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СТЕНОГРАММЫ УСТНЫХ ВЫСТУПЛЕНИЙ СПИКЕРОВ – ТЕОРЕТИКОВ И ПРАКТИКОВ СФЕРЫ БРЕНД-МЕНЕДЖМЕНТА ТЕРРИТОРИИ

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PLACE BRAND POSITIONING: PERSPECTIVES FROM VALUE CO-CREATION AND STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

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My presentation is a little bit theoretical. This is our first contribution; we are trying to study the connection between value co-creation and strategic narrative in the context of place brand positioning. For this reason, with my colleague Maria Anna Pagnanelli and my university, we are trying to move our first steps to merge the strategic narrative to the place brand positioning.

Place branding: *a strategy to build place identity*

Place Branding is the **process** of discovering, creating, developing and realizing ideas and concepts **for reconstructing place identities**, their defining traits and 'genius loci' and subsequently building the **sense of place**, by efforts and **investments in hardware** (e.g. infrastructure, buildings), **software** (e.g. events, stories), **orgware** (e.g., co-operative organizational structuring) and **virtual ware** (e.g., symbols and symbolic actions, websites)."

Govers, R. and Go, F., 2009. Place branding—glocal, physical and virtual identities constructed, imagined or experienced. Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan

Strategy

Identity

Actors
involvement

So my presentation starts with the presentation of place branding that is the strategy in place marketing. We use this strategy to identify the place identity, and we try to find the pillars able to stimulate the immersion of the identity of the place. The identity, as the literature presents, is the result that place marketing strategy needs to highlight.

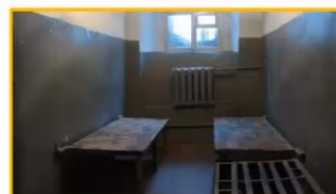
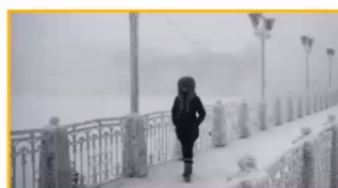
In fact if we reflect on the place identity definition – it is a set of associations suggested by the place marketing strategy, and, at the end, the place identity expresses how this place would like to be recognized. On the contrary, we have the place image. And place image is a subjective representation of a place. Each actor, each subject has an image of different places.

Each subject expresses its image.

Tomsk (Siberia): *image*

*...a wild and difficult
place where live strong
experiences: be careful!!!*

Negative perception emerges...



For this reason we reflect about the image that we have in Italy about Tomsk, for example. When I say that I'm going to Tomsk: "Oh, Tomsk... Probably Siberia... What's this – Siberia? Prisons, bears, and cold!" Really – this is Siberia. The problem is the perspective. This is the negative perspective. But if we reflect in another sense, we can use the same pictures, as you see here, and we can connect other pictures with Tomsk.

Tomsk (Siberia): identity ...a vibrant and multicultural city

3 key pillars in place identity

historical and cultural Innovation and entrepreneurial Scientific and educational

TUSUR Included in First Entrepreneurial University Rankings

Tomsk State University of Control Systems and Radioelectronics was included in the First Entrepreneurial University Rankings published by the Analytics Center Expert.

Only 18 Russian universities have qualified for the new university in

Tomsk is communicating that now it is becoming a vibrant and multicultural city because of the Universities and international students. And as you can see from this slide, we can use the same picture saying that bears, prisons, and what you know about Siberia could be seen with another perspective. Prisons are the cultural and historical places that you can visit, for example, museums. Or the bears, the forest, the mountains that Siberia has. For this reason, the work that Tomsk is doing these years, at this University in particular, with the projects of increasing the place identity of Tomsk rests on three pillars: historic and cultural, innovation and entrepreneurial, and scientific and educational. Three pillars are useful to identify the place identity in Tomsk. Of course it's not simple to identify this place identity if we are not able to connect different actors, and cooperate and share these pillars.

Brand positioning (companies)

- In a market context, **BRAND POSITIONING**:
 - a process that follows the whole marketing strategy
 - the aim to make a **brand occupy a distinct position** (respect to other competing brands) in the mind of the target market (customers)

Who is in the consumer target? (TARGET)

Where the company plays? (CATEGORY)

Where the company wins? (BENEFIT)

Why should they believe to the company? (SUPPORT POINTS)

If we start to reflect on positioning and brand positioning in marketing for companies in general... You know that the concept of positioning is a process that follows the whole marketing strategy. You can see three brands: Gucci, Ferrari and Apple. Every brand is able to represent the strategy of these three companies: Gucci for luxury fashion, Ferrari for luxury automobiles, and then Apple for luxury technologies, of course. We clearly identify the target category and benefits that each company is able to give to the customer, and the competences that each company is able to apply to generate the benefits they promise.

Differences in positioning processes

	Company	Place
Positioning meaning	Same	Same
Subject working for positioning strategy	Company management	Internal, external stakeholders and policy makers, sometime together
Boundaries in targets and benefits provided	Narrow	Wide
Offering or value proposition	It comes from the company	It comes from the interaction between internal, external stakeholders and policy makers
Brand image	Mostly depends by the company's behaviour from foundation and target interpretation	Mostly depends by the place actors (internal and external), their behaviours and by the different targets interpretation

If we compare this situation to the work that each actor has to do to generate the positioning from the company side, and from the place side, how many efforts do you have to make to create your positioning if you are a company? And, on the right, you can find how many efforts and difficulties the place has to establish the positioning.

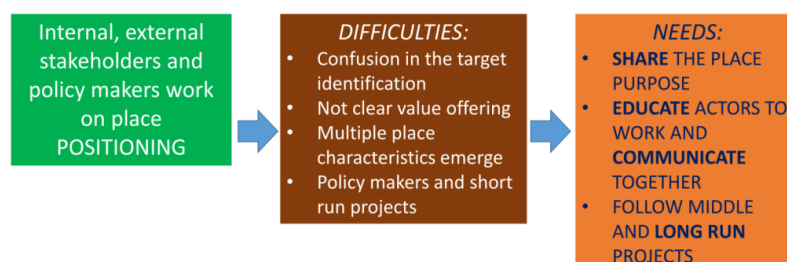
The company has a narrow target, the places are wide. The place is subjected to different actors, i.e. internal and external stakeholders; in particular, policy makers that interact together to generate stimuli to identify the positioning. On the contrary, the company has the company management. The company management is able to decide what the company is, and where the company has to go in the future.

place brand positioning: *difficulties to overcome*

Defining positioning	Characteristics	Difficulties
Who is in the stakeholders target? (INTERESTED PLACE USERS)	Specific groups of stakeholders interested to the place value proposition	Elements in place value proposition that create confusion in the target identification
Where the place competes? (CATEGORY)	Similar place value propositions (other places with similar offerings for same users)	It is difficult to 'be different' if the value offering it is not clear
Where the place wins? (BENEFIT)	Elements of unicity and differentiation of the place	High variety of offering and a multiplicity of emerging characteristics
Why should stakeholders believe to the place offering (SUPPORT POINTS)	Pillars in place value proposition that strongly support the elements of unicity and differentiation of the place during the time	Elements of unicity and support pillars are entangled with a multitude of internal and external stakeholders interests and with policy makers decisions

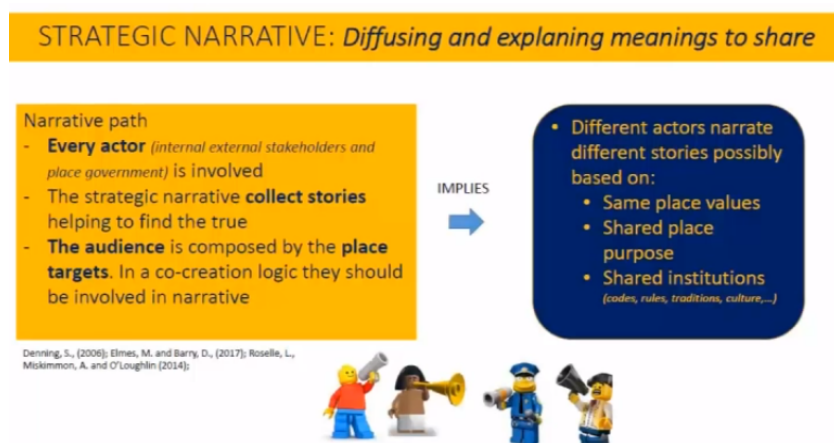
There are difficulties to overcome, difficulties for the place. If you see in the column on the left – it's simple to see that we have to identify for the place the target category, in which the place competes, the benefits the place needs to give to the targets. As you know, there are difficulties to overcome because of a high variety of offering, because it's difficult to be different to other places. In particular, there are difficulties to have a connection between different actors.

Actors working on place brand positioning



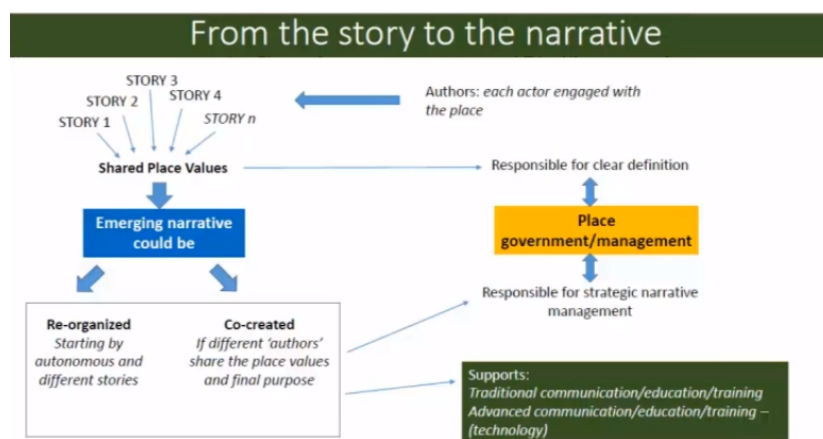
The place has three needs: (1) to share the purpose. The final purpose of each place could be identified as creating well-being for people that live in the place and want to have good quality of life. The second need is (2) to educate actors to work and communicate together. And for this reason the education is the first step and the first need that could be satisfied by the universities. The third is (3) to follow middle- and long-run projects that are the contrary for the policymakers. Policymakers in every country have short-run projects, because they need to have results in short run. It's not the same if we would like to create place brand positioning because we need to have long-run projects to affirm our pillars.

We are trying to reflect on that, and we think that value co-creation and strategic narrative could be useful to integrate these tools. Value co-creation is a concept that comes from business studies. The meaning of it is the cooperation in creation, operating together and sharing resources to build the place meanings. The problem is that if you want to cooperate with someone, you need to share the same institutions, the same rules and the same languages. So it is necessary to educate actors to cooperate. At first we need to find the engaged actors that are able to share the same institutions, and we need to have educated actors able to cooperate.



On the other hand, we could use the concept of strategic narrative. You can see Lego characters; there are different characters with megaphones. Each one is able to tell its story and is an actor in the place. Every actor is involved in creating the narrative of the place. But different actors narrate different stories.

The goal is to identify the same place values at the base of the stories. The actors need to share the place purpose, create well-being and quality of life. Of course, we need to identify institutions to be shared by different actors. You can imagine that each character could be a company, could be a university, and could be a policymaker, a mayor, for example.



As we see in this slide, we are able to see that different stories should share the same place values. In this way the place management, the place government should be responsible for defining clearly the values of shared places. And particularly the place management is responsible for strategic narrative management.

STRATEGIC NARRATIVE in place branding

How place management should work:

- With a communicative path **connecting** together the **different stories**
- Keeping **clear** the **place benefits** provided and the values
- **Encouraging** the expression of **actors**
- Encouraging the **participation** to **trainings**
- Diffusing a sense of **coopetition** between the actors in the place

Implementation

- **Education following a narrative logic** (*educating key informant, opinion leaders, in general place actors to the place final purpose and key relevant benefit to provide*)
- **Participation of people** (*involving citizens, foreigners, journalists, artists, to cooperate in creation and in giving ideas and points of view – for e.g. the Living Labs experiences*)

What we have to say about strategic narrative... Here we are studying how to better explain what we have in mind. Strategic narrative could be a place management activity, because place management should work with communicative paths connecting the different stories of different characters together, and, in particular, keeping clear the place benefits that the place has to deliver.

This is the problem that each place has: different actors that are telling different stories, but the director could be a place manager. The place management needs to diffuse a sense of coopetition: to cooperate in coopetition between the actors. For this reason, it's impossible to implement strategic narrative thinking about education of actors, in particular, involving people, foreigners, journalists, artists, citizens to participate in it. Living Labs, for example, could be a good experience to involve people to design products, to cooperate with companies or to cooperate in place reorganization designing a new way to see the same routes, for example, the same squares.

Technology as key factor for Strategic Narrative and Value co-creation

opportunities

Category	Value	Penetration
Total Population	7.593 Billion	-
Internet Users	4.021 Billion	53%
Active Social Media Users	3.196 Billion	42%
Unique Mobile Users	5.135 Billion	68%
Active Mobile Social Users	2.958 Billion	39%

Increasing in the world:

- the **SMART approach to the city life** involving citizens in cooperation for product and services development (eg. *The Living Labs*)
- The **fast communication** in creating and diffusing **stories**
- The opportunity to **share** the strategic **narrative** with every **people** in the world
- The simplicity/complexity to **vehiculate** the **real place meanings**

Technology (because this conference is focused on digital place brand) is an opportunity. As you can see from the slide, this is the measure of the use and diffusion of technology in the world, in particular, the use of Internet and mobile communication. It's increasing worldwide: the SMART approach of the city life, the fast communication creating and diffusing stories between people. Of course, companies are diffusing stories in order to tell the customers about their brand positioning. This is the time for the places to tell their stories, but the stories should be connected with the pillars of the identity that the place would like to communicate. Simplicity and complexity to vehiculate the real place meanings are supported by technology.

Conclusions

- Place brand positioning in a middle and long run project could be supported by
 - **value co-creation**
 - **strategic narrative approach**
- It is necessary a 'mental change' of every actor interacting in the place
- Technology is a key factor that offers **opportunities**



In conclusion, we can say that value co-creation and strategic narrative approach could be integrated to create a new opportunity for a mental change. We can discuss different techniques and theories, but the first step is the mental change to be positive for the future, to be open, to change our ideas if it's possible, and also to share and integrate our resources around the world. Technology is a key factor but it's a tool, it's not a principal pillar. Technology is a tool that is useful to diffuse this kind of communication. Thanks!