

Branding Small Cities through Placemaking: A Case Study on El-Burullus, Egypt

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Abstract:

This study aims to establish a framework for branding small cities through placemaking, with a focus on El-Burullus city in Egypt. To achieve this objective, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are utilized. The study begins by investigating city branding and placemaking strategies and aspects, followed by an analysis of successful branding cases in Mediterranean cities such as Athens and Barcelona. The findings from these cases are then synthesized to develop nine place-making and branding attributes, that can be applied in the Egyptian context. The research case study - Borg El-Burullus- located in Kafr El Sheikh, a Mediterranean waterfront city with potential, is subsequently analyzed, through interviews, and semi-structured questionnaires conducted with different stakeholders; to analyze the proposed nine attributes. These attributes are then rearranged based on their importance, as determined by their significant weight calculated through the survey analysis. The findings reveal that the attributes with the most significant impact on place-making and branding in El Burullus City are Quality of life, City Accessibility, connectivity, and Economic Development. These attributes have weighted means of 17.3%, 14.6%, and 13.3% respectively. Finally, the study develops a prioritized conceptual framework for implementing branding processes linked to place-making, in El-Burullus City; to be a well-known destination in Egypt. The outcome of this study reflects the significant contribution of place-making and city branding in developing strategies and promoting citizens' quality of life.

Keywords:

City Branding, Place Making, Quality of life, urban regeneration, small Cities.

1. Introduction:

Cities have been continuously growing in terms of both physical size, economic, and cultural development significance [1]. Cities are increasingly competitive in the globalized economy, seeking to attract people. As a result, cities are looking for implementing initiatives to improve their positioning. One such strategy being employed by cities and regions is “city branding” [2]. as cities have had to become more appropriate, inclusive, sustainable, and fundamentally oriented on people. They have had to adjust, and be redesigned, to better support their communities [3]. Placemaking is a comprehensive process utilized to meet the requirements of those communities. It requires working together to plan, develop, execute, and manage public spaces. [4].

City branding and placemaking have grown in importance in the regeneration, development, and design of small towns and cities; due to the rivalry and challenges they confront. Placemaking differs from place branding/marketing, which uses marketing methods and a customer-oriented mentality to advertise the city to customers [5]. Placemaking, on the other hand, comprises both non-branding practices and enhancing users' quality of life. Instead of being the goal, a pleasing external look should be a result of placemaking. Making a location more habitable for those who already live there should make it more desirable to others [6]. Placemaking involves creating high-quality, authentic spaces for users to attach, City branding promotes and frames places, while placemaking creates unique vibrant public spaces for social, economic, and policy benefits.

While they are distinct concepts, they are interconnected and complement each other. According to Graeme Evans (2014), serving as the city profile, projecting its image to the world [7]. City branding amplifies this narrative and can also catalyze the revitalization of an area. participation, cooperation, and ownership, and when combined, they may provide even larger profits [8].

Recently many studies addressed the theory of placemaking while others investigated success key factors for branding cities, however, very few studies inspected the interconnection/combination between both theories specifically in small cities. Thus, the study's significance lies in rethinking branding small cities through place making which owes social and cultural services, local economy, as well unique hidden resources, the research also addresses the regeneration of lost urban areas to enhance the user experience in those spaces.

1.1 Research problem

In Egypt, small cities are not receiving adequate attention and resources compared to Greater Cairo. This has resulted in a decline in social services, economy, housing, and overall quality of life, leading to spatial inequality. Despite the potential for regeneration and improvement in these small cities is significant, there is a lack of clear principles on how to effectively conduct place-making and city branding to address this issue and regenerate resources in these specific contexts.

1.2 Research Aim

The study aims to create a framework for branding small cities using placemaking by analyzing their unique features, challenges, and opportunities. Focusing on a Mediterranean city, this will provide valuable insights into local attributes, enhancing the effectiveness of city branding strategies.

1.3 Hypothesis

Promoting unique place-making strategies for small city branding, involving both authorities and inhabitants, will lead to successful branding, resource regeneration, and improved quality of life.



Figure 1 Research Hypothesis, Author.

1.4 Study Methodology

The study methodology is set into three main parts, as shown in Figure 2, the first qualitative part is a comprehensive literature review about definitions of branding cities, place-making and its associated characteristics, strategies, and aspects, the second Analytical part is analyzing international cases of Mediterranean cities such as Athens and Barcelona, which have been successfully branded; to extract attributes that could be applied in the Egyptian context, The research case study, "Borg El Burullos," located in Kafr El Sheikh, Egypt, will then be analyzed in detail. The third part is the quantitative method, where the study will involve conducting interviews, and survey with key stakeholders such as local government officials, residents, tourists, and investors to gather their perspectives on the current status of the city and their expectations for its transformation to a destination. This data will be analyzed using statistical techniques to identify the significance of the factors that contribute to positive perceptions of the city. The findings from the literature review, comparative analysis, case study analysis, interviews, and surveys will be synthesized to develop recommendations for improving Borg El Burullos' urban design elements to enhance its city branding efforts. Finally, the research develops a prioritized conceptual

framework that can be used in implementing branding processes in El Burullos City. The outcome framework demonstrates the significant contribution of place-making in branding small cities.



Figure 2 Research Methodology, Author.

2. Literature Review

Around the world, small cities have increasingly recognized the importance of branding and place-making as strategies for urban design regeneration; to enhance their competitiveness and attract investment, tourism, and talent. This literature review aims to explore the existing body of knowledge on place-making and small-city branding, highlighting key concepts, benefits, and attributes.

2.1 City Branding Overview

According to the definitions of place branding, it is a wide activity that entails comprehending, evaluating, prompting, and administrating how cities are cherished and identified by worldwide, and local communities [9]. tourism, people, export businesses, international and local governance, tradition, and legacy, are all dimensions of city branding [10]. Branding is an art form in which a scene is evoked and a city is associated with impressionistic feelings [11]. It imbues spaces with symbols and emotional sensations, acting as an urban governance technique for regulating perceptions [12]. Branding entails both message transmission and response, focusing on responsiveness over persuasion [13].

Effective city branding creates a positive image by emphasizing functional, symbolic, and experiential attributes. Branding is influenced by fashion trends and evolves. It serves as a cultural space that preserves heritage and cultural resources while improving the value of the place, where the people have a desire to visit the place. Ultimately, a brand is not defined by what something is, but by people's beliefs about it. [14]. Thus, a branded place should be related to the community.

Recently, city branding has become a popular method of boosting tourism, Place marketing involves geographical locations holding spaces within advertising and marketing, focusing on historic rejuvenation or cultural identity formation [15]. Urban branding aims to adapt and reshape scenes to be desirable and send messages to the targeted layman. Places become real brands when visitors perceive them as distinctive and give them an identity [16].

2.1.1 City Branding Objectives

The objective of city branding, as stated by Dr. Belinda Yuen (2021), is to carefully manage the overall perceptions, experiences, and emotions that individuals associate with a city to make it distinct, and memorable [17]. While for Sonia Jojic (2018), aims to develop innovative methods of communicating the city's image, obtain competitive benefits, and improve its public image while also increasing its economic relevance [18]. Moreover, it generates, progresses, runs, and connects a city's identity to boost its attractiveness and competitiveness.

2.1.2 City Branding Benefits

City branding enhances a city's appeal for tourism, arts, education, residence, talent attraction, investment, and business. It boosts competitiveness, resulting in positive impacts on investments, employment, talent attraction, resident satisfaction, vibrancy, and returns on real estate, infrastructure development, and events. It fosters a sense of pride and unity among residents, businesses, and institutions. When understanding their city branding.

2.1.3 Successful Urban Branding Aspects

There are many factors for successful urban branding; such as environment, cultural tourism, quality of life, technology, knowledge, etc. that play a dominant role in spatial urban development and hence play a great role in urban branding. In terms of Urban regeneration meets individual requirements through improved infrastructure, such as pollution reduction, and contemporary waste disposal systems. Asphalt pavements, road expansion, street amenities, and realignment of advertising displays can all help to improve streets. Moreover, for social progress, launching 'mega-events' such as exhibitions, events, and celebrations, can improve urban investment. As well as implementing projects in the undeveloped area, where maintenance is required by designers and residents [19]. Another important aspect provided by Urban Branding is integrating sociocultural, and economic themes into the city, thus strengthening the visual image [20]. Branding in urban policy involves focusing on design and iconic architecture to enhance a city's brand and attract tourists. Cities like Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum and Sydney Opera House use this approach to enhance their reputation as innovative and distinctive. Moreover, Place branding encompasses

aspects like safety, security, territoriality, privacy, and aesthetics. It connects people and places, urban form, nature, and the built environment. Sustainable developments are crucial for successful city branding and economic growth. Good design creates livable, vivid places with distinctive characters, safe streets, and accessible public spaces.

2.2 Placemaking Overview:

Placemaking is defined by Wyckoff (2014), as “Involving the creation of high-quality spaces that individuals desire to stay, work, play, and learn in” [21]. While the Place Agency defines it as a procedure that enhances people's ability to invest in meaningful places through co-creation with the community [22]. Placemaking serves as both a concept and a practical method for improving communities, neighborhoods, cities, or regions by encouraging collective reimagination and reinvention of public spaces. It is a comprehensive process that aims to develop cherished places where individuals feel fit and connected. Fostering community, inclusivity, and conviviality through considering associations between people, societies, and spaces [23].

2.2.1 Placemaking Objectives:

The goal of placemaking is to construct high-quality locations for living, working, playing, studying, and visiting [24]. The ultimate goal is establishing a sentimental connection or affection among individuals, groups, or areas [25]. fostering a regionally interconnected economic ecosystem. [26]. It promotes accessible, adaptable built environments, fostering community health and resilience. Cities can demonstrate their commitment to sustainability, mobility, and safety by utilizing placemaking to address urban concerns and position themselves as visionary global leaders.

2.2.2 Placemaking Benefits:

Placemaking improves living environments for locals, communities, and visitors. fostering social cohesion, health, community involvement, civic activity, and perceptions of safety [23-26]. Placemaking promotes place attachment and has positive effects in diverse communities. It encourages inclusive civic structures and supports network building, fostering a vibrant and cohesive social environment reflecting the community's history and identity. Placemaking also contributes to the development of networks and public spaces, besides other benefits, as shown in Figure 3.

2.2.3 Successful Place-Making Aspects:

The Project for Public Spaces emphasizes four essential qualities for a great place: accessibility, proximity to significant venues, favorable image, comfort, activity participation, and convivial environments that encourage return visits. PPS developed a framework integrating intangible elements and metrics, focusing on community building, involvement, and stakeholder engagement. This approach addresses people's needs, aspirations, desires, and visions, ensuring active participation and engagement in the placemaking process [27].

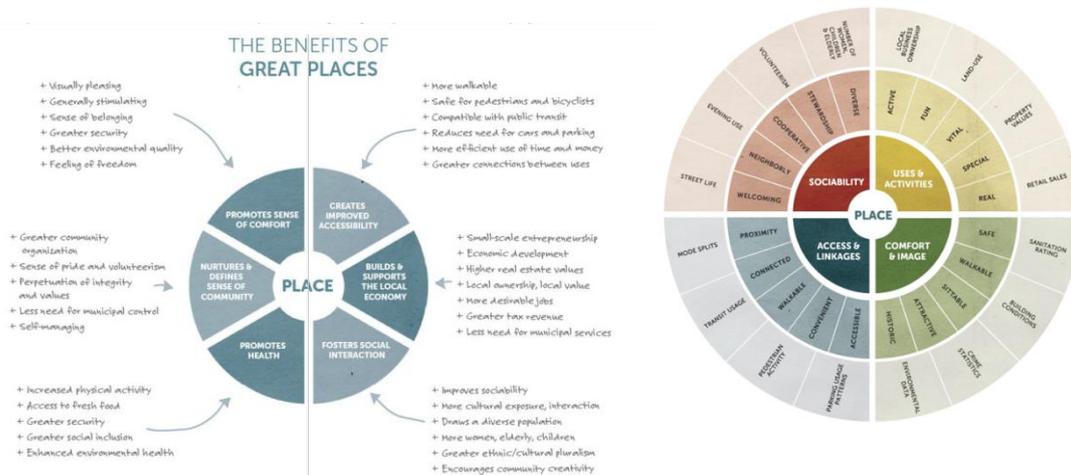


Figure 3 On the Left, The Benefits of Placemaking. on the Right, placemaking attributes [27]

2.2.4 Branded Cities and Place-Making by Design Approaches:

Cities' physical place-branding initiatives involve two types of involvement in the urban environment, the first one is Iconic architecture aiming to be authentic, as new and renovated structures, such as cultural centers, public buildings, mixed-use complexes, office buildings and towers, shopping centers, transportation hubs, public art installations, and extensions of ancient monuments (such as the Pyramids in Egypt). The second approach is Urban design and quarters through improvements to the public realm; parks and open spaces/squares; pedestrian-only shopping streets [28]. In addition to, cultural, heritage, or creative quarters; transport and routes/trails; and regeneration driven by mega-events and area-based culture and housing [29]. The following figures are samples from recently rebranded sites all over the world.



Figure 4 Cheonggyecheon, Seoul, cultural waterfront in the form of public art museum [30].



Figure 5 Cumberland River Park, Nashville, USA, location with touristic &Recreational potentials.

Based on the analysis of existing scholarly works, it can be inferred that the attainment of city branding is closely intertwined with the concept of place-making and the utilization of public spaces. By integrating urban tourism and city branding initiatives with place-making strategies, cities can leverage the diverse advantages offered by these approaches. This includes promoting and commemorating public spaces, cultural resources, and unique attributes, thereby enabling a city to differentiate itself from competitors and cultivate a distinct and enduring brand identity. Consequently, this transformation can foster an inviting and inclusive atmosphere that encourages individuals to reside, work, and invest in the city.

3. Research Approach - Analytical Study

The study employed a qualitative inductive approach to accomplish its objectives, focusing on the analysis of two cities situated along the Mediterranean coast, Barcelona and Athens, which were selected as exemplars of successful city branding strategies. The selection criteria were based on their common coastal urban context, diverse approaches, varying urban scales, and shared industrial and cultural aspects. Additionally, these cities have experienced the integration of local industries in endeavors to improve their infrastructure and stimulate tourism. It is noteworthy that the case studies were visited during the year 2021.

3.1 Barcelona, Spain



Figure 6 Historical landmark to be revitalized. Author, 2021



Figure 7 Frank Gehry Golden Titanium Fish standing, Author, 2021

Barcelona is a Mediterranean city with a diverse population and Roman ruins. Spain's capital is well-known for its art and architecture. A city that clearly and consistently strengthens its brand through visual communication, hired professional illustrators and graphic designers for the design of its branding campaigns [31]. The city of Barcelona is being marketed as a great destination to live and visit. This has led to the development of numerous branding sub-strategies that improve all facets of sustainable development, including urban projects, city life, festivals, events, sociocultural activities, and newly restored architectural elements. These, however, are the real transforming tools that keep the urban image fresh and vibrant. Events are a key success for Barcelona, including the “Barcelona Anti-Racism” event, the “International Day of Eliminating Violence against Women”, the “Barcelona Beach Festival”, the “Flower Festival”, “La Merce”, and “Festa Major de la Barceloneta”.

Authenticity is present due to Numerous historic structures found in the city, such as the famous Sagrada Familia Church with other Gaudi-designed landmarks, the Picasso Museum, and the City History Museum, which contains several Roman archaeological sites. These iconic historical structures act as touristic attractions. In Barcelona, many architects design and stamp their architectural icons there, "Frank O. Gehry Golden Fish," is an example, facing the beach as a new translation to the Olympic halls as shown in Figures 6, 7. Barcelona's branding is primarily influenced by its architecture, which creates new icons and unheard-of landmarks.

In the context of Placemaking in Barcelona, events play a crucial role in initiating and shaping the physical environment, conveying the city's images, and enhancing the overall experience of the space [32,33]. Richards and Palmer emphasize the importance of a comprehensive, strategic approach to understanding the relationship between a location and its calendar of events for events to significantly impact placemaking. [34]. In Barcelona's case, each event has a consistent annual date, which has transformed the city from being merely known for hosting events to becoming an "eventful city" where

events can have long-lasting implications rather than just immediate ones as shown in Figures 8,9.



Figure 8 on the left photo of the “La Merce” Festival in Barcelona, On the right, are built-in benches for the coastal line pedestrians. Author, 2021



Figure 9 On the left, seats, tables, and umbrellas were added to contribute to a café zone in a historic building, on the right, fountains were added on the street sides, to emphasize the whole set. Author, 2021.

3.2 Athens, Greece

Greece's capital, Athens, was the center of Ancient Greece, a highly advanced civilization. Its area is 2,929 km², and it experienced numerous economic crises for almost ten years, but things have improved significantly since 2017. After employing branding strategies such as, “This is Athen’s campaign”, and “One City Never Ending Stories” on social and print media and PR campaigns [35]. Authenticity in Athens is unique due to the presence of the Acropolis, the Parthenon Temple, and the National Archaeological Museum. These museums hold sculptures, and other artifacts dating back to ancient Greece. The street life embedded in the urban image, revitalizing old streets, and transferring them to commercial sites assisted in rebranding the city in a new way, such as Ermou Street and Plaka Street as shown in Figures 10,11. Architecture is very crucial in city branding by establishing new symbols and landmarks to find new distinguishing architectural images and produce a popular image, such as the parliament building in Syntagma Square. besides, the paintings on the façade changed the city's image, and the continuous event around these historical sites upgraded tourism. New strategies are being adopted as tailored programs for tourists, “Athens your Way” as shown in Figures 12-14. Another aspect is the Restaurant for food experience, and the digital nomads, In the Greek city with the most

Michelin-starred restaurants, demonstrates the link between the destinations' food photos and a traveler's aim to travel [36].



Figure 10 The Plaka is the oldest section of Athens. Most of the streets have been closed to pedestrians, At one time it was the nightclub district, it is now an area of restaurants, and shops
Author, 2021.



Figure 11 Ermou Street, Athens Main Shopping Street, very close to Syntagma Square, is a commercial avenue that has been turned into a pedestrian street. Author, 2021



Figure 12 Cafe and restaurants and food experiences were set emphasizing street life.
Author, 2021



Figure 13. Face-lift facades, graffiti. Author, 2021.

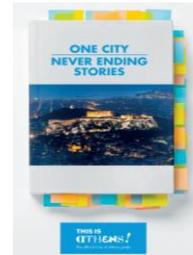


Figure 14. Branding campaign for Athens [34].

3.3 Extracted city branding and place-making Attributes

Following the completion of the literature review and the analytical approach, the study identified the main attributes associated with place-making and city branding strategies.

3.3.1 City Branding Attributes

1. Authenticity: Highlight the unique and genuine aspects of the city's culture, history, and local traditions to create an authentic brand identity.
2. Community-oriented: Emphasize the strong sense of community and neighborly spirit that exists within the city, showcasing the support and collaboration among residents.
3. Natural beauty: Showcase the city's natural landscapes, parks, and green spaces to promote a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

4. **Accessibility:** Highlight the city's convenient transportation options, such as well-connected public transportation systems or walkability, making it easy for residents and visitors to navigate.
5. **Innovation:** Showcase any innovative initiatives or industries within the city that contribute to its growth and development, positioning it as a hub for innovation.
6. **Cultural diversity:** Celebrate the diverse cultural heritage of the city by promoting multicultural events, festivals, and cuisine that reflect its inclusive nature.
7. **Quality of life:** Emphasize the high quality of safety, healthcare facilities, education options, recreational activities, and overall well-being for residents.
8. **Sustainability:** Promote environmentally friendly practices such as recycling programs, renewable energy initiatives, or sustainable urban planning to position the city as an eco-conscious destination.
9. **Entrepreneurial spirit:** Highlight opportunities for entrepreneurship and small business growth within the city to attract investors and foster economic development.
10. **Historic charm:** Showcase any historical landmarks or preserved architecture that adds character to the city's identity while also promoting heritage tourism.
11. **Arts and culture:** Promote local art galleries, museums, theaters, music festivals, or any cultural events that showcase creativity within the community.
12. **Welcoming atmosphere:** Emphasize a warm and friendly atmosphere where visitors feel welcomed by locals who are known for their hospitality.
13. **Educational opportunities:** Highlight educational institutions or programs available in the city to attract students or families seeking quality education options.
14. **Culinary experiences:** Promote local food and beverage offerings, including unique culinary experiences or signature dishes that reflect the city's gastronomic identity.
15. **Sports and recreation:** Highlight any sports teams, recreational facilities, or outdoor activities available within the city to attract sports enthusiasts and active individuals.
16. **Leadership and Governance:** Strong leadership and effective governance are essential for successful place branding implementation. This involves having dedicated teams or individuals responsible for overseeing the brand strategy, coordinating efforts across different stakeholders, and ensuring accountability.

3.3.2 Placemaking Attributes

1. **Accessibility:** Placemaking should focus on creating spaces that are easily accessible to all members of the community, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and those using different modes of transportation.
2. **Diversity and inclusivity:** Placemaking should strive to create spaces that are welcoming and inclusive for people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and socioeconomic statuses.
3. **Safety:** Placemaking should prioritize the safety of individuals using the space by incorporating appropriate lighting, clear signage, and well-maintained infrastructure.
4. **Social interaction:** Placemaking should encourage social interaction and community engagement by providing gathering spaces, seating areas, pedestrian shopping streets, and opportunities for people to connect.
5. **Cultural identity:** Placemaking should celebrate and reflect the unique cultural identity of a city or neighborhood through art installations, public art displays, or architectural elements that represent local heritage.
6. **Green spaces:** Placemaking should incorporate green spaces such as parks, gardens, or urban forests to provide opportunities for relaxation, recreation, and connection with nature.
7. **Vibrancy:** Placemaking should aim to create vibrant spaces that are lively and engaging through activities such as festivals, markets, street performances, or public events.
8. **Sustainability:** Placemaking should prioritize sustainable design principles by incorporating energy-efficient infrastructure, green building practices, waste reduction strategies, and promoting alternative transportation options.
9. **Economic vitality:** Placemaking should contribute to the economic vitality of a city by attracting businesses, supporting local entrepreneurship, and creating job opportunities within the community.
10. **Flexibility and adaptability:** Placemaking should be designed with flexibility in mind to accommodate changing needs over time. This includes considering multi-functional spaces that can be adapted for different uses or temporary installations that can be easily modified or removed if necessary.

Overall, city branding and place-making are interconnected in their goals of creating a unique identity, fostering community engagement, attracting economic opportunities, promoting authenticity, enhancing livability, and incorporating sustainability in urban development. based on the theoretical and analytical sections discussed in this study. Table 1 represents, all gathered attributes, while Figure 15 shows the nine interconnected city branding and place-making attributes that will be later used in the framework.

Table (1): Extracted Attributes from Theoretical and Analytical parts
 for small-city branding and place-making.

Source: Author

Extracted City branding Attributes		Extracted Placemaking Attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Authenticity ▪ Community-oriented ▪ Natural beauty ▪ Accessibility and connectivity ▪ Innovation ▪ Cultural diversity ▪ Quality of life ▪ Entrepreneurial spirit ▪ Historic charm ▪ Arts and Culture ▪ Welcoming atmosphere ▪ Educational opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Culinary experiences ▪ Sports, and recreation events ▪ community involvement ▪ Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uniqueness, Cultural identity ▪ Social interaction ▪ Green spaces ▪ Accessibility ▪ Cultural identity ▪ Safety ▪ Economic vitality ▪ conservatism ▪ Vibrancy/livability ▪ Diversity and inclusivity ▪ Flexibility and adaptability ▪ Sustainability



Figure 15. Placemaking and city branding common attributes.
 Author, 2023.

4. Empirical Case study

The conceptual framework built from an interdisciplinary literature study guides an empirical inquiry. Interviews, and survey methodologies targeting urban data, and data sources are used with a diverse group of stakeholders, the case study visits were held between 2021-2023.

4.1 Case study criteria of selection

This study explores a Mediterranean waterfront city facing social, environmental, and economic challenges. The economy relies on small crafts like fishing, carpeting, and weaving, but inadequate urban services persist. Given its unique characteristics and potential, the city represents a promising candidate for place branding through place-making initiatives. By undertaking such branding efforts, numerous issues can be addressed effectively, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

4.2 Case Study: El Burullos City, Kafr El Sheikh, Egypt

Baltim is a resort located in Kafr El Sheikh Governorate, on the north coast of Egypt, as shown in Figure 16. Lake Burullos is a tourist attraction in Baltim city, distanced from Cairo by 300 km, a lot of monuments such as Burullos Tower and different unique islands, the most famous one is Singbar island and Burullos beaches [37], the city has an old history since the colonial resistance 1956, the 04 November is considered the National Day for Kafr El Sheikh Governorate [38]. Despite being an important center of resistance throughout Egyptian history, El Burullos has received little attention in terms of development before 2017.

Burullos Lake Protectorate, located in Egypt's northeast Rashid Channel, is the second largest natural lake, connecting the Nile and Mediterranean Sea. It spans 70 km and the city is divided into two sections, with locals using boats or bridges for transportation. Its original area has been reduced by 50% due to various violations. These violations include the presence of 28 islands scattered across significant distances within the protectorate, which serve as habitats for migratory wild birds and rare plant species. The lake is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including 33 fish species, 23 reptile species, 112 bird species, and 18 mammal species [39]. Unfortunately, the number of fish species has declined from an initial count of 52 at the beginning of the twentieth century. This decline can be attributed primarily to agricultural runoff entering the lake and subsequently reducing its salinity. Despite these challenges, Burullos Lake remains a crucial source of Egypt's fish resources, accounting for approximately 45% of the country's total fish wealth [40].

Regarding Authenticity, Burrullos is a small city, yet It has many monuments such as Fanar al-Burullos as shown in Figure 17, Tabia Orabi, and others. It has the manufacture and export of fishing boats which defines the identity of the city. Where a great number of inhabitants are fishermen and their families who need great consideration. It has many small villages Which is the basis of its fish wealth, such as (Al-Banna Al-Yen and the third market), Daily fish auctions are held in the village

public markets, where fish are sold at reasonable prices and in various types. The city's Tourism promotion aims to attract a larger number of tourists to the village and improve its services to become a global destination for those interested in witnessing the stunning nature and migratory birds, where the season starts in autumn, during which thousands of birds migrate from Europe to the village due to its moderate climate, before returning to Europe again by the end of February.

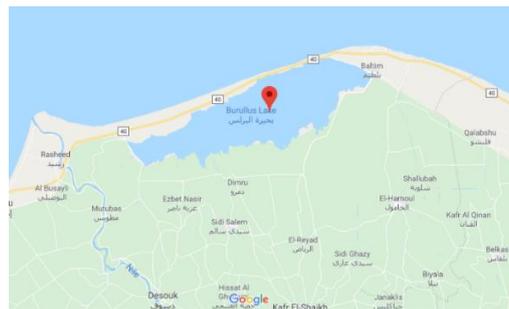


Figure 16 Burullus Lake, the second largest natural lake in Egypt shown on the map.



Figure (17), left-hand side photo of the old light house-Fanar- facing the Mediterranean Sea, the last one remaining from Khedevi Abbas age, right-hand side photo is the old terminal, a focus of attractive sightseeing nowadays. (Author, 2021)



Figure (18), left image Al Shakhloba (Egyptian Venice), right image Al Burullus Lake. (Author, 2021)



Figure (19), In November 2017, 40 artists from 14 nations gathered for the Graffiti Forum, which was supervised by UNICEF, Author, 2021).

Recently, one of the significant events that occur regularly in Burg El Burolos; to emphasize the visual characteristic, is the El Burolos festival, when the streets and walls of the buildings, were turned into beautiful artistic paintings by 25 volunteer artists, where the participating artists paint on the walls and boat pictures inspired by nature as boats. Fishing in the sea, fishermen's nets, and other works of plastic art, drawing and coloring with the cooperation of residents and children. The forum witnessed workshops for children, and workshops for painting on wood "the remains of trees from which boats are made", and the remains of colored cloth and shellfish workshops, and children participate in artists and university youth drawing to gain experiences and contact with artists, see Figure 19. Another event is that of migratory birds from Eastern Europe, East Asian countries, and Africa in the fall and winter seasons, as well as in the summer. These migratory birds, which belong to more than 66 families and about 24 species, form A carnival show for a natural painting of migratory birds in the sky of Lake Burullus.

Governmental Efforts:

The city is currently dealing with various challenges, and the city government is working on addressing them through revitalization and restructuring policies. One of the problems being tackled is fishing farm violations, which are being monitored closely. Additionally, parts of the lake are being buried for agricultural purposes. As a response to these challenges, a first step was taken in 2015, when the Governorate of Kafr El Sheikh officially permitted to development of the small town into a city "Borg El Burullos", consequently, should be provided with city facilities, according to municipal legislation. As mentioned in the local council meeting "The city has only become a city in name and requires a vision to realize its full potential and contribute to Kafr El Sheikh's governorate" [41].

The stages of developing Lake Burullos are carried out through 3 phases, the completion of the first and second phases by 100%, and work is underway on the third phase with a budget of one billion and 580 million pounds. Financial water, and disinfection in front of 7 outfalls of agricultural drainage [42]. initiatives include fishing decks and a 40 km bridge connecting Burullos Lake to land for agricultural fish planting. The goal is to upgrade the fishing industry and redirect the Bermal channel flow. Efforts are made to eliminate violations and clean biogas, enhancing fish wealth in the lake. The government also distributed 48 boats to Al-Shakhlouba fishermen, promoting a "safe shore" initiative where fishermen bear 50% of the boats' value [43].

According to tourism specialists, Burullos is a potential tourist project with the possibility to generate millions of dollars and employ 15,000 people in the first phase and 100,000 in the second. The project will have 5,000 hotel rooms and 20,000 furnished apartments, built away from the shore to prevent environmental harm. The facilities can be used for medical tourism, sports team training, and other activities. Burullos may compete with the future Suez Canal area if it receives an airport. [39].

4.3 Survey Analysis:

In this section of the research, the Placemaking and city branding attributes will be examined for developing El Burullos city and enhancing its branding, by calculating the relative significant weight of each attribute and rearranging them according to their importance; to obtain detailed input from the practical application, the study conducted 100 semi-structured questionnaires forms presented to (residents, Tourists, professionals, and businessmen) as research samples, to address the set of indicators. this survey supports the development of the proposed framework to clarify and develop the basic research hypothesis

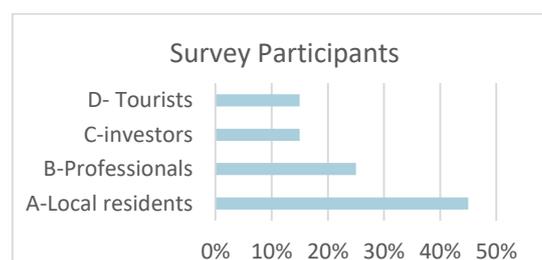


Figure 20, El Burullos Survey research samples. Author, 2023.

The survey is divided into two sections, the first one contains information on the participant's sociodemographics. The second section includes 9 questions on evaluating the placemaking and city branding attributes (Accessibility/Connectivity, Identity, and Image, Sense of Place, Community Engagement, Economic Development, Authenticity, Livability/vitality, Sustainability, and Quality of life), each attribute was explained thoroughly in Arabic to locals, who represented 45% of total responses as shown in figure 20.

Data Analysis: measuring the weighted mean is considered one of the important measures of central tendency, in the case of random sample size n and its items are $A_1, A_2, A_3, A_4, \dots, A_9$ respectively then $W_1, W_2, W_3, W_4 \dots$ etc. are the weights corresponding to the sample items, the weighted mean is obtained by finding the multiplication of each item by its weight, then add the weights for all items. Lastly, divide the weight products by the sum of the weights.

5. Results and Discussion:

According to the survey analysis findings, every attribute got a significant weight as shown in Table 2, the attribute that had the greatest impact on place-making and branding in El Burullus City was Quality of life (A_9), with a weighted mean of 17.3%. Following closely were Accessibility and Connectivity (A_1) and Economic Development (A_5). On the other hand, the attribute with the least significance was Sustainability (A_8), which only had a weighted mean of 4.3%. as shown in figures 21.

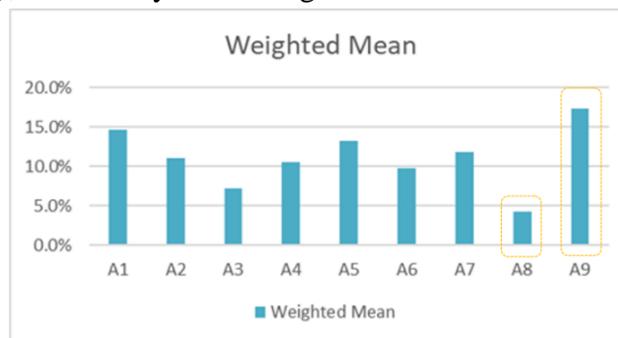


Figure 21, City branding and place-making attributes Weighted mean chart. Author, 2023.

Table 2, City branding and place-making attributes
Weighted mean analysis based on participants' points of view. Author, 2023.

El Burullos Place making and city Branding Attributes			
Attribute	Code	Weighted Mean	Order
Accessibility /Connectivity	A1	14.6%	2
Identity and Image	A2	11.1%	5
Sense of Place	A3	7.2%	7
Community Engagement	A4	10.5%	6
Economic Development	A5	13.3%	3
Authenticity	A6	9.8%	8
Livability/vitality	A7	11.9%	4
Sustainability	A8	4.3%	9
Quality of life	A9	17.3%	1

The interviews revealed major challenges in Egypt, including lower average income and below-average education levels. Citizens requested increased security campaigns to remove encroachments in Lake Burullos, a water bodies police department in Bogaz Burullos to avoid overfishing practices, and the rule of law to protect fishermen's rights. Additionally, unemployment was found to be high. These issues require collaboration between the Directorate of Security and Fisheries and the public to address these issues.

The locals' desire to transform a city's visual image into a distinctive brand image is evident in interviews. Urban branding strategies can be developed based on city development goals and visions, including large-scale strategies set by the government and smaller-scale ones implemented by individuals or professionals. Recognizing the potential of city branding as a process for residents and stakeholders to communicate their societies and communities is crucial for supporting branding efforts in smaller cities.

Finally, based on the analytical and empirical study, the study concluded the following prioritized framework in Table 3, including branding and place-making interconnected attributes, supported by proposed actions; for developing El Burullos city.

Table 3, A proposed city branding framework for Borg El- Burullos, through place-making approach.

Attributes	Description	Proposed Actions
1. Quality of life	Increase quality of safety, healthcare facilities, excellence in education, adequate public transportation recreational activities, and overall well-being for residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The city needs more security surveillance -Healthcare services need enhancement -Governmental and nongovernmental Awareness complains -The residence's overall quality of life needs improvement.
2. Accessibility /Connectivity	Cities should focus on creating spaces that are easily accessible to all members of the community, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and those using different modes of transportation For more connectivity between users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -street urban regeneration -well-maintained roads -Adequate road network - disabilities facilities -pedestrian streets -clear directions, signage, and good public transportation.
3. Economic Development:	City branding and place-making contribute to economic development by attracting investment, tourism, talent, and businesses to a city or place. A well-branded city with attractive public spaces created through effective place-making can enhance its competitiveness in attracting these economic opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -support small projects, -propose strategies that attract investors, tourism - redesign markets and recreational areas and cafes for increasing its success and profit. - business opportunities
4.Livability/vitality	City branding and place-making contribute to enhancing livability by creating attractive environments for residents and visitors alike. A well-branded city with well-designed public spaces can improve the quality of life, as leisure activities, social interactions, cultural events, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Urban regenerating public spaces such as restaurants and cafes area, parks, characterized by El Burollos identity. - Seasonal events such as (birds Migration, El Burollos painting festival, fishing contests in the lake, folkloric festivals, and historical events).

5. Identity and Image	Both city branding and place-making aim to create a distinct identity and image for a city or place. City branding focuses on promoting the unique characteristics, culture, and values of a city to attract visitors, businesses, and residents. Placemaking involves creating spaces that reflect the identity and aspirations of the community, fostering a sense of place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Long-term Events such as (The fishing your dish event), (and handicraft your product). -local sports tournament -Those events will revive the place into an experience Narrative of the city: Authentic storytelling (as humans of New York campaign) Logos, Advertisements place photos, a social media profile, and a slogan, inviting celebrities for attending events in the city, digital nomads. by transferring physical places into digital
6. Community Engagement:	Both concepts involve active community engagement. City branding requires involving residents, businesses, and other stakeholders in shaping the brand narrative and ensuring it resonates with their experiences. Place-making also emphasizes community involvement in designing public spaces that meet their needs and preferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Involving residents, businesses, and other stakeholders in shaping the brand narrative through contests, exhibitions -participation of residents in designing public spaces that meet their needs. -Sharing Burullos trips through social media
7. Sense of Place	City branding and place-making work together to develop a strong sense of place. City branding helps in defining the essence of a city while place-making focuses on creating physical environments that evoke an emotional connection with the community. Residence should be proud and love to live in their city, and have no intentions to leave it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creating physical environments that evoke an emotional connection with the community. -Public spaces. -Designing their own spaces. -street life
8. Authenticity:	Both concepts emphasize authenticity in representing the character of a city or place. City branding aims to showcase genuine aspects of a city's culture, history, people, and environment rather than relying on superficial marketing tactics. Place-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -conservation of historical buildings, and monuments. -Use of historical spaces in long-term events - historical buildings conservation

making also emphasizes creating authentic spaces that reflect the local context rather than generic designs.

- Tours around the city to brand its historical timeline
- redesign public markets compatible with the local context
- Promote local food and beverage offerings

9. Sustainability

Both concepts recognize the importance of sustainability in urban development. City branding can promote sustainable practices as part of a city's image, such as showcasing green initiatives or eco-friendly policies. Place-making can incorporate sustainable design principles, such as using renewable materials, promoting walkability, and integrating nature into urban spaces.

- Promoting green initiatives such as (recycling ships wood, clothes, and green building materials)
- Promoting safe walkability around the city
- Caring for and integrating old endangered trees and plants.
- PR Campaigns (Airbnb, social media, products)
- strengthening their digital communication

Conclusion:

This study proposes a framework for implementing small-city branding using the Placemaking approach, focusing on Burullus, a waterfront city with potential. A comprehensive set of criteria for successful city branding development is essential, and compiling and verifying these attributes will benefit authorities and professionals in developing strategies and promoting citizens' life. Brand image is the overall impression made by customers and laymen, and places become real brands when they are distinctive. this could be achieved in several ways, one of these is the place-making approach. In an attempt to monitor and examine a small city branded in Egypt, we have spotted the light on users' requirements through semi-structured interviews and observation, and thorough analysis, then the study extracted 9 attributes for branding a small city through place-making, including (Quality of life, Accessibility, Connectivity, Economic Development, Livability, Identity, Community Engagement, Sense of Place, Authenticity, and Sustainability), ending up with a prioritized city branding framework. The study suggested to start with improving the quality of life all over the city and city accessibility and connectivity to main roads, for El Burullus city. This will attract visitors and investors.

Finally, To establish a small city's brand, it is crucial to focus on the minor attributes with high significance, as the study proposed in the framework; ordering the actions will help in achieving effective, and rapid outcomes. These intangible values and interests determine the city's identity. Moreover, If a city's narrative fails to align with the values and interests of its diverse social and economic groups, these groups will become disconnected. Preserving local memory and creating spaces that resonate with local citizens are essential for cities to maintain their stories. Moreover, it is equally important to acknowledge the new events and trends in shaping small cities. In the end, the issue is not about whether the big or small cities are better, but rather how we can make both a better place to live in.

Recommendations:

- The study recommended the establishment of distinctive and unique architectural images that can help in city promotion, Sea resorts, fishing centers, new schools, and hospitals, and the reconstruction of a seafront promenade.
- Work on the establishment of long-term human and building systems to ensure Lake Burullus' sustainability and the ability to protect its fisheries.
- Actions towards El-Shakhluba urban development to expand tourism, boost national income, and reduce internal migration.
- Place branding requires community involvement, and fostering public-private relationships, making projects meaningful to a larger group.
- Transform branding from physically oriented to digital media strategies, incorporated with all community members.

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