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Master's Thesis

**(A) Study on the flexible identity use to
improve a city brand image
- Focused on Xi'an, China -**

도시브랜드 이미지 제고를 위한 플렉서블
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August 2016

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(A) Study on the flexible identity use to improve a city brand image

- Focused on Xi'an, China -

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Abstract

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The aim of this thesis is to study the concept of city branding and flexible identity, then gives a proposal for Xi'an city branding design by combining these two studies.

Xi'an was one of the most important cradles of Chinese civilization. It was the start of "Silk Road" that linked China with Continental Europe. And it served as the first capital of a unified China and capital of 11 dynasties periodically from the 11th century B.C. to the early 10th century A.D. Xi'an, or Chang'an as it was called in ancient times, was the city of "Everlasting Peace."

For the most of Chinese cities, the city logos are hard to be distinguished. They are being repeated, similar shaping and outdated. Even more, currently, Xi'an does not even have its own city branding.

City branding means to choose a relevant brand factor to combine it with the city by establishing a positive image in order to gain recognition. A circumstance of increased competition among cities has led the cities to build a good city image to attract people..

However, City, as a multi-components system, apparently a static identity can't interpret it adequately. At a time of exponential growth in technology and business, a brand must be flexible to be changed to face all kinds of opportunities. Thus, a new concept for building brand identity showed up - Flexible Identity. Flexible Identity is an identity that can be changed, but has a basic element that always remains the same.

By researching previous literatures, this thesis builds a flexible city branding identity model. After the model is tested by other city branding cases, the thesis then identifies that the factors in city branding system and flexible identity system are influencing each other. The more of the city branding flexibilities have, the more items of city branding factors will be defined. At the last part, the proposal of Xi'an city branding design is based on this model.

Keyword : Brand Identity, City Branding, Flexible Identity, Xi'an City Branding,

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Purpose of the Study

Now days, a big competition has showed up among cities, each of them is making effort to attract people all over the world. The benefit is not only for the city's economic or the citizens, but also for growing its global position. City branding has been an effective way in past few years as a strategy to reach the attention. City branding as explained by Dinnie (2010, 4) should be adapted to circumstances since a city has complex dimensions and backgrounds.¹

City branding helps to build a positive city image. A good city image can influence people's impression, making them be interested in this city.

With the development of science and technology, a brand must be flexible to be able to face all kinds of media. Then a new concept for building brand identity system gradually appeared - Flexible Identity. As Emanuel Jochum discussed, In branding, a flexible brand generally is defined as a variable brand system. By changing pattern of manifestation, it can still convey the brand message.²

Xi'an, One of the oldest cities in China, was known as Chang'an before the Ming dynasty. As the an Ancient Capitals of China, it has an important position in

¹ Dinnie, D. K. City Branding: Theory and Cases. Palgrave Macmillan, p4

² Emanuel Jochum (2013) Dynamic Branding Thesis, p8

Chinese history. The scenic spots and historic sites have attracted more and more tourists to visit. Also the government strategies of the Development of China's West are attracting investors' interest and the talent. Thus, a city image of Xi'an is strongly needed to show to the whole world by telling people what the Xi'an is, what history and culture does Xi'an have by increasing Xi'an's city brand awareness.

With the changing times, city branding has also been evolved. HangGi Park argues that after 2 ages of city branding evolved, now it has become the 3rd age – the age of flexible branding.³ In recent years cities are searching for the new ways to promote themselves. City, as a multi-components system, which composed by culture, history, citizens, and its own characteristic, apparently a static symbol can't interpret it adequately. So the aim of this thesis is to combine the characteristic of the flexible identity system and features of Xi'an, using a variable brand system to express this city's attractive aspect.

³ 박항기 2016, 한글일보, <http://www.hankookilbo.com/v/5877a004d87f41af8d82061a3b3f3ddf>

1.2 Thesis outline and Research method

This thesis is composed of 5 different parts: In the first chapter it starts with the introduction and the background of thesis. After that, the second chapter discusses the theoretical literature, which has a focus on the concept of brand identity, city branding and flexible identity. After introducing the evolution of city branding, the second chapter also combines the characteristic of city branding and flexible identity to find the internal relationship. Through a large number of information inquiry, a flexible identity system model of city branding is made by exploring the definitions of above-mentioned concepts and the research results from other literatures. The third chapter gives the oversea cases in each of the three city branding ages and the present city branding cases in China is also discussed independently. While discussing the third age of city branding cases, the thesis tests the model, which is made in the second chapter, then gives the result at the last part. In the fourth chapter, it introduces the background and city features of Xi'an. By researching the current city branding situation, the fourth chapter lists the main symbols, which can represent Xi'an by the survey results, it shows people's acknowledge for this city. Then the thesis gives the design proposal by using the concept of flexible city branding, which refers to the previous survey results of Xi'an. The conclusion is set in chapter five, ending with discussion.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Concept of Brand Identity

2.1.1 Definition of Brand Identity

Brand identity consists of characteristics, profits, values, distinction, and individuality; it is connected with consumers by all round⁴. According to Melin,⁵ brand identity is what the brand indicates, what gives it significance, and what makes it distinct; it is the brand's DNA.

Aaker and Joachimsthaler⁶ define brand identity in terms of a special brand union, as an important part of brand strategy, it is indispensable. Brand identity builds up a relationship between brand and customers by creating an importance, which provides trust and attraction.

As the concept discussed, brand identity is to identify a company. The conformance of a brand identity is composed by its features. Sabin Mindrut, Adriana Manolica and Cristina Teodora Roman state that brand identity will be

⁴ Roy, D. Banerjee, S. (2007). CARE-ing strategy for integrating of brand equity with brand image. *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, vol. 17 no. 1/2, p140-p148.

⁵ Melin, F. (1997). *Varumärket som strategiskt konkurrensmedel: Om konsten att bygga starka varumärken* Lund University Press Malmö.

⁶ Aaker, D.A., & Joachimsthaler, R. (2000). *Brand Leadership*. New York: Free Press, p43

varied as following components to express brand image: logo, apparel, signage, stationery, marketing collateral, messages and actions, products and packaging, emotions and other components.⁷ It is considered that those components as a package that contains the brand image. Brand identity should follow customer's perception.

Aaker states another explanation of brand identity that it can be the business and can be extended. The brand identity indicates the basic individuality that represents brand as time pass by. After that, he discussed that brand identity should not be static, but should be able to varied if needed. It should reflect its desired goals and its constant qualities.⁸

⁷ Sabin Mindrut, Adriana Manolica and Cristina Teodora Roman(2015), *Procedia Economics and Finance*, Volume 20, p393–p403

⁸ Aaker, D (1996), *Building Strong Brands*, 2010 edition, London, Pocket Books

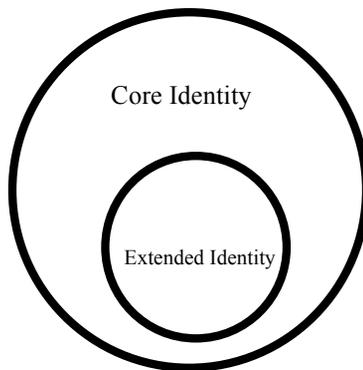


Figure 2.1 The Identity Structure
(Aaker 1996, 86)

As shown in figure 2.1 the brand identity includes two parts: the core identity and the extended identity. The core identity decides whether the company can be successful or not. As a brand's foundation, it must be special and sustainable.

The other part, the extended identity is allowed to vary. Even if it changes, the identity should be recognized still. The extended identity includes the brand individuality, which gives the expression that what the brand stands for.

2.1.2 Role of Brand Identity

It is said that brand identity is composed by 5 key variations, which are the **reputation; relevance; personality; performance; and relationship.**⁹

Variables	Attributes
Brand reputation	Trust in the brand Reliability of the brand Honesty of the brand communication strategists Heritage, legacy and tradition of the brand Clear communication message Consistency – a clear brand identity to be communicated Credibility in advertising (marketing communication media)
Brand relevance	Needs to be satisfied – and values addressed Meaning fit of the brand Innovation and originality of the brand Academic value in harmony with stakeholders' needs The brand is well accepted by stakeholders
Brand personality	Sincerity of the brand Level of excitement created by the brand Competence reflected by the brand Sophistication and superiority of the brand Ruggedness and resilience of the brand
Brand performance	Exceeds expectations Delivers on promises Delivers tangible benefits Reflects value for money
Brand relationship	Understand how stakeholders feel Stakeholders will use this brand for a long time Actively investigate what is important to stakeholders Stakeholders have to enjoy using the brand Probability of non-usage of the brand

Figure 2.2 Adapted from Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 44)

⁹ Coop 2005, Ind 2003, Perry & Wisnom 2003, Dowling 2001. Aaker 1997

Brand reputation gives the explanation of brand's ability, it has the persuasion that makes people trust this company.¹⁰ In another world, it represents brand image.¹¹

Brand relevance tells consumer brand's business.¹² It is a label of the brand. Brand relevance delivers the message that what this brand stands for.¹³

Brand personality expresses the brand's individualities. These individualities evolves from the brand's core values.¹⁴ According to Aaker,¹⁵ brands also have the self-expressive function. Consumers choose brands depend on their personal preferences.

¹⁰ Fombrun, C.J. & Rindova, V. (1996) 'Who's Tops and Who Decides? The Social Construction of Corporate Reputations', New York University, Stern School of Business, Working Paper.

¹¹ Dowling, G. (2001) Creating corporate reputation: identity, image and performance.p19

¹² Perry, A. & Wisnom, D. III. 2003. Before the brand: creating the unique DNA of an enduring brand identity. New York: McGraw-Hill, p9

¹³ Ind, N. (2003) Beyond branding. London: Kogan Page, p80

¹⁴ Harris, F. & De Chernatony, L. (2001) Corporate branding and corporate brand performance. European Journal of Marketing, 35(3/4): p444.

¹⁵ Aaker, J.L. (1997) Dimensions of brand personality. Journal of Marketing Research, 34(8): p347-p356.

Brand performance decides how consumers feel and realize about a brand. It contains brand's service and quality. A good brand performance can gain respect from consumers.

Brand relationship is built by the brand's personality. Customers choose the brand due to its values.¹⁶ Fournier states that employees strongly affect a brand's relationship with its consumers. It is important that employees should understand this relationship between brand and consumers. It can be said as brand's another core values.¹⁷

In general, the role of brand identity can be explained as follows:

a. Brand identity provides convenience to all the people. It helps consumers recognize the brand immediately. A successful brand identity distinguishes it from its competitors, which can show brand's features.

b. Brand identity helps grow sales, people can easily understand the relevant business. It is a bridge between company and consumers, which is certainly a powerful way to engrain the brand in the user's mind.

¹⁶ Harris, F. & De Chernatony, L. (2001) Corporate branding and corporate brand performance. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(3/4): p444.

¹⁷ Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4): p344.

2.2 Concept of City Branding

2.2.1 Definition of City Branding

City branding is a strategy which is made by government to revitalize city. Dinnie states that city branding, as a branding strategy, needs the support and cooperation in every aspect since city is diversified composition.¹⁸ City branding is a combination of theory and practice, it is applied to both big cities and small cities.

City branding can show the value of this city, it is an effective way to express that value. However, city branding cannot be decided by individual, it is a process that need to be considered in many ways.¹⁹ To build up a creative city branding is always discussed by scholars, they defined city branding as shown in the figure 2.3

¹⁸ Dinnie, D. K. (2010) City Branding: Theory and Cases: Palgrave Macmillan, p4

¹⁹ Van Gelder, S., Allan, M., (2006). City branding – how cities compete in the 21st century.[Booklet]. Netherlands: Place brands, p1-p11

Researcher	Concept Explanation
Nickerson& Moisey (1999)	City branding is building up a relation between people and the image of their city.
Hall (1999)	The essential goal of city branding is to "provide a consistent and focused communication strategy".
Cai (2002)	City branding means to choose a consistent brand factor combination by establishing a positive image in order to gain a recognition and differentiation with the city as the destination. The brand factors include names, terms, signs, logos, design, symbol, slogan, packing or the combination of the above; among them, name is the priority.
Rainisto (2003)	City branding is a method to increase the attraction of the city; the essential point is to establish city recognition.
Julier (2005)	City branding is considered an effort to create and enrich the city's qualities.

Figure 2.3 The definition of city branding by the academia

Hospers claims that a simple logo can not reflect a city's multi-aspects, such as buildings, scenic spots, monuments and events. Hospers (2010) later states that it is difficult to brand a city while this city is not distinctive.²⁰

²⁰ Hospers, G.-J. (2010). City branding and the tourist gaze. In *City Branding: Theory and cases*, ed. D. K. Dinnie, 27. Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 32

Apparently, as a corporate branding strategy, city branding can be taken as the tangible asset because a positive city image can affect people's mind strongly, which will lead whether people would like to make efforts for this city or not. Dowling claims that visual identity can generate recognition of a brand, people are most impressed by a creative and unique brand logo.²¹ City branding represents places which related to the its natural environment.²² Thus, city branding can be distinguished from others by its unique features.

2.2.2 Role of City Branding

City branding provides advantages that related to the marketing strategy for building up city image. City branding, just like a normal company branding, generates trust of a city.²³

²¹ Dowling, G. (2010) *Creating corporate reputation: identity, image and performance*, p211

²² Burgess, Barke and Harrop, Warnaby and Bennison cited in Warnaby and Medway 2010, p211

²³ Anholt, S. (2004). *Nation-brands and the value of provenance*. In N. Morgan, A. Pritchard, R.Pride, *Destination branding*. Burlington: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann. p26

City branding as one part of governmental strategies is used for managing place. It creates opportunities by its identity, and it also contains economic strategy. City branding is also related to city management that it should follow its city features.²⁴ In another word, it plays a role of urban policies.

What causes city branding important is the globalization, it is useful to get people's attention in this era of information. Simon Anholt states that by studying previous researches, city branding is not optional but necessary. For one reason is that consumers now are easy to explore global information while cities strongly need to attract investment, travelers and skilled people.²⁵

City branding also affects tourism.²⁶ A good city strategy can create a city image which can meets tourists' needs appropriately. Liping Cai claims, a tourism city branding should be like the normal branding to consider the brand elements, identity and brand image. It help to distinguish city by reinforcing its attributes.²⁷

²⁴ Kavaratzis, M. (2008) *From City Marketing to City Branding. An Interdisciplinary Analysis with Reference to Amsterdam, Budapest and Athens*. Published PhD Thesis. Groningen: Groningen University.

²⁵ Anholt, S., (2007). *Competitive Identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p19

²⁶ Kampshulte, A. (1999) 'Image as an instrument of urban management', *Geographica Helvetica*, Vol. 54, No. 4, pp. p235

²⁷ Liping Cai cited in Ashworth and Kavaratzis 2009

For example, in 2009, the City of Melbourne changed its new brand identity in order to enhance the competitive ability. Jason Little, who created the new brand identity for Melbourne, states that the aim was to define Melbourne as international city due to its multi-components and features.²⁸ As a result, Melbourne got a high recognition by becoming the 2nd most livable city in the EIU's 2011 Global Liveability Report. Melbourne's Anholt's GfK City Brand Index changed from 15th to rank 8th.²⁹ A very important aspect is that city branding should match city branding strategy..

Behind the scenes: Rebranding the City of Melbourne 2010 states that a city branding must be able to challenge following factors:

- 1) to be unique from others,
- 2) to generate awareness related to policy and culture,
- 3) to satisfy global people,
- 4) to be sustainable and fresh.

In conclusion, a city branding should be 'sustainable, unique, global and attractive'.

²⁸ Behind the scenes: Rebranding the City of Melbourne 2010

²⁹ Octaviyanyi.D.W. (2012) The Significance of City Logo in City Branding Strategy, Recent Researches in Engineering Mechanics, Urban & Naval Transportation and Tourism, p82



Figure 2.4 The City Branding of Melbourne

2.2.3 City Branding Factors

As Minghui.Q states, what cause city branding successful are five components, which are Identification, Architecture, Position, Communication and Audit.³⁰

Identification is to give citizens strong impressions by creating and maintaining a special city image. It directly causes if the city is attractive due to its foundational attribute.

³⁰ Minghui Q. A study of success factors in city branding: the ISE conceptual model[J].

Marketin Science Innovations and Economic Development, 2009: 313-321.

As a essence part, it contains distinctiveness, authenticity, attractiveness and personality.³¹

Architecture, as Morgan and Pritchard states (2002), includes expanding marketing and creating. Managers treat it as a tool to deal with city brands. It is the structure that support the whole process.

Position defines characteristics of a city, then chose the relevant elements to create the city brand. But it has to follow the needs of target market.

Communication means to communicate the city brand's information with target market, which needs to find all the ways to promote a city as a toll. It also can be applied by all kinds of media.³²

Audit helps find opportunities and difficulties while creating city branding, which also provides plans, and calculates the influence of city branding. Audit in is a system that can verify previous work in city branding, which is able find the problems and solve them.

³¹ Kotler, P. and Gertner, D., (2004) Country as brand, product and beyond: a place marketing and brand management perspective. In Morgan, N. Pritchard, A. and Pride, R. (eds.), Destination branding: creating the unique destination proposition. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, p40-p56.

³² Liu Yanping. (2005) City marketing strategy. Beijing: Renmin University of China press.

Minghui.Q also states that there are also few factors playing important roles in city branding management which are organization, system and culture, etc.

Organization is needed to set up and carry out the city branding plans and strategies. To make the project effective to develop the city is strongly important³³.

System in the process of city branding is followed by the city branding management. It gives the whole principle of planning structure. It also guarantees the communication between each department.

Culture decides the concept of city branding. Government make the decision of the city branding process.³⁴ But, the concept of all the directions of city branding should be decided by the market.³⁵

People includes all kinds of skillful talents who ensure quality in the city branding building. The technical managers realize the value of city branding.

³³ Hankinson, G., (2001) Location Branding: A Study of the Branding Practices of 12 English Cities, *Journal of Brand Management* , Vol.9, No.2, pp.127-142.

³⁴ Ryan, C., (2002) The Politics of Branding Cities and Regions: the Case of New Zealand, in Morgan, N. J., Pritchard, A. and Pride, R., *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition* , Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, p66-86.

³⁵ Papadopoulos, N., (2004) Place Branding: Evolution, Meaning and Implications, *Place Branding* , Vol. 1, No. 1, pp.36-49.

2.3 Evolution of City Branding

2.3.1 Heraldry (Symbol) Style

As cities were founded in the 12th and 13th centuries, the official seals were needed to seal official, licensed professional documents.³⁶ Or guarantee the authority for the projects. Seals are also used for security protected file.³⁷ Now days, the city seals represent the city in the historical and cultural way.

2.3.2 Slogan (Word Mark) Style

Brand identity is used to tell what the brand is about. A city's slogan is the core concept that shows consumers the soul of the city.³⁸

City slogan is very important while developing a strong city image, it embodies the destination,³⁹ offers a better experience to tourists⁴⁰ and gives the attribute to

³⁶ GSA P100 Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service. Appendix A:

"Submission Requirements" [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seal_\(emblem\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seal_(emblem))

³⁷ "Rule and Regulation Change Allowing the Construction and use of Computerized Seals" Kansas State Board of Technical Professions. Typical sample of requirements for a professional seal in the United States. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seal_\(emblem\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seal_(emblem))

³⁸ Anholt, S., (2007). Competitive Identity. New York: Palgrave Macmillan 5

the city. It helps tourists understand the soul of the city.⁴¹ A slogan, as a tool, is used to communicate the destination with people in the unique and emotional way.⁴²



Figure 2.5 Logo of "I love New York2"

³⁹ Murphy, L., G. Moscardo, and P. Benckendorff. (2007). "Using Brand Personality to Differentiate Regional Tourism Destinations." *Journal of Travel Research* 46 (1): p5–p14.

⁴⁰ Beckman, E., A. Kumar, and Y.-K. Kim. (2013). "The Impact of Brand Experience on Downtown Success." *Journal of Travel Research* 52 (5): p646–p58.

⁴¹ Keller, K. L. 2003. *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

⁴² Lehto, X. Y., G. Lee, and J. Ismail. 2014. "Measuring Congruence of Affective Images of Destinations and Their Slogans." *International Journal of Tourism Research* 16:250–60.

City slogans convey city's spirit. In past few years, more and more branding agencies took part in it. After "I ♥ New York" showed up, each city tried its own way to find the solution of city branding. They started to use more professional way to target the market and promote themselves.

2.3.3 Open Type (Flexible) Style

City development is an ongoing problem, which includes city's economic issue, tourism, attractiveness and international status. To challenge those problems, cities are searching for the solutions to improve the city images in an internationalized way.

with the popular use of flexible identity in branding, city brandings also started to try this way to build their images in past few years to match in the modern age. The flexible identity system gives the city chance to build a diversified identity for city branding, it does not have to be a single or a static logo. The identity could be changed at any time to match each aspect of the city. Thus, people could also remember or have a stranger impression for this city.

In 2006, Munich decided to create a city image to use it in various ways. The project started by coming up with a series of demands for building up the city brand: It has to be easy to quickly build, be explained reasonably, showed the all

aspects of the city, have high recognition, understood by international people, be able to be used in each media, etc. The slogan was decided as: ‘Munich loves you’, and the brand identity shows the Munich’s traits:

- quality of life.
- excellent economic, networks and scientific;
- hospitality;
- high-achieving sports.



Figure 2.6 Logo of "Munich loves you"

This brand identity was used to promote Munich for the 2006 FWC, for the city’s celebrations, and to publicize Munich as an international city. It was used in both English and German: be amiable for local citizens and be easy to understand for conveying message in the international dimension.

2.4 Concept of Flexible Identity

2.4.1 Definition of Flexible Identity

A prosperous brand has a brilliant identity system all the time by conveying their business clearly. Also it can be identified in all kinds of media.⁴³ Brand identity can be treated as the face of a company, it provides consumers convenience that they can identify company's features, meanings, individuality and values.⁴⁴

The feature of flexible identity is to connect the brand's characters, making them be able to be used in diverse media. By maintaining the brand's spirit, the static identity could be changed into a flexible one. Flexible identity is used to represent the brand variously, and its appeal is decided by brand's internal culture.⁴⁵ With the development of technology, development direction of flexible

⁴³ Lin, P.S. (1985). Cooperate identity System/CIS. Taipei: YTF Publish

⁴⁴ Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2002). Brand leadership. NY: Free Press.

⁴⁵ Wang, G. T. (2005). Enterprises, brand, identity, image-Sybohc thinking and design logic. Taipei: Chuan Hwa & Technology Book Co.;

Mollerup, P. (1999). Marks of excellence: The history and taxonomy of trademarks.NY: Phaidon.;

Rawsthorn (2008). The brand identity of Omaba. Taipei: International CreativeBusiness.;

identity should follow market changes, so there are still many opportunities to improve flexible identity due to consumer's demands increasing.

As a whole, combining the brand core with various brand image as visual identity, then communicate them with audience in different media will generate the flexible identity in a distinct way.⁴⁶

2.4.2 Flexible Identity Systems

Based on many academic' studies, as the times progress, now what important is to express brand culture and visual image in diverse media perfectly.⁴⁷

Irene Van Nes, who wrote the book 'Dynamic Identities-How to create a living brand' mentioned, states the concept of flexible identity system that connect its six components⁴⁸ Each of the elements would affect another one. The six

⁴⁶ Hsu, Chen & Chiu (2002). Analysis of Dynamic Brands Identity and the Type of Logo Expressions, e-CASE & e-Tech 2012, Hong Kong.

⁴⁷ Liu & Guan (2009). Three expression forms of logo design-hyperplane,dynamic and interaction. Computer-Aided Industrial Design & ConceptualDesign. IEEE 10th International Conference.

⁴⁸ Van Nes, (2012), Dynamic Identities: How to Create a Living Brand, BIS Publishers, p6

components are as **Logo, Color, Typography, Graphic Elements, Imagery** and **Language**.

Logo.

As a major element, logo plays the core role that ensures the whole identity maintain its visual image while other continue to change.⁴⁹ It decides the identity performance while interacting in the digital environments.⁵⁰

Color.

Color affects the whole brand image that can be distinguished from others. It can gain its own recognition even other elements are ignored.

Typography

Typography provides an auxiliary function of brand identity while attracting people visually. Because of the development of technology and the infiltration of new technology from different media, it is becoming more and more important due to its readability.

Graphic Elements

Graphic elements contain all kinds of graphic forms which can highlight some specific information to simplify the complicated brand message.

Imagery

⁴⁹ Emanuel Jochum (2013) Dynamic Branding Thesis, p1

⁵⁰ Spies 2012, 216

Images can express the brand culture and value to audience with the actual imagery content. It can cause people's real feeling and reaction when they think this brand is telling a story.

Language

Language means the products' series names. These names can also form a visual identity as a flexible element.

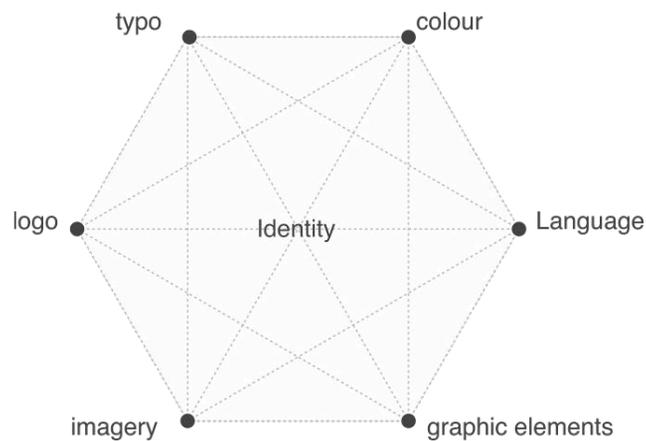


Figure 2.7 Flexible identity system

The flexible identity system is composed by these six components. The whole system varies while one or more factors is changing.⁵¹ Each factor's change can

⁵¹ Van Nes, (2012), Dynamic Identities: How to Create a Living Brand, BIS Publishers, p6

form a new identity. The more components are defined, the more specified the identity becomes.⁵²

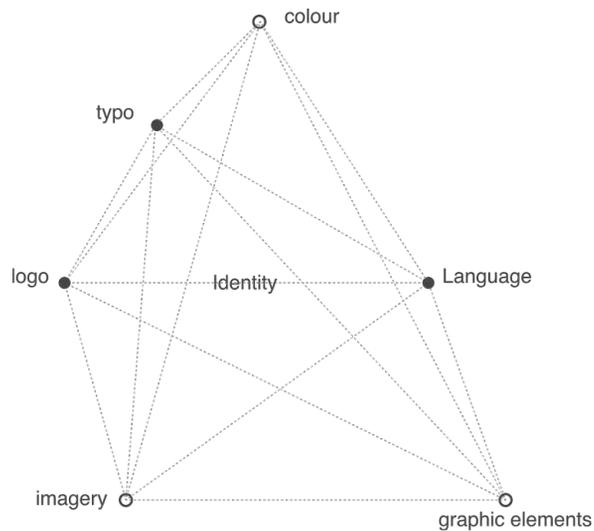


Figure 2.8 Variation of flexible identity system

Van Nes states that the system has to remain a certain component unchanged to ensure recognition that consumers can still recognize the brand while other elements are free to vary.⁵³

⁵² Van Nes, (2012), *Dynamic Identities: How to Create a Living Brand*, BIS Publishers, p7

⁵³ Van Nes, (2012), *Dynamic Identities: How to Create a Living Brand*, BIS Publishers, p7

2.4.3 Flexible Identity System Model for City Branding

Based on the research, this paper refers a mode of city brand, as shown in Figure 2.9⁵⁴

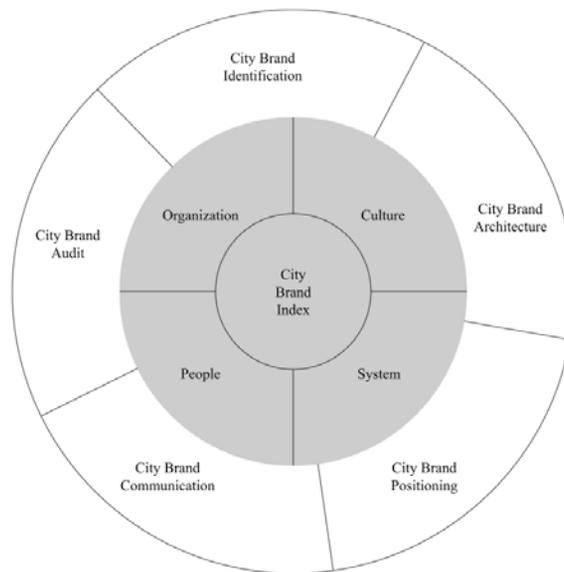


Figure 2.9 The wheel model of city branding

⁵⁴ Minghui Q. (2009) A study of success factors in city branding: the ISE conceptual model[J]. Marketin Science Innovations and Economic Development, p313-p321.

According to Figure 2.9, a city brand model is composed by three parts.

The core part is City Brand Index. It directly decides whether city branding can success or not, it also can express the goal of city branding.

The middle part is the City Brand Support. It is composed by city branding co-organization, city branding management system, city branding culture and city branding talents. This part directly affects City Brand Execution, playing a foundational role in city branding.

The outermost part is City Brand Execution, which includes City Brand Identification, City Brand Architecture, City Brand Position, City Brand Communication and City Brand Audit. They decide the city branding performance visibly.

However, another model made by Kavaratzis argues another explanation of city branding.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ M. Kavaratzis, (2008), City Branding Communication Model, European Institute for Brand management, p1

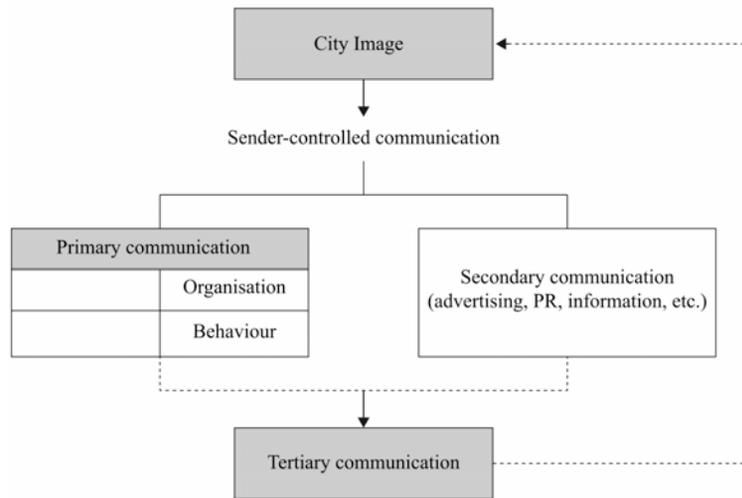


Figure 2.10 Kavaratzis's city branding model

In his City Branding model, Kavaratzis states those elements form the city image. He claims that because the city image is decided at the really first time, it has nothing to do with the marketing.

According the model, we can tell that the design and development of the city are crucial elements of city image. Also people can affect city branding. Without the citizen's support, city branding cannot communicate successfully.

Combining with the Flexible Identity System (Figure 2.7), The wheel model of city branding (Figure 2.9) and Kavaratzis's city branding model (Figure 2.10), this thesis gives a Flexible identity system model for city branding as follows.

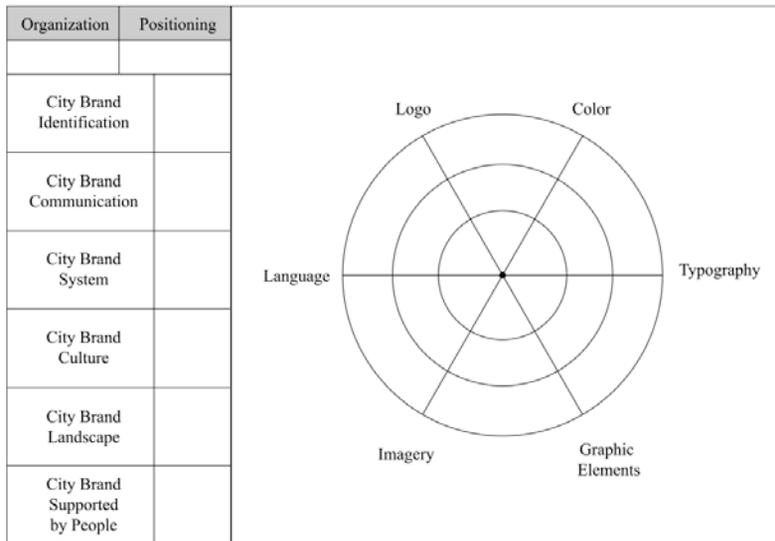


Figure 2.11 Flexible city branding identity system model

The model (Figure 2.11) is composed by 3 parts: The first part gives the explanation of the Organization and Positioning. The second part includes City Brand Identification, City Brand Communication, City Brand System, City Brand Culture, City Brand Landscape and City Brand Supported by People. Each of the

items can be marked by using the symbol \triangle and \blacktriangle to measuring the item's level.

The third part is a refined Flexible Identity System Model, which is composed by Logo, Color, Typography, Graphic Elements, Imagery and Language. The three circles represent 3 levels, and with the wide use of item's strength, the point in the center by following its item's line, will move to the different outside circle line. Thus, by connecting the points, a new figure will be made to showing the level of the flexibility. The following Figure 2.12 gives an example.

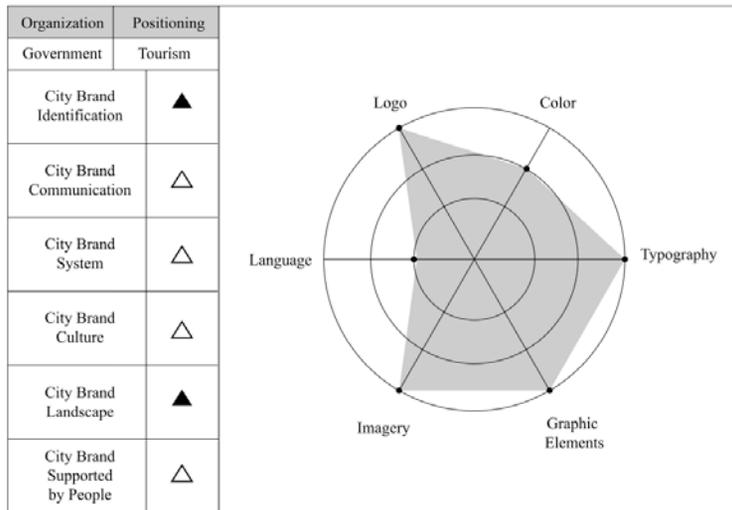


Figure 2.12 Flexible city branding identity system model sample

3. Case Analysis

3.1 The Age of Heraldry



Figure 3.1 City heraldries

3.1.1 New York

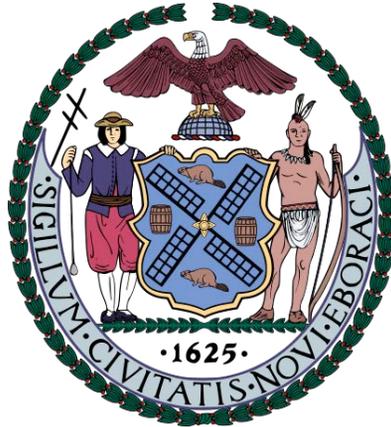


Figure 3.2 Seals of New York City

The two men represent the unity of Native Americans and colonists. In the shield, the sails represent the city's Dutch history, at that time the beavers and barrels are the city's earliest trade goods. The flour barrels and windmills mean the huge treasure generated by New York City from the Bolting Act of 1674.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ The New York Times Magazine. June 20, 1915. p. SM12.

By testing the seal of NYC in the Flexible City Branding Identity System Model, it shows the results as follows:

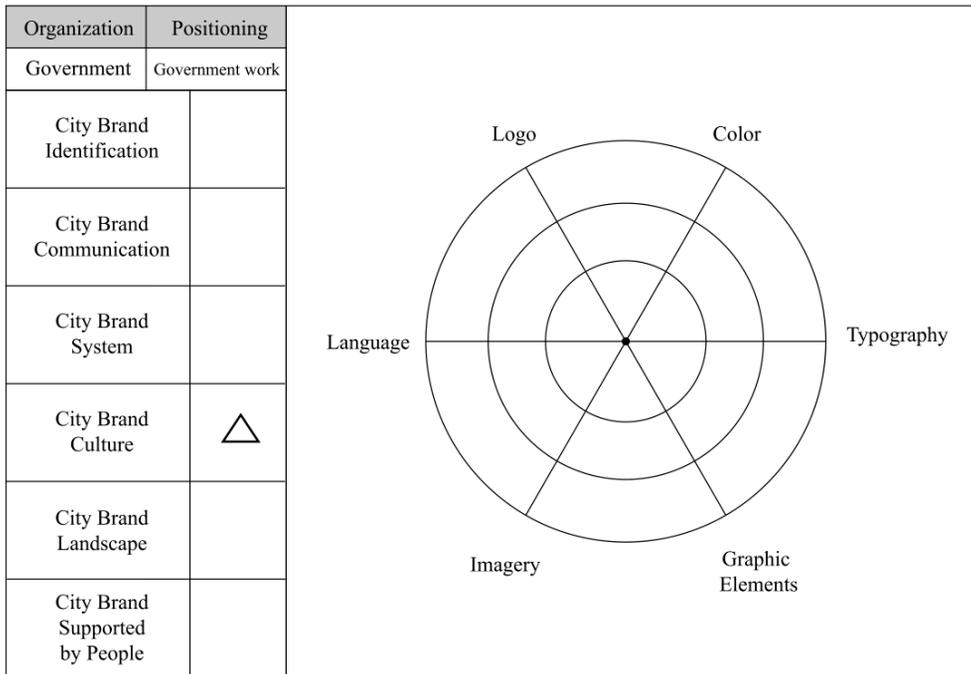


Figure 3.3 Seals of New York City testing result

3.1.2 Berlin



Figure 3.4 Seals of Berlin



Figure 3.5 Seals of Berlin in 1253

At the really first time, the city seal didn't have the element of a bear but an eagle, which was the symbol of the Margraviate of Brandenburg. In 1280, a second city seal showed up. In this case, two standing bears appeared by the Brandenburg eagle.

Some studies indicate that, Berlin, the city's name, came from a diminutive form of the Middle Ages German word for Bear (now Bär, then Bër). Therefore, the bear is reasonable for the city's branding.⁵⁷

Now, the bear has become Berlin's symbol. Especially the Berlin Buddy Bears: They are everywhere in Berlin. The bears are popular for citizens and tourists all over the world.



Figure 3.6 The Buddy Bears

⁵⁷ Maya Lekach, (2013) A look at city branding in Berlin, San Francisco and Melbourne, <https://99designs.com/blog/creative-inspiration/city-branding/>



Figure 3.7 Bear T-shirts in Berlin

The bears play an important role as Berlin's cityscape. The circle of United Buddy Bears came appeared in 2002. Each of the bears represents a country, which have international meaning – always standing together hand in hand.



Figure 3.8 Buddy Bears in Berlin Street

By testing the seal of Berlin in the Flexible City Branding Identity System Model, it shows the results as follows.

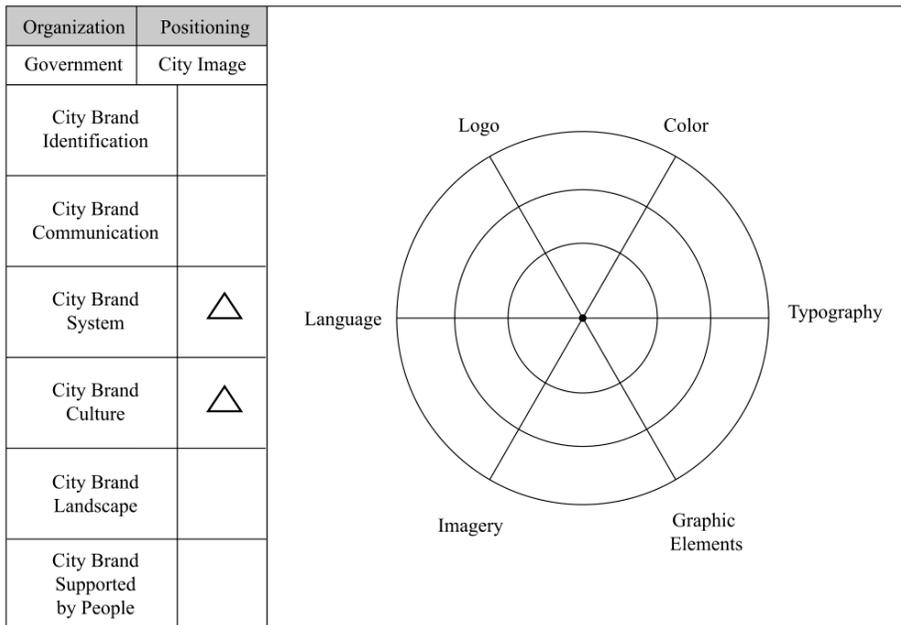


Figure 3.9 Seals of Berlin testing result

3.2 The Age of Slogan

3.2.1 New York



Figure 3.10 Logo of I Love New York

In 1976, New York City ushered in the financial crisis, people kept being homeless and losing the jobs, rising crime rates led more and more people leave there. The government decided to make tourism rehabilitate the economy, and to increase the city's attractiveness.

While Milton Glaser was designing the city logo, his aim was to design a image that connected with a slogan.

The final design of I ♥ NY logo used the initials that expressed people's feeling for this city in an emotional way. This logo has remained unchanged for almost 40 years due to its success and influence.



Figure 3.11 The Popular of I love NY

This logo is claimed by www.logodesignworks.com as the most top city tourism logo.

By testing I Love NY logo in the Flexible City Branding Identity System Model, it shows the results as follows.

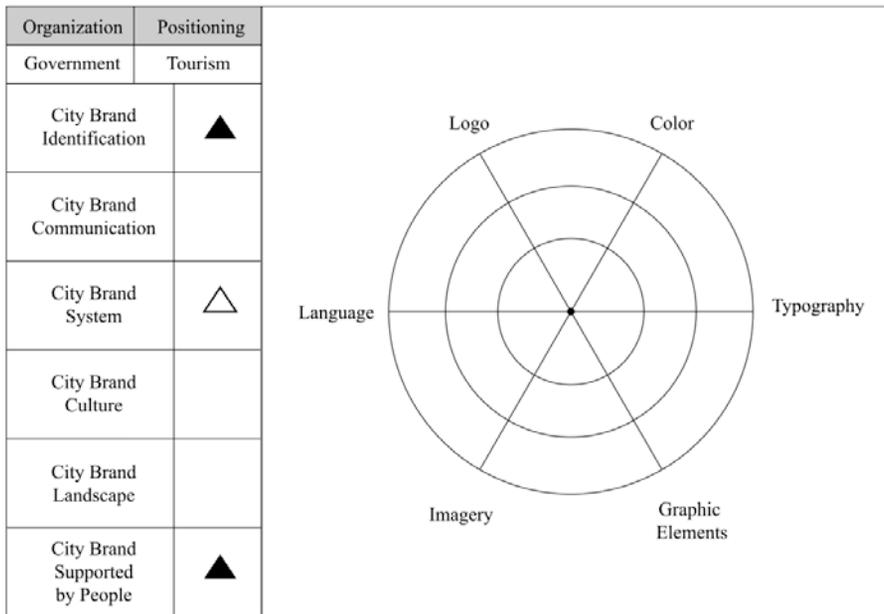


Figure 3.12 I Love NY logo testing result

3.2.2 Berlin

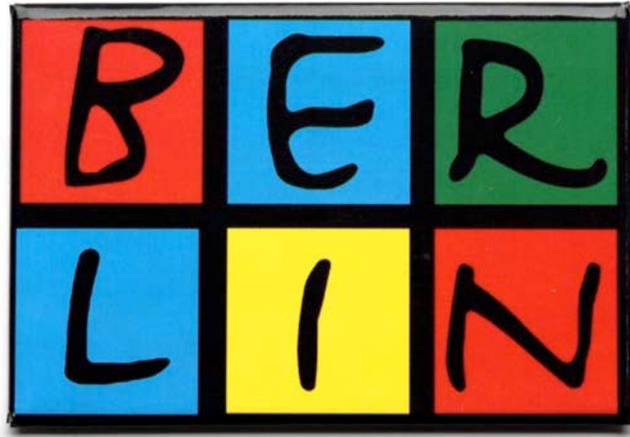


Figure 3.13 The Slogan (Word-Mark) Style of Berlin Logo

The tourist stores 'BERLIN', founded in 1991 during Olympic Games, for selling city merchandise and souvenirs are everywhere in Berlin. It was nominated as "the capital city's brand" in 1994.

The color of this logo is based on Olympic rings. The six letters in two lines means the separation of this city, then highlight the unify in 1989. It is mostly used as a tourist logo in now days.



Figure 3.14 "Berlin" tourist shop



Figure 3.15 "Berlin" shirt

By testing "Berlin" logo in the Flexible City Branding Identity System Model, it shows the results as follows.

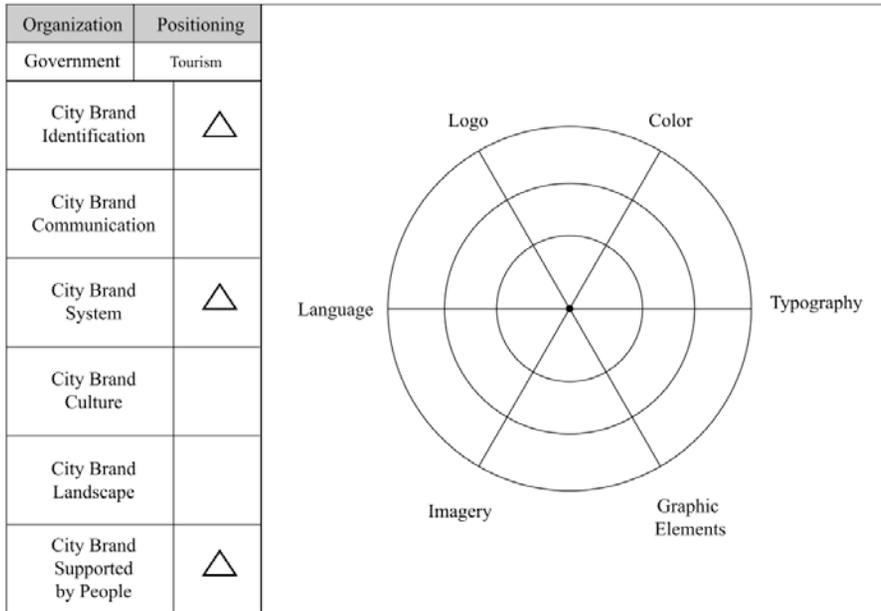


Figure 3.16 "Berlin" logo testing result

3.3 The Age of Open type

3.3.1 New York



Figure 3.17 Original logo of NYC



Figure 3.18 Flexibility of NYC brand identity

Wolff Olins, who created NYC city branding, claims that there's only one New York City. But in this city, there are over eight million people living in it, NYC looks different through everyone's eyes.

Due to the mixed culture, and the different feeling of different people who think about this city, it's hard to find one element to represent NYC. No symbol can stand for NYC to everyone. Thus, a flexible identity is strongly needed to solve this problem.



Figure 3.19 Flexibility of NYC brand identity (2)



Figure 3.20 NYC branding identity in New York

Now the NYC brand is used widespread, which includes greenNYC, NYCgo, BeFitNYC and milliontreesNYC. In 2007, the number of visitors has increased by 5%, which created 350,000 jobs. In 2010 the number increased to 49 million, which generated \$31 billion.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Wolff Olins official website: <http://archive.wolffolins.com/work/new-york-city?ghost=1>

By testing "NYC" brand identity in the Flexible City Branding Identity System Model, it shows the results as follows.

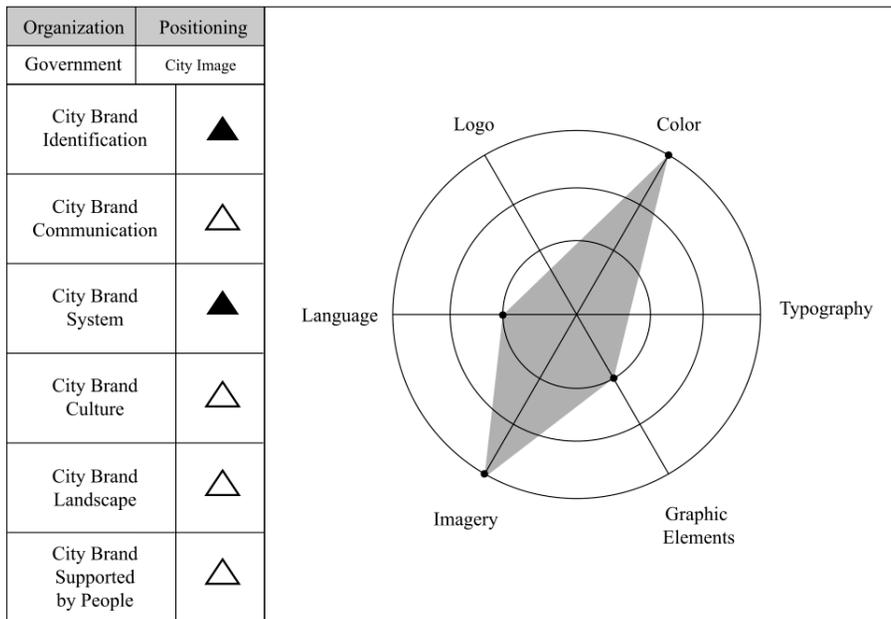


Figure 3.21 NYC brand identity testing result

3.3.2 Berlin



Figure 3.22 City Branding of Berlin

Berlin Senate organized the ‘be Berlin’ in 2008, which also financed by the business communities. The goal is to promote Berlin as an international city where is great to live for its good business environment and its potential of tourism.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ <http://www.be.berlin.de/campaign/background>



Figure 3.23 Flexibility of 'Be Berlin' (1)



Figure 3.24 Flexibility of 'Be Berlin' (2)

The identity's core element is a red message-box and the letters of "be ..., be ..., be berlin." People can fill in all kinds of words or sentences as they wish to express their feeling for Berlin. Now the logo is widely used in the city such as sticker, t-shirt, brochure and poster.



Figure 3.25 Flexibility of 'Be Berlin' (3)

By testing "Be Berlin" branding identity in the Flexible City Branding Identity System Model, it shows the results as follows.

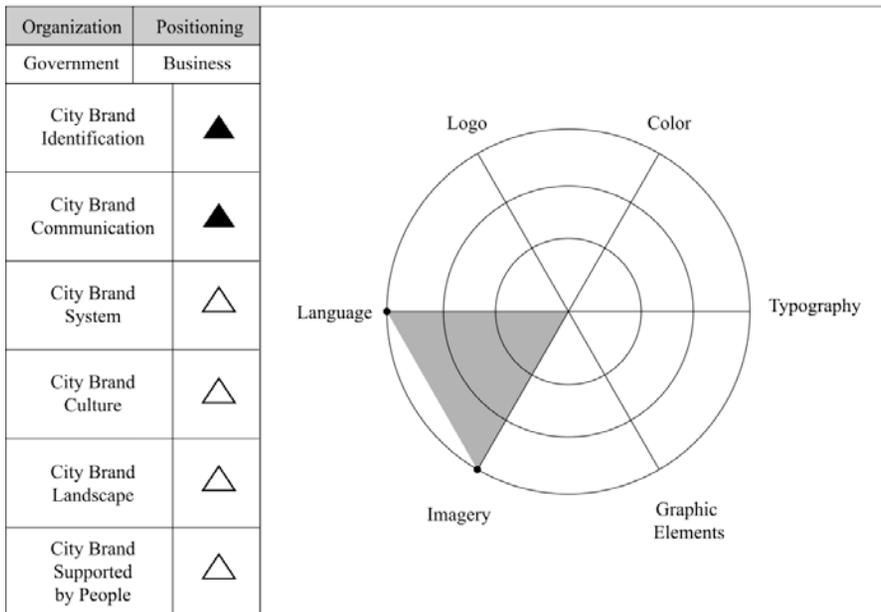


Figure 3.26 'Be Berlin' brand identity testing result

3.4 Analysis Results

By testing the cases from each three ages of city branding, this thesis gives a test result that: In the Flexible City Branding Identity Model, the three components do have the connection with each other. The more of the city branding flexibilities have, the more items of city branding factors will be defined.

City branding can be considered as the tangible asset of city. It is one of the most appealing elements that are possible to reinforcing a city brand by creating a positive image and emotive impression in people's mind. City branding stands as a brand identity that symbolizes a city's assets to its targeted audiences.

In the first age of city branding cases, we can clearly see that both of them have a strong history story behind as the city branding culture, but they lack of brand recognition. Also, other items can get high score.

In the second age of city branding cases, both of these two cities enhances the brand recognition. At the case of I Love NY, the strong support by people really makes it successful.

In the third of city branding cases, we can see the there starts to have the flexibility in the refined model of flexible identity. At the same time, the more items in the city branding parts are defined.

3.5 Chinese City Branding Analysis

3.5.1 Current City logo situation in China

With the economic development of China, the city branding is now strongly needed in each city in China. However, most of the cities lack the innovation idea of the design part, which lead all of the city branding look same. The outdated designs make the city cannot be distinguished from others. Those logo elements mostly use the city's historical stories, famous landscapes or architectures in order to express their traditional culture. The style of Chinese city branding is always maintaining the same by Chinese ink.

People cannot have a deep impression neither on the city nor its branding. They don't want to pay attention on it or to know it by curiosities.

In a word, most of the cities are lacking breakthrough and innovation. This thesis classifies the Chines city logos into 4 categories which is Landmark, Representativeness, Abstract graphic and Font graphic.

Landmark	Representativeness	Abstract graphic	Font graphic
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			

Figure 3.27 China's city logos

3.5.2 Hangzhou



Figure 3.28 The city logo of Hangzhou

Hangzhou, a city with over 2,000 year's history, created its city brand: "City of Quality Life" In 2007. The goal of this project is to promote Hangzhou's multi-aspect. The city logo contains series Hangzhou elements: boat, architectures and garden. The logo has been widely used in everywhere now, such as big events, tourism, public places and city advertising.

By testing "Hangzhou" branding identity in the Flexible City Branding Identity System Model, it shows the results as follows.

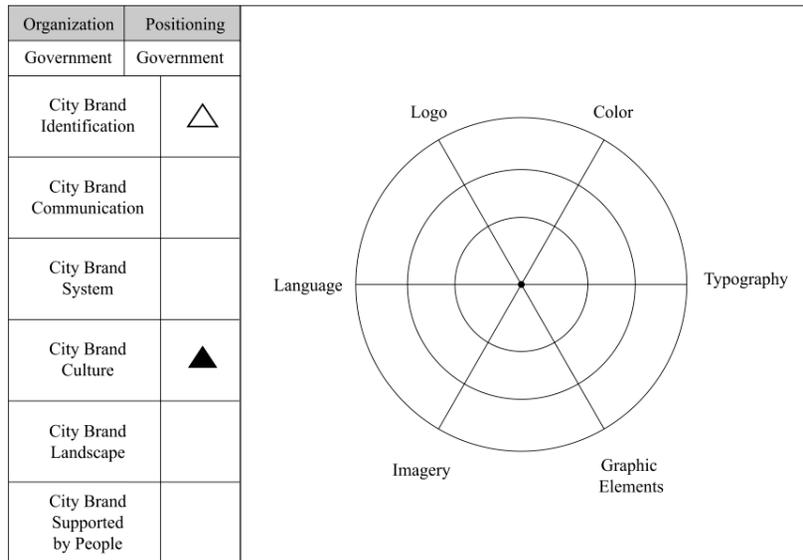


Figure 3.29 Hangzhou brand identity testing result

3.5.3 Nanyang



Figure 3.30 The city logo of Nanyang

The city of Nanyang design its city logo to have an international city image.

The final work ended up with the shape of "Wan (宛) Pavilion", which reflects the stone carvings in Han Dynasty, also it has the shape of boat with its cultural architecture on it.

By testing "Nanyang" branding identity in the Flexible City Branding Identity System Model, it shows the results as follows.

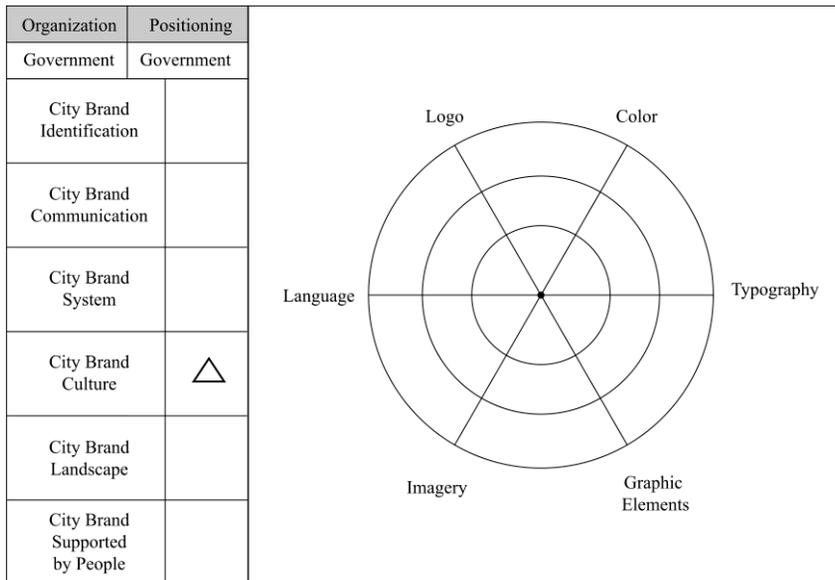


Figure 3.31 Nanyang brand identity testing result

4. City Branding Identity Design Proposal for Xi'an

4.1 Research

4.1.1 Background of Xi'an

Xi'an, once was the capital of China, also was China's political, economic and cultural center. This city has recorded the significant changes of the China just like a living history book.

The two Chinese characters "西安" means "Western Peace".

As a world-known ancient city, Xi'an has been designated as the capital of 13 ancient Chinese dynasties such as the Western Zhou, Qin, Xihan, Xinmang, Eastern Han, Western Jin, Former Zhao, pre-Qin, post-Qin, Western Wei, Northern Zhou, Sui and Tang dynasties.

Xi'an, as the biggest industrial base and the largest trade center in Northwest of China, was famous as the start of the Silk Road. The Silk Road connected China with other countries, making it possible that communicate Chinese culture with Continental Europe.

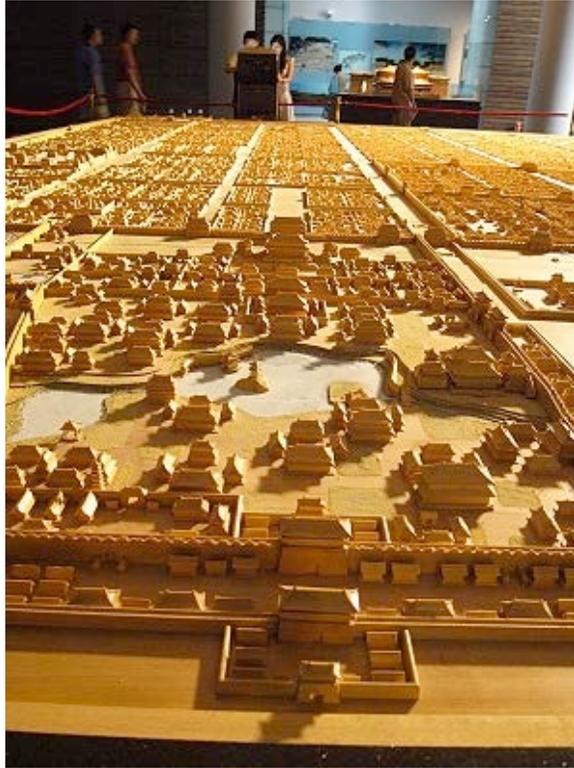


Figure 4.1 The model of ancient Xi'an

4.1.2 Current situation of Xi'an

As part of the China Western Development policy, Xi'an has increase the economic superiorly. From 1997 to 2006, the value of industrial output increased

by the rate of 13.74%, which is from US\$8.113 billion to US\$25.85 billion.⁶⁰

The Industries includes service outsourcing, tourism and equipment manufacturing.⁶¹ As Chinese famous ancient capitals, Xi'an's also attracts more and more tourists to visit. In 2010, Xi'an was visited by 52 million domestic guests, ending up with the income of RMB 40.52 billion.

4.1.3 Features of Xi'an

In this chapter, this thesis gives the main features of Xi'an from researches to offer the later design reference.

Ancient Xi'an (Chang'an) was divided into 108 parts by the street, the whole city was composed by lots of rectangle-shaped space. The city layout of Chang'an still influences today's Xi'an now.

⁶⁰ Walcott, Susan (April 17, 2010). "Xi'an's Maturing Economy". Retrieved 2013-06-01.

⁶¹ "Xi'an Economy". The People's Government of Shaanxi. January 1, 2008. Retrieved 2013-06-02.

http://english.shaanxi.gov.cn/articleNews/news/governmentnews/200801/5297_1.html

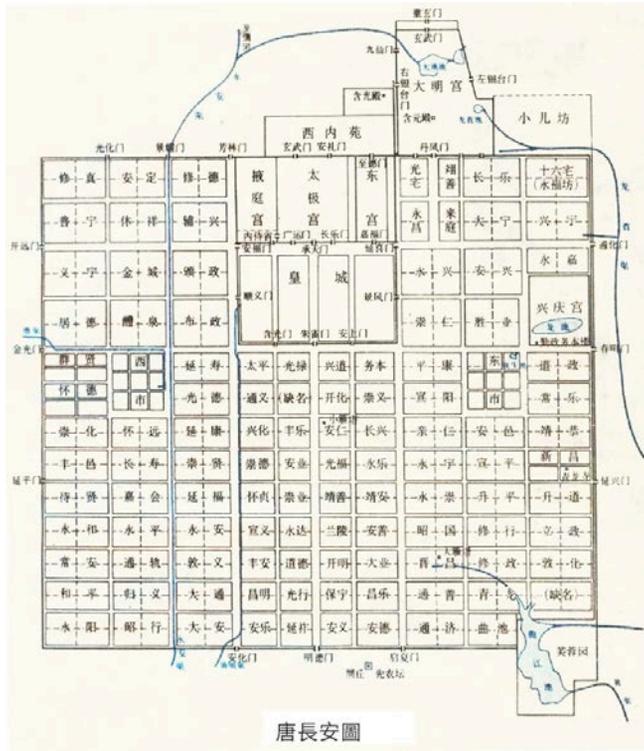


Figure 4.2 Chang'an's layout in Sui dynasty



Figure 4.3 Today's Xi'an city layout

- As world-known site, Terracotta Army is named the most significant archeological excavations of the 20th century:

a. Frequency of Things The Foreign Tourists Associated When Xi'an Have Been Mentioned:⁶²

1.Terra-Cotta Warriors

2. City Hall

3. Silk Roads

⁶² Xin.Y.P, (2011), 《西安国际旅游感知形象调查与营销策略》 p24

4. Giant Wild Goose Pagoda

5. Food



Figure 4.4 Terra-Cotta Warriors

b. Frequency of Things The Chinese Tourists Associated When Xi'an Have Been Mentioned:⁶³

1.Terra-Cotta Warriors

2. Giant Wild Goose Pagoda

3. Shaanxi History Museum

4. Bell tower

⁶³ Zhang zhenzhen and Li Junyi, (2014), 旅游形象研究中间卷调查和网络文本数据对比—以西安旅游形象感知研究为例。p79

5. City hall

c. International influence of scenic spot in China.⁶⁴

1.The Great Wall

2.The Palace Museum

3.Shaolin Temple

4. Terra-Cotta Warriors

5. Three Gorges

d. Top 10 of historic interests in China:⁶⁵

1.The Great Wall

2.Guilin landscape

3.The Palace Museum

3.Shaolin Temple

4. The West Lake

5. Suzhou Gardens

⁶⁴ China 4th Tourism Development Conference 2015.

<http://xian.qq.com/a/20150126/015015.htm>

⁶⁵ China Tourism News.

<http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=0MWQhlujj41K8goPLCxRwgBy->

[fArkOngM9A_F7tqJEjl3y-M_jS8qAKYMo8uPIhEbp-b9BSf8Tvr7KN-yU4ZK](http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=fArkOngM9A_F7tqJEjl3y-M_jS8qAKYMo8uPIhEbp-b9BSf8Tvr7KN-yU4ZK)

6. Mount Huang

7. Three Gorges

8. Riyuetan Pool

9. Mountain resort

10. Terra-Cotta Warriors

- As a historical city, there were lot of famous figures in Chinese history.⁶⁶

1. Confucius

2. First Emperor of Qin

3. Genghis Khan

4. Mao Zedong

5. Mencius

- Xi'an served as the imperial capital for ten ancient imperial dynasties and a number of regional kingdoms. It has 3,100 years of construction history and it was a capital of thirteen dynasties in the history:

Qin Dynasty

Han Dynasty

Xin Dynasty

⁶⁶ http://www.360doc.com/content/13/0812/17/13358165_306660424.shtml

Eastern Han Dynasty

Jin Dynasty

QianZHAo Dynasty

Qian Qin Dynasty

Hou Qin Dynasty

Western Wei Dynasty

Northern Zhou Dynasty

Sui Dynasty

Tang Dynasty

4.2 Proposal of Xi'an Brand Design

4.2.1 Design Process

In ancient China, doors had a deep cultural meaning, reflecting feudal etiquette, representing moral beliefs, and expressing personal aspirations.

From previous research, the concept is decided by using the shape of the city wall. The wall of this city loads spirit connotation of history, city, culture, and humanity. It can be seen as a canvas, and all of the elements that related to Xi'an could be draw on it. Thus, the whole identity is not limit at all. At the same time, the flexibility allows to be changed at any aspect. The scaled-down frame follows to the city wall of Sui and Tang dynasty.



Figure 4.5 Scale of the City Wall

The four letters 'X', 'I', 'A' and 'N' compose the shape of the City Wall. By setting them in these 4 corners, it gives the meaning of Chinese “四海一家”. (All people belong to one family.)

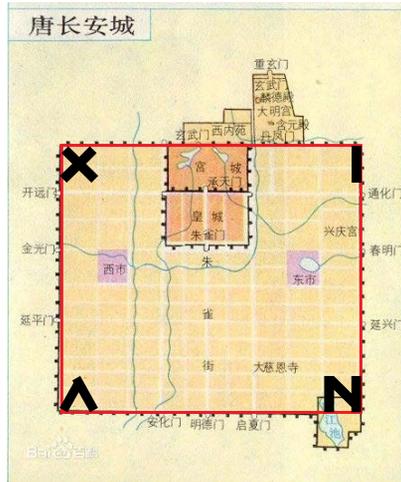


Figure 4.6 Letters Position

There are twelve gates in the City Wall. The next step is to use those 12 “gates” to communicate with the world. By passing these twelve gates, people are all welcome to come to this city.

Also, Xi'an is located in the center of China, it links each part of China together.



Figure 4.9 Xi'an's position in China

To link the each of the gate, it gives the meaning of “to connect”.

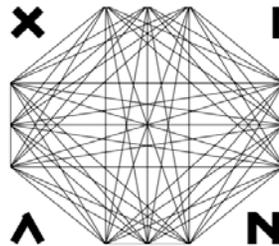


Figure 4.10 Basic Frame

In the basic frame, all of the representative factors can be drawn on it. Then it shows the abstract figures.

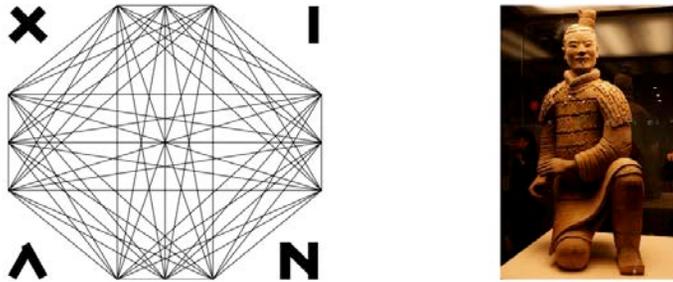


Figure 4.11 Terra-Cotta Warriors

x

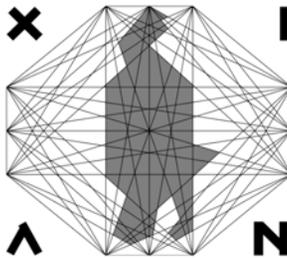


Figure 4.12 Abstract Drawing

In the next step, by subtracting the line part, it is created as a Banpo Culture style symbol.

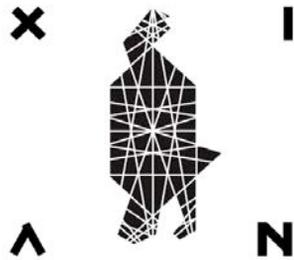


Figure 4.13 Art Work



Figure 4.14 Banpo Culture Pattern 1

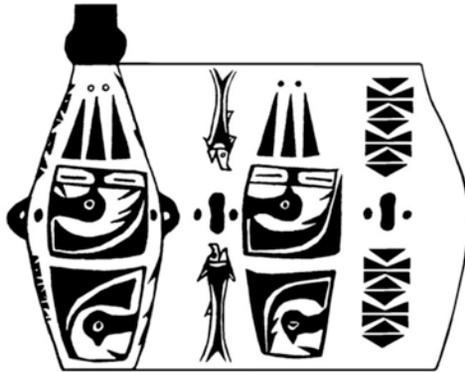


Figure 4.15 Banpo Culture Pattern 2



Figure 4.16 Black and White Work

Thus, by using an algorithm, a cultural image is created. It shows the ancient side of Xi'an, at the same time, it is also combined by modern designed effect. At last, it is also can be given by color.

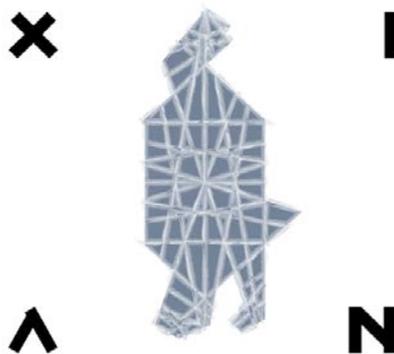


Figure 4.17 Color Work

It can be drawn as other figure by the same method to represent Xi'an.

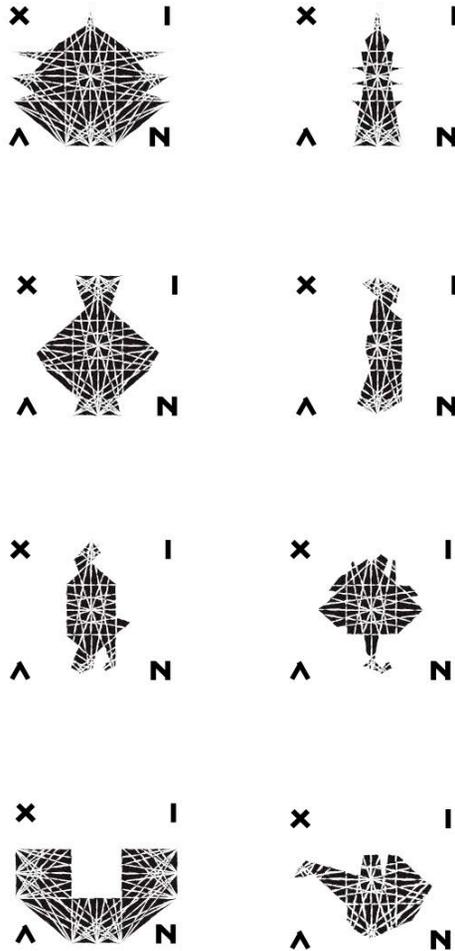


Figure 4.18 Flexible Art Work

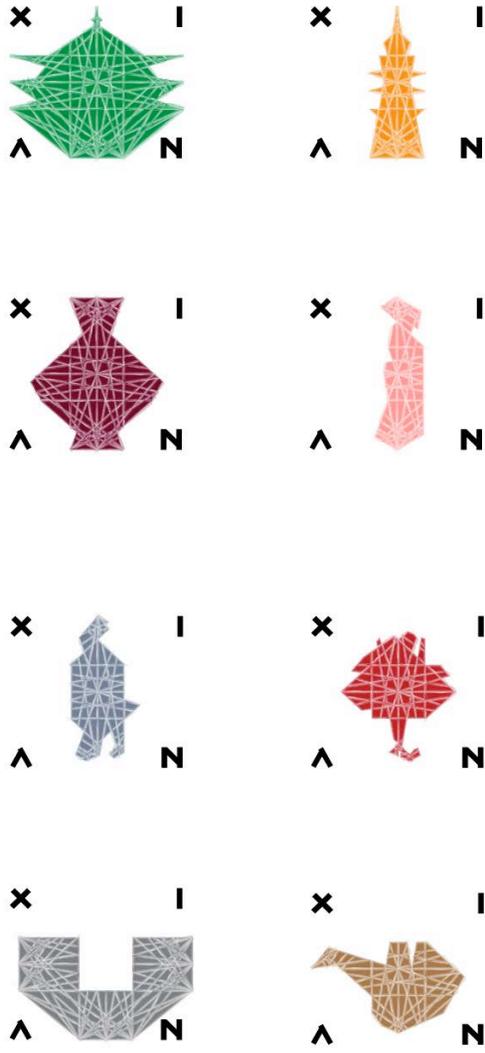


Figure 4.19 Flexible Color Art Work

Also, each of the them has other variations

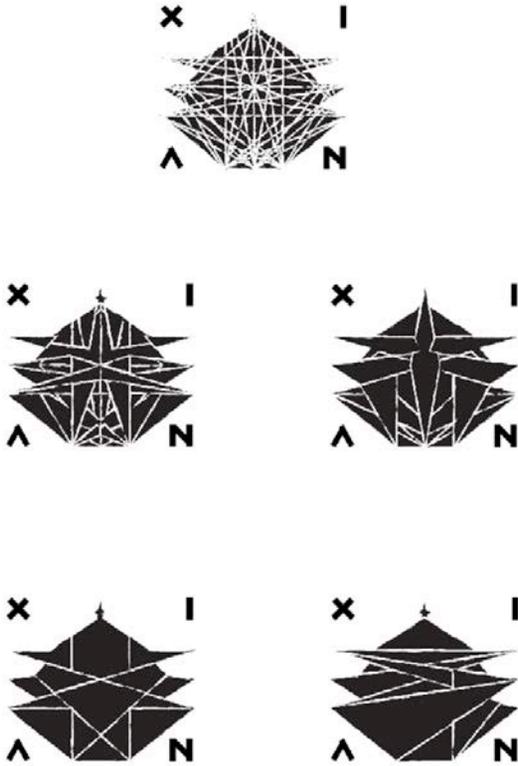


Figure 4.20 Variation1

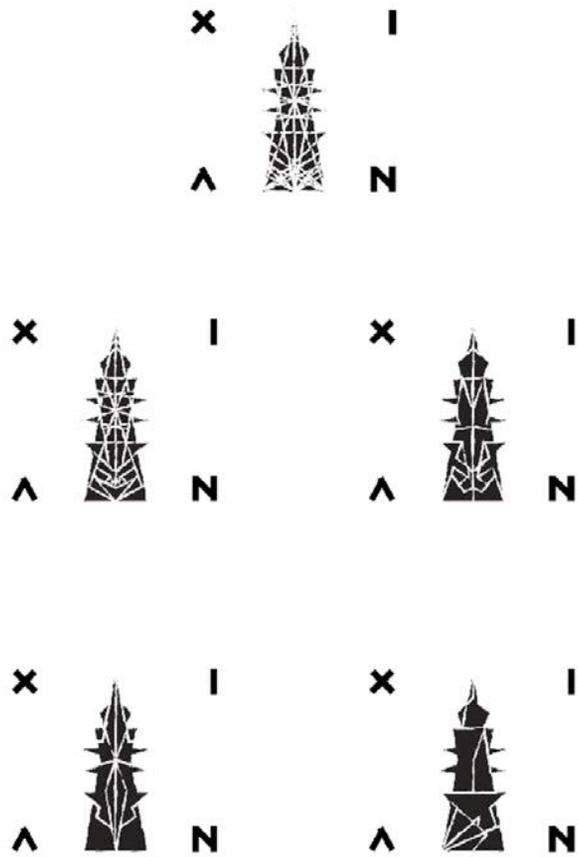


Figure 4.21 Variation 2



Figure 4.22 Variation 3

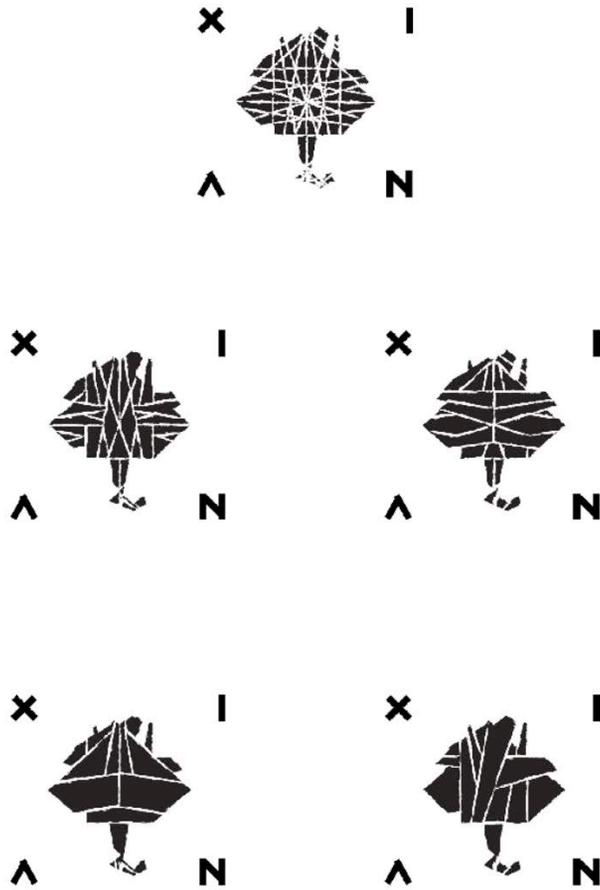


Figure 4.23 Variation 4

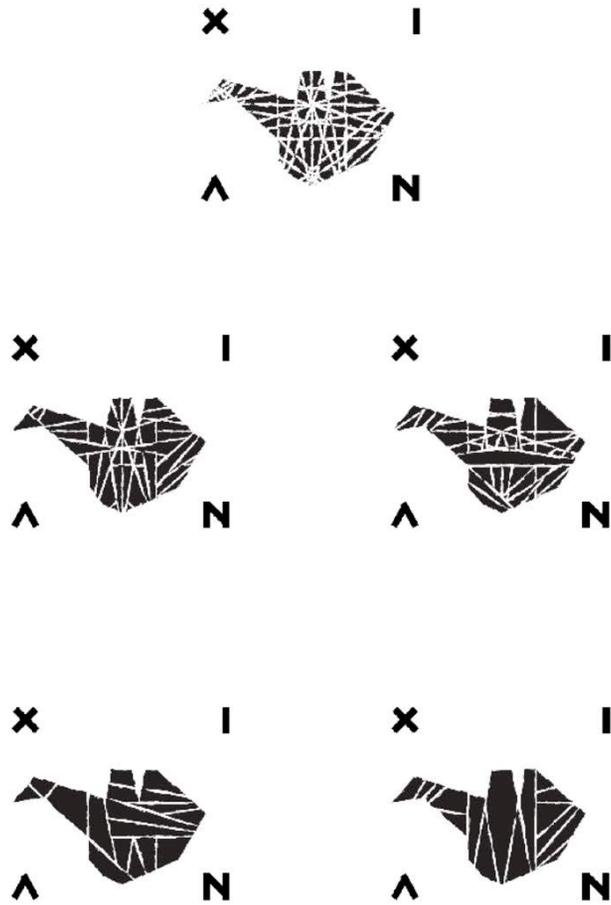


Figure 4.24 Variation 5

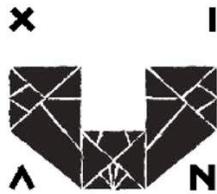
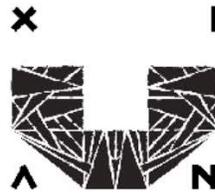
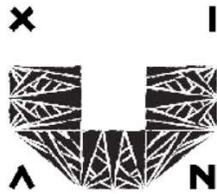
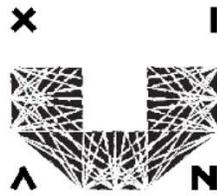


Figure 4.25 Variation 6



Figure 4.26 Variation 7

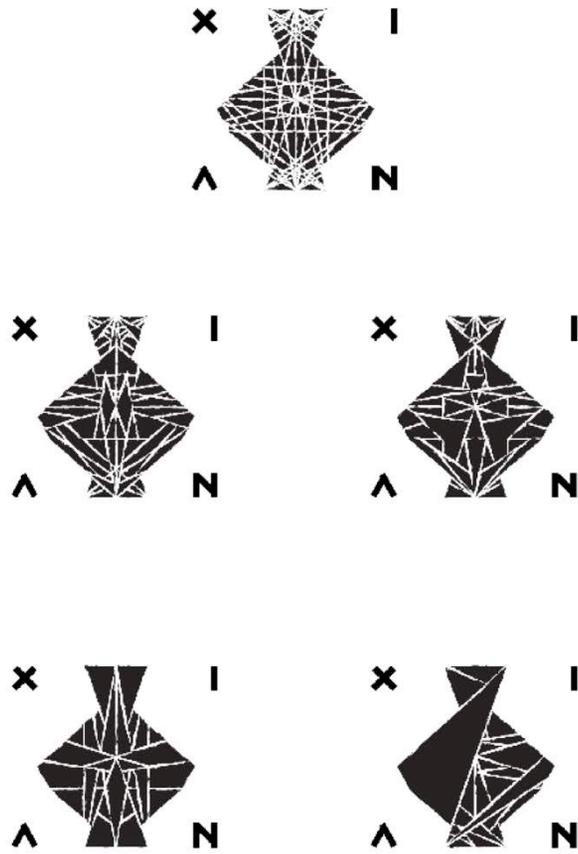


Figure 4.27 Variation 8



Figure 4.28 Color Variation 1

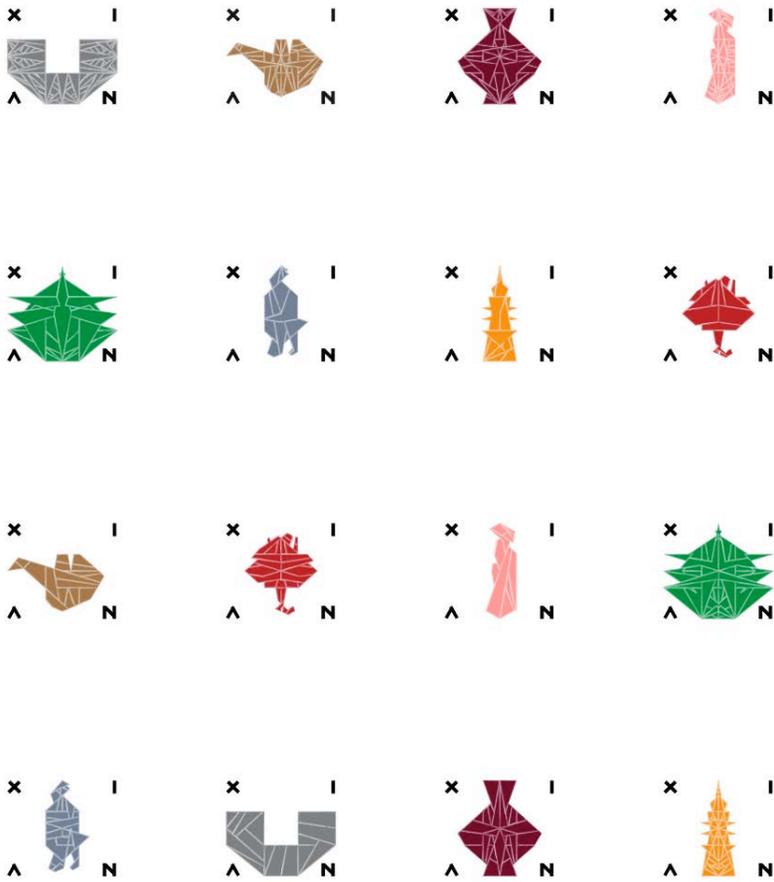


Figure 4.29 Color Variation 2

4.2.2 Final Work and Exhibition



Figure 4.30 Exhibition 1



Figure 4.31 Exhibition 2



Figure 4.32 Exhibition 3

5. Conclusion

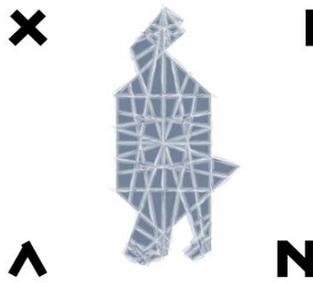


Figure 5.1 Xi'an City Branding

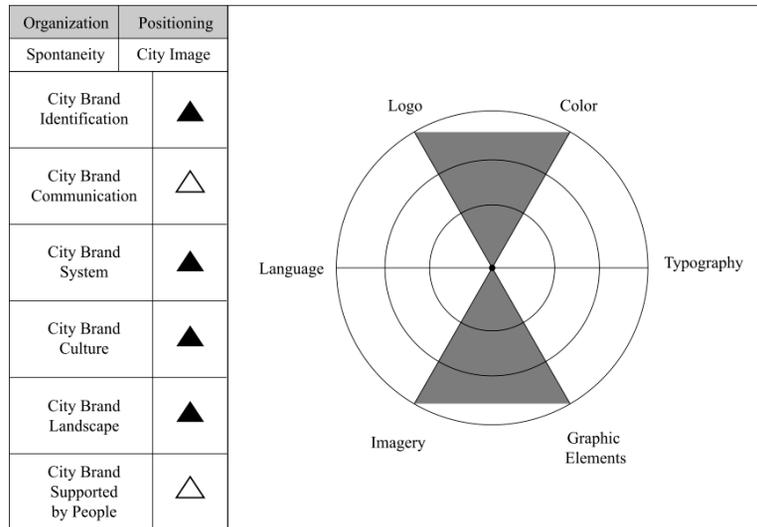


Figure 5.2 Xi'an Brand Identity testing result

As a conclusion, this proposal gives more possibilities to show more aspects of Xi'an. From the Figure 5.2, it can be said that the flexibility identity factors make the city branding factors more defined.

Also, the basic logo shows the culture of this city. At the same time, the algorithm gives it a modern style. The variation makes it possible to be used at various places and medias.

The whole identity is unified and identifiable. People from the world can feel the ancient side of Xi'an. And being changeable lead the identity more alive and flexible.

But it can be said, it is not that every city can be used the flexible identity system. There must be a defined or convictive factor in the city. Thus, the design process can be controlled.

It is necessary to examine further the discussion of city identity development methods within creative contexts. This further research would possibly create a better understanding about city branding and flexible identity, and help other researchers build a more advanced city branding system.

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초록

논문의 연구 목적은 도시 브랜딩과 플렉시블 아이덴티티 이 두 가지 영역의 탐구를 통해 서안시 도시 브랜딩 전략과 해결 방안을 세우는 것이다.

서안은 중국 문명의 발원지의 하나로써 비단길(絲綢之路) 이후 아시아와 유럽을 연결하는 중요한 도시로 세계에서 유명하다. 서안은 중국 최초로 나라의 수도로써 진(秦) 나라 이후 총 11 개 나라가 서안을 수도로 지정하였다. 서안은 당(唐) 나라때 장안(長安)이라고 불렀다, 이 뜻은 사회 질서가 장기간 안정되고 태평스럽다는 말이다.

현재 대부분 중국도시의 도시 로고를 보면 구별되지 않거나 유사한 점이 많이 보인다. 그 원인을 보면 로고 디자인의 형식이 유사 또는 중복되는 상황이 많이 있기 때문이다. 이런 배경에서 역사문명 도시인 서안도 도시문화를 상징할 수 있는 도시 로고가 보이지 않았다.

도시 브랜딩의 정의는 도시를 대표하는 브랜드 요소를 선정하여, 적극

적인 이미지를 구성하며 도시의 정체성을 제고를 통해 다른 도시들과 구분되는 것이다. 오늘날 도시의 인재, 투자, 관광 등 자원이 치열하게 경쟁되는 배경에서 좋은 도시 이미지의 구성은 매우 중요하다.

오늘날 도시는 다원화 요소들을 통해 구성되었다. 그래서 정적이고 변화가 없는 도시 로고는 다원화적인 도시를 상징할 수 없다. 따라서 도시를 상징할 수 있는 도시 로고는 정체성을 확보하는 동시에 도시의 다양한 문화를 브랜드 전략을 통해 표현해야된다. 이런 배경에서 플렉시블 아이덴티티가 나타났다. 플렉시블 아이덴티티는 다변화하다, 하지만 그중에 로고 정체성을 확보하기 위해 기본요소가 필요하다. 플렉시블 아이덴티티 작업을 할때 대량적인 연구를 통해 브랜드의 정체성을 강조해야 한다.

앞에서 살펴본 바와 같이 본 연구는 도시 브랜딩과 플렉시블 아이덴티티 연구를 통해의 연구모형을 구성하였다. 그리고 사례분석을 통해 도시 브랜딩과 플렉시블 아이덴티티의 요소가 연관성이 있고 상호작용성이 있는 것을 발견하였다: 플렉시블 아이덴티티 지수가 높을 수록 도시 브랜딩 정체성이 높아진다. 검증된 연구모형을 통해 서안 도시 브랜딩 디자인을 시작하였다.

주요어: 브랜드 아이덴티티, 도시 브랜딩, 서안, 플렉시블 아이덴티티

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