

# City branding strategies of Hermosillo: Reflections of culture, heritage, identity, and tourism in the institutional political stratum

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## Abstract

*Latin American cities have recently joined the worldwide competition of being consolidated as a touristic attraction and a venue for international events, but many of them are not prepared for such competition. City branding seeks to promote their identity, heritage and cultural resources to attract tourism. But sometimes marketing strategies are not the most appropriate or those assets are promoted in an artificial way by institutions that don't seem to know certainly what they want to convey, such as Hermosillo case. The key purpose of this paper is to analyze and redefine those fundamental concepts that we noticed are mistakenly raised and promoted by these institutions' stratum. Thus, through this reflection we suggest that the implementation of strategies seem to be prefabricated formula. It is valid to promote cultural tourism in a restricted social context? What does Hermosillo needs to ensure a genuine local development without been excluded of international recognition?*

Keywords: City Branding, Cultural Tourism, Urban Policy, Hermosillo

## Introduction

### *The evolution of City Branding: From Universal Exhibitions to Deindustrialization*

Branding emerges as a discipline in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and city planners begin to employ place branding from the seventies until now that practically is used in all urban managements. First manifestations of what we recognize as a brand can be identified since the Second Industrial Revolution<sup>1</sup>, essentially the first Great Exhibition placed in London (1851) where the product was isolated from all that characterize it but still accentuating its status of industrialized object. This first kind of brand tried to differentiate the mass-fabricated products almost identical between them (Klein, 2007) so its "soul" could be rescued by branding it through different representations like personal shape, material or style and by making emphasis in its name, logotype or place of precedence.

In this context the industrial city adopts a new role too. Universal Exhibitions are the opportunity to attract a mass of visitants in order not only to show its new marketable commodities but to launch the city as a touristic destiny like a product profitable by itself. That is how these exhibitions contribute also urbanistically to the host city because of its strategic character committed to the renewal of urban image, political complicity and therefore financial support of government gear. Besides each

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<sup>1</sup> Bruno Remaury (2004) calls it the "first mercantile revolution" because it was the first time that an insignificant value was rescued of industrialized object by displaying it at the Universal Expositions. At the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> Century emerged a new phenomenon that was showed to the world at these expositions: *the marketable commodity*.

participant country has the occasion to show to the world its technological advances and architectural contributions by building a pavilion<sup>2</sup>. So the touristic furtherance is not only for host cities but for all participants. Thus brands, urban development, iconic architecture and tourism begin working together in the industrial city scenario.

United Kingdom's cities -where Industrial Revolution began (1750-1840)- and the most important cities of United States, Germany and Netherlands -where Second Industrial Revolution took place (1880-1914)- share an history of economical activity mutation consequence of the industrial crisis at the seventies that faded the economic engine of Glasgow, Amsterdam, Manchester, Chicago, Leipzig, Detroit, London and then other European cities like Barcelona, Saint Etienne, Milan and Bilbao. So there was a gradual desertion of urban cores towards the outskirts that propitiated the emergence of suburbs and metropolitan areas and led to new land uses at downtowns in which economic activity became more oriented to tertiary sectors. This phenomenon known in Spain as "tertiarization" transcends the economic aspect in order to affect the whole city meanings.

Deindustrialization had an important impact in society. The gradual loss of employment generated an atmosphere of boredom and it stopped not only economic but human productivity. Many of the cities I mentioned share a gray scene during the late 70's and 80's of drug addiction, social apathy and crime. Public administrations had to rethink the city with the aim of generate new expectations to citizenship. New political and urban actions were needed to reorient the typically industrial market into incoming types of consumption. The change of an economy based on production into a consumption based economy was determinant and in this condition the commodities were not produced to satisfy existing needs, but moreover as a secondary response to needs generated 'in the first place' by advertising and marketing strategies (Payne [et al], 2002).

The case of New York is a reference in terms of de-industrialized city and a paradigm of successful city brand. Miriam Greenberg (2008) explains how the great value and good reputation of this city is the result of a transcendent strategy which found out how to reorient its decadency and its notoriety of "crime and lawlessness" to grab international attention and take a long road to regeneration. Greenberg tells of how in 1971, amid a fiscal crisis, a fatalistic ad appears in newspaper "*Announcing the Beginning of the End of New York City*" accompanied by an image of the Statue of Liberty crying.

The purpose of the announcement (among others that appear in the same format) was to publicize the arrival of *Alitalia* airline from Europe to the Big Apple. This would denote an incipient willingness to project New York as a tourist destination: The imagery that then prevailed about a city of hopeless and (de) composed by a society of renegade artists (poets, painters, musicians, etc.) from all around the world, would be used and promoted as the "Mecca of culture". That's how neoliberal politicians found in the tourist market a great opportunity to restructure the economy through tangible changes (urban, economic and social) and symbolic (which would be handle by marketing) to achieve an investment and consumption vision of New York.

As well the branding activity will begin with a "quasi-official" campaign by the *Association for a Better New York* in 1971, known as *Big Apple*. So the strategy culminates with the celebration of the bicentennial of U.S. independence in 1976 and the construction of the World Trade Center that proclaims the revival of the city. The Milton Glaser's "I ♥ NY" logo would accompany the campaign of the State Department of Commerce and represent the beginning of a massive array of symbols that point to the future of this city. Its influence on the management of post-industrial cities would be determinant. New York City adopts since then an infallible iconicity, legitimized by the cinema, literature, design, art and architecture. This case it will be an example of synergies between public

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<sup>2</sup> Since the first international version of London (1851) that is released the Crystal Palace by Joseph Paxton, the field of architecture becomes important. *Gallery of Machines* by Ferdinand Dutert and *Victor Contamin* for the Universal Exhibition in Paris (1889) -which cover long distances without columns- aroused admiration because of its audacity constructed. Gustave Eiffel Tower aroused controversial reactions because of its singularity, but the time has established itself as the undisputed icon of the city. Mies Van der Rohe's German Pavilion at Barcelona (1929) has been established in history as one of the first modern buildings.

administration and private –urban coalitions- (Paramio, 2001), mostly for cases of cities that want to implement urban practices in times of crisis.

Deindustrialization not only changes the meanings of industrialized object to object of consumption. The conception of city by itself undergoes the same change. Consumption, in essence, is not the appropriation of an object but its meaning. That's how culture will adopt new meanings too, more oriented to what is called "postmodern era" and will be related to conceptions of leisure and capitalist countries lifestyle. Society adopts new dynamics, becomes a consumer of cities and the only way to promote those new intangibles values will be through city branding.

### *City Branding Strategies: Culture, Heritage, Identity and Tourism*

As mentioned, brand at first was meant to mark, stamp or indicate a difference of a product. This discipline is responsible for constructing a story around a marketable commodity in order to convince customers that it is the most suitable for them. So city branding will be applied so as to recover the "soul" of the cities which includes marketing strategies based on differentiation as a competitive maneuver in which the city is a product that is offered to the market. This time the market will have an interesting duality because city image must be sold both its citizens and potential visitors/investors.

For Marxist theory of value work force determines the value of a commodity, in a primitive stage of capitalist accumulation and the exchange of commodities. Nevertheless in the economy of the latest 20<sup>th</sup> century in a postindustrial context that value resides in that "overprice" (Klein, 2007) which the consumer is available to pay for a brand compared with another product of equal characteristic but without that label. Brand equity is defined by several factors, including the accuracy of the product description, the emotional benefit, familiarity and gained loyalty, its reputation and public image and all the associations generated by this brand. For city branding this added value may lie in different characteristics and not only by creating a logo and a slogan for it.

The last thirty years it has been evolving the strategies of city branding. Nowadays we can identify those that are implemented as a must in most cities all over the world looking for projection. Three important factors to develop can be categorized: economic, social and territorial. These aspects are interlinked so there is no established order for the development of each. Although branding may be interpreted as a recipe or steps to follow, therefore each city must pose their strategies according to their needs. Social development includes the pursuit of welfare, education, sports, health and culture. Economic development contemplates the creation of jobs and activities vital to the cities governed by capitalism as construction, manufacturing and services such as tourist promotion. Territorial development includes urban planning, infrastructure, environment care, and architecture for housing and urban equipment (Martínez, 2009).

The creation of a city brand is the result of a joint work -synergies- that encourage the development of these three fundamental aspects that should convince both citizens and potential visitors (tourism and investors). This often represents a major challenge due to the need for a balanced development in which the requirements of tourism do not undermine the citizen. Its complexity has highlighted the need to explore in the creation of "added values" and the legitimation of marketable meanings. This is how the concept of culture (because of its hybridity and its multiple interpretations) becomes a sort of wildcard for the development of these new meanings. *"The evolution of the city has made evident over time as well as traces of it. Culture has made these traces a benchmark of identity. Furthermore, the enormous costs of dispersal have made looking back, if only for financial reasons, to the built heritage and its reuse."*<sup>3</sup> (Peñín, 2006:31)

Many authors have pointed out the different notions about culture. The definition of this concept has changed over time and there are many interpretations and perspectives. From anthropology objective

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<sup>3</sup> Translated from Spanish

culture is considered as a framework that raises man above nature. From a more idealistic (or postmodern) reference culture is regarded as singular and coherent idiosyncratic configuration that gives personality to a human group. One of the most widespread and standardized concepts lately is called *cultural system*, in which meanings are shared, expressed in an order of representations that are communicable through symbols (Delgado, 2011). But culture has gone from something that defines us all to what makes us different from the others (differences, contrasts, comparisons by groups), so culture may represent countries or big communities (Mayan culture, Muslim culture, African culture) and even small groups of society or individuals (cultural diversity, cultural identity, multiculturalism) (García, 2010).

Is difficult to clarify the scope of culture, the fact is that culture is a public matter and beyond their interpretations is considered as an economic engine in which come into play the diverse representations of cultural identity. Since culture has the virtue to vary over time, cultural identity will lie in those elements that have endured over time. Such as ceremonies, heritage, art and all social representations that transcends human history. Thus, the patrimonial value plays a significant role in the development of cultural policies and much more when its economic potential is discovered embodied in what we now know as cultural tourism.

It is important to distinguish clearly between *cultural system* and *cultural policy*. For Tulio Hernandez (2003) *cultural system* is a real and specific culture of a society that is never reduced to the interventions of the state and its institutions, neither to those of the market and its operations. Is established as an "ecosystem" where interact products, messages and cultural practices as diverse as those from the mass media, religious cults, institutional speeches, counter-cultural events, traditional folk memory, the values of the nationality or the rites of family life. On the other hand *cultural policies* are interventions conscious, deliberate, formal, rational and strategic conducted by the government or from private initiative to try to influence a particular cultural system. Aimed to correct their faults, compensate their shortcomings or reinforce their potential.

## **The implementation of City Branding in Public Policy of Mexican cities: the promotion of cultural tourism in Hermosillo, Sonora**

### *The uses of culture*

Cultural policies have revealed another issue that government has to face: The diversity of uses that are given to culture in economic terms. Does it represent an expense or an investment? The experts in this topic have failed to agree partly because it depends of the place that would be implemented. Giandomenico Amendola (2001) point out that in studying contemporary successful cases, we realize the role of culture and how it is performed in a multitude of ways: Culture as a social welfare factor that recovers the most degraded areas of the city and generates social cohesion. That strengthens and promotes the human development; Culture as a constitutive factor of the project represented through the exaltation of collective identities and their heritage; Culture as the field of expression of human creativity that should be encouraged in order to catalyze the sector of innovation; Culture as a constitutive element of life's quality in some area and, through it, as a factor of touristic and investment attraction. And finally, culture as a field of production of the new economy.

In the case of European and American cities where social welfare is covered, we can identify a cultural vitality that may be regarded as an industry, as an economic engine, but they don't have a general definition of the concept or how to measure it. José Luis Zofío (2001) notes that we cannot yet measure the participation of so-called "cultural industries" in GDP, due to the absence of a single definition that allows its inclusion in the classifications of economic activities currently in force. The truth is that the change of direction that has been given to culture is evident and a lot of authors affirm that culture is recognized today as a development activity and employment generator. *"The discourse of its importance has gone from being gratuitous, spontaneous; something that is part of the creativity*

*for anyone who aspires to raise above the material conditions of existence, to the expression of a good "intangible" that acquires its realization through the market, as an expression of the implicit value exchange.*<sup>4</sup> (Leonardo, 2001:142)

In contrast, in the case of Latin American cities, cultural development has been particularly inequitable. Industrialization came to them late and therefore deindustrialization didn't hit so suddenly. Except for the capitals and some big secondary cities, the development has reached the provincial cities until very recently, so it is common to see low-impact industrial facilities in a lot of these cities like the case we will study here. With all this, the development of culture (in its diversity of interpretations) and a commitment to tourism promotion will not be an exception.

### *The arrival of cultural tourism through branding Hermosillo*

Most of the cities in northern Mexico are around 400 years old. They emerged from New Spain's missions, and most all of them were settlements whose source of income was agriculture and stockbreeding. In order to ensure economic development, supported the last thirty years mostly by manufacture industry, these cities have developed a touristic industry to ensure local development. The case of Hermosillo is not an exception: it is an isolated town of nearly 1 million population located in the desert. The capital of the State of Sonora whose economy is based on automobile manufacturing industry and commerce, is rarely visited by Mexicans and almost unknown by the rest of the world. It has a few monuments (none of them recognized by UNESCO) but big natural landscapes that in many cases are unexplored. The slow development of this population as well as its low heritage could be explained by its location.

The discovery of the tourism potential of these urban areas has led initiatives to promote cultural tourism in this region. Since 2003 coinciding with the start of the municipal government of Dolores del Rio<sup>5</sup>, measures of "internal promotion of city" begin to be implemented addressed to the citizens to create public awareness. The slogan "Yo le voy a Hermosillo<sup>6</sup>" is launched to support the reinforcement of the collective identity (figure 1). One official statement described this program "(...) *designed by the 2003-2006 administration of this municipality in the state of Sonora, is an effort to strengthen the identity and responsibility among the residents of Hermosillo, the collective affairs of the municipality and public services from City Hall as a priority (...) Consist in a promotion of a symbolic sense of belonging, responsibility, local pride, which to some extent rests on the traditional regional identity, characteristic of the culture of the state of Sonora.*<sup>7</sup>"

The program also promoted a responsible water use and vial culture, two of the most serious problems of the city<sup>8</sup>. Another area that the campaign was meant to cover was solving urban sanitation issues, promote social participation and the "values of solidarity". All of them "en un sentido amplio" ("broadly") and in this wide sense is where probably the problem starts. Marketers indicate the weakness of rhetorical messages or multivocal concepts because they are not recorded in the memory

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<sup>4</sup> Translated from Spanish

<sup>5</sup> Hermosillo's mayor (2003-2006) from the PAN (Partido Acción Nacional) known as the most influential right-wing party.

<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to make an accurate translation because it involves the use of regionalism. In brief it can be interpreted like "I'm with Hermosillo" or "I support Hermosillo" as if it were a team.

<sup>7</sup> Translated from Spanish

<sup>8</sup> Since 1995 Hermosillo has been through a drought process that has completely emptied his only dam. At the same time the problems with public transport (which is not administered by the city but concessions that don't make an effort to provide good service) has led to an uncontrolled growth of vehicular traffic, which added to the deficiencies in the roads has made to drive either a daring.

of citizens. Later one of the creators of the program and its slogan, Tonatiuh Guillén, indicated that the scheme was not what were wrong but the interaction rules of the administration because of its short duration<sup>9</sup>. Even so a 2006 report states that traffic accidents decreased by 45%, but for the water saving the government implemented a too radical measure so-called “Tandeo” (that it means “by turns”) that consisted in the rationalization of the service areas and schedules, which it really is recorded in citizens minds.



Figure 1.- Slogan of the city program of 2003-2006 and campaigns of the public administration

Other measures that had a positive impact were two programs: "A day without fines" and "Wednesday of citizen". Over the eternal red traffic lights a group of artist used to make a performance about vial awareness and during Wednesdays citizens used to come together to voice their complaints to City Hall. But the contribution recognized even by the subsequent government of the opposite party was the cultural. In an official government document of Del Río explained: *“The present administration aims to promote the history and culture of the city of Hermosillo, as well as promote tourism and that is why through the Department of Culture Pitic<sup>10</sup> Festival was held. Also it was purchased a trolley that takes a tour of historical points of Hermosillo.”<sup>11</sup>* In 2003 the Municipal Institute of Culture and Art is created to promote public access to the manifestations of art and culture. The trolley (figure 2), which is actually a bus whose exterior is decorated as antique (there has never been a tram), is a success and is currently used by Hermosillo citizens and a small percentage of visitors.



Figure 2.- Turistic trolley that makes a tour around the historical center (2003)

<sup>9</sup> <http://infotecnia.com.mx/centrosconacyt/nota.php?id=99193&tipo=w>

<sup>10</sup> Pitic is the original name of the city

<sup>11</sup> Translated from Spanish

During the 2006-2009 period<sup>12</sup> the cultural aspect of the city continued its momentum but generally to speak about culture was usually referring to the fine arts such as dance, music, painting, literature, sculpture and theater. By then the Municipal Institute of Culture and Art (IMCA) continued working on the grants of local artistic creation and the so-called *cultural animation* (events). Meanwhile, because of Hermosillo is the state capital, Sonoran Institute of Culture (ISC) -located in this city- is mainly involved in promoting the arts produced in this region. Instead, except for the trolley tour, the concern for promoting heritage is null. There was even a controversy because of the intent of the State Government to demolish a building of 1915 generously sized and architectural and historical significance, to build a convention center and shops instead.

But certainly the biggest controversy of that period was the influence of “*the Guggenheim effect*”. The formula *iconic architecture + culture = touristic based economy* would occupy the political agenda of the controversial state governor, Eduardo Bours (2003-2009). In 2006 was announced the construction of an urban complex “Río Sonora” that would include an art museum, a music house, a visitor center, a mall, and an outdoor agora<sup>13</sup>. It sounded perfect: the famous “urban coalitions” in which both government and private would work together could be possible; the catalyst project as those in Barcelona, Medellin, Amsterdam and Bilbao would project the image of Hermosillo to the world and boost local economy. But one of the obstacles was that this “*miraculous architecture*” was projected to be built in a wooded area (one of the few remaining) of the city, which led to unprecedented manifestations of dissatisfaction at the park. For this reason the Museum took time to be build but the neighbors’ complaints went unheeded (in fact they are in a penal process) and the inexplicable ambition to build it there finally won. The result is as expected: It's a rarely-visited museum; local artists complain that they are not taken into account and the space is wasted; is more used for private events such as awards or benefit ceremonies and even weddings. Not all the complex has been built but only the mall and the museum. We are still waiting for the miracle.



Figure 3.- Left: Architectural perspective of the “Río Sonora” complex by Puebla Architects (2007).  
Right: Picture of the Museum of Art of Sonora (MUSAS) main facade

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<sup>12</sup> The mayor passed to Ernesto Gándara (PRI) who is remembered for neglecting his office in his quest for the governorship of the Sonora state. During this period, his officials and party colleagues were involved in a scandal, particularly because of the death of 49 children on a fire at the *ABC* day care.

<sup>13</sup> Obeso, Marta (2006, 2nd march) “Cultura como indicador del desarrollo”, in jornal *Expreso*, Hermosillo.

In 2009 the PAN party resumed the City Hall by Javier Gándara (cousin of his predecessor but of the opposite party) who follows Del Río's line of city branding but with greater force and the complicity of the governor, who is now of the same party after breaking down the hegemony of the PRI that did not overcome the controversial of the ABC case. From this moment, there is a very fuzzy line that separates the impetus to promote local art, social cohesion and identity through culture and the touristic city project. The Municipal Institute of Culture and Art (IMCA) is merged with Tourist commission so is created the Municipal Institute of Culture, Art and Tourism (IMCATUR, henceforth) with a similar mission: *“Encourage the development and promotion of creative and place the Municipality of Hermosillo in the major national and international markets as a prime tourist destination; through coordinated action with other agencies and levels of government to achieve greater access for citizens and visitors to the manifestations of art and natural attractions, taking advantage on being one of the fastest growing cities in economic Mexico.”*<sup>14</sup>

At the same time is launched the new brand of the city “hmo” accompanied by a slogan “Hermosillo I love you” (Hermosillo te quiero) (figure 4). The city brand and its slogan promoted concrete actions such as the Hermosillo song contest, the creation of the Association of Touristic Guides and Hosts “Your Guide”, the promotion of museum spaces and heritage, a Medal of Civic Merit and permanent cultural activities at the Plaza Zaragoza. As we see it is a combination of citizen participation and the promotion of urban tourism to promote the few heritage buildings, because the city actually is pretty young.



Figure 4.- The city brand “hmo” and its slogan “Hermosillo te quiero”

This city brand joins to the list of cities seeking not to be a typecast and reach the maximum number of people (citizen, visitors, etc.). A multicolor logo, generic, where everything can be represented and at the same time all people must be identified, as is the case of the brands: Hawaii, Lisbon, Montreal, Hong Kong, Mexico City, Sydney, Tunisia, Melbourne, Manabí, Panama, Guadalajara, Aruba, Budapest, Querétaro, Barranquilla, to name a few popularized by that time. On the other hand, the slogan, obviously looking for the "feeling of belonging", responds to a worn pattern (forty years later of the "I ♥ NY") as the use of a heart to symbolize a feeling or the inclusion of the words passion, love, want, or being, to indicate that identification. For example: “Belfast”, “Blackburn and Darwen”, “Barcelona batega” (Barcelona beats) with the B as a ♥. Besides “I amsterdam” and “BeBerlin”. Also the slogans “Amor por Bogotá”, “Virginia is for lovers”, “Love Barrow”, “Love Cambrigde” and one that is the same of our case, “Puerto Cabello Te quiero” (Venezuela).

With its new brand and slogan, Hermosillo starts an announced way to promotion as a host city for events. To do this the council creates a new agency, the Conventions and Visitors Office (OCV) with a mission that sounds familiar: “Contributing to the three levels of government and private initiative in economic development and growth of tourism in Hermosillo, Sonora, being a facilitator in the process of promotion, attraction and retention of national and foreign visitors.”<sup>15</sup> It is noteworthy that the reference to these three levels is due to the difficulty to make a joint work involving parties of different political forces. In this case the three levels belong to the same PAN party for the first time.

<sup>14</sup> Mission of IMCATUR translated from Spanish and taken from <http://www.hermosillomex.com/mision.php>

<sup>15</sup> Mission of OCV translated from Spanish and taken from <http://www.ocvhermosillo.com/web/>

The the Conventions and Visitors Office (OCV) seems to make the same work of IMCATUR and it uses the city brand to promote their labor.

Nevertheless, the institutions that support cultural activity at the Sonora State level (Comisión de Fomento al Turismo del Estado de Sonora e Instituto Sonorense de Cultura) and México's Federal level (Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes y Secretaría de Turismo México) depict several discrepancies about their conception of culture or identity. Likewise, the institutions doomed to promote tourism at the state and national level do not even consider local art as an option, instead they have the fantasy of a city full of legends and monuments.

The *Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Sonora 2010-2015* which made a diagnosis that indicates a trend towards urban tourism destinations on the beach<sup>16</sup>, but instead of proposing a beach tourism it offers a tour of the city of Hermosillo: *"Delve into the wonderful Hermosillo's history and culture, visit the Cathedral, Government Palace, the major museums, among many other things that will take you into a trip full of anecdotes and incredible scenery. Meet the statues have been placed in honor of the heroic figures of our history, enjoy their stories and marvel at the stunning architecture of our main monuments. See the main points of business, infrastructure developments and attractions offered by Hermosillo city dwellers such as bars, restaurants, clubs, parks, plazas and more."*<sup>17</sup> But this descriptions are not even close to reality, since the document proposes a tourism almost mythological and does not correspond it the final proposals, which again point to promote its beaches and increase the tourism infrastructure based water use in the Sonora river route.

What we can agree to this city brand are some of the programs and specific campaigns. The campaign "Hermosillo I want you clean, tidy and modern"<sup>18</sup> is released in October 2010 and express some of the actions come from participatory processes, not only through the 13 city councils but also to desires expressed by residents of nearly 200 neighborhoods visited by the program "The Mayor in your neighborhood." The emphasis in the cleaning it will need citizen engagement through five key actions: *"1. No littering in public places, 2. Sweep the front of your house including the street, 3. Take out the trash only day that passes the collection truck and in a safe container, outside the reach of pets, 4. Prune the bush, tree or green area in front of your property, 5. Keep the backyard free of tires, junk, debris or branches, which may be deposited in the designated green points."*<sup>19</sup> Is proved that concrete strategies which indicate specific actions, would have more effect on the population. For instance, the case of the campaigns made by the City Hall of Barcelona in the eighties which eventually reached the complicity of the citizens for their Olympic project.

But the city brand does not end here, because the urban transformation projects will also be supported by it. One of the weaknesses of the municipal administrations (since the 80's) is his obsession for intervening always in the same places. Hermosillo is growing fast; the ford plant expansion in the early 21th century accelerated its growth and there are a lot of new areas of the city where not even the asphalt has come. The main boulevards are rehabilitated again and again, the same parks and squares, the same few historic buildings. These projects are mostly like a make-up to its visible face; give the citizen a spectacle so far from their real needs. The federal, state and municipal institutions identified in Hermosillo a cultural potential that is interpreted by each one in very different ways. They are not even weak, just do not work for a common goal neither communicate with each other.

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<sup>16</sup> The municipal territory is large (more than 14 000 km<sup>2</sup>) and the stretch of beach is more than 200km.

<sup>17</sup> Plan Estratégico de Desarrollo Turístico Sustentable del Estado de Sonora 2010-2015. (pp. 36)

<sup>18</sup> The meaning of "want" and "love" in Spanish is the same, so they played with the ambivalence of them with "Hermosillo te quiero limpio y ordenado"

<sup>19</sup> Translated from Spanish and taken from [http://www.hermosillo.gob.mx/pages/hermosillo\\_moderno.aspx](http://www.hermosillo.gob.mx/pages/hermosillo_moderno.aspx)

The city council is committed to providing *identity* and *culture*, but contrasting the local project and a *National Survey of Habits, Practices and Cultural Consumption* by the *National Council of Culture and Art* (CONACULTA) in late 2010<sup>20</sup>, the confusion becomes bigger. According to the survey, in Sonora for 46% of respondents have little interest in what happens in the culture or cultural activities (which for the CONACULTA are: theater, dance, film, literature and music). The 35.6% had never been in a museum and 88% have never been to an exhibition of plastic arts.

### *Last reflections*

There is no doubt that the cultural system must be strengthened at all levels. It is essential that Hermosillo citizens have access to art manifestations and is a prime necessity that the city promotes values such as water care, cleaning and proper use of the roads and public spaces. The problem is starting from the end; the city brand it should be a product of specific actions, not backwards. The obsession with promoting forced identity, a heritage that has nothing of historical, and an art museum where local artists cannot exhibit and no one visits, ends up being offensive to citizen. All of these strategies do not reevaluate architectural landmarks, regional identity or urban transformation and local development, but instead, they constitute a risky initiative to trivialize the public space, and symbolize citizenship to consumption and leisure, according with the neoliberal inertia to which cities have undergone.

We argue that Hermosillo's population requires another type of institutional strategies advocated to fulfilling the basic needs. Its citizen need more specific consciousness campaigns, starting to attack the biggest problems of the city such as the drought, insecurity, education, and drugs traffic culture. To promote cleanliness, civics, safety, coexistence and other human values; culture as a factor that reinforces these values and provides identity to a community; the revaluation of heritage as assets of our culture; to create venues for the dissemination of culture and interaction (museums, parks, libraries, sports centers, etc.); to ensure that citizens have quality of life; the brand as a result of citizen synergies that promotes the success of public policies; and promoting tourism in the city to hold events and attract new citizens.

This paper is not against some uses of culture, it is essential as a social welfare factor and we need to generate social cohesion not only by the access to arts but providing the required space for interaction. That strengthens and promotes the human development. Urban tourism in a case like this should be the result of a safe citizenship, proud of their neighborhood, where people can be transported through their town in a desirable time and without perturbations. We must remember that no brands, slogans or iconic architecture are miraculous.

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<sup>20</sup> Translated from Spanish and taken from CONACULTA web site [http://conaculta.gob.mx/encuesta\\_nacional.php](http://conaculta.gob.mx/encuesta_nacional.php)

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