rates in both population and income.

Cities with negative growth indicators (see Figure 3c), form a numerically small group but make them an interesting case study due to their adverse performance. Out of approximately 151 cities with populations ranging from 3,000 to 10,000 inhabitants, only 25 show a negative population change between 1951-2011, with a maximum of -47% (Soufli). Examples include Krinides, Kalambakion, Aiginion, Orchomenos, Eleftheroupolis, Velventos, Deskati, Kranidia, Amfiklia, Poros, Lixourion, Amfilochia, Goumenissa, Messina, Erythrai, Gythion, Sidirokastro, Gargalianoi, Filiatra, Nigrita, Prosotsani, and Souflion (Sidiropoulos, 2017).

Cities in this category were competitive in the past but face challenges today for various reasons, resulting in a recession. Their declining population growth and low-income profile are their main characteristics. Importantly, their location on the map of less favored areas does not necessarily place them all in areas with the most degraded characteristics, such as mountainous areas with natural limitations and special disadvantages.

THE PRODUCT (VIDEO PRODUCTION)

The production of video marketing can initially be categorized into two main groups, depending on whether the videos promote a brand implicitly or explicitly. The category of videos with implicit brand focus includes three subcategories, while the category of videos with explicit brand focus has 13 subdivisions. Following these two categories (videos with explicit vs. implicit brand focus), there

Figure 3. (a) No previous market presence, (b) previous market presence, (c) negative growth

(a)　　　　　　　　(b)　　　　　　　　(c)
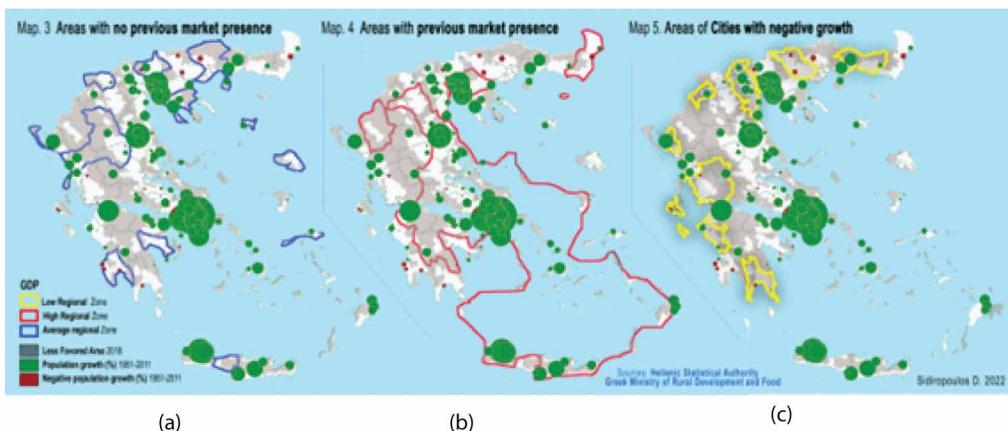
are three other categories (customer videos, customer support videos, corporate marketing videos) with less dynamics but only at a rhetorical level. However, all three categories can prove to be equally effective in promoting the brand, as presented in Table 1.

The purchase decision process is, in practice, a decision-making process followed by consumers before, during, and after a purchase. It can be considered as a specific form of cost-benefit analysis in the presence of multiple alternatives (Korres, 2015). Therefore, when producing a branding video, the corresponding stage in the purchasing cycle must first be selected. That is, whether it will target the pre-purchase phase, where the focus needs to be chosen at which stage of the purchase decision (information, desire, or validation); or whether it will target the post-purchase phase (brand maintenance or support).

The decision-making process steps in a typical consumer market decision-making model include the identification of needs and desires, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation (James et al., 1968; Kotler, 1999).

To effectively use the different versions among the multitude of different types of videos, it is necessary to have a classification that considers the purchasing cycle. In this case, productions based on the purchasing cycle can be divided into those aimed at the clientele before the purchase and those aimed at the clientele after the purchase of the product (see Table 2). This categorization (Fox, 2020) was selected for its analytical and detailed nature, distinguishing itself among others by focusing on the outcome of the purchase experience.

In the pre-purchase phase of the product (place branding), three quality categories can be distinguished:

Table 1. General types of branding videos (own elaboration)

A. Videos with explicit brand focus Informational branding videos. Product placement. Branded entertainment
B. Videos with implicit brand focus Product marketing videos. Product demonstrations. Launch videos. Crowdfunding/Kickstarter videos. Explainer videos. Live videos. Stunt videos. User generated video campaigns. Event videos. Infomercials. Digital signage and billboards. 3D projection mapping. In-Store/Lobby/Office videos
D. Customer support Customer support videos. FAQ videos. Company overview videos. Recruitment videos. Corporate marketing videos. Corporate event promo video. Behind-the-scenes
F. Public relations Corporate social responsibility videos. Community relations. Investor relations. Video press release. Public service announcements

Own elaboration

Table 2. Cost-benefit analysis and branding video types

Purchasing cycle	Pre-purchase phase			Post-purchase phase	
Purchasing cycle stage	Information	Desire	Prestige	Maintenance	Support

A. Videos with explicit brand focus
Informational branding videos. Product placement. Branded entertainment

B. Videos with implicit brand focus
Product marketing videos. Product demonstrations. Launch videos. Crowdfunding/Kickstarter videos. Explainer videos. Live videos. User generated video campaigns. Stunt videos. Event videos. Infomercials. Digital signage and billboards. 3D projection mapping. In Store/Lobby/Office videos

D. Customer support
Customer support videos. FAQ videos. Company overview videos. Recruitment videos. Corporate marketing videos. Corporate event promo video. Behind-the-scenes video

F. Public relations
Corporate social responsibility videos. Community relations. Investor relations. Video press release. Public service announcements

Source: Sidiropoulos D. 2023

- **Information Videos:** Aim to attract attention through information.
- **Desire-Creation Videos:** Create desire in the customer for the product.
- **Prestige and Appreciation Videos:** Inform the interested party about the prestige associated with the product (place branding).

For the post-purchase phase of the product, particularly in areas that have already established a strong brand and aim to preserve it, two types of video productions are required:

- **Brand Maintenance Videos:** Maintain and sustain the given brand for the area.
- **Support Videos for Promotion:** Support the further promotion and dissemination of the acquired brand.

Apart from marketing criteria, there are also issues related to production costs, which are important because they can greatly affect the quality of the video (Korres & Drakopoulos, 1999). To create, promote, and strengthen their brand, stakeholders must understand how cost is related to the quality of production of a video.

The selection of different versions of video production is linked to three categories:

- **Low-Cost Video Production:** Low cost and efficient.
- **Medium-Range Professional Video Production:** Specially designed, high-quality video production.
- **High-Standard Video Production:** High quality and high value.

The choice among these categories depends on specific parameters and budgets.

Finally, the video selection involves a dual-input panel that the customer-city must combine according to the needs of the purchasing cycle and its production cost (see Table 3). The first parameter, the purchasing cycle stage, is a matter of relatively free choice. If this is the first time the city is interested in brand promotion, it has three options: (1) information; (2) desire; and (3) prestige. If the city has already established a brand, it has two options: (1) maintenance; and (2) support. The second parameter, the cost of production, although seemingly influenced by the financial status and available budget of a city or region, actually leads to solutions related to the final quality.

At the same time, and in combination with the above options, the interested party should select the type of video from a range of options. This can be done at an initial stage or at a later stage.

It is important to note that the multicriteria approach does not have a linear continuum. The options can, depending on the situation and the wishes of the client-city, be different.

Cities with seemingly identical characteristics may adopt different production frameworks. This can happen either because they believe they must choose a different type of video within the same category (e.g., implicit brand focus), or they may opt for a different direction even if they are in the same market cycle (e.g., post purchase phase). In any case, cities may choose different production costs based on their unique considerations and goals.

STANDARDIZATION RESULTS OF VIDEO PRODUCTION IN SMALL GREEK CITIES

General Findings

The goal of creating this standardized tool is to produce audiovisual products by systematically analyzing specific data. The tool aims to codify the process of city branding in a clear, valid, and comprehensible way (see Table 4). The result was the creation of a model—a hierarchical and

Table 3. Model of the production process for video production in terms of technical characteristics


Source: Sidiropoulos D. 2023
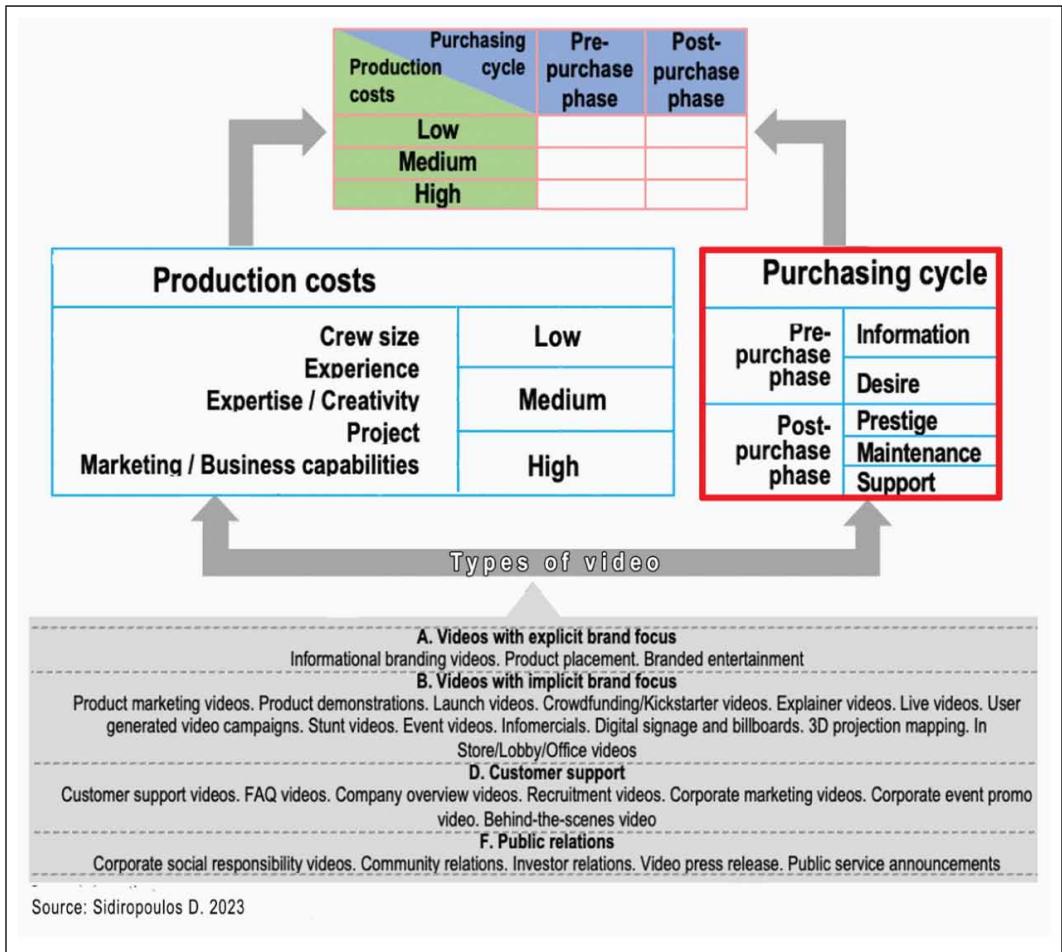
evaluative "ranking grid"—through which it is possible to create city branding by exploring specific parameters exclusively related to place branding.

The steps involved in formulating the proposed branding model are as follows:

1. **Highlighting Developmental Characteristics:** Feature the competitive advantages of small cities.
2. **Focusing on Proper Branding Management:** Ensure proper management of emerging branding advantages.
3. **Selecting Video Production Character:** Choose the appropriate video production character in relation to the purchasing-cycle.

The results will show whether cities have a competitive advantage that positions them in the market. They can be categorized into three groups: (1) cities with no previous market presence; (2) cities with market presence; and (3) cities with negative growth indicators. An additional consideration in this prioritization process, determined at this stage, is the scale of the intervention (whether the aforementioned objectives are main or individual).

Table 4. Model for branding small cities throw video production

Source: Sidiropoulos D. 2023
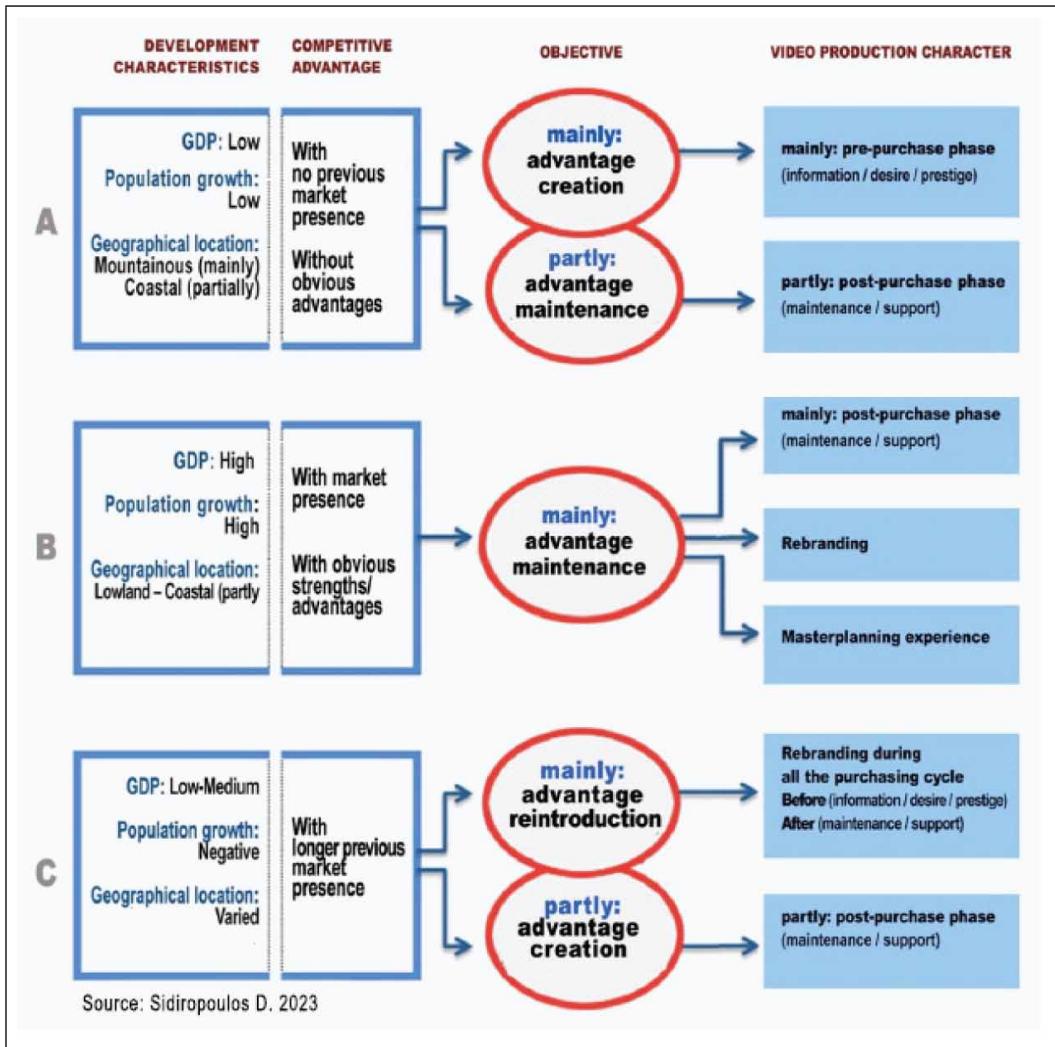
Once the city (customer) has determined the type of video production aligned with its objective features, it must then choose from several subjective options within the categories of general branding video types. These include videos with explicit brand focus, videos with implicit brand focus, customer videos, customer support videos, corporate videos, or public relations videos.

An additional and significant consideration for the customer, particularly a small city, is related to the production cost—an aspect crucial for the creation of the brand. The available options are low cost, medium range, and high standards. The choice of cost is a critical parameter because it will determine the technical identity of the audiovisual product (video). It is important to note that while financing is a key factor, a low-cost production does not always translate to lower quality services or a project with limited technical specifications.

General Findings for the Grouped Areas of Small Cities

In the case of cities with no previous market presence, such as Filippiada (see Figure 3a), it is imperative to create a competitive advantage. To achieve this goal, two actions are recommended.

First, the focus should be on the pre-purchase phase of the purchasing cycle. In this phase (place branding), the city must be able to gain an advantage that will enable it to enter the market. This could be achieved through three video production options:

1. **Informational Videos:** Aim to attract attention through providing updates.
2. **Desire-Creation Videos:** Create customer desire for the product (city or region).
3. **Prestige Videos:** Give prestige to the area or city.

For most cities in this zone, participating in a landscaping project aimed at enhancing the brand is advisable, but not universally applicable. The Ionian Islands, Chalkidiki, and the islands of the Northern Cyclades, while not as popular as the Cyclades, are not newcomers to the market. Despite their lower income and population development compared to the rest of Greece, they benefit from establishing branding, and their market presence is well recognized. Cities in these areas should be selectively integrated into pre-purchase strategies that require maintenance video production or support video production.

For cities with a market presence like Naxos (see Figure 3b), the focus should be on maintaining and preserving the advantage. To achieve these goals, it is advisable to produce video variations with the following target. The focus should be set on the post-purchase phase, in which cities have already acquired a brand. In these cases, video production options include:

1. **Maintenance Video Production:** Preserve the existing brand.
2. **Support Video Production:** Continue the promotion and dissemination of the acquired brand.

For cities with negative growth indicators (see Figure 3c), the loss of competitiveness of their brand requires a more focused analysis. In this case, the goal of video production concerns the entire purchasing cycle (pre- and post-purchase), aiming to reenter the market through information, the creation of desire, and prestige. It also involves the maintenance and support of the old strong brand. The following guidelines can be followed to achieve the above objectives:

1. **Video Production for Rebranding:** The main difference lies in the fact that rebranding can simultaneously serve as a reintroduction of the brand in the pre-purchase phase of the purchasing cycle (information, desire, prestige), especially if the city has lost its place and is not present in the market. The production will aim either to differentiate it from its previous brand or to re-introduce it to gain the older acquired advantages.
2. **Post-Purchase Phase of the Purchasing Cycle:** Given that these cities had once acquired a strong brand, the city's strategy could be to restore the brand as it was, aiming to regain its place in the market with the same features. In this context, the production could take the form of a classic maintenance video or support video for the continuation of the pre-existing brand name.

Three Representative City Case Studies

The city of Filippiada, situated in Epirus, holds unique characteristics that contribute to its identity. With a distinctive long urban form of 4 km) in relation to its population (see Figure 4), it serves as a nodal point connecting central Greece (Trikala) to the Ionian Sea (Preveza) and Epirus (Ioannina) to the Corinthian Gulf (Patra). Its main activity is agro-farming within the Less Average Area, characterized by medium to low gross per capita income and a relatively stagnant population (3,172/1951 - 5,207/2021 ELSTAT).

The municipality's geographical landscape includes the Luro River and Lake Zirou, along with historic elements like a 50 km Roman aqueduct that once carried water from the cities of Nicopolis. Traces of prehistoric enclosure have also been found in the area. Furthermore, the town's unique

Figure 4. Filippiada: Prefecture of Preveza
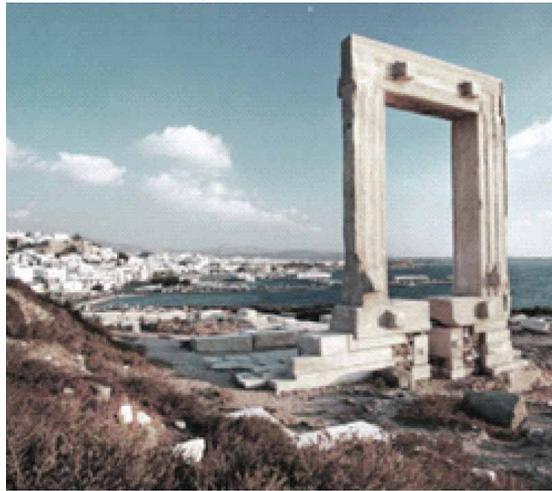
Source: prevezanews

feature as a "stork town," with scattered nests of migratory birds, adds to its distinctiveness. Given these characteristics, Filippiada is classified in the area with no previous market presence.

According to the MCA (see Table 3) and considering Filippiada's characteristics, the framework for producing a branding video can be outlined as follows:

1. **Select the Purchase Cycle:** Filippiada is entering the market for the first time, so the pre-purchase direction is chosen.
2. **Decide on the Video Focus:** The municipality needs to decide whether the video will provide simple information about the city or aim to create desire. Hypothetically, the choice is to provide simple information.
3. **Cost of Production:** The cost of production will be low, medium, or high cost based on the finances of the municipality. Hypothetically, the choice is a low-cost production.
4. **Select Video Type:** Considering the options in Table 3, the choice is between implicit brand focus or explicit brand focus. Hypothetically, the choice is implicit brand focus.
5. **Choose Video Variation:** Each video type has different options. Hypothetically, the choice is a first presentation video, considering that Filippiada is being marketed for the first time.

In conclusion, the hypothetical choice for the Filippiada video is to be in the market cycle, pre-sale, a consumer information video with low production costs, and of the first presentation type.

Naxos, the largest island of the Greek Cyclades, saw significant development after World War II. In the early post-war years, its economy was based on agriculture and fishing. Tourism grew throughout the 1960s, making Naxos a popular destination. In addition to tourism, Naxos gradually developed its agricultural sector, producing wine, olive oil, and dairy products. Its growing manufacturing sector produces textiles, ceramics, and food products.

A robust brand strategy for Naxos should reflect the island's identity and values. It should accentuate its unique features, including its beaches, rich culture, and historical significance. The branding efforts should include a distinctive brand name, potentially leveraging existing cultural symbols like the iconic Portara (see Figure 5) or other symbols from the Cycladic civilization. Emphasizing sustainability and promoting responsible tourism should be integral components of the overall branding strategy for a city with an established market presence.

Figure 5. Temple of Apollo: Marble gate (Portara). In the background the town of Naxos

Source: Korres G.

In the case of Naxos, a strategic consideration in the purchase cycle could involve options related to maintenance or support. Given its existing recognition, the choice within the purchase cycle could be either to maintain the town's current image or provide support if the municipality considers it to be effective. Considering the island's economic benefit from tourism, higher production costs could be justified. The video could lean toward an implicit brand focus, possibly in the crowdfunding category, or an explicit brand focus within the category of product placement. Using the island as a natural backdrop in a film could be a successful and impactful option for branding.

Nigrita, situated in the southwestern part of the valley of Serres, is an example of a city facing negative growth. Established in the 15th century as a transportation hub between Thessaloniki and Serres, serving as a link to the Balkans and a waiting station during the winter floods of Lake Achinos, Nigrita experience significant development over time. It was mainly active in the cultivation and processing of tobacco, silkworm processing, and the textile industry. It aso gained prominence for its exploitation of hot springs and mineral water production under the name of Nigrita. The city's historical significance is further highlighted by the traditional song "The Gerakina" (see Figure 6).

In the 1940s, the city's permanent population peaked at 15,000, making it a destination for migration and labor. However, changes like the construction of a direct road connecting Serres to Thessaloniki and the draining of Lake Achinos altered the city's fortunes. The developments diminished its transporation advantage, leading to a gradual declide in its foundations. The population decreased by 37% between 1950 and 2011. Today, Nigrita is a town of 4,892 residents (ELSTAT, 2021).

The city of Nigrita presents an opportunity for rebranding by using its strong historical strengths and promoting new trends. Leveraging its once strong brand, the city can embark on a revitalization journey, emphasizing features like the hot springs, the reopening of the mineral water production, and the promotion of annual events like the Gerakineia festival.

In the case of Nigrita, a city with high market penetration despite experiencing a period of negative growth, the strategic focus would be on rebranding. The purchase cycle can be a combination of

Figure 6. Advertising of the Mineral Water of Nigrita. Label of the record of the traditional song of Gerakina

Source: Sidiropoulos G.

pre-purchase information, especially if rebranding is required, and a post-purchase emphasis on the promotion of the prestige of the area. Given its limited funding, the cost of production would be low or marginally medium. The type of video would be in the implicit brand focus, specifically a product demonstration, showcasing the modified product with a different target audience and highlighting its new character to the market.

CONCLUSION

City branding plays a crucial role in the growth of countries, regions, and urban centers. A successful branding process, including a carefully designed framework and establishment of regulatory tools, is necessary for achieving recognition, enhancing the catch-up process, boosting competitiveness, and fostering sustainable development.

This article presented a model to produce brand videos based on multi-criteria analysis. In turn, it demonstrates viable solutions for the development and sustainability of small towns. Multicriteria analysis substantially affects city branding and video production tools, contributing to a city's recognition. Multicriteria analysis also involves evaluating a set of criteria and criteria weights to reach final decisions.

The use of multicriteria analysis in city branding through video production is a strategic approach that allows for the prioritization and consideration of various technical aspects. This includes factors like production costs, production cycle, supply and demand, focus, dissemination method, and market presence. Multicriteria analysis ensures that these technical aspects align with the overall goals and objectives of the city branding campaign.

Furthermore, the city may prioritize lower production costs but also emphasize a longer production cycle to ensure high-quality video production. Additionally, external factors like market trends, public audience preferences, and competition can be integrated into the analysis, ensuring that the city branding video production tool is relevant and competitive in the market.

Multicriteria analysis can determine trade-offs between various criteria, allowing for a balanced and efficient mechanism in the city branding process. Its application in city branding video production has implications for sustainable development, facilitating a comprehensive evaluation that considers both internal and external factors, leading to a more effective and impactful branding strategy.

When it comes to sustainability, city branding plays a vital role by promoting environmentally friendly initiatives, encouraging green investments, and raising awareness about the importance of

sustainability. Video, a powerful tool for city branding, can be especially effective for promoting sustainability. Conveying complex environmental issues in an engaging and easily understandable way can raise awareness and educate the public about the importance of sustainability. The use of eye-catching visuals and compelling storytelling can create a strong emotional connection to the city's sustainability initiatives, encouraging more people to get involved and support the destination.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

FUNDING STATEMENT

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