

**What's in a Place Name: Reputation Components and Drivers? A Comparison of Five European Metropolises' Perceptions**  
**À quoi renvoie le nom d'un territoire : composantes et facteurs de réputation ? Comparaison entre les perceptions de cinq métropoles européennes**  
**¿A qué se refiere el nombre de un lugar: componentes y conductores de la reputación? Comparación de percepciones de cinco metrópolis europeas**

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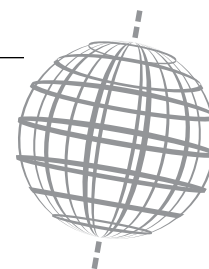
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Article abstract

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# What's in a Place Name: Reputation Components and Drivers? A Comparison of Five European Metropolises' Perceptions<sup>1</sup>

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¿A qué se refiere el nombre de un lugar: componentes y conductores de la reputación? Comparación de percepciones de cinco metrópolis europeas

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## ABSTRACT

What do individuals know or believe about a city place? What should city managers do in order to develop city branding or change the perceptions of individuals? These questions refer to the place reputation, a managerial concept that city managers can use to foster place attractiveness. This article provides new insights on place reputation investigating the perceptions of French people about five European metropolises: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, London, Paris. Findings shed light on four key components of place reputation (i.e. cultural heritage, economic vitality, quality of life, place personality) influenced by three key drivers (i.e. experience, formal and informal communication).

**Keywords:** Place Reputation Components, Place Reputation Drivers, Place Attractiveness, European Metropolises

## RÉSUMÉ

Qu'est-ce que les individus connaissent des métropoles? Quel sont les rôles des managers territoriaux pour développer l'image de ces dernières? Ces questions font référence à la réputation des territoires, concept managérial que les décideurs peuvent utiliser pour favoriser l'attractivité territoriale. Cet article apporte un éclairage nouveau sur la réputation à partir de la perception des Français concernant cinq métropoles européennes : Amsterdam, Barcelone, Berlin, Londres, Paris. Les résultats mettent en lumière quatre composantes de la réputation (i.e. patrimoine culturel, vitalité économique, qualité de vie, personnalité des territoires) influencées par trois facteurs (i.e. expérience, communication formelle et informelle).

**Mots-Clés :** Composantes de la réputation des territoires, Facteurs de la réputation des territoires, Attractivité territoriale, Métropoles européennes

## RESUMEN

¿Qué se sabe de las metrópolis? ¿Cómo los administradores territoriales contribuyen al desarrollo de la imagen de estas últimas? Estas preguntas se refieren a la reputación de un lugar, un concepto de administración que los responsables públicos y privados pueden utilizar para promover el atractivo de los territorios. Este artículo esclarece la reputación basándose en las percepciones de los franceses de cinco metrópolis europeas: Ámsterdam, Barcelona, Berlín, Londres, París. Los resultados destacan cuatro componentes de la reputación (patrimonio cultural, vitalidad económica, calidad de vida, personalidad territorial), influenciados por tres factores (experiencia, comunicación formal e informal).

**Palabras Clave:** Componentes de la reputación de los territorios, Factores de la reputación de los territorios, Atractivo territorial, Metrópolis europeas

In the current global context, public management reforms affect the governance of public action and require thinking differently (Pollitt, 2001). This is the path cities are taking to address economic (unemployment), social (poverty) and environmental (scarcity of resources) development issues (Hernandez and Fiore, 2017). Due to the increased competition among places to attract tourists, residents, and economic activities, city managers rely on

place marketing strategy to foster place attractiveness (Carroll and Nelson, 2017). Attractiveness is a multidimensional concept and refer to political, economic and socio-cultural goals (Soldo, 2010; Servat, 2018). This article focuses on the economic dimension which consists in attracting tourists and investors, though place marketing strategies, in order to generate economic revenues (Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Zenker *et al.*, 2013).

1. This article comes from a paper that received the "Best Paper Award" at the International Place Branding Conference in 2017.

Those new place marketing strategies take place in “the wider governance trend of introducing commercial practices and private sector management styles” (Eshuis *et al.*, 2013, p.507). However, if place marketing includes some key doctrinal components of New Public Management defined by Hood (1991), it cannot be defined as a simple transfer of marketing managerial practices in public sector. This domain has evolved simultaneously with the emergence of new paradigms in public management that goes beyond the logic of New Public Management (Ferlie and Ongaro, 2015; Arnaud and Soldo, 2015). For instance, public value school goes beyond the logic of economic efficiency with its focus on the creation of public value defined as the positive impact of services on public needs that are collectively identified by officials and key stakeholders (Moore, 1995; Stoker, 2006; O’Flynn, 2007). Within this paradigm, new public governance theoretical framework focuses on building public action collectively through deliberations between public, private organizations and stakeholders (Osborne, 2006; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011). This New Public Governance is visible in the co-production of city marketing (Lucarelli and Berg, 2011) with new processes and the use of digital tools that facilitates stakeholders’ involvement to improve city branding effectiveness (Klijn *et al.* 2012). Apart from marketing managerial practices, marketing has now become “an integral part of urban governance” (Eshuis *et al.*, 2013, p.507).

Place marketing strategies include two main directions: developing the city to better meet the need of these different targets and creating a positive image of the city with promotion among others (Eshuis *et al.*, 2013). In doing so, city managers tend to consider place branding as a strategic asset. In recent literature, authors suggest that place branding can be “repositioned as part of the more comprehensive notion of place reputation” because both concepts are complementary and difficult to dissociate (Bell, 2016; p. 248). In the business marketing literature, a large stream of research has argued that reputation enables consumers to make product and service choices (Hubbert *et al.*, 1995), applicants to make career decisions (Dutton *et al.*, 1994), economic agents to make investment decisions (Dowling, 1986), and more broadly, contributes to build a loyalty-based relationship with various stakeholders (Robertson, 1993).

As any other organization (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990), a favorable place reputation may have favorable consequences. We assume that a positive place reputation leads to increase place competitiveness and attractiveness (Eshuis *et al.*, 2013). *A contrario*, a negative reputation could result in a place lock-in situation and a vicious cycle that jeopardizes the place capacity to anticipate and respond to changes in economic circumstances. These two dynamics are quite different and require a different set of variables used by marketers. In this article, the focus is given to positive aspects of place reputation. However, although the reputation concept has been largely studied in the business marketing literature, it still remains understudied in the specific field of place marketing research. Indeed, it is hard and even dangerous to consider places as any other product or service due to its public and democratic features (Karens *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, in a pragmatic perspective, without considering any public dimension, the complexity of the place product comes from its uncontrollable dimension because it

is, above all, a living product, enacted and built overtime by people who live in (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013). Considering the place reputation as a managerial tool for city managers, some key questions arise: What are the components of place reputation? What are the key drivers in order to build the place reputation? This article aims to fulfill these theoretical gaps through an empirical investigation based on a mix methodology related to five well-known European metropolises: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, London, and Paris.

The article is structured as follow. The theoretical framework outlines three key elements: reputation, its key components and drivers. The research design and method focus on the data collection and data analysis of the perceptions of 1600 French respondents (i.e. representative sample) about the five famous European metropolises cited below. The results identify and compare the key components and drivers, which are finally discussed.

## Theoretical Framework

The goal of the following paragraphs is threefold: first, we provide a clear definition of place reputation to differentiate it from other closely related concepts such as image and identity. Secondly, following an assessment perspective, we identify key dimensions that serve as a very conceptual work to uncover consistent and stable components of place reputation. Finally, the theoretical framework sheds light on drivers that determine the individual perceptions of place reputation.

### IMAGE, IDENTITY AND REPUTATION: TOWARD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING

In a competitive context, local authorities have been empowered progressively and the figure of city marketer came to the fore. Through their high technical expertise, city marketers are in charge of defining and implementing attractiveness strategies (Carmouze *et al.*, 2019). The concept of city attractiveness is multidimensional and essentially assessed by individual perceptions (Keramidas *et al.*, 2016; Soldo and Arnaud, 2016). Then, many place marketers across the world are interested by the following question: What do individuals know or believe about a city place? What should city managers do in order to develop positive perceptions of individuals? These questions refer to the place reputation, a key managerial concept that city managers have to handle for fostering place attractiveness.

This concept of place reputation remains understudied and even more, can lead to conceptual confusions. Some place marketing scholars study place image (Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Richards and Wilson, 2004; Zimmerbauer, 2011), place identity (Kalandides, 2011; Kalandides and Kavaratzis, 2011; Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013), meanwhile other scholars deal with place reputation (Bell, 2016). Indeed, image, identity and reputation are three different concepts which have in common to deal with perceptions that are institutionalized and characterized by their central, enduring, and distinctive aspects (Albert and Whetten, 1985). However, their difference come from the “viewpoint” adopted, depending on internal and/or external flows of perception. Through a large literature review, Brown *et al.* (2006) has proposed a unifying terminology based on four main viewpoints described in the Table 1.

**TABLE 1**  
**Toward a Unifying Terminology**

Viewpoint	Definition	Concept
"Who are we as an organization?"	Mental associations about the organization held by organizational members	Identity
"What does the organization want others to think about the organization?"	Mental associations about the organization that organization leaders want important audiences to hold	Intended image
"What does the organization believe others think of the organization?"	Mental associations that organization members believe others outside the organization hold about the organization	Constructed image
"What do stakeholders actually think of the organization?"	Mental associations about the organization actually held by others outside the organization	Reputation

Source: Authors

Based on this conceptual framework, place reputation is a concept that includes a set of mental associations about the place actually held by individuals located outside the place. This place reputation would also contain capital reputation that can be accumulated with several audiences in different domains and various sectors (Bell, 2016, p.248). In that sense, the place reputation concept can be defined as an external flow of accumulated perceptions held by different place targets such as potential residents, tourists and investors. It is worth noted that the external target group has a more reductive and synthetic view of the place than the internal target group (Zenker and Beckmann, 2013).

#### THE PLACE REPUTATION CONCEPT: KEY COMPONENTS

In general, scholars have paid attention on place reputation concept in order to study the mental associations of two specific place targets: tourists and investors. This academic focus could be explained by the primacy given by place marketers to them. Tourists and investors are the primary targets for generating economic benefits and local development from their choice of destination and location (Porter and Stern, 2001; Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Phillips and Schofield, 2007; Zenker *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, recent studies have shed light on the role played by personal logics on companies' location decisions. Spatial perceptions and preferences of decision-makers play a significant role on location decisions (Sergot, 2007). Thus, the bound between these two specific targets is porous and partly explained by their simultaneous investigation.

Despite the lack of empirical research on place reputation components, and especially in a comparative perspective (Gilboa *et al.*, 2015), some academic works have emphasized key dimensions that seem to cover every place. According to Kotler *et al.* (1999) the place reputation derives from four functions, namely: the place as a character (the sense of the place), the place as a fixed environment (infrastructure and natural environment), the place as a service provider (quality of public services such as safety, waste collection, education, etc.), and the place as entertainment and recreation (events, leisure facilities and cultural place of consumption). In a post-modern approach of place, scholars have recently conceptualized the reputation in a more experiential and emotional perspective. In his City Brands Index, Anholt (2006) adds to the previous functions, three dimensions that emphasize these post-modern aspects of a place reputation. In doing so, the place reputation components cover the assessment of economic and educational opportunities,

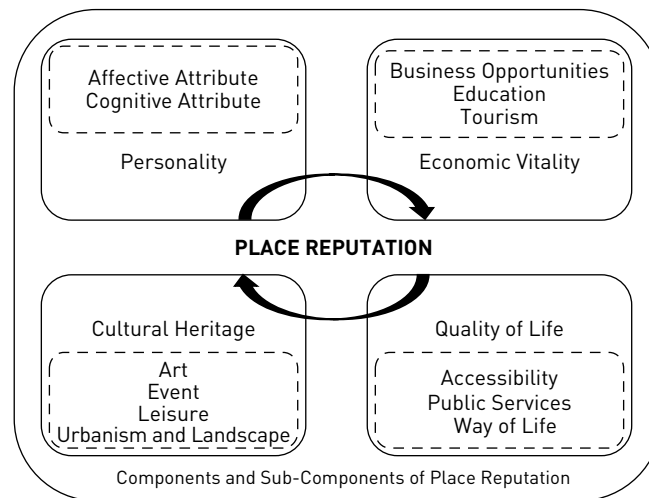
the urban lifestyle, and the hospitality of inhabitants through their cultural aspects. This is in line with Warnaby's work (2011) that underlines the subjective and emotional basis of mental associations attached to a specific place. Kalandides (2011) argues that mental associations related to a place are rather processes than outcomes which arise from place experiences and practices. Indeed, according to Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013, p. 76), the set of mental associations is "a complex system of interactions between the individual and the collective, between the physical and the non-physical, between the functional and the emotional, between the internal and the external, and between the organized and the random".

Based on these theoretical frameworks, we propose four key components of the place reputation concept that are largely accepted by scholars and cover the functional and emotional criteria (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999; Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Richards and Wilson, 2004; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008; Muñiz Martinez, 2012; Lucarelli, 2012; Zenker *et al.*, 2013; Gilboa *et al.*, 2015; Wæraas *et al.*, 2015). The first component is the place personality. It refers to "the sense of place" (Kotler *et al.*, 1999; Warnaby, 2011; Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013). This dimension is assessing through the attitude (cognitive and affective attributes) of the respondent toward the place. The second component derives from the cultural dimension of a place (cultural heritage, events, leisure, art, urbanism and landscape). The third component corresponds to the economic vitality of the place through its tourism dynamism, education and business opportunities (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008; Zenker *et al.*, 2013; Wæraas *et al.*, 2015). The last component is the quality of life which encompasses the quality of the environment (Kalandides, 2011), infrastructures, good public services and local amenities (Kotler *et al.*, 1999; Anholt, 2006; Chamard and Alaux, 2018), and lifestyle (Anholt, 2006; Kalandides, 2011). The set of place reputation's components are synthesized in the following Figure.

#### THE PLACE REPUTATION DRIVERS: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DIMENSIONS

Authors underline some key drivers that influence place reputation. Based on previous academic works (Kavaratzis, 2004; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005; Warnaby, 2009; Zenker, *et al.*, 2014), we distinguish three drivers, one internal: the individuals' experience; and two external: formal and informal communication. A driver is considered as internal because it has an intrinsic dimension. It emanates directly from an

**FIGURE 1**  
**Place Reputation Components**



Source: Authors

individual through its own experience. Conversely, a driver is considered as external because it comes from the environment of individuals and influences extrinsically the individuals' perceptions of place reputation.

First, the experience of a place by individuals is an internal driver (Eshuis *et al.*, 2013; Parker *et al.*, 2015). This driver derives directly from the post-modern conception of the reputation concept (Anholt, 2006; Kalandides, 2011). Consequently, its main basis are subjective and emotional with a large influence of situational variables (Belk, 1975) such as climate, crisis and unexpected events (positive or negative).

Then, external drivers encompass the formal and informal dimensions. They could be formal, through the intended communication and marketing practices of local authorities, or informal and unintended such as word-of-mouth or rumors, notably through social networks (Kavaratzis, 2004; Kavaratzis, 2009). These drivers cover a large scope of thematic. Indeed, economic symbols is one of the main driver of a place reputation. Business opportunity makes a city emblematic and attractive (Muñiz Martinez, 2012). Indeed, cities have iconic images and symbols conveying messages to prospective investors (Nallathiga and Dubey, 2011). Some places actively promote the reputation of a "business friendly place" to attract investment (Zimmerbauer, 2011) or new venture (Wæraas, 2015). To attract tourists and investors, places also promote a discourse about the region's know-how, skilled labor, creativity to show their innovativeness (Zimmerbauer, 2011). Furthermore, the communication on history and culture are strong drivers of a place reputation (Paasi, 2007; Clifton, 2011; Nallathiga and Dubey, 2011; Zimmerbauer, 2011). Places can have an anchored reputation because of the historical nationalities, such as Scotland, Wales in the UK, Catalonia and the Basque Country in Spain (Muñiz Martinez, 2012). Promoting these stereotypes through different communication canals such as the classic literature or popular culture influences the reputation of a place (Anholt, 2002; Dinnie, 2004; Brown *et al.*, 2013).

## Research Design and Method

The main goals of the empirical research are twofold: What are the components of place reputation? What are the key drivers in order to build the place reputation? The methodological framework has been built to fit these research goals. We first precise our research design based on a qualitative and multiple case study. Then, we describe the five cases selected. Finally, we present the data collection process and data analysis methods.

### MULTIPLE CASE STUDY AS RESEARCH STRATEGY

We consider place reputation concept as an observable phenomenon which is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). This basic premise involves a focus on people's perception and their interpretations of their experience lived (Dewey, 1933). Consequently, an exploratory investigation with a qualitative method (Miles *et al.*, 2014) is to address the scarce research on this concept. A case study is a research strategy used to investigate a phenomenon within its real-life context because the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2017).

Our research design is based on a multiple case study (Stake, 2013) in order to explore the research object in several situations. This multiple case study targets five European metropolises: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, London and Paris. The cases selection results from the attention paid to the internal validity (Table 2):

- To make the comparison possible, the five selected cities have similarities in terms of attractiveness and common European identity. We selected five European cities among the ten most attractive european cities in terms of economic dynamic according to EY attractiveness survey (2019);
- To maximize the differences (which make the comparison reliable), cities vary in number of inhabitants, area and density. Furthermore, one of the metropolises is not a capital city of a country (i.e. Barcelona).



**TABLE 2**  
**The five European Metropolises Characteristics**

Metropolises	Number of inhabitants*	Area	Density	Status
Amsterdam	1 096 920 inh. (2013)	219 km <sup>2</sup>	3 832 inh/km <sup>2</sup>	Capital City of Holland
Barcelona	1 608 746 inh. (2016)	100 km <sup>2</sup>	16 023 inh/km <sup>2</sup>	Capital City of Catalonia
Berlin	3 520 031 inh. (2015)	892 km <sup>2</sup>	3 947 inh/km <sup>2</sup>	Capital City of Germany
London	8 673 713 inh. (2015)	1 572 km <sup>2</sup>	5 518 inh/km <sup>2</sup>	Capital City of the United Kingdom
Paris	2 220 445 inh. (2014)	105 km <sup>2</sup>	21 067 inh/km <sup>2</sup>	Capital City of France

\*The number of inhabitants is that of the municipal population - not the urban area population

Source: Authors

## DATA COLLECTION

A questionnaire has been sent from the 15th February to the 26th February 2017 in collaboration with the French Institute of Public Opinion (IFOP). A Computer Assisted Web Interview (CAWI) has been addressed to 1 600 persons representative of the French population (18 years old or more). The focus on the French population is justified by the objective of this research: the aim is to understand how interviewees, as potential tourists or investors, perceive the reputation of cities, and not to compare the perception according to nationalities (French, English, Spanish, etc.). Moreover, each metropolis is tested by a different sub-sample (i.e. 5 sub-sample of approximately 200 persons) and the representativeness of each group is guaranteed by the quota method (age, gender, socio-professional category, region and size of town) (Malhotra, 2006).

For this survey, four questions were asked to the respondents.

1. To collect respondent associations and definition of the metropolis reputation: *"What are the words that come to your mind about the city X? (Five words, verbs, phrases or adjectives)"*
2. To detail the component of the metropolis reputation: *"You have just evoked the element Y of the city X, on what is based this image? (From which elements or sources did you make this image?)"*
3. To understand the meaning of each component: *"Would you say that the element you has evoked just before is: Very positive / Rather positive / Rather negative / Very negative / Neither positive nor negative?"*
4. To evaluate the strength of each association: *"Would you say that the image of city X is: Very positive / Rather positive / Very Negative / Neither positive nor negative / Do not know?"*

## DATA ANALYSIS

We opt for a content analysis which is a widely used qualitative research technique (Miles *et al.*, 2014) because of the flexibility to analyze text data. The data analysis is divided in two stages: first identifying the key components and the key drivers of place reputation, and then measuring the weight of each of them. Indeed, two distinct and complementary content analysis approaches match the two goals of our data analysis.

First, the directed content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) aims at validating or extending a theoretical framework using existing prior research. The goal is to identify and to define key

concepts or variables as initial coding categories and to code the data with this code grid (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). The part of the text that can't be categorized with the code grid is then assigned a new code.

Then, the summative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) aims at quantifying certain words or content in text in order to highlight their contextual use. We are following three goals: to synthesize, to make sense from our data and to increase the richness of the interpretation process (Daniels *et al.*, 2002). The repetition of the discourse analysis units (in this case: the words) is the center of interests. More precisely, we focus on a lexical analysis based on the nature and the richness of the vocabulary used in the text and we attempt to analyze the frequency of words' occurrence.

## Results

The main goals of the findings are twofold: first we present the components of the five European metropolises' reputation (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, London and Paris). Secondly, we present the key drivers of the places' reputation.

### THE KEY COMPONENTS OF THE FIVE EUROPEAN METROPOLISES' REPUTATION

What are the components of the five metropolises' reputation? On the one hand, we describe the findings for each metropolis and on the other hand, we put into perspective the similarities and the differences between the five cases.

The Table 3 displays the components and sub-components of the five metropolises' reputation. First, Amsterdam's reputation is mainly due to its cultural heritage (42%) and its quality of life (34,7%). For example, *Van Gogh* and the *tulips* are part of the cultural heritage of the Netherland capital. The *canals*, the *bikes* and the *coffee shops* are the elements of a cool lifestyle.

Secondly, Barcelona's reputation is determined by its quality of life (32,4%) and its cultural heritage (31%). In this case, the quality of life refers to the gastronomy (e.g. *tapas*, *paella*, and *sangria*), and the cultural heritage refers to the Catalan culture with monuments such as the *Sagrada Familia* and painters such as *Dali*.

Thirdly, Berlin's reputation is also mainly due to its cultural heritage (37,9%) and its quality of life (24,7%). For the German capital, the cultural heritage is an historical one with the *Second World War* and the *Wall*. *Beer*, *sausages* and underground culture (e.g. *electro music*, *street art*) make Berlin a modern and dynamic city.

Fourth, London's reputation depends on its quality of life (29,4%) and its economic vitality (26,9%). *Red buses, yellow taxis* and *pubs* are characteristics of the London lifestyle. The economic vitality has two faces: the power of finance characterized by *The City* and the *Brexit* in reference to the European crisis context. An emergent code completes the definition of personality (19,7%) with a positive political dimension (*The Queen* and the *Royal family*).

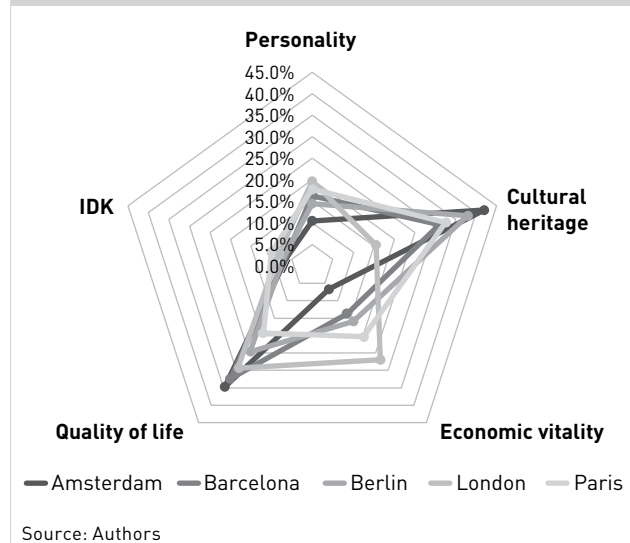
Fifth, Paris's reputation is linked to its cultural heritage (32,5%) and its economic vitality (20,3%). Named *City of Lights*, its *numerous museums* and *shows* (e.g. *Le Louvre* and the *theatres*) compose the French cultural heritage. The economic vitality of the capital is defined by a higher *employment rate* compared with the rest of France. An emergent code completes the definition of the personality (17,9%) with a negative political dimension with *local government's manoeuvring*.

The Figure 2 compares the key components of reputation of the five European metropolises and underlines two trends. On the one hand, the reputation of Amsterdam, Berlin and Barcelona is based on emotional and functional aspects through their cultural heritage and quality of life. On the other hand, the reputation of London and Paris is connected to a functional dimension through their economic vitality.

To summarize, the reputation of a metropolis varies according to the components (i.e. cultural heritage, economic vitality quality of life and personality) stated by tourists and investors. Four components are consistent to define the reputation construct at an aggregated level covering all five cases. Nevertheless, each case does not reveal the same structuration of reputation's construct. Considering the bounded rationality of humankind, respondents may suffer to mentally associate several attributes to a place at the same time. Consequently, they could fail to cover

all four components. This observation leads to consider that a strong place reputation does not require the four components and can be built with at least two components, with either functional or emotional dimension. An efficiency-enhancing outcome derives directly from these findings: place marketers should focus their resources on some key reputation components according to their priorities in terms of reputation desired and place targets, or place features.

**FIGURE 2**  
**The Key Components of the Five Metropolises' Reputation**



**TABLE 3**  
**The Components and Sub-Components of the Five Metropolises' Reputation**

Unity of measure: %		Amsterdam		Barcelona		Berlin		London		Paris	
Personality	Affective Dimension +	10,4	5,1	16,3	11,8	14,4	7,3	19,7	10,1	17,9	5
	Affective Dimension -		1,1		0,8		2,5		5,8		5
	Cognitive Dimension		4,2		3,7		4,6		3,2		7
	Political Dimension +								0,6		
	Political Dimension -										0,9
Cultural Heritage	Art	42	5	31	5,5	37,9	31	15,6	3,1	32,5	1
	Event		1,5		12,8		3,1		0,3		5,2
	Leisure				0,3						0,2
	Urbanism and Landscape		35,5		12,4		3,8		12,2		26,1
Economic Vitality	Education	6,6		13,7		16		26,9	0,3	20,3	
	City's Behaviour		2,6		2,7		11,8		12,6		12,4
	Crisis								4		
	Organizational Structure		0,3		1		2,5		7,5		3,3
	Tourism		3,7		10		1,7		2,5		4,6
Quality of Life	Accessibility	34,7	8	32,4	15,9	24,7	17,5	29,4	6,2	19,3	5,5
	Climate		1,6		10,8		2,9		7,4		
	Environment		1,6		0,1		1,2		3,3		9,7
	Mobility		9		1,5				9		2,6
	Way of Life		14,5		4,1		3,1		3,5		1,5
I don't know		6,3		6,6		7,0		8,4		10	

Source: Authors

### THE KEY DRIVERS OF THE FIVE EUROPEAN METROPOLISES' REPUTATION

The following paragraphs answer the question: What are the key drivers of the five metropolises' reputation? The Table 4 displays the key drivers of the five metropolises' reputation that are based on experience, formal and informal communication.

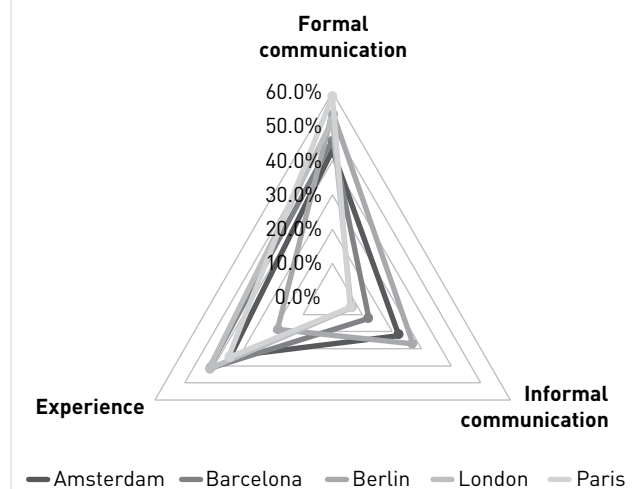
First, in the Amsterdam case, there is an equilibrium between the formal communication driver (43,1%) and the experience driver (34,5%). Formal communication is present in *press articles* and *television reports*, and plays on cultural heritage and quality of life. Experience focuses on situational aspect such as lifestyle. Barcelona's reputation is also influenced by these two drivers: the formal communication (46%) and the experience (41,7%). These reputation factors play mainly on the quality of life and the Catalan culture heritage. In this case, the situational aspect of the experience focuses on the climate. London's reputation drivers follow the same equilibrium between the formal communication driver (52%) and the experience driver (41,8%). Directly linked with *press articles*, *television reports* and *news*, the formal communication focuses on the economic vitality of the British capital and the Brexit background. Experience refers mainly to quality of life and the London lifestyle. Paris' reputation derives primarily from the formal communication driver (58,9%) and then from the experience driver (35,3%). As the respondents are French, *news* is the main canal of the formal communication, playing on the cultural heritage and the economic vitality of the French capital. The driver of experience is promoted through cultural events.

Considering the case of Berlin, some contrasting results appear in comparison with the formers. The reputation of the German capital comes primarily from the formal communication driver (54,2%) and then from the informal communication driver (27,1%). The formal communication plays on culture heritage through historical symbols. The informal communication refers to *movies*, *photos* but also to *word-of-mouth*, *rumors* and *prejudices*: its importance could be linked with the underground culture (major component of Berlin's reputation).

The Figure 3 compares the key drivers of the five European metropolises' reputation and outlines two trends. On the one hand, experience and formal communication are the two key drivers that most influence the place reputation; informal communication is also a driver but less influential. On the other hand, these three drivers can influence differently the cultural heritage, the quality of life and the economic vitality of the metropolises through symbolic and situational aspects.

To summarize, according to the findings, the key components of place reputation are: the cultural heritage, the quality of life and the economic vitality. In order to promote an efficient reputation, metropolises can play with three key drivers: the experience, the formal communication and the informal communication. As a managerial tool, the place reputation can be improved by city managers focusing the formal communication on specific canals and improving the experience of the tourists and investors. However, it is more difficult or even impossible for managers to act directly on informal communication.

**FIGURE 3**  
The Key Drivers of the Five Metropolises' Reputation



Source: Authors

### Discussion

The main goals of the discussion are threefold: first we present the four components of the place reputation which can attract two specific targets (i.e. tourists and investors). Secondly, we propose a theoretical model about the three drivers that influence these components. Finally, we put into perspective the recursive dimension of the place attractiveness.

**TABLE 4**  
The Key Drivers of the Five Metropolises' Reputation

Unity of Measure: %		Amsterdam					Barcelona					Berlin					London					Paris				
Components of Places' Reputation		C	E	Q	P	T	C	E	Q	P	T	C	E	Q	P	T	C	E	Q	P	T	C	E	Q	P	T
Drivers of Reputation	Formal Communication	17,2	4,6	16,1	5,2	<b>43,1</b>	42,4	1,4	0,7	1,4	<b>46,0</b>	7,6	41,5		5,0	<b>54,2</b>	13,0	22,6	11,3	5,1	<b>52,0</b>	24,0	20,6	7,4	6,9	<b>58,9</b>
	Informal Communication	14,9		5,7	1,7	<b>22,4</b>	5,0	2,2	0,7	4,3	<b>12,2</b>	5,9	9,3	4,2	7,6	<b>27,1</b>	1,7		1,7	2,8	<b>6,2</b>	2,5		2,5	1,0	<b>5,9</b>
	Experience	19,5	2,3	8,0	4,6	<b>34,5</b>	13,7	5,8	15,8	6,5	<b>41,7</b>		7,6	7,6	3,4	<b>18,6</b>	11,3	10,2	13,0	7,3	<b>41,8</b>	10,8	5,9	4,9	13,7	<b>35,3</b>

Components of Places' Reputation - C : Cultural Heritage - E: Economic Vitality - Q: Quality of Life - P: Personality - T: Total  
Source: Authors



#### FOUR COMPONENTS OF PLACE REPUTATION

The findings confirm the presence of the four place reputation components identified in the theoretical framework which cover the functional and emotional criteria (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999; Kotler and Getner, 2002; Richards and Wilson, 2004; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008; Muñiz Martinez, 2012; Lucarelli, 2012; Zenker *et al.*, 2013; Gilboa *et al.*, 2015; Wæraas *et al.*, 2015). Do all components have the same influence on the place reputation?

The cultural heritage and the quality of life are the most important components and refer to an emotional criterion and to a lesser extent, the economic vitality is also significant (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008; Zenker *et al.*, 2013; Wæraas *et al.*, 2015). The economic component highlights two aspects: the functional criterion which is composed of tourism dynamism, education and business opportunities, and the emotional criterion referring to the European crisis context. Finally, the personality, assessed through the attitude (cognitive and affective attributes), is the least important component. Due to the importance given to the four components of place reputation, we can assume that the place reputation for tourists and investors is based on emotional and/or functional criteria.

#### THREE DRIVERS TO BUILD PLACE REPUTATION

Among the three drivers of a place reputation identified by authors (Anholt, 2002; Dinnie, 2004; Anholt, 2006; Nallathiga and Dubey 2011; Kalandides, 2011; Zimmerbauer, 2011; Muñiz Martinez, 2012; Brown *et al.*, 2013; Zenker *et al.*, 2014; Wæraas *et al.*, 2015), all the three (i.e. the experience, the formal and informal communication) are prominent but their degree of importance varies.

The experience is characterized by the climate, lifestyle and events in a situational and an emotional perspective. The formal communication also refers to an emotional aspect through the culture heritage (historical symbols). However, the media of communication that generate the formal discourse (press articles, television reports, news) convey discourses and images of the place in a more functional aspect.

Informal communication, less important than the other two, refers to the non-formalized and non-institutionalized communication, the word-of-mouth, the rumours and the prejudices attached to a place reputation (emotional aspect). Even if the influence of informal communication is not as strong as the formal one, this driver plays a significant role in the place communication and reputation.

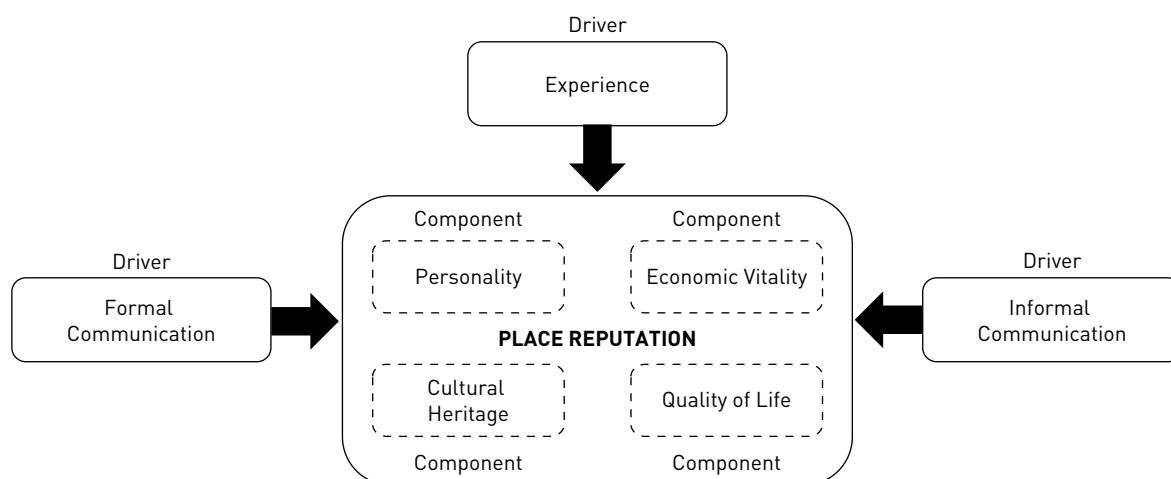
Finally, the three main drivers (i.e. experience, formal and informal communication) were put into perspective with the four components of reputation (i.e. economy, quality of life, culture and personality) to identify their relationships (Figure 4). The reputation is both influenced by its components and its drivers in an interdependent relationship.

#### LINK BETWEEN COMPONENTS AND DRIVERS TO FOSTER ATTRACTIVENESS

Place reputation is understood as a key managerial concept that place marketers have to handle to foster place attractiveness. Moreover, place attractiveness encompasses both exogenous and endogenous dynamics to attract resources and retain them on a permanent basis (Foroudi *et al.*, 2016). What is the link between the components, the drivers of reputation and the place attractiveness?

Considering the territory as an idiosyncratic dimension, place attractiveness is understood as a complex social object (Alaux and Boutard, 2017), which can be illustrated through “the metaphor of the bridge” involving three challenges and dealing with roles, responsibilities, structures and engagement processes for city managers (O'Neill and Nalbandian, 2018, p. 312). The first challenge refers to city managers who are considered as multilingual because they can understand the different political logics, the community dynamics and the administrative processes. The second challenge encompasses the problems faced by local governments since collaboration suffers from the lack of a clear authority structure. The third challenge focuses on the new forms of engagement combining the assertive citizen, the lines between

**FIGURE 4**  
**Relationship between Drivers and Components of Place Reputation**



administrative and political work becoming blurry. Applying the metaphor of the bridge to city managers' practices in order to improve place attractiveness, each place need may have its own attractiveness. The Figure 5 illustrates the recursive link between these four elements. The recursive loop is more complex than a retroactive loop because it relies on a self-production and a self-organization dynamic (Argyris, 1977). In that sense, the place attractiveness is, at the same time, a product and a result of enduring mental associations such as the place reputation.

Depending on the component of reputation, place managers can solicit two main drivers: the experience and the formal communication. Indeed, the formal communication can trigger the will to experience the place and then creates an informal communication. Moreover, a formal communication that is consistent with the experience of a place may lead to create a positive informal communication and doing so, influences a place reputation and attractiveness. Finally, it is more difficult or even impossible for managers to act directly on informal communication.

### Conclusion

This article has provided new insights on the place reputation as a measurable construct and a managerial tool for place marketers. To address the lack of empirical and comparative study of place reputation, we have investigated the perceptions of French people (from a representative sample of 1050 French respondents) about five famous European metropolises: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, London and Paris.

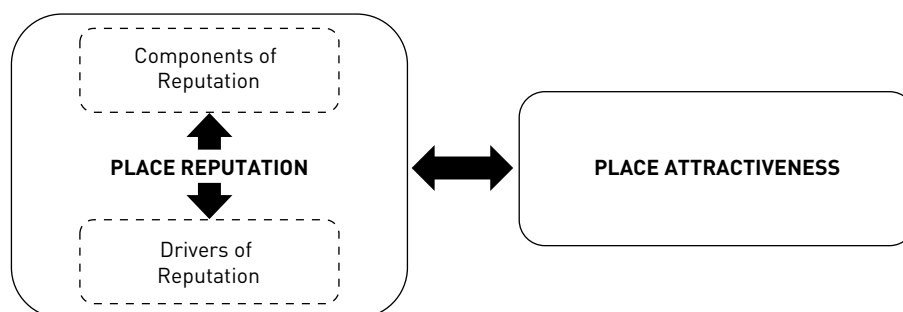
Findings shed light on components and drivers of place reputation. First, we uncover four key components of place reputation, namely: cultural heritage, economic vitality, quality of life and the place personality. These components of place reputation derive from three drivers: external with formal and informal communication, and the experience of individuals that is an internal driver. It is worth reiterating that the formal discourse and the experience are the main drivers that managers can use to influence the different components of place reputation. It is almost impossible for managers to act directly on informal communication; the latter can possibly be influenced by quality experience. This study has highlighted the need for place managers to consider and prioritize the different dimensions and drivers of a place reputation to foster place attractiveness.

The exploratory and qualitative design resulted in a richness of findings which does not come without limitations. We chose a multiple case study focusing on the exclusive perception of French people to assess European metropolises' reputation which considerably reduces the ability to generalize results. To support the proposed theoretical model, the validity, reliability, and replicability of our findings need to be tested in a confirmative and quantitative study, based on a hypothetical and deductive logic. This will constitute our next step with a special attention to extend this study to both more metropolises and to other place targets. It would be also relevant to confront these findings with the perceptions of place marketers involved in the metropolitan areas assessed. In addition, we encourage further studies to focus on the negative perception of a place reputation and its negative drivers that this article didn't provide. Indeed the negative aspect of place reputation require new insights in order to better understand some lock-in situations and vicious cycles that city marketers may have to face. Finally, it would be interesting to investigate the others dimensions of attractiveness and especially the political and socio-cultural dimensions (Soldo and Arnaud, 2016). In this paper we have focused on economic targets such as tourists and investors. However, other specific targets would be considered, following other purposes such as destitute migrants and their perceptions of political and social attractiveness. Thus, the place reputation concept may have different components.

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**FIGURE 5**  
**Place Attractiveness and Place Reputation in a Recursive Loop**



Source: Authors

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